As part of the annual program assessment exercise mandated by the University, the Department of Political Science conducts assessment in three courses from one subfield per academic year.

The course you are teaching has been selected for assessment in the 2017-2018 academic year.

This guide aims to assist you with the annual assessment process. If you need additional help, please contact the department’s assessment coordinator, Jessica Valsi (.1), or Teresa Johnson (.674) at UCAT to schedule an individual consultation. Additionally, further assessment information is available in your copy of the “Nuts and Bolts of Teaching” handout.

There are three steps in assessment:

- Syllabus Construction (specifying Goals and Objectives)
- In-Class Measurement
- Post-Semester Reporting

I. Syllabus Construction

The first step in assessing your course is to include all relevant Goals and Objectives in your syllabus. As you know, it is also required to send your completed syllabus to Jessica Valsi (.1) at the beginning of each semester.

a. Goals - Goals should address the question: How will students think differently after the course?
   i. Program Goals. Upper division courses fulfill two program goals:
      1. Gain in-depth knowledge of the scholarly literature in a field or thematic specialization.
      2. Develop analytic and critical thinking skills that will enable them to evaluate competing arguments and to appraise value-based claims.
   ii. Course Specific Goals. We recommend identifying no more than two course specific goals.
   iii. General Education (GE) Goals. Your course may fulfill a GE requirement and if so then these goals must be included on your syllabus. If you are not sure, contact the assessment coordinator, the Coordinating Advisor, Charles Smith (.3280).

b. Objectives. These are outward demonstrations of the acquisition of skills and knowledge, designed to align with specific goals.
   i. For each Goal, identify 2-4 objectives.
“Students will be able to…” is a helpful starting point for formulating your course objectives. For example:

“Students will be able to differentiate among theories of Y; apply concepts to contemporary policy debates; analyze and evaluate strategies of Z, orally and in writing…”

ii. Objectives should be clearly aligned with your Course Goals.

Example (from PSC 4164).

Goal: Students gain deeper knowledge of the scholarly literature, including debates about theories, research methods, and substantive issues, in one of the areas of specialization.

Related Objective: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the scholarly understanding of key determinants of political participation and partisanship in American politics
- Explain scholarly understanding of the key barriers to political participation in American politics

II. Measurement

To measure student achievement of the Course Objectives, we recommend embedded testing and/or rubric grading (if you assign essays.) Our Department has identified a score of 75% or higher to demonstrate achievement of relevant knowledge objectives (critical thinking and in-depth knowledge in the subfield), and 85% or higher to demonstrate mastery of those objectives. The Department is required to report aggregate data, i.e., the percentage of your students that meet the criteria. Our target is that 50% of students will achieve these objectives.

a. Embedded Testing:

i. Identify particular questions in your quizzes, midterms, and final exams that can be readily linked to the outcomes you have identified.

ii. Record individual scores on each question, and calculate the percentage of students who attained a score of 75% or greater and of 85% or greater.

iii. The assigned reporting criteria is as follows:

- Minimum Criteria: 50% of students scored 75% or greater
- Aspirational Criteria: 50% of students scored 85% or greater

b. Rubric Grading:

i. Identify particular dimensions on the rubric that align with the outcomes you have identified.

ii. Specify a point scale, and calculate the percentage of students who attained a score of 75% or greater and of 85% or greater.

iii. The assigned reporting criteria is as follows:

- Minimum Criteria: 50% of students scored 75% or greater
- Aspirational Criteria: 50% of students scored 85% or greater
iv. **IMPT:** Rubric assessment does not entail reporting overall scores, we are not looking for a class average.

For example (adapted from PSC4127):

**GOAL:** in-depth knowledge
**OBJECTIVE:** understand the political dynamics and coalition building strategies necessary to effectual city-wide policy change
**MEASURE:** on an essay question in the final exam, students explain how contextual factors, constraints, and incentives account for the political or policy logic of Carcetti’s decisions.

### III. Reporting of Results

The Department has set a minimum standard of 50% of students in upper-division courses achieving a 75% score or greater and an aspirational standard of 50% of students in those courses achieving an 85% score or higher. When you report your results, include the percentage for each individual objective and relate it to the department standard, as shown below.

Example (adapted from 4127):

**Assessment Report**
**Course #, semester/year**
**Instructor Name**

**Instructor designation:** TT faculty, adjunct, graduate student
**Campus:** Columbus or Regional
**Mode of instruction:** on-line or classroom
**Enrollment:** # students

For each Goal (Program, Course, and GE), list the objectives, measures, and results:

**GOAL: in-depth knowledge**

**OBJECTIVE #1:** understand the political dynamics and coalition building strategies necessary to effectual city-wide policy change

**MEASURE:** on an essay question in the final exam, students explain how contextual factors, constraints, and incentives account for the political or policy logic of Carcetti’s decisions.

**REPORT:**
- 100 students were graded.
- 82 students scored 75% or greater on this essay question; 40 students scored 85% or greater
- 82% exceeds the department’s goal of 50% of students demonstrating basic knowledge.
- 40% does **not** meet the Department’s aspirational goal of 50% achieving mastery.
**Resources**

The following resources may provide useful guidance on syllabus construction and developing assessment tools. In addition, if you would like assistance with developing course outcomes and measures, we recommend reaching out to Teresa Johnson (.674) at the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching (UCAT). She is available to consult with instructors and can provide useful guidance on developing an assessment plan that will meet your needs.

University Center for the Advancement of Teaching: [http://ucat.osu.edu/bookshelf/teaching-topics-plus/assessing-your-course/](http://ucat.osu.edu/bookshelf/teaching-topics-plus/assessing-your-course/)

Resources from the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services: [https://asccas.osu.edu/assessment/resources](https://asccas.osu.edu/assessment/resources)
