

Course Assessment Report  
Washtenaw Community College

Discipline	Course Number	Title
Political Science	112	PLS 112 06/08/2023- Introduction to American Government
College	Division	Department
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Social Sciences
Faculty Preparer		Lauren Foley
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

**I. Review previous assessment reports submitted for this course and provide the following information.**

1. Was this course previously assessed and if so, when?

Yes

Winter 2017.

2. Briefly describe the results of previous assessment report(s).

Overall, the 2017 assessment report concluded that this course met the needs of the students. It highlighted that the students randomly selected from the on-campus sections did "somewhat better" than the students from the distance learning (DL) sections; likewise, the students from the 15-week sections did better than the students from the 12-week sections.

3. Briefly describe the Action Plan/Intended Changes from the previous report(s), when and how changes were implemented.

In the "Course Summary and Intended Changes Based on Assessment Results" section, the 2017 Assessment Report stated, "no changes intended." However, the report did recommend some smaller changes for each of the outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Instructors will spend more time teaching students how to apply what they have learned beyond descriptions and definitions.
- Outcome 2: Instructors will spend more time teaching students how to apply what they have learned beyond descriptions and definitions.

- Outcome 3: Instructors will spend more time explaining these concepts [identifying how the powers and responsibilities of each branch of government have evolved over time] to students.
- Outcome 4: Instructors will need to spend more time focusing on the difference between civil liberties and civil rights and the relevant cases.
- Outcome 5: 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. 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)
2022	2023	

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

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
479	207

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.

In the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 terms, a total of 23 sections ran at WCC.

- In the Fall 2022 term, 12 sections ran: 5 in-person, 2 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.
- In the Winter 2023 term, 11 sections ran: 5 in-person, 1 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.

10 out of the 23 sections (43.48%), or 207 of the 479 students enrolled in the course were assessed. All of the students in the 10 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.

In the assessment, I included all of the 207 students that were enrolled in the 10 selected sections. The time and modality of the selected sections varied.

- 2 (day) in-person sections
- 2 (day) virtual sections
- 1 (evening) virtual section
- 4 (15-week) DL sections
- 1 (12-week) DL section

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 exam. The DL sections took a different exam than the in-person and virtual sections. The exam for the DL sections included 50 multiple-choice questions that covered the purposes of government, political cultures and values, political ideology, types of government, and the principles of democracy, pluralism, and elitism. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key.

The exam for the in-person and virtual sections included 46 questions (38 multiple-choice, 6 short-answer, and 2 true-and-false) that covered the purposes of government, political cultures and values, political ideology, types of government, the principles of democracy, pluralism, and elitism, the founding of the United States Constitution, and the major principles and values of government embodied in the United States Constitution, including the principle of federalism. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key; the short-answer questions 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

For the DL sections, 130 out of 139 students took the exam. 80.77% (105/130) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 139 students, the average score on the exam was 55.354 out of 75 points, or 73.81%. The DL 15-week sections did better with an average score of 57.25 out of 75 points, or 76.33%; compared to the DL 12-week section with a score of 47.46 out of 75 points, or 63.68%.

For the in-person and virtual sections, 64 out of 68 students took the exam. 84.38% (54/64) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 68 students, the average score on the exam was 153.708 out of 200 points, or 78.85%. The in-person sections fared slightly better with an average score of 157.305 out of 200 points, or 78.65%, compared to the virtual sections with an average score of 151.309 out of 200 points, or 75.65%.

Total, 194 out of 207 students in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual) took the exam. 81.96% (159/194) scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher; therefore, 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.

In all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual), students performed generally well in describing and defining key concepts (e.g., social conflict, capitalism), and identifying different types of political systems (e.g., representative democracy, elitism, pluralism, autocracy, monarchy).

For the in-person and virtual sections, in particular, the students did really well in describing the advantages and disadvantages of different democratic political systems, such as a direct democracy versus a representative democracy, and providing examples to support the argument that the United States is an elitist political system, pluralism political system, etc.

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, there are areas for continuous improvement. For example, in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual), students struggled in identifying the differences between liberals,

socialists, libertarians, communitarians, and conservatives. Future instructors will want to spend more time teasing out the similarities and differences.

In addition, in the DL sections, the students did not do so well in going beyond the definitions, such as applying the elitist theory of democracy or egalitarian theory of democracy to the United States government, or inferring the advantages and disadvantages of different democratic political systems, such as a procedural democracy versus a substantive democracy. Future instructors will need to provide more examples of how these political systems play out in everyday life.

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)
2022	2023	

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

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
479	207

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.

In the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 terms, a total of 23 sections ran at WCC.

- In the Fall 2022 term, 12 sections ran: 5 in-person, 2 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.
- In the Winter 2023 term, 11 sections ran: 5 in-person, 1 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.

10 out of the 23 sections (43.48%), or 207 of the 479 students enrolled in the course were assessed. All of the students in the 10 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.

In the assessment, I included all of the 207 students that were enrolled in the 10 selected sections. The time and modality of the selected sections varied.

- 2 (day) in-person sections
- 2 (day) virtual sections
- 1 (evening) virtual section
- 4 (15-week) DL sections
- 1 (12-week) DL section

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 an exam. The DL sections took a different exam than the in-person and virtual sections. The exam for the DL sections included 57 questions (56 multiple-choice and 1 ordering) that covered the founding of the United States Constitution, and the major principles and values of government embodied in the United States Constitution, including the principle of federalism. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key.

The exam for the in-person and virtual sections included 46 questions (38 multiple-choice, 6 short-answer, and 2 true-and-false) that covered the purposes of government, political cultures and values, political ideology, types of government, the principles of democracy, pluralism, and elitism, the founding of the United States Constitution, and the major principles and values of government embodied in the United States Constitution, including the principle of federalism. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key; the short-answer questions 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

For the DL sections, 126 out of 139 students took the exam. 68.25% (86/126) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 139 students, the average score on the exam was 52.22 out of 75 points, or 69.62%. The DL 15-week sections did better with an average score of 54.84 out of 75 points, or 73.12%; compared to the DL 12-week section with a score of 44.35 out of 75 points, or 59.13%.

For the in-person and virtual sections, 64 out of 68 students took the exam. 84.38% (54/64) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 68 students, the average score on the exam was 153.708 out of 200 points, or 78.85%. The in-person sections fared slightly better with an average score of 157.305 out of 200 points, or 78.65%, compared to the virtual sections with an average score of 151.309 out of 200 points, or 75.65%.

Total, 190 out of 207 students in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual) took the exam. 73.68% (140/190) scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher; therefore, 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, in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual), the students did well in defining key concepts (e.g., expressed power, concurrent power, supremacy clause), and identifying the origins and principles of the United States Constitution (e.g., Mayflower Compact, Federalists and Anti-Federalists, principle of federalism, popular sovereignty, checks and balances).

Moreover, the students in the in-person and virtual sections did a great job explaining the key concepts beyond the definitions in the textbook, such as describing the advantages and disadvantages of the principle of federalism, especially in the twenty-first century, and teasing out the main debates at the Constitutional Convention.

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, there are areas for continuous improvement. In particular, the students in the DL sections did not do well at going beyond the definitions in the textbook and applying the principles of the United States Constitution to contemporary issues. For example, the students struggled to explain the reasons why the founding fathers wanted a federal system of government. Future instructors will need to invest more time in teaching students how to apply what they have learned beyond the definitions and descriptions.

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)
2022	2023	

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

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
479	207

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.

In the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 terms, a total of 23 sections ran at WCC.

- In the Fall 2022 term, 12 sections ran: 5 in-person, 2 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.
- In the Winter 2023 term, 11 sections ran: 5 in-person, 1 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.

10 out of the 23 sections (43.48%), or 207 of the 479 students enrolled in the course were assessed. All of the students in the 10 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.

In the assessment, I included all of the 207 students that were enrolled in the 10 selected sections. The time and modality of the selected sections varied.

- 2 (day) in-person sections
- 2 (day) virtual sections
- 1 (evening) virtual section
- 4 (15-week) DL sections
- 1 (12-week) DL section

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 an exam. The DL sections took a different exam than the in-person and virtual sections. The exam for the DL sections included 61 questions ( 60 multiple-choice and 1 matching) that covered the three branches of government: the Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch, and the Judicial Branch. The exam focused on the basic institutions of government and their powers and purposes. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key.

The exam for the in-person and virtual sections included 49 questions (38 multiple-choice, 6 short-answer, 3 fill in the blank, and 2 matching) that covered the three branches of government: the Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch, and the Judicial Branch. The exam focused on the basic institutions of government and their powers and purposes. In addition, the exam asked the students to analyze how the Courts have expanded civil liberties and civil rights protections over time, and match significant Supreme Court cases with their findings. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key; the short-answer questions 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

For the DL sections, 118 out of 139 students took the exam. 89.83% (106/118) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 139 students, the average score on the exam was 70.744 out of 100 points, or 70.74%. The DL 15-week sections did better with an average score of 74.16 out of 100 points, or 74.16%; compared to the DL 12-week section with a score of 57.08 out of 100 points, or 57.08%.

For the in-person and virtual sections, 66 out of 68 students took the exam. 96.97% (64/66) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 68 students, the average score on the exam was 168.58 out of 200 points, or 84.29%. The in-person sections fared slightly better with an average score of 179.115 out of 200 points, or 89.56%, compared to the virtual sections with an average score of 161.562 out of 200 points, or 80.78%.

Total, 184 out of 207 students in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual) took the exam. 92.39% (170/184) scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher; therefore, 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, in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual), the students did well in describing and defining key concepts (e.g., first amendment, supremacy clause), and answering questions about the constitutional powers of the Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, and Judicial Branch (e.g., the Senate has the power to give "advice and consent" for presidential appointments).

The in-person and virtual students, in particular, did considerably better in explaining the advantages and disadvantages of the basic institutions of American government, such as the pros and cons of privatizing public services, and the advantages and disadvantages of federally appointed judges (versus elected judges).

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, there are areas for continuous improvement. For instance, in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and

virtual), the students did not do as well as expected in recognizing the criteria to run for elected office: Senate, United States House of Representatives, Presidency, Supreme Court, etc. Future instructors will need to spend a little more time talking about the constitutional requirements for each of these positions.

In the DL sections, the students had difficulties with questions about how the powers and responsibilities of each branch of government has evolved over time. Future instructors will have to spend more time explaining these concepts.

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)
2022	2023	

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

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
479	207

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.

In the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 terms, a total of 23 sections ran at WCC.

- In the Fall 2022 term, 12 sections ran: 5 in-person, 2 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.
- In the Winter 2023 term, 11 sections ran: 5 in-person, 1 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.

10 out of the 23 sections (43.48%), or 207 of the 479 students enrolled in the course were assessed. All of the students in the 10 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.

In the assessment, I included all of the 207 students that were enrolled in the 10 selected sections. The time and modality of the selected sections varied.

- 2 (day) in-person sections
- 2 (day) virtual sections
- 1 (evening) virtual section
- 4 (15-week) DL sections
- 1 (12-week) DL section

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 an exam. The DL sections took a different exam than the in-person and virtual sections. The exam for the DL sections included 29 questions (1 matching and 28 multiple-choice) that asked the students to analyze how the Courts have expanded civil liberties and civil rights protections over time, and match significant Supreme Court cases with their findings. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key.

The exam for the in-person and virtual sections included 49 questions (38 multiple-choice, 6 short-answer, 3 fill in the blank, and 2 matching) that covered the three branches of government: the Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch, and the Judicial Branch. The exam focused on the basic institutions of government and their powers and purposes. In addition, the exam asked the students to analyze how the Courts have expanded civil liberties and civil rights protections over time, and match significant Supreme Court cases with their findings. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key; the short-answer questions 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

For the DL sections, 118 out of 139 students took the exam. 94.07% (111/118) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 139 students, the average score on the exam was 35.6032 out of 50 points, or 71.21%. The DL 15-week sections did better with an average score of 36.892 out of 50 points, or 73.658%; compared to the DL 12-week section with a score of 30.7 out of 50 points, or 61.4%.

For the in-person and virtual sections, 66 out of 68 students took the exam. 96.97% (64/66) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 68 students, the average score on the exam was 168.58 out of 200 points, or 84.29%. The in-person sections fared slightly better with an average score of 179.115 out of 200 points, or 89.56%, compared to the virtual sections with an average score of 161.562 out of 200 points, or 80.78%.

Total, 184 out of 207 students in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual) took the exam. 95.11% (175/184) scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher; therefore, the standard of success 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.

Overall, in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual), the students performed well in defining and describing civil liberties and civil rights, and explaining how the Federal Courts, especially the Supreme Court, have used constitutional principles to expand civil liberties and civil rights protections (e.g., Marbury versus Madison, Civil Rights Act). In addition, the students did a great job in teasing out the struggle to secure and protect the civil rights of the various groups that have been (or continue to be) discriminated against.

In the in-person and virtual sections, the students did very well in matching the Supreme Court case with its relevant ruling.

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, there are areas for continuous improvement. For instance, in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual), some of the students struggled in describing the different approaches to

legal interpretations (e.g., originalists, modernists) and other students demonstrated difficulty in distinguishing the three standards that the Supreme Court uses to determine whether the Equal Protection Clause has been violated (e.g., strict scrutiny, intermediate scrutiny, and ordinary scrutiny). Future instructors will need to spend more time covering these concepts, and the relevant cases.

In the DL sections, the students did less well in matching the Supreme Court case with its relevant ruling. Future instructors will have to invest more time in helping the students grasp these 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)
2022	2023	

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

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
479	207

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.

In the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 terms, a total of 23 sections ran at WCC.

- In the Fall 2022 term, 12 sections ran: 5 in-person, 2 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.
- In the Winter 2023 term, 11 sections ran: 5 in-person, 1 virtual, 3 (15-week) DL, and 2 (12-week) DL.

10 out of the 23 sections (43.48%), or 207 of the 479 students enrolled in the course were assessed. All of the students in the 10 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.

In the assessment, I included all of the 207 students that were enrolled in the 10 selected sections. The time and modality of the selected sections varied.

- 2 (day) in-person sections
- 2 (day) virtual sections
- 1 (evening) virtual section
- 4 (15-week) DL sections
- 1 (12-week) DL section

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 an exam. The DL sections took a different exam than the in-person and virtual sections. The exam for the DL sections included 61 questions (56 multiple-choice, 4 true-and-false, and 1 matching) that covered how political socialization, public opinion, the media, interest groups, political parties, and elections are used by citizens to influence and control the American political system. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key.

The exam for the in-person and virtual sections included 48 questions (36 multiple-choice, 6 true-and-false, and 6 short-answer) that covered how political socialization, public opinion, the media, interest groups, political parties, and elections are used by citizens to influence and control the American political

system. The exam was scored using a departmentally-generated answer key; the short-answer questions 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

For the DL sections, 107 out of 139 students took the exam. 79.43% (85/107) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 139 students, the average score on the exam was 61.09 out of 100 points, or 61.09%. The DL 15-week sections did better with an average score of 63.794 out of 100 points, or 63.79%; compared to the DL 12-week section with a score of 50.28 out of 100 points, or 50.28%.

For the in-person and virtual sections, 64 out of 68 students took the exam. 93.75% (60/64) scored 70% or higher. Out of all 68 students, the average score on the exam was 160.43 out of 200 points, or 80.215%. The in-person and virtual sections were almost exactly the same. The in-person sections had an average score of 160.6975 out of 200 points, or 80.35%, compared to the virtual sections that had an average score of 160.24 out of 200 points, or 80.12%.

Total, 171 out of 207 students in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual) took the exam. 84.80% (145/171) scored 70% or higher. The standard of success is that 70% of students will score 70% or higher; therefore, 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.

Overall, in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual), the students did well in answering questions about key concepts (e.g., political party, purposive incentive, agenda setting, free rider problem, political action committees, dealignment, push polls).

The students in the in-person and virtual sections did a great job applying the concepts to contemporary debates, such as reasons why the two major parties are so ideologically polarized, what is the role of media in a democracy, and why younger people might be much less likely to vote than older people.

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 #5, there are areas for continuous improvement. For example, some of the students in the DL sections

did not do well in distinguishing the functions of a political party versus the functions of an interest group or the government. Future instructors will have to spend more time making that distinction clear.

In addition, the students in the DL sections struggled to apply the concepts in the textbook to situations in real life, such as the criticism of interest groups, or reasons why third parties are at a disadvantage in American politics. Future instructors will need to invest more time in teaching students how to apply what they have learned beyond the definitions and descriptions.

### III. Course Summary and Intended Changes Based on Assessment Results

1. Based on the previous report's Intended Change(s) identified in Section I above, please discuss how effective the changes were in improving student learning.

The 2017 assessment report did not recommend any changes.

Therefore, it is no surprise that the results were similar, including the average score on the exams and the percentage of students who scored 70% or higher. In addition, the two reports showed similar disparities between the in-person and virtual sections and the DL sections. In both assessments, the students who participate in the in-person and virtual sections did much better than the students in the DL sections; likewise, the students in the DL 15-week sections did considerably better than the students in the DL 12-week sections.

2. 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 indicated that this course is meeting the needs of students in all of the sections (DL, in-person, and virtual), since the standards of success for each outcome were met. In general, students who pass the course are prepared to go on to upper-level courses in Political Science. However, improvements can be made in the DL sections since the exam results were consistently lower than their in-person counterparts.

The assessment process revealed that the students who participate in the in-person and virtual sections did much better than the students in the DL sections; likewise, the students in the 15-week DL sections did considerably better than the students in the 12-week DL sections.

3. 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.

4.

Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
Assessment Tool	<p>Change the assessment tool from five exams to three exams. Add, delete, or reword the exam questions. This change will be made across all delivery methods (DL, face-to-face, etc), making the assessed exams consistent in all assessed sections. Also, extra credit points will be removed from future assessments, and the students who did not complete a given exam will be removed from the assessment data for that exam.</p>	<p>Currently, in the DL sections, the students take one exam for each of the outcomes, or five exams in total. That means, the students are taking an exam almost every 3 weeks (even less for the DL 12-week sessions). This is in addition to the Discussion Boards, homework assignments, readings, video lectures etc.</p> <p>Meanwhile, in the in-person and virtual sections of "PLS-112: Introduction to American Government," the students take three exams in total. The first exam covers Outcome #1 and #2, the second exam covers Outcome #3 and #4, and the third exam covers #5. This is in addition to the homework assignments, research projects, readings, lectures etc.</p> <p>The assessment data shows that the students in the in-person and virtual sections did much better than the students in the</p>	2023

		<p>DL sections. One potential explanation is that the students had more time to prepare and ask questions in between exams. The students in the in-person and virtual sections did not have to study every other week for an exam. Another explanation is that the exam questions for the in-person and virtual sections varied from the exam questions in the DL sections. In particular, the exam questions for the in-person and virtual sections were more straightforward and asked the students to critically think about contemporary political debates.</p> <p>There are related changes to the exams covered in the other "Intended Change" sections. For example, in the in-person and virtual sections, the exams are worth 60% of the total grade; meanwhile, in the DL sections, the exams are worth 80% of the total grade. That means that the students in the DL sections have more pressure to do well, and if the students do not do well in the first exams, then there is no incentive to improve.</p> <p>Therefore, the assessment tool should be changed</p>	
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		from five exams to three exams, and the exam questions should be revised.	
Course Assignments	Add, delete, or update the homework assignments and Discussion Boards.	<p>Some of the homework assignments and Discussion Boards should be exchanged or updated in order to strengthen the student achievement in the learning outcomes.</p> <p>At the moment, some of the homework assignments and Discussion Boards in the DL sections are not sustainable, especially when considering the longevity of the course material. For example, two of the Discussion Board questions asks about the COVID-19 pandemic: one in relation to American values and the other in regard to the principle of federalism. The former should be replaced with a question that asks the students to define the political culture in America. This question is much more sustainable and permits for a wide range of answers, and hopefully, sparks an enriching discourse. The latter should be replaced with an assignment that requires the students to pick a current issue in which the national government and state/local government</p>	2023

	<p>have conflict. This assignment gives the students an opportunity to apply what they have learned about the principle of federalism beyond the definition in the textbook.</p> <p>Likewise, there are no homework assignments and Discussion Boards that cover the key concepts of elitism, pluralism, etc. A Discussion Board should be added that asks the students for examples to support the argument that the United States is an elitist political system and examples to support the argument that the United States is a pluralist political system, and to consider the advantages and disadvantages of these types of democracies. This Discussion Board encourages the students to think about how these political systems play out in everyday life.</p> <p>Moreover, there are no homework assignments and Discussion Boards that cover the key concepts of civil liberties and civil rights. A homework assignment should be introduced to have the students review the wide range of civil liberties,</p>	
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		and make an argument for which one they believe is the most important and why. This assignment allows the students to apply the key concepts beyond the descriptions and definitions in the textbook, and consider how American civil liberties are interrelated.	
Course Materials (e.g. textbooks, handouts, on-line ancillaries)	Incorporate online learning activities. Update video lectures.	<p>Online learning activities should be incorporated in the DL sections in order to ensure that the content is being retained and address the areas identified for "continuous improvement." Currently, the DL sections do not have any learning activities. The importance of learning activities cannot be understated. Learning activities give students the opportunity to make decisions, solve problems, and test what has been taught (and, hopefully, learned) in new settings.</p> <p>Based on the assessment data, the following learning activities should be introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A learning activity that allows the students to better identify the similarities and differences between liberals, socialists,</li> </ul>	2023

		<p>libertarians, communitarians, and conservatives. For example, a political typology quiz.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A learning activity that helps the students to gain a better understanding of the redistricting process, as well as the potential ramifications of gerrymandering. For instance, a game to put the State of Michigan back together.</li><li>○ A learning activity that enables the students to distinguish the powers and responsibilities of each branch of government. For example, a game where the students have to select which branch (or branches) of government is responsible in random situations.</li><li>○ A learning activity that helps students remember Supreme Court cases. For instance, a game matching Supreme</li></ul>	
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		<p>Court cases with relevant rulings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A learning activity that permits students to recognize the constitutional requirements to run for elected office. For example, a game to determine whether or not someone is eligible for the Senate, United States House of Representatives, Presidency, Supreme Court, etc.</li> <li>○ A learning activity that allows the students to review how the media is used by citizens to influence and control the American political system. For instance, a game to spot a fake news story.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the video lectures should be re-recorded. At the moment, the video lectures in the DL sections are outdated, dating back to 2005 and 2006 (with George W. Bush as President). There are 19 video lectures; the shortest video lecture is</p>	
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		<p>21:33 minutes and the longest is 66:29 minutes. The average length of a video lecture is 43:61 minutes. This is too long to hold the attention of the students. Most students do not watch the video lectures and, as a result, do not receive important information. Therefore, the videos should be re-recorded into shorter videos between 5-20 minutes each.</p>	
Other: Syllabus	Edit the syllabus.	<p>The "Methods of Evaluation" section of the syllabus in the DL sections should be revised.</p> <p>At the moment, in the DL sections, the students are evaluated based on five homework assignments (10% of total grade), five Discussion Boards (10% of total grade), and five exams (80% of total grade). That means a majority of the weight is on the exams. If the students do not do well on the first and second exams, then there is no incentive to improve. There is a good chance that those students will not pass the course. In the DL sections, fewer students scored 70% or higher. The students in the DL sections did not</p>	2023

		<p>have an incentive to do well.</p> <p>Meanwhile, in the in-person and virtual sections, the students are evaluated based on attendance and participation (10% of total grade), two research projects (10% of total grade), ten assignments (20% of total grade), and three exams (60% of total grade). The weight is more distributed. If the students do not do well on one exam, it is not an automatic fail. The students have more opportunities align the coursework with their learning style.</p> <p>In addition, the "Course Requirements and Class Policies" section of the syllabus in the DL sections should be revised.</p> <p>Currently, in the DL sections, absolutely no late homework assignments or Discussion Board posts are accepted. This policy – in conjunction with the exams being worth 80% of the total grade – allows very little room for error from the students. Comparatively, in the in-person and virtual sections, late homework assignments and</p>	
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		<p>Discussion Board posts are penalized a percentage grade for each day they are late (counting weekend days). For example, if the assignment is due on a Sunday, and the student turns it in on a Monday, then that student cannot get a score higher than 18 of the 20 points (A-). Any exceptions to this policy must be negotiated prior to the due date.</p> <p>The policy should be changed that the students will be penalized for late homework assignments and Discussion Board posts, but will still receive some points (if the task is turned in within an appropriate amount of time). Some points are better than no points. The students should be encouraged to keep trying.</p>	
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5. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

In the Winter 2023 term, I worked with CiTL and revised the "PLS-112: Introduction to American Government" Blackboard Mastershell. I incorporated the changes listed in the "Action Plans" section of the 2023 Assessment Report, including, but not limited to, developing learning activities, revising the exam questions, and editing the syllabus.

**III. Attached Files**

- [PLS-112 DL Sections - Exams 1-5 - Rubrics](#)
- [PLS-112 In-Person and Virtual Sections - Exams 1-3](#)

[PLS-112 DL Sections - Statistics](#)

[PLS-112 In-Person and Virtual Sections - Statistic](#)

<b>Faculty/Preparer:</b>	Lauren Foley	<b>Date:</b> 06/28/2023
<b>Department Chair:</b>	Christopher Barrett	<b>Date:</b> 06/30/2023
<b>Dean:</b>	Scott Britten	<b>Date:</b> 06/30/2023
<b>Assessment Committee Chair:</b>	Jessica Hale	<b>Date:</b> 12/07/2023

**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
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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 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.
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### 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