

Millikin University
Student Learning in the Political Science Major

By Bobbi Gentry
June 29, 2012

Executive Summary

The 2011-2012 year has been amazing for Political Science in three major ways: the integration of performance learning, student success and faculty success. All three simulation courses in Political Science (Model Illinois Government, Moot Court, and Model United Nations) have been integrated into the curriculum to offer students an opportunity to present their knowledge, make arguments, and discuss real world problems with students from around Illinois and the world. Students have been particularly successful this year with a student traveling to South Africa on the McIntire Fellowship, a student earning the Scovill award, a student earning the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship, three students getting admitted to Washington DC internships, one student interning at a top law firm in the country, students presenting their work at the Day of Scholarship, and one student earning the Pi Sigma Alpha National Honors Society award to intern in Washington DC. Lastly, faculty have been particularly successful by receiving the Fulbright fellowship and completing research and teaching in Poland, receiving the Griswold Professorship in the Social Sciences, receiving the joint award of the Summer Undergraduate Research fellowship, working with students to create off-campus opportunities in the simulation classes and through competitive programs, and successful completion of a number of journal articles.

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 within the senior thesis.

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 the assessments of the major, there is a necessity for additional faculty to serve the institution as a whole and for the majors in the capacity of a Comparative or International Relations faculty member.

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 2011-2012 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. Dr. Gentry continued as Acting Chair and was promoted in March to Chair of the Political Science department. To fulfill Dr. Jervis's courses for the Fall 2011 term, Dr. Paula Banerjee joined our faculty as a visiting professor.

On average, Political Science courses serve 19 students per course. From Fall 2011, Political Science served a total of 187 students served within the department. While the total number of students served decreases to 152 students during the Spring 2012 semester, due to the required and lower enrolled course of Research Methods. Nine courses were taught by Political Science faculty for the Fall semester and eight of those courses were cross listed or fulfilled another university requirement. Within the Spring, six were cross listed and a total of ten courses were taught. Three courses were major only courses which were Model Illinois Government, Research Methods and Professional Development in Political Science. Political Science provides many opportunities for students and continues to provide a vital contribution to the University studies program.

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. Most of the courses in Political Science taught during the 2011-2012 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. As well as succeeding in the service it provides to the institution as a whole.

Political Science professors continue to contribute to a variety of initiatives across campus including Dr. Gentry's service as a University Seminar Faculty. Democratic citizenship activities for the Fall semester included Political Science hosting global scholars on forced

migration and immigration. This event was a huge success and involved students, faculty, and community members. During the Spring semester, Political Science hosted Alumni Justin Allen and Michael Halbrook back on campus along with a visit from State Senator Kyle McCarter for the Model United Nations simulation.

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 enhance performance learning by increasing the number of credit hours model simulation courses to three credit hours. Three courses within the major offer unique opportunities to bridge theory and practice: Model Illinois Government, Moot Court, and Model United Nations. The purposeful assessment and increase in the credit hours more accurately reflect the amount of time, knowledge, and real world experience students learn from these 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. 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.

During the Fall 2012 semester, nine incoming freshman indicated Political Science as their major. By the end of Spring 2012, 21 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 has received a position where she completed her internship, and the final student is seeking full time work. A new assessment with a senior exit survey has improved the reflection within the department as to how we can better serve our students.

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), 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 2011-2012 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.

Assessments implemented in the 2010-2011 continued in the 2011-2012 assessment include a senior exit interview, new standards for internships including a questionnaire, and evaluation of student presentations. These new assessments do seem to provide additional information about the nature and progress of our majors.

An additional assessment was added this year. The Portfolio Assessment of student's work within the Professional Development course provided a variety of information on the graduate school and professional readiness of our majors. This assessment will continue every other year when the course is taught, but all majors will be assessed.

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.

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

American Politics	Spring 2012
Mean Correct Answers	5.52/10
Nominal (0 – 49 % Correct)	29% (5)
Adequate (50 – 79% Correct)	60% (10)
Excellent (80 – 100% Correct)	11% (2)
Number of Students	20

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 2011-2012**

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 results varied between students. The analysis and capability of the three students ranged from excellent to adequate for the three senior theses. In this vein particular improvements need to be promoted.

Rating for Goal 5: **YELLOW**

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 theses papers and by students' discussion of the literature within the paper, itself. Again, the production of work by the three students who completed a senior thesis was mixed. Perhaps the most important contributing factor was that students needed more time with faculty members as they moved through the project.

Rating for Goal 6: **YELLOW**

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

Of the three senior thesis, one was judged to be "excellent" using the department's rubric, and two were adequate. As for oral communication of the paper's results,

Assessment Measure	Average
Presentation Style	3.0
Creativity	2.6
Knowledgeable	4.0
Ability to Answer Questions	3.6
Engaging	3.0
Easy to Understand	3.6

Rating for Goal 7: **YELLOW**

Improvement Plans

Despite the somewhat discouraging nature of these results, the department will not make major changes to its courses or assessment plan in 2011-2012. There are two reasons for this. One, this assessment plan has only been comprehensively implemented for one year, so it does not provide enough evidence to stimulate drastic changes.

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

Learning Goal 2: A better assessment of the pre/post text is needed to assess student learning for both the Spring and Fall semesters. This implementation is acknowledged by Dr. Gentry and will be improved in the next assessment report.

Learning Goal 3: An introduction to Comparative Politics Course will be taught in the Fall 2012 semester and will be assessed then.

Learning Goals 5 and 6: Greater effort must be made in the senior seminar course to have students review the scholarly literature on their topic and to apply it more closely and clearly to the topic. Dr Jervis emphasized this issue to students when discussing their

projects, and it seems clear that about two-thirds of the students understood what is needed but there is still the one-third that does not. One way to do so might be to institute a system similar to that used on JMS projects in which students write a much more extensive project statement before embarking on extensive research. A problem with that solution is that students have only a semester to complete the department's thesis requirement. The department will follow through on a new process where students must have an approved proposal before they are allowed to register for the senior thesis course. This will require students to focus their topic and jump immediately into the research.

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

Is there a need for some sort of assessment of students' progress in the middle of their Political Science careers and not just at the beginning and end of it? There was, apparently, some discussion of doing so in the original assessment plan on which this report is based, but no mechanism was ever implemented.

Given the importance assigned to practical experiences by the department and the institution, there should probably be some way to assess student learning in their internships. A new implementation plan has been implemented and assessment continues to be improved for internships.

Based on issues this semester, the department will develop an extensive plagiarism policy that will be implemented and followed through by all faculty members. Training for the new policy will begin in the Fall 2012 semester.

Departmental Goals

Throughout the 2011-2012 year, specific departmental goals have been set to improve the quality of the program and the department as a whole. Four specific goals were set along with initiative points for each.

Goal 1: Recruitment of new and transfer students into Political Science.

Initiative 1: Create a 2 plus 2 program that offers easier transition into Political Science from Community Colleges in the area.

Initiative 2: Compete at Model Illinois Government Conference and utilize as a recruitment tool for new and transfer students.

Initiative 3: Contact social studies high school teachers about Millikin's Political Science program.

Initiative 4: Create concentration in Pre-Law and create course rotation for the implementation of Law and Politics courses.

Goal 2: Curriculum Design and Revision to improve student success and achieve departmental learning goals.

Initiative 1: Revise Model Simulation courses to have a variable rate based on student hours invested and allow for increased course requirements.

Initiative 2: Explore the need for an Introduction to Comparative Politics course to fulfill the departmental learning goal number 3 “Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics and theories central to comparative politics”.

Initiative 3: Aid History and Social Science Education in fulfilling requirements for Social Science Teaching Certification and Content Exam preparation.

Goal 3: Improve Assessment of sophomore and junior courses.

Initiative 1: Research current assessment tools for content specific courses and develop departmental assessments for courses not currently covered in the Assessment Report.

Initiative 2: Improve assessment of Internships including clarification of responsibilities for faculty, students, and on-site supervisors.

Initiative 3: Teach and Assess the Political Science Professional Development course.

Goal 4: Send students to the Washington Internship Program

Initiative 1: Consider funding options for students interested.

Initiative 2: Pool options for programs and make suggests for better programs.

Initiative 3: Make connections with Washington Program Officers.

Of these initiatives all goals were met. The only initiative not completed was to contact high school teachers to recruit majors. The challenge for that initiative was to gain access to the available detail on social studies and history teachers in the area. This initiative will be followed through in the Fall 2012 semester.

Goal 1 was clearly met by the increase in recruitment numbers, one new improvement will be to get high school teachers involved. A letter will be sent out in October 2012 to encourage teachers to speak with students about Political Science at Millikin. Two programs that are in the planning stages are a pre-law boot camp that will be a three day intense training for high school juniors to come and be a part of campus and experience the program. The other program will be to host a debate watching event for all three presidential debates and continue the tradition of hosting local debates.

Goal 2 included creation of new courses and considered the value of assessment of a variety of projects within Political Science. Each of these changes were carefully considered and do seem to fit the way that Millikin is moving toward performance learning. Goal 3 was the beginning of an overarching assessment improvement within the department. The groundwork has now been laid for the oversight of assessment for the sophomore and junior courses. Goal 3 will continue to be an important aspect of the department in the years to come.

Goal 4 has contributed to the opportunities for students to pursue off-campus internships. The relationships build with two Washington Programs has already produced student applicants. These programs have articulation agreements between Millikin and each program. One major improvement that needs to happen is Millikin investing in its highly motivated students, students

should receive funding from Millikin to attend these programs especially if these students receive scholarships.

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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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.

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 points] 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 points] 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.

17. What undergraduate experiences, courses or opportunities would have added to your college experiences? Why?
18. What skills did you acquire as a Political Science major that you think are valuable?
19. What skills did you want to have in your courses that were not present?
20. Do you have any recommendations for the Political Science Department website?
29. What advice would you give to current Political Science majors?