

Course Assessment Report
Washtenaw Community College

Discipline	Course Number	Title
Political Science	112	PLS 112 08/03/2017- Introduction to American Government
Division	Department	Faculty Preparer
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Social Science	Donna Wasserman
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

I. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome

Outcome 1: Identify the purposes, values, and models of democratic political systems

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2017
 - Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections including all teaching modalities.
 - Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty will score and analyze the data

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
306	216

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

A total of 12 sections of PLS 112 ran for the Winter 2017 term -- 7 sections as on-campus and 5 sections as DL. Assessment data is based on a random sample of one-half of the seven on-campus sections (4 sections sampled) and all five of the DL sections for a total of 9 out of the 12 total sections. All students in the 9 selected sections were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

The 4 randomly selected on-campus sections were all day sections because no on-campus evening sections were offered Winter 2017. The DL sections included three 15-week sections and two 12-week sections.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #1 was assessed using an essay exam. The essay exam included three essay questions—the first focusing on the purposes and values of the Constitution, the second on the purposes and values of a federal political system, and the third comparing and contrasting different models of democracies. Essays were scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The average score on the essays for all sections was 76% (22.9 points/30 possible points). Of the 216 students in the sample, 77.8% scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for Outcome #1 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students generally performed well in writing essays addressing and analyzing the required material in their essay responses. Students did especially well when asked to describe, define, and explain key concepts for this outcome.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Although the standard of success was met for Outcome #1, overall, students did not do as well when it came to comparing and contrasting concepts and inferring the advantages and disadvantages of different ideas. Instructors will spend more time teaching students how to apply what they've learned beyond descriptions and definitions. Also, when comparing essay results, the on-campus students assessed did considerably better than the DL students when answering essay questions. The average score on the essays for on-campus sections was 81.3% (24.5 points/30 possible points) and 71.3% (21.4 points/30 possible points) for DL sections. Moreover, students in the 12-week DL sections did considerably less well than students in the 15-week DL sections. Instructors of DL sections will need to devote more time to the mechanics of writing essay questions.

Outcome 2: Summarize the Constitution's major principles of government

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2017
 - Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections including all teaching modalities.
 - Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty will score and analyze the data

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
306	216

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

A total of 12 sections of PLS 112 ran for the Winter 2017 term -- 7 sections as on-campus and 5 sections as DL. Assessment data is based on a random sample of one-half of the seven on-campus sections (4 sections sampled) and all five of the DL sections for a total of 9 out of the 12 total sections. All students in the 9 selected sections were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

The 4 randomly selected on-campus sections were each day sections because no on-campus evening sections were offered Winter 2017. The DL sections included three 15-week sections and two 12-week sections.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #2 was assessed using a multiple choice exam focusing on the social, political, and social origins of the U.S. Constitution and the major principles and values of government embodied in the U.S. Constitution. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The average score on the multiple choice questions for all sections was 77.8% (out of 100 possible points). Of the 216 students in the sample, 74.1% scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for outcome #2 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Overall, students did well identifying the origins and principles of the U.S. Constitution.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Although the standard of success was met for Outcome #2, some students struggled when it came to applying what they learned about the principles of the Constitution to contemporary issues. Instructors will spend more time teaching students how to apply what they've learned beyond descriptions and definitions. Also, when comparing exam results, the on-campus students assessed did considerably better than the DL students. The average multiple choice exam score for on-campus sections was 80.9% (out of 100 possible points) and 74.9% (out of 100 possible points) for DL sections. Instructors will need to spend more time on overall concepts and test-taking skills for DL students.

Outcome 3: Identify the basic institutions of American government and their powers and purposes in the American political system

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2017
 - Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections including all teaching modalities.
 - Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty will score and analyze the data

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
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3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

A total of 12 sections of PLS 112 ran for the Winter 2017 term -- 7 sections as on-campus and 5 sections as DL. Assessment data is based on a random sample of one-half of the seven on-campus sections (4 sections sampled) and all five of the DL sections for a total of 9 out of the 12 total sections. All students in the 9 selected sections were assessed. Also, at the point in the semester when Outcome 3 was assessed, almost 20 students had stopped attending/participating.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

The 4 randomly selected on-campus sections were day sections because no on-campus evening sections were offered Winter 2017. The DL sections included three 15-week sections and two 12-week sections.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #3 was assessed using a multiple choice exam focusing the basic institutions of government and their powers and purposes. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The average score on the multiple choice questions for all sections was 81.1% (out of 100 possible points). Of the 197 students in the sample, 83% scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for outcome #3 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Overall, students did well on questions where they were asked to identify the constitutional powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Although the standard of success was met for Outcome #3, students had the most difficulty with questions requiring them to identify how the powers and responsibilities of each branch of government have evolved over time. Instructors will spend more time explaining these concepts to students. As was true for the first two outcomes, on-campus students performed better than the DL students. The average multiple choice exam score for on-campus sections was 84.7% (out of 100 possible points) with a 90% success rate compared to an average score of 77.6% (out of 100 possible points) and a success rate of 76% for DL sections. Instructors will need to spend more time on overall concepts and test-taking skills for DL students.

Outcome 4: Define civil liberties and civil rights and identify important cases where the Courts have applied and expanded civil liberties and civil rights

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2017
 - Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections including all teaching modalities.
 - Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty will score and analyze the data

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
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306

200

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

A total of 12 sections of PLS 112 ran for the Winter 2017 term -- 7 sections as on-campus and 5 sections as DL. Assessment data is based on a random sample of one-half of the seven on-campus sections (4 sections sampled) and all five of the DL sections for a total of 9 out of the 12 total sections. All students in the 9 selected sections were assessed. Also, at the point in the semester when Outcome 4 was assessed, almost 20 students had stopped attending/participating.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

The 4 randomly selected on-campus sections were day sections because no on-campus evening sections were offered Winter 2017. The DL sections included three 15-week sections and two 12-week sections.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #4 was assessed using a two part exam. Part One consisted of matching questions where students were asked to match significant Supreme Court cases with their findings. Part Two was an essay question asking students to analyze how the Courts have over time expanded civil liberties protections. Part One of the exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key, and Part Two essays were scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The average score on the Part One matching questions for all sections was 95.7% (14.35 points/15 possible points). Of the 200 students in the sample, 100% scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for identifying court cases for outcome #4 was achieved. The average score on the civil liberties essay question for all sections was 84.5% (21.1/25 possible points). Of the 200 students in the sample, 86.5% scored 70% or

higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for explaining the expansion of civil liberties for Outcome #4 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students did quite well when asked to identify key court cases and their findings. They also for the most part did a good job explaining how the Courts have used constitutional principles to expand civil liberties protections. Students in both on-campus and DL sections did comparably well on Outcome #4.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Although the standard of success was met for Outcome #4, some students demonstrated confusion when it came to distinguishing the difference between civil liberties and civil rights. Instructors will need to spend more time focusing on the difference between civil liberties and civil rights and the relevant cases.

Outcome 5: Identify the role of public opinion, the media, interest groups, political parties, and elections in the U.S. political system

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2017
 - Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections including all teaching modalities.
 - Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty will score and analyze the data

- 1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2017	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
306	192

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

A total of 12 sections of PLS 112 ran for the Winter 2017 term -- 7 sections as on-campus and 5 sections as DL. Assessment data is based on a random sample of one-half of the seven on-campus sections (4 sections sampled) and all five of the DL sections for a total of 9 out of the 12 total sections. All students in the 9 selected sections were assessed. Also, at the point in the semester when Outcome 5 was assessed, approximately 20 students had stopped attending/participating.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All on-campus sections selected were day sections because no on-campus evening sections were held. The DL sections included three 15-week sections and two 12-week sections.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #5 was assessed using a multiple choice exam focusing on how public opinion, the media, interest groups, political parties, and elections are used by citizens to influence and control the U.S. political system. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: <u>Yes</u>
The average score on the multiple choice questions for all sections was 84.4% (out of 100 possible points). Of the 192 students in the sample, 90.6% scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of

students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for outcome #5 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students in both on-campus and DL sections did well on questions relating to the influence of the media, public opinion, and elections on the U.S political system.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Students had the most difficulty with questions asking them to identify which political party was associated with specific issue positions and why the U.S. tends toward a two party system. Instructors will need to spend more time explaining why the United States is a two party system and the ideological and issue differences between the two major parties.

II. Course Summary and Action Plans Based on Assessment Results

1. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

The assessment data indicates PLS 112 is meeting the needs of students since all standards of success for each outcome were met. Students who pass PLS 112 are generally prepared to go on to upper-level courses in Political Science.

The assessment process did quantify concerns that the on-campus and DL experience do differ slightly for PLS 112. In general, students assessed in the randomly selected on-campus sections did somewhat better than students in the DL sections. In addition, when comparing the 15-week and late-starting 12-week DL sections, students who were in the regular 15-week version of PLS 112 did somewhat better overall than students in the late-starting 12-week version of PLS 112.

2. Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

Assessment data and information, including any action plans, will be shared with all full-time, part-time, and adjunct political science faculty at department meetings and via email.

3.

Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
No changes intended.			

4. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

5.

III. Attached Files

[Outcome 2 Data W17](#)

[Outcome 3 Data W17](#)

[Outcome 5 Data W17](#)

[Outcome 4 Data W17](#)

[Outcome 1 Data W17](#)

Faculty/Preparer: Donna Wasserman **Date:** 08/14/2017
Department Chair: Gregg Heidebrink **Date:** 08/28/2017
Dean: Kristin Good **Date:** 08/29/2017
Assessment Committee Chair: Michelle Garey **Date:** 11/28/2017