As part of the annual program assessment exercise mandated by the University, the Department of Political Science conducts assessment in all pre-major courses (1000 and 2000 level courses).

This guide aims to assist you with the annual assessment process. If you need additional help, please contact the 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. Pre-major courses fulfill one Program Goal:
      1. Gain basic knowledge across the major subfields and thematic specializations of Political Science.
   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 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 describe basic concepts used to understand X; differentiate among theories of Y; apply concepts to contemporary policy debates.”
   ii. Objectives should be clearly aligned with Goals.
For example (adapted from PSC 1300):

Program Goal: Students gain basic knowledge in an area of specialization.
Objective: By the end of this course, students will be able to…
  • Describe the basic concepts associated with the three major approaches to the study of world politics.
  • Apply concepts from each of the three major approaches to contemporary policy debates.

II. Measurement

To measure student achievement of your Course Objectives, we recommend embedded testing and/or, rubric grading (if you assign essays.) Our Department is required to report aggregate data, i.e, the percentage of students that meet the minimum standard of achievement in Basic Knowledge. Our Department has identified a score of 75% or higher to demonstrate achievement of basic knowledge. Your minimum target is that 50% of your students score 75% or greater in the measurement of your course objectives, and your aspirational target is that 75% of your students score 75% or greater in your measurement of course objectives.

a. Embedded Testing:
   i. **identify particular questions** in your quizzes, midterms, and final exams that can be readily linked to the Learning Objectives you have identified.
   ii. **Record the number of students that meet the basic standard (75%)** for demonstration of basic knowledge.
   iii. **Report the percentage of students who meet this standard.**

Example of embedded testing (adapted from PSC 1300):

GOAL: basic knowledge
OBJECTIVE: describe concepts associated with each of the three major approaches, Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism.
MEASURE: on a short answer exam question, students will correctly define the security dilemma and situate it among the approaches. On a five-point scale, 3.5 or higher demonstrates achievement of basic knowledge.

b. Rubric Grading of Essays:
   i. **Compose particular** dimensions on the rubric that align with the objective(s) you have identified.
   ii. **Record the number of students who meet the basic standard (75%)** for demonstration of basic knowledge.
   iii. **Report the percentage of students who meet this standard.**
   iv. **IMPT:** Rubric assessment does not entail reporting overall scores, only the points aligned with the particular objective being measured.
Example of rubric category (adapted from PSC 1300):

GOAL: basic knowledge
OBJECTIVE: distinguish concepts associated with each of the three major approaches, Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism.
MEASURE: the essay should accurately compare two approaches along at least two dimensions. On a five-point scale, students should score 3.5 or higher to demonstrate mastery.

III. Reporting of Results. When you report your results, include the percentage for each individual objective and relate it to the department standard of 75%, as shown below.

Example:

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: basic knowledge

- OBJECTIVE #1: describe concepts associated with each of the three major approaches, Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism.
- MEASURE: on a short answer exam question, students will correctly define the security dilemma and situate it among the approaches. On a five-point scale, 3.5 or higher represents achievement of basic knowledge.
- REPORT:
  - 100 students were graded.
  - 65 students met the standard set for achievement of basic knowledge,
  - 65% exceeds the department’s minimum standard of 50% of students in course demonstrating achievement of basic knowledge.
  - 65% of students scoring 75% or greater falls short of our aspirational goal that 75% of students score 75% or greater.
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/

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

 Archived materials from the OSU Student Affairs Assessment & Research Conference: http://cssl.osu.edu/student-affairs-assessment-research-conference/saarc-archive/

Assessment in Political Science, American Political Science Association, 2009. Available to order at: http://www.apsanet.org/stateoftheprofession/BKctl/ViewDetails/SKU/APSPASS1