As part of the annual program assessment exercise mandated by the University, the Department of Political Science conducts assessment of one subfield per academic year. Within that subfield, each semester three offerings of an upper division course are chosen for reporting purposes. Your course has been selected this term.

This guide is aimed at facilitating the process of assessment. If you need additional help, please contact the assessment coordinator, Christina Murphy, or Teresa Johnson (.674) at UCAT to schedule an individual consultation.

There are three steps: Syllabus Construction (specifying Goals and Objectives); In-Class Measurement; Post-Semester Reporting.

I. **Syllabus Construction.** Include on your syllabus all relevant Goals and Objectives.

   a. **Goals.** These 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 rigorously 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, Christina Murphy (.1518) or 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 3-5 objectives. The language of “**Students will be able to...**” is a helpful starting point. 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 Goals.
For 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 determine the extent to which Objectives have been attained, we recommend embedded testing and/or, if you assign essays, rubric grading. For Program Assessment, the Department needs aggregate data, i.e., the percentage of your students that mastered the Objective. 75% or higher is the Department benchmark.

**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. **Specify a point scale for determining individual mastery.** For example, on a five-point scale, three or higher.
   iii. **Specify a percentage that represents aggregate mastery.** For example, 75% of students score 3/5 or higher.

**b. Rubric Grading:**
   i. **Identify particular** dimensions on the rubric that align with the outcomes you have identified.
   ii. **Specify a point scale for determining individual mastery**
   iii. **Specify a percentage that represents aggregate mastery**
   iv. **IMPT:** Rubric assessment does not entail reporting overall scores, only the points aligned with the particular objective being measured.

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 standard of 75% of students in any given course achieving mastery of the objectives. 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 met the standard set for mastery,
• 82% exceeds the department’s goal of 75% of students per course 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/

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/