

FEB 17 2005

**MA in Political Science
Assessment of Student Learning Plan
Kansas State University**

received

Check the box if your program's student learning outcomes have been modified since November 2003. If so, please email (apr@ksu.edu) or attach a hard copy to this document.

A. College, Department, and Date

College: *Arts and Sciences*
 Department: *Political Science*
 Date: *October 11, 2004*

B. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plans

Joe Aistrup, Department Head, Political Science
Laurie Bagby, Interim Director, M.A., Chair M.A. Committee

C. Degree Program

Master of Arts, Political Science

D. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. *Understand a diversity of approaches, models, paradigms, theories, and intellectual traditions within political science*
2. *Know how to use scholarly research and perspectives to analyze politics.*

Relationship to K-State Student Learning Outcomes (insert the program SLOs and check all that apply):

Program SLOs	University-wide SLOs (Undergraduate Programs)					Program SLO is conceptually different from university SLOs
	Knowledge	Critical Thinking	Communication	Diversity	Academic / Professional Integrity	
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

Program SLOs	University-wide SLOs (Graduate Programs)			Program SLO is conceptually different from university SLOs
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes and Professional Conduct	
1.	X	X		
2.	X	X	X	
3.				
4.				
5.				

1. How will the learning outcomes be assessed? What groups will be included in the assessment?

1. *Understand a diversity of approaches, models, paradigms, theories, and intellectual traditions within political science.*

This learning outcome will be assessed through the written comprehensive examination that occurs in each student’s final semester in the M.A. program. This examination covers the student’s major field and his or her understanding of all four subfields of political science: American Government, Political Thought, International Relations and Comparative Politics. We will collect these exams and an assessment form, indicating whether the students pass with distinction, pass, or fail.

This is a *direct* assessment.

2. *Know how to use scholarly research and perspectives to analyze politics.*

Students in the M.A. program must complete one of three research options: thesis, report or four seminar papers. In each case, students must submit their research at the end of their program of study to demonstrate their competence in scholarly research. We will collect these research products and the evaluation of the supervising professor on the quality of this research (excellent, passing) as indicated on an assessment form.

The part of this learning outcome having to do with “using scholarly perspectives to analyze politics” also will be assessed through examination of theses, reports and papers in the manner detailed in the previous paragraph. It will also be assessed through the written comprehensive examination in the same way as outlined in outcome one above.

These are methods of *direct* assessment.

2. When will these outcomes be assessed? When and in what format will the results of the assessment be discussed?

Three-Year Plan:

Year One: An assessment form will be used by all faculty supervising students' M.A. committees, to be attached to each student's completed comprehensive examination. It will indicate whether the student passed with distinction, passed or failed this examination. The form will allow space for additional comments from the major professor and any of the other committee members so that all are encouraged to give feedback on student performance. These forms will be placed in the students' files along with their examinations. This form will also include space for rating the graduating student's research component and any additional comments about research quality. These forms will provide the most important data for the committee to assess student achievement.

Year Two: We will continue to collect the assessment forms described above, monitoring the efficiency of the process and the usefulness of the assessment forms for the faculty.

Year Three: In the Spring of the third year the M.A. Committee will meet, review the forms and a sampling of student examinations and research (including samples of poor or failing examinations, and examinations and research that are passing, or excellent). The Committee will summarize the results of its review and bring its findings and initial recommendations for improvement to the full faculty, and then finalize its recommendations in light of the faculty's suggestions.

We will continue the assessment process detailed above and will begin the process of any changes or necessary improvements in our approaches to teaching, examinations or research. This assessment process will continue with the M.A. Committee doing its review every three years.

3. What is the unit's process for using assessment results to improve student learning?

Learning Outcomes	Improvement Plan
Understand a diversity of approaches, models, paradigms, theories, and intellectual traditions within political science.	Student exams and assessment forms will be collected for a three year period, and then evaluated by the M.A. committee. If any problems or weaknesses are discovered, the committee will make recommendations to the full faculty, which will make final decisions on how to correct them. At each new assessment, we will compare the current results to the baseline as well as the most recent assessment to track progress and continue to recommend any improvements that may be necessary.
Know how to use scholarly research and perspectives to analyze politics.	Every third year, the M.A. committee will meet to review the research submitted by our recent graduates and on that basis will present recommendations to the full faculty, which will make final decisions on whether and how to make any changes in our courses and in supervision of research projects to improve student performance in the research component. The part of this learning outcome having to do with using scholarly perspectives to analyze politics will also be assessed through the written comprehensive examination in the same way as outlined above.