

Millikin University
Student Learning in the Political Science Major

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Executive Summary

The Department of Political Science supports the mission of the University in preparing students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and a personal life of meaning and value. The mission of the department is to produce graduates who achieve the following seven learning outcome goals:

1. Identify key questions, fundamental concepts, and theoretical frameworks critical to an understanding of the political world;
2. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to American politics;
3. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to comparative politics;
4. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to the area of international relations;
5. Solve complex problems by demonstrating a mastery of substantive knowledge in the discipline's main subfields;
6. Follow scientific and humanistic methods to design and carry out politically-oriented research projects by utilizing sufficiently advanced social research methods;
7. Communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as colleagues in the field.

The major's core curriculum introduces students to each of the main subfields of political science, including American Politics, Comparative Politics, Political Theory, and International Relations. Students may choose certain tracks that emphasize their interests such as students within Pre-law taking courses such as the Philosophy of Law and the Supreme Court. To ensure our majors professional success, we require all of our students to do an internship, which has improved their ability to find jobs and create a professional network. Majors receive research training that they can use in their lives after Millikin and work towards a final project that incorporates a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

In addition to regular assessment in the classroom, we assess student learning at two specific points in students' academic careers: First, through pre and post tests in introductory courses at the beginning of their careers and through a senior research project.

The original assessment plan implemented during the 2008-2009 year has continued for two years now with continued mixed results. Based on additional assessment, major changes to the curriculum are due and changes to how the department assesses students in their sophomore

and junior years are a necessity. Improvements within the major have been both in depth and have broad implications for the future of the major and development of assessment techniques.

Report

Learning Goals

The Department of Political Science supports Millikin University's three prepares of professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and a personal life of meaning and value. The mission of the department is to produce graduates who can:

1. Identify key questions, fundamental concepts, and theoretical frameworks critical to an understanding of the political world;
2. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to American politics;
3. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to comparative politics;
4. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to the area of international relations;
5. Solve complex problems by demonstrating a mastery of substantive knowledge in the discipline's main subfields;
6. Follow scientific and humanistic methods to design and carry out politically-oriented research projects by utilizing sufficiently advanced social research methods;
7. Communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as colleagues in the field.

The successful graduate of the Department of Political Science is one who has a broad understanding of the institutions and processes of government – at both the domestic and international levels – and the manners by which citizens participate in the policy process. The successful graduate of our department also has a broad understanding of the methods by which we examine political processes and an ability to design, carry out, and communicate the findings of original research.

Snapshot

The department of Political Science in 2010-2011 has two full time faculty members, Dr. David Jervis who teaches Comparative Politics and International Relations and Dr. Bobbi Gentry who teaches American Politics, Research Methods, and Public Policy. In addition, Dr. Richard Dunn continues to teach as an adjunct professor in courses such as Constitutional Law and State and Local Politics. Two professors within Philosophy (Dr. Robert Money and Dr. Eric Roark) also teach cross-listed Political Science courses including Philosophy of Law and Political Philosophy.

Dr. David Jervis received a Fulbright Teaching fellowship in Poland for the 2011 calendar year, and Dr. Gentry moved into the position of Acting Chair for that year. To fulfill Dr. Jervis's courses for the Spring 2011 term, an advanced graduate student from the University

of Illinois (Mr. Dongsuk Kim) joined our faculty as an adjunct instructor. Based on student reviews and professional feedback, Mr. Kim was an asset to the department and provided our students with alternative points of view about the world.

Political Science continues to fulfill the university's mission of democratic citizenship in a global environment. Our faculty, not only live as global citizens but, also encourage our students to think and actively become democratic citizens. All of the courses in Political Science taught during the 2010-2011 semester were either cross-listed as a Global Studies course fulfilling the IN 350 requirements, or as United States Structures course fulfilling the IN251 requirements. Our courses encompass and continue to help Millikin students see the value and responsibility of being involved in their political, civic and social world.

Students within Political Science courses vary from majors or minors to students taking our courses to fulfill their general education requirements. Among the students we serve are also Social Science Education majors who need both American Political Systems and State and Local Politics to prepare for their content area exam. In this vein, Political Science fulfills several roles to students across the university.

On average, Political Science courses serve 24 students per course. From Fall 2010, each faculty member served 76 students with a total of 190 students served within the department. While the total number of students served decreases to 170 students during the Spring 2011 semester, the number of students served per full time faculty member increased to 97 students due to Dr. Jervis on Fulbright. Nine courses were taught for the Fall semester and seven for the Spring.

Political Science professors continue to contribute to a variety of initiatives across campus including Dr. Jervis's service as Global Studies Coordinator in the Fall 2010 semester and Dr. Gentry's service as a University Seminar Faculty. Political Science also occurs outside the classroom in this vein the department has served not only our students but community members as well. Two of these major initiatives include a debate between candidates for State Representative position Adam Brown and Bob Flider, and a bus trip organized by Dr. Gentry to Washington, DC. The debate was a success and involved students and community members. The question and answer type forum gave both candidates time to address concerns of the community and discuss modern politics. This debate showed Millikin's investment in the Decatur community and encouraged democratic citizenship of students and community members. The debate was organized by the Political Science department and illuminated Millikin's investment in real world learning and continued pursuits of knowledge for everyone involved.

Hiring our newest faculty member, Dr. Gentry has helped to build the department. Adding another faculty member during the 2010-2011 academic year provided not only quality, but also quantity to the courses taught. During this year, Dr. Jervis received a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to teach and research in Poland. Among social scientists, the Fulbright Fellowship is a competitive and highly distinguished award. Dr. Gentry has also built on the reputation of the department by providing a variety of knowledge to news media. Several

interviews, in a variety of venues, have increased Millikin's presence as an institution that contributes to the public discourse.

Based on current research and departmental discussions a few initiatives have been undertaken to improve the curriculum, offer flexibility and interest within the major. The Political Science department based on assessment data and discussions of what is covered in coursework throughout the major, decided to eliminate Introduction to Politics as a course. This particular course overlapped with courses that were already required within the major including Introduction to International Relations and American Political Systems. This course in previous assessments received a yellow indicator. Based on the previous assessments, the needed improvement was to improve our teaching of the departmental learning goals in the courses that emphasize subfield specialization rather than a broad overview of the discipline.

In addition to the elimination of Introduction to Politics, the department is working on improving the offerings to students by increasing the credits earned for model simulation course such as Model UN, Model Illinois Government, and Moot Court to more accurately reflect the amount of time, knowledge, and real world experience students learn from these courses. A proposal for the Fall 2011 semester will suggest a variable rate for these model simulation courses.

Two other major changes include the emphasis on research methods. By adding an additional faculty member with expertise and knowledge in research methods, we are now able to offer on a more frequent basis the Research Methods course that deals specifically with statistics for Political Scientists. On previous departmental advising sheets, the suggestion to take two math courses or our Research Methods course left the option open for students to study math that would not necessarily prepare our majors for the research done within our field. We have since revised this requirement and are currently working with the math department to qualify our Research Methods course as a Quantitative Reasoning course. Because our majors need to know how one asks research questions and attempts to answer them with appropriate methods, we believe that our courses better fulfill the needs of our students to reason as researchers within Political Science.

With any new faculty member there tend to be new courses taught by the department. During the Spring 2011 semester, Dr. Gentry taught two new courses: Fat Politics and American Politics and Film. Both of these courses were offered to students who were non-majors, yet both courses were successful in teaching students about the role that politics plays in their lives. With the Fat Politics course, students engaged in a variety of assignments meant to inform students about their chosen topics within food and obesity politics within the United States. Students engaged in democratic citizenship and actually wrote letters to the editor and letters to public officials about their particular issues. Issues included Decatur School Lunch Program, National Physical Education Initiatives, the role of testing meat in the United States and organic initiatives around the country.

On the other hand, Dr. Gentry also introduced American Politics and Film which discusses four major themes of Presentation of Information, War, Political Institutions, and American Political Culture. Within this course, students discussed ideas presented in film and

reflected how film works as a medium to inform us about our political world. Research papers written within this course included comparing the film of *Wall Street* to actual Wall Street scandals, political portrayals of Oliver Stone, and the American Dream in Suburbia. These courses worked to help students fulfill their university studies requirements and develop their interest in politics.

During the Fall 2010 semester, three incoming freshman indicated Political Science as their major. By the end of Spring 2011, 24 students were either a major in Political Science or a minor. Fourteen of these students were majors and three graduated during this school year. Based on senior exit interviews, the most influential element to the decrease in majors was turnover in faculty. Lack of consistent faculty in the department has led students to choose other homes in Philosophy or other social sciences. Of the three students who graduated, one is going to law school, one will be lobbying for sororities in Washington and around the country, and the final student is seeking full time internships with a look towards graduate school. A new assessment with a senior exit survey has improved the reflection within the department as to how we can better serve our students.

Groups sponsored by the Political Science department have been especially successful this year. Our Moot Court team, under the direction of Dr. Money, again won state championship. Our Model UN team won a team award and several individual awards at their regional conference. The department has worked with interested students to create a College Republicans on campus, which allows for professional development activities including leadership within the organization. In addition, the newly formed group advised by Dr. Gentry hosted an open forum with State Representative Adam Brown to address student questions. This new group is optimistic about its future endeavors and looks forward to organizing trips to Springfield and Washington DC for students to experience politics firsthand.

The bus trip to Washington DC was meant to get students involved in a non-partisan rally hosted by political comedians Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. The “Rally to Restore Sanity” offered students a unique perspective on what people organizing can lead to mass participation. Dr. Gentry worked with rally organizers to get a bus out of Decatur so that Millikin students could have the opportunity to be a part of the rally without an additional burden. Even though efforts began slowly, eventually the total number of people going to the rally was 102. Community members and students took a whirlwind adventure of 36 hours to DC and back. This opportunity was not limited to the rally and offered a relatively inexpensive way for individuals to experience our nation’s capital.

The Learning Story

Political Science continues to unite theory and practice in our coursework and extracurricular initiatives. Students within Political Science develop skills in argument, writing, oral presentation, and research techniques. Throughout their time at Millikin, Political Science majors will begin using the skills in their introductory courses, develop these skills in their sophomore and junior levels courses and culminate in a final research project that the student

presents either at a discipline oriented conference or in Millikin's Day of Scholarship. The curriculum moves students toward gaining the necessary skills to be successful in their professional lives—solid written and oral communication skills as well as critical and analytical thinking skills—and toward meeting the department's learning goals. (See curriculum map in Appendix I).

Over their four years in the program, majors will take a total of 41 credits worth of courses. Twenty of these hours will be in our foundation courses. An additional seven courses within the major allow our students to specialize in either American Politics or International Politics. Our foundation courses help us to assess and maintain high expectations of our students, while also creating a course of study that offers content, skills, and individualized attention.

In the first year of the major curriculum, students set about the task of acquiring basic knowledge in the various subfields of the discipline. Two major courses taken during the first year of study cover the basic concepts and theoretical frameworks. PO 105: The American Political System places politics into the domestic setting and encourages students to begin asking questions about their country and how they can be active citizens. PO 221: Introduction to International Relations sets the stage for a more international understanding of how countries interact with one another and what the consequences are for how countries view one another. The American Political System is taught every semester, but majors are suggested to take this course during their first semester to improve their understanding of politics in an international setting, which is generally taught during the Spring semester.

In their second year, students acquire basic research skills through either the department's Methods of Political Research (PO 280). Within this course students will begin to work with developing a testable research question, acquire data to help them answer their question and utilizing statistical techniques to answer their questions. Additionally, majors take a course in macroeconomics. These courses provide majors with the essential foundational experiences we expect our majors to employ in their upper-level courses and senior-year thesis.

In the second and third years, political science majors broaden their knowledge through electives. Students' particular interests guide their choice of tracks of electives, and through these intensive elective studies, each major develops a line of inquiry leading to a senior thesis project. Additionally, during this time, majors complete an internship experience (PO 371) and professional development course (PO 410, although this course has not yet been offered), adding practical political and vocational knowledge to the resources with which they can complete their major requirements.

The political science curriculum requires majors to integrate basic and enhanced knowledge of political phenomena, research skills, and the practical experiences gained over the course of the previous three years into a senior thesis project (PO 450). Majors work with faculty members to develop research proposals which they then execute in written form and present to an audience of either Political Scientists or a general audience.

Advising allows for our students to explore their future options, discuss plans of study and to meet with faculty about their current educational experiences. Advising sessions occur twice a year, but students are encouraged throughout the year to come in and meet with our faculty to discuss challenges and possibilities. Two of the most important elements of our advising session are to give students the opportunity to discuss future career plans and create a well-rounded schedule to provide students with the skills they need to be successful in their careers. Secondly, the advising session in Political Science is also meant to identify moments where our students are successful either in their coursework or politics oriented extra-curricular learning opportunities and explore how we can continue to promote these initiatives within the department.

Towards the end of their career students will meet with faculty members more frequently as they are developing their senior thesis project, discuss their internships, and explore options for life after Millikin. These opportunities have been utilized as anecdotal assessment of departmental goals and initiatives.

Assessment Methods

While a variety of assessment methods have been used since the development of the new learning goals in 2008, some assessment moments were clearly left out. In our assessment techniques since 2008, we have focused on introductory courses have utilized multiple choice assessments with a pre- and post-test. Based on these assessments, introductory courses often have received **GREEN** assessment in goals 2 and 4. The department has remained consistent in administering pre- and post assessment tests throughout the 2010-2011 semester.

Assessment has continued with the analysis of senior thesis papers. The senior thesis project provides an opportunity for us to assess how effectively our students have mastered comprehensive knowledge of the discipline. Students in PO 450 work closely with faculty members to develop a proposal – a process in which students report on their progress, try out various formulations of a central thesis or idea for exploration, find and locate sources to be used, and how to present ideas to different audiences. The faculty assesses the fifth and sixth departmental learning goals with each proposal on the basis of the rubric for the Thesis Proposal (see Appendix III).

Students complete a substantial written essay – generally between 20-25 pages. This essay forms the basis for majors' PO 450 grade, and we assess the quality of the written work by employment of the rubric for the Written Thesis (see Appendix III) in conjunction with our own intuitive judgments regarding the quality of the writing and the difficulty of the subject matter (Learning Goals 5 and 6).

Additional assessment has been added to evaluate learning goal seven: communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as colleagues in the field. In order to achieve a better assessment of the comprehensive knowledge of our seniors, the single major completing a senior thesis project was required to present their thesis at the Day of Scholarship. To better assess their ability to communicate knowledge to a general audience, a survey was administered to students in the audience. This assessment is possibly more impartial than faculty members within the discipline evaluating how well our students communicate to general

audiences. This experience was also invaluable to the student as they were completing their senior year. Several times the student remarked that they knew and felt what it was like to become a political scientist.

New assessments were introduced in the 2010-2011 academic year. One such assessment included a revised internship questionnaire upon completion of the internship and an updated internship contract that better connects students' educational practice within the field to a set of theories. By including a book discussing the theories relating to the students' internships, the application of theory can be better achieved.

A new assessment of a senior exit survey will help the department better identify key skills, courses, and experiences that are crucial to student success within our department. The senior exit survey consists of an in-depth interview with a graduating major with one faculty member. The in-person interviews allow for the student to reflect on their four years with Millikin and their time within the Political Science department. Please see the attached senior exit survey within the Appendix. Based on the new assessment, a broad overview of improvements will be suggested and new institutional knowledge has been gained.

Assessment Instruments

In the department of Political Science, assessment of goals 1 – 4 involves the administration of pre- and post-tests in introductory classes (see Appendix II) to gauge student learning over the course of the semester. Since the development of the learning goals in

Answering 85 to 100 percent of the instrument's questions correctly qualifies a student for a rating of "excellent"; 64 to 84 percent correct a rating of "adequate;" and below 63 percent correct a rating of "nominal." The department employed the following assessment criteria to evaluate student progress in achieving learning goals:

“GREEN light” (an acceptable level or clearly heading in the right direction and not requiring any immediate change in course of action): 80% or more of the students ranked “adequate” or “excellent”;

“YELLOW light” (not an acceptable level; either improving, but not as quickly as desired or declining slightly. Strategies and approaches should be reviewed and appropriate adjustments taken to reach an acceptable level or desired rate of improvement): 60% to 80% of the students ranked “adequate” or “excellent”; and

“RED light” (our current status or direction of change is unacceptable. Immediate, high priority actions should be taken to address this area): fewer than 60% of the students ranked “adequate” or “excellent”.

In the department of political science, assessment of goals 5-7 involves the faculty's application of the department's rubric to senior theses (see Appendix III) to gauge student learning over the course of their Political Science careers. Applying a GPA-like formula (5.0 for excellent, 4.5 for excellent/good, 4.0 for good, 3.5 for good/adequate, etc.) allows for a calculation of attainment of each learning goal on a scale from 5.0-1.0. The department

employed the following assessment criteria to evaluate student progress in achieving learning goals:

“**GREEN** light” (an acceptable level or clearly heading in the right direction and not requiring any immediate change in course of action): score of 4.0 or above;

“**YELLOW** light” (not an acceptable level; either improving, but not as quickly as desired or declining slightly. Strategies and approaches should be reviewed and appropriate adjustments taken to reach an acceptable level or desired rate of improvement): score of 3.0-3.9; and

“**RED** light” (our current status or direction of change is unacceptable. Immediate, high priority actions should be taken to address this area): score less than 3.0.

Assessment Results

Learning Goal 1: Identify key questions, theoretical frameworks and concepts critical to an understanding of the political world.

Intro to Politics	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean Correct Answers	5.76/10	5.66/10
Nominal (0 – 49 % Correct)	5%	8%
Adequate (50 – 79% Correct)	95%	92%
Excellent (80 – 100% Correct)	0%	0%
Number of Students	21	12

Rating for Goal 1: **YELLOW**

Learning Goal 2: Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to American politics

American Politics	Class A	Class B
Mean Correct Answers	4.1/10	4.1/10
Nominal (0 – 49 % Correct)	60%	50%
Adequate (50 – 79% Correct)	35%	50%
Excellent (80 – 100% Correct)	5%	0%
Number of Students	20	10

Rating for Goal 2: **YELLOW**

Learning Goal 3: The department needs to find a way to assess student learning of this goal.

Rating for Goal 3: See “improvement plans” below.

Learning Goal 4: Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to international relations

Rating for Goal 4: **International Relations not taught in 2010-2011**

Learning Goal 5: Solve complex problems by demonstrating a mastery of the substantive knowledge in the discipline's main subfields.

This goal was measured by Dr. Gentry's application of the "analysis" portion of the department's rubric for senior thesis written papers. The only senior thesis was judged as excellent. Applying a GPA-like calculation to this score results in a 4.0 "GPA."

Rating for Goal 5: **GREEN**

Learning Goal 6: Follow scientific and humanistic methods to design and carry out politically-oriented research projects

This goal was measured largely by an examination of the bibliography of senior thesis papers and by students' discussion of the literature within the paper, itself. The only senior thesis was judged "excellent" using the department's rubric; Applying a GPA-like calculation to this score results in a 4.0 "GPA."

Rating for Goal 6: **GREEN**

Learning Goal 7: Communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as colleagues in the field.

The only senior thesis was judged to be "excellent" using the department's rubric resulting in a 4.0 "GPA." As for oral communication of the paper's results,

Assessment Measure	Senior A
Presentation Style	4.75/5
Creativity	4.66/5
Knowledgeable	5/5
Ability to Answer Questions	4.75/5
Engaging	4.83/5
Easy to Understand	4.83/5

Rating for Goal 7: **GREEN**

Assessment of Department by Graduating Seniors

Based on qualitative interviews with graduating seniors, several elements of the exit survey allowed for additional assessment of the department's quality, challenges, and opportunities. This assessment, while qualitative, provides guidance in how to consider improving the department, continuing with successful programs, and eliminating unsuccessful elements of the major and the department.

First and foremost, the major complaint from both senior exit surveys was the turnover in the department. One such major has had five advisors; obviously this is a major problem for the coherence and implementation of departmental goals. While both graduating seniors were happy to have a new faculty member, they also reiterated the need for faculty within the department to connect to students and make the material relevant to their lives.

Based on the qualitative evaluation of the coursework, both students found different areas of interest to pursue during their time within the department. The availability of a diverse course offering was valuable to our seniors and was said to prepare them for their lives outside of Millikin. Perhaps the most challenging course for both graduating seniors was Research Methods, the major complaint about the course was the teaching. Taking this into account any professor teaching this course should consider the challenge of connecting the methods to real world data and student research.

In addition to coursework, both seniors also mentioned the need to create a Political Science community within the institution and to hold frequent extra-curricular events throughout the year to encourage interest of political topics and perhaps recruit majors. Other than professor contact both in person and through email, very little communication happened between majors and their advisors.

Both graduating seniors considered their Political Science degree to be useful and will help them in their professional pursuits. Based on the May graduating seniors one has a position lobbying for sororities throughout the United States and the other graduate is currently evaluating career options with graduate school.

Improvement Plans

Some major changes have been implemented during this assessment year based on previous assessment results and previous plans discussions within the department that now includes Dr. Gentry. New assessments have also been implemented to better assess how we do as a department in several areas, such as overall department assessment with seniors, assessment of internships, and assessment of communication skills of seniors.

Still, certain things are planned that might improve the **YELLOW** ratings on the three learning goals:

Learning Goal 1: We have changed the curriculum in Spring 2011 to eliminate the redundancy of Introduction to Politics to our other required courses of Introduction to the

American Political System and Introduction to International Relations. Based on this change we may consider eliminating this learning goal from future departmental goals to better reflect the different types of knowledge within Political Science that are the basis of a broad understanding of politics.

Learning Goal 2: Some improvement is required with this learning goal. Dr. Gentry believes that the measure of student learning by the department does not accurately reflect the learning within the courses. A new assessment for Learning Goal 2 should be introduced to better assess this goal for future courses.

Learning Goal 3: The current curriculum does not include an Introduction to Comparative Politics course (although, apparently, it had done so prior to 2008), so it is difficult to assess this goal. We believe that it is necessary for students to have an introductory comparative course, and therefore should reintroduce this course into our curriculum. In addition, advanced courses in comparative politics should also be able to assess this goal at higher levels of student knowledge. The department needs to be more specific with how they will assess learning goals at multiple levels including introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses.

Learning Goal 4: The rotation of the required Introduction to International Relations is every other Fall, therefore this learning goal will have to be assessed in off years by intermediate and advanced coursework in the subject. Again, the department must improve our assessment of different levels of coursework.

Learning Goals 5 and 6: Based on this year's results, we are doing particularly well on these learning goals. However, there may be some skew based on the fact that only one student completed a senior thesis this year and this student was by all means an exceptional graduate.

Learning Goal 7: Assessment of this goal has already been improved this year based on a more rigorous approach to communication to others. The department would also like to consider students working on senior thesis projects to go to a conference and present their work. Communicating to others within one's field is just as important and just as valuable a learning experience as it is to communicating information outside of one's field.

Specific Assessment Improvements:

This assessment exercise has stimulated other questions that will be pursued in the next year:

There must be assessment during the middle years of one's coursework. This assessment should assess student knowledge at many different levels from introductory coursework to intermediate and finally advanced.

Next year, the department will implement its new internship assessments with a three pronged approach: written assessment, assessment administered to the onsite internship personnel, and assessment of the student in their own learning experiences.

Additionally, considerations for coursework include creating an Introduction to Comparative Politics course, creating a variable rate for simulation courses (such as a student can take Model UN for 1, 2 or 3 credits) and considering that the Research Methods course be taught as a four credit course with computer access time such that students can work with the programs necessary for quantitative analysis.

Substantive Improvements for 2010-2011

In addition to departmental improvement with student learning goals and coursework, the department has worked to improve internship opportunities and connections with alumni. Based on a departmental initiative, alumni of Political science were contacted and were asked to provide their business cards. The purpose of this work was three-fold: 1) Current students can see the diversity of occupations and professions with a Millikin Political Science degree, 2) Potential students can see the value of Political Science and opportunities for professional success after Millikin, and 3) Reconnecting with alumni to inform them of the success of the department as well as ask if there are any opportunities for Millikin interns. This expansive endeavor has been a wonderful experience for the department and a good utilization of resources to develop our alumni base and consider the value for current and potential students.

Implementing a senior exit survey improves the quality of institutional knowledge for a rebuilding department. In this work, we consider what is valuable for the department to know about our students and what we substantively provide our students. The implementation of this assessment allows students and faculty to discuss what are the strengths and challenges within the department as a whole and to see the department as a complete entity rather than several disparate parts.

Forward Looking

The department for the next year will focus on two fronts: Recruitment and Retention of students within Political Science. Two major initiatives for recruitment include contacting local high school government teachers to discuss our Political Science program, and work on a 2 plus 2 model (two years at community college and two years at Millikin) to encourage recruitment of transfer students into the major. Retention of students will be more of an endeavor to keep the students we currently have and make sure that the department is fulfilling its responsibilities in course rotation and course variety. Based on these endeavors, the 2011-2012 assessment report will expound on these initiatives and the success and challenges faced by this work.

Appendix I: Curriculum Map for Political Science

University Goals

1. Professional success
2. Democratic citizenship in a global environment
3. A personal life of meaning and value

Department Goals

1. Identify key questions, fundamental concepts, and theoretical frameworks critical to an understanding of the political world;
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7. Communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as colleagues in the field.

Learning Goals	PO 105	PO 221	PO 280	PO 371	PO 410	PO 450
(1) Identify Key Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories in the Political World	•	•				
(2) Identify Key Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories in the American system	•					
(3) Identify Key Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories in Comparative Politics						
(4) Identify Key Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories in International Relations		•				
(5) Solve Problems by Integrating Substantive Knowledge			•	•		•
(6) Follow Scientific/Humanistic Methods to Carry Out Research			•			•
(7) Communicate Political Knowledge Effectively					•	•

Appendix II: Pre- and Post-Tests for Introductory Political Science Courses

PO 100 Intro to Political Science

1. What is politics?
 - a. the art of argumentation and debate
 - b. the process by which groups of people make decisions
 - c. competition between government actors
 - d. duplicitous interactions that result in a corrupt society
2. What is power?
 - a. the ability to use force
 - b. the possession of significant capabilities, e.g., military and economic resources
 - c. the ability to achieve one's goals, to influence others to get the outcome one wants
 - d. status, or position in society
3. Agents of political socialization include:
 - a. family
 - b. schools
 - c. the media
 - d. all of the above
4. A state is:
 - a. legal entity that possesses territory, sovereignty and a government
 - b. a culturally cohesive community that shares political aspirations
 - c. the only important actor in international relations
 - d. the highest form of political organization
5. Sovereignty is:
 - a. a king or queen
 - b. the ability to act independently from external actors or internal rivals
 - c. international law, as laid out by the UN security council
 - d. only guaranteed when a state has a written constitution
6. Capitalism advocates:
 - a. the limited provision of social goods via the state
 - b. encourages individual responsibility
 - c. a laissez-faire approach to market management
 - d. all of the above

7. In a country with a unitary system of government
 - a. the central government possesses all legitimate power
 - b. power is divided between the central government and regional governments
 - c. there are three branches of government, executive, legislative, and judicial
 - d. the government is illegitimate

8. Which of the following is not a necessary attribute of democracy?
 - a. periodic elections
 - b. checks and balances
 - c. popular involvement in politics
 - d. free and independent media

9. In international politics, the primary distinction between the “North” and the “South” is
 - a. political
 - b. economic
 - c. demographic
 - d. environmental

10. In the years since World War II
 - a. there have been no wars between the world’s great powers
 - b. the world has developed ways to prevent a repeat of the WWII-like Holocaust
 - c. there has been a reduction in the number of wars
 - d. Europe has seen more wars than Asia

**PO 105 Introduction to American Government
Assessment Test Spring 2011**

Name _____ Major _____

Rank _____

Please circle your answers. Answer to the best of your ability.

- 1) The greatest extension of the United States welfare state came when?
 - a) **in 1789 with the ratification of the Constitution of the United States**
 - b) **in 1865 with the establishment of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands**
 - c) **in 1935 with the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935**
 - d) **during the 1960s as a result of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War of Poverty"**
 - e) in the 1980's with the Reagan Revolution

- 2) Bicameralism is defined as the:
 - a) division of the national government into two branches
 - b) division of the executive branch into the offices of President and Vice-President
 - c) division of the overall government into federal and state systems
 - d) division of the legislative branch into two chambers
 - e) division of political power through the two-party system

- 3) Divided government is best described as:
 - a) the difference between the federal, state, and local governments
 - b) the difference between control of government by the Republicans or the Democrats
 - c) the difference between the President's first and second term of office
 - d) when Congress is unable to agree on policy and no laws are passed
 - e) when one party controls the White House and the other controls one or both chambers of Congress

- 4) The jurisdiction of the federal judicial branch, including the boundaries of its districts and circuits, was defined by:
 - a) The Judiciary Act of 1789
 - b) Article III of the Constitution
 - c) Marbury v. Madison
 - d) Judicial review
 - e) The 4th Amendment to the Constitution

- 5) Which Chief Justice of the United States presided over the Supreme Court as it expanded of rights of the criminally accused during the 1950s and 1960s?
 - a) Earl Warren
 - b) Warren Burger
 - c) Robert Bork
 - d) William Rehnquist
 - e) Oliver Wendell Holmes

- 6) The United States Congress has two functions: lawmaking and representation. Representation may be measured along different dimensions. Which of the following terms refers to Congress's ability to represent constituents' interests and values?
- Politico
 - Descriptive representation
 - Geographic representation
 - Substantive representation
 - Trustee
- 7) "Framing"
- refers to the tailoring of the presentation of information about an issue in hopes of shaping opinion about that issue in one direction or another
 - refers to the practice of nesting an unpopular bill within a larger, more popular bill in hopes of getting it passed by Congress
 - refers to the creation of salience concerning an issue as a result of news coverage, regardless of whether the coverage is positive or negative
 - refers to the repackaging of an unpopular policy by a presidential administration in an attempt to garner public support
 - refers to the tendency of the voter to "box out" information presented by other political parties
- 8) Which of the following statements is FALSE?
- Even though many of the framers of the Constitution feared that extending the franchise to people without property would encourage economic leveling (i.e., redistribution from rich to poor), in the contemporary U.S., voter turnout among poor people is lower than it is among rich people.
 - Even though people nowadays have more formal schooling than people did a century ago, voter turnout in the U.S. is generally less nowadays than it was a century ago
 - Even though local government is often viewed as more amenable to citizen influence than the national government is, voter turnout in local elections in the U.S. is generally lower than in elections for President, Vice-President, Senator, and members of Congress.
 - Even though young people today have more formal schooling than older people, voter turnout in the U.S. among young people is lower than it is among older people.
 - None of the above, i.e., all of the above statements are true.
- 9) The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Amendments (dealing with the right to bear arms, quartering soldiers, and right to be secure in the home) place a limit upon:
- the legislative branch
 - the executive branch
 - the judicial branch
 - local governments
 - national government
- 10) Which of the following is NOT a core value of United States political culture?
- Legal equality
 - Political equality
 - Economic equality
 - Freedom of religion
 - Freedom of speech

Appendix III: Evaluation Rubrics for Senior Thesis

Thesis Proposal: Assessed by Department Faculty.

	Excellent	Adequate	Nominal
Knowledge Sources (Goals 1 – 4)	[6 points] Reflects a high level of integration of multiple sources of information and knowledge acquired in political science courses.	[4 points] Demonstrates only occasional integration of information from multiple sources and political science coursework.	[2 points] Demonstrates little or no integration of information from multiple sources.
Method (Goal 5)	[5 points] Presents a clear research design, including discussion of hypotheses to be tested, pertinent data, as well as methods skills acquired in the program and relevant to the project's execution.	[3 points] Research design and hypotheses present, but proposal falls short in tying in pertinent data and relevant methods.	[1 point] No clear design or hypotheses, few – if any – connections to relevant data and methods. Proposal suggests methods incorrect for research question.
Clarity (Goal 7)	[3 points] Very few grammatical errors, if any. Sentences clearly express ideas, and paragraphs are coherent wholes. Overall structure is logical and coherent and contributes to overall strength of proposal.	[1 point] Common errors in usage and sentence structure. Sentences and paragraphs may run too long or too short. Variation in coherence of paragraphs and clarity of logic.	[0 points] Many spelling and grammar errors, use of incomplete sentences, inadequate proof reading.

Written Thesis: Assessed by Department Faculty.

	Excellent	Adequate	Nominal
Literature Review (Goal 1)	[6 points] Presents a well-organized review of pertinent political science literature. Demonstrates clearly how previous findings relate to the project at hand. Builds toward a clear hypothesis.	[4 points] Review of pertinent political science literature present; however, connections to current project tenuous or – in a few cases – absent.	[2 points] Superficial to no connection of project to pertinent political science literature.
Analysis (Goal 5)	[5 points] Makes clear connections between findings in the data and established knowledge in the field. Demonstrates superior mastery of the material. Suggests – and explores – areas for possible future research.	[3 points] Connections between findings and established knowledge present, but analysis fails to make some of them clearly. Demonstrates ample mastery of the material. Only suggests – without much elaboration – future avenues of research.	[1 point] Few to no connections between established knowledge in the field and the project's findings. Questionable mastery of the material.
Clarity (Goal 7)	[3 points] Very few grammatical errors, if any. Sentences clearly express ideas, and paragraphs are coherent wholes. Overall structure is logical and coherent and contributes to overall strength of proposal.	[1 point] Common errors in usage and sentence structure. Sentences and paragraphs may run too long or too short. Varied coherence of paragraphs and clarity of logic.	[0 points] Many spelling and grammar errors, use of incomplete sentences, inadequate proof reading.

Senior Presentation Assessment

Presentation Assessment

Presenter's Name _____ Your Initials _____

When using a five point scale, 1=poor and 5=excellent and where 3 is average. Where would you rate the presenter in each of these categories?

Presentation Style	1	2	3	4	5
Creativity	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to Answer Questions	1	2	3	4	5
Engaging	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to Understand	1	2	3	4	5

Name one thing you learned from the presentation:

What did you like about the presentation?

What could have been improved?

Appendix III: Senior Exit Interview

SENIOR EXIT SURVEY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

2. Date of Graduation from Millikin: _____

3. Age: _____ 4. Gender: _____

5. Current Position: _____

Firm or Organization Name: _____

6. How do you rate Millikin as an institution?
Please circle your response. 1= Poor to 6= Excellent

A. Academics	1	2	3	4	5	6
B. Core Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	6
C. Quality of Campus Life	1	2	3	4	5	6
D. Computer Technology	1	2	3	4	5	6
E. Library	1	2	3	4	5	6
F. Leadership Development	1	2	3	4	5	6
G. Student Government	1	2	3	4	5	6
H. Preparation for						
Graduate School	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional School	1	2	3	4	5	6
A Career	1	2	3	4	5	6
For Life	1	2	3	4	5	6
I. Career Development	1	2	3	4	5	6
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. How do you rate the Department of Political Science?
Please circle your response. 1= Poor to 6= Excellent

A. Quality of Faculty	1	2	3	4	5	6
B. Course Diversity	1	2	3	4	5	6
C. Quality of major in Political Science	1	2	3	4	5	6
D. Rigor of Study in Political Science	1	2	3	4	5	6

E. Student-faculty Ratio	1	2	3	4	5	6
F. Career/Job Counseling	1	2	3	4	5	6
G. Internship Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6

8. Of the items you rated above, which are the most important to you? Why?
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
9. As a student, what do you think were the greatest strengths of the Department of Political Science major program? Why?
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
10. As a student, what do you think were the greatest weaknesses of the Department of Political Science Major program? Why?
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
11. How well did the Political Science major do in preparing you for a graduate school, law school, or additional training? Please circle your response. 1= Poor to 6= Excellent
- 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Which particular Political Science courses did you take that most relate to your current work? Please circle your response(s).

PO 100	Introduction to Politics
PO 105	The American Political System
PO 220	Current American Foreign Policy
PO 221	Introduction to International Relations
PO 223	Political Participation and Democratic Citizenship
PO 224	Group Influence in America
PO 235	Introduction to the Criminal Justice System
PO 240	State and Local Government
PO 244	Campaigns and Elections
PO 260	Topics in Political
PO 280	Methods of Political Research

PO 300	Media and Politics
PO 301	Political Behavior and Opinion
PO 305	Philosophy of Law
PO 310	Political Philosophy
PO 315	Supreme Court in American Politics
PO 320	International and Law and Organization
PO 321	Global Issues
PO 322	Topics in Comparative Politics
PO 323	Topics in World Politics
PO 324	Politics of the Developing World
PO 330	Constitutional Law
PO 334	Civil Liberties and the Constitutions
PO 340	The American Congress
PO 348	The American Presidency
PO 356	Topics in Public Policy
PO 360	Topics in Political Science
PO 361	Washington Internship of Practicum
PO 362	Washington Experience
PO 363	Washington Leadership Forum
PO 365	Political Simulations
PO 371, 372	Internship
PO 391, 392	Independent Studies in Political Science
PO 400	Seminar in Political Science
PO 410	Political Science Professional Development
PO 450	Senior Thesis

13. Which particular Political Science courses or experiences most relate to your present personal life? Please circle your response(s).

PO 100	Introduction to Politics
PO 105	The American Political System
PO 220	Current American Foreign Policy
PO 221	Introduction to International Relations
PO 223	Political Participation and Democratic Citizenship
PO 224	Group Influence in America
PO 235	Introduction to the Criminal Justice System
PO 240	State and Local Government
PO 244	Campaigns and Elections
PO 260	Topics in Political
PO 280	Methods of Political Research
PO 300	Media and Politics
PO 301	Political Behavior and Opinion
PO 305	Philosophy of Law
PO 310	Political Philosophy
PO 315	Supreme Court in American Politics
PO 320	International and Law and Organization
PO 321	Global Issues

PO 322	Topics in Comparative Politics
PO 323	Topics in World Politics
PO 324	Politics of the Developing World
PO 330	Constitutional Law
PO 334	Civil Liberties and the Constitutions
PO 340	The American Congress
PO 348	The American Presidency
PO 356	Topics in Public Policy
PO 360	Topics in Political Science
PO 361	Washington Internship of Practicum
PO 362	Washington Experience
PO 363	Washington Leadership Forum
PO 365	Political Simulations
PO 371, 372	Internship
PO 391, 392	Independent Studies in Political Science
PO 400	Seminar in Political Science
PO 410	Political Science Professional Development
PO 450	Senior Thesis

14. What courses do you wish you could have taken that were not available in the department?

15. Were you involved with the following experiences? Please circle your response.

A.	Model Illinois Government	YES	NO
B.	Model United Nations	YES	NO
C.	Washington Semester	YES	NO
D.	Drew University/United Nations	YES	NO
E.	Semester Abroad	YES	NO

16. What four or five pieces of information presented in Political Science courses have you carried with you to this day?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

