# Assessment Overview

## Discipline/Program Name ___________ POS_________  
**Assessment Year ___2010-11___________**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Outcome Type</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Strength of Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will be able to identify and explain the basic principles of American democracy.</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Pre-Post Test</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Improvement</td>
<td>Significant Improvement p &lt; .01</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will be able to identify and explain the structure, powers and functions of the major institutions (Congress, the Executive and judicial branches).</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Pre-Post Test</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Improvement</td>
<td>Significant Improvement p &lt; .01</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will demonstrate increased ability in critical thinking</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Pre-Post Test</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Improvement</td>
<td>Significant Improvement p &lt; .01</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students will demonstrate increased respect for diversity and global awareness</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Pre-Post Test</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Improvement</td>
<td>Significant Improvement p &lt; .01</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe the Learning Outcome That You Have Measured

| Recommendation: Complete this Assessment Overview Table after you have completed your Assessment Summary in the following template.
Program / Discipline Assessment Report

Program/Discipline: Political Science
Responsibility: John Ratliff, PhD

Program/Discipline's Mission Statement:
It is the mission of Political Science to provide students with a broad-based introduction to the concepts of the discipline in a learning centered environment. Political Science is committed to promoting critical-thinking skills, writing skills, and preparing students for successful transfer to a four-year college. Political Science is also committed to continuous assessment of classes offered.

Program/Discipline's Assessment History:
By using the assessment process as an evaluative technique, how has it previously affected your program's curricula and/or teaching strategies?
The Assessment Project in political science has increased awareness of the POS curriculum in general and has emphasized the instruction of the basic principles of American democracy, the structure, powers and functions of the major institutions (Congress, the Executive and judicial branches), critical thinking and respect for diversity and global awareness in particular. The feedback from previous years' assessment data has affected discipline-wide teaching strategies in both online and face-to-face classes. Past assessment analyses have contributed to curriculum decisions, textbook adoptions, adjunct hiring, and the selection of classroom materials and media.

By using the assessment process as an evaluative technique, what changes to student learning have been noted?
In general the use of a course pretest has been valuable in identifying student knowledge deficiencies at the beginning of the course. As a result, significant growth in learning is identified on almost every learning outcome.

What unintended consequences, if any, have occurred because of the assessment process?
Not applicable.

Who receives information about your department's assessment and why? (Please note if you plan on altering either of these items for the coming year.)
The annual assessment report is submitted to the Assessment Committee and is available for departmental colleagues and Chair to review. The assessment will be available to all adjuncts, as well as to Don Walker, Department Chair.

Part 1: Previous Academic Year Assessment Summary
Previous Academic Year: Academic year 2010-11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #: 1</th>
<th>Outcome Title: “Students will be able to identify and explain the basic principles of American democracy.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome Type (choose by bolding): Program</td>
<td>Outcome Description: In terms of the basic goals of Political Science, this outcome is one of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Benchmark for success

1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?

For the objective tests of student performance, SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and post-test means for each intended learning outcome. The present study employed a repeated-measures design, and a statistically significant improvement ($p < .05$) in student performance across the pre and post-tests for each learning outcome was predicted. This result would confirm that the students’ comprehension of Sociology concepts improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.

### Description of assessment process:

1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?
2) How do these methods show students are learning?
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?
4) How many students made up the sample size?

1. The Assessment Plan called for the analysis of this learning outcome with only one distinct method, the objective measurement of student performance based on a pre and post test of student learning. This year assessment data was collected from students in POS 111 (American Democracy).
2. A significant improvement in student performance across the pre and post-test would confirm that the students’ comprehension of concepts related to the scientific method improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.
3. This was the third year this measure was used. For the foreseeable future, this outcome will be measured in what amounts to an efficient research cycle, with data collected in the spring and analyzed in the fall.
4. 67 students from POS 111 completed both the pre- and post-test.

### Results

What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 67 SOC students. For Outcome A, the mean score of the post-test ($M = 3.61$) was significantly greater than the mean score of the pre-test ($M = 2.42$). $F(1,66) = 40.81$, $p < .01$. The Outcome 1 assessment revealed a significant improvement in student learning across the semester, and suggests that instruction contributed to improved performance in Outcome 1 learning.
What did the department learn?
1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

1) A statistically significant improvement in identifying the basic principles of democracy was observed this year on the objective assessment, with significant improvement in demonstrated ability in this area across the semester.
2) This is a significant improvement over last year.
3) The objective measure supported the conclusion that there was significant improvement

Student performance summary
1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

1) Objective measurements indicated strong student performance.
2) While these results are heartening, it’s important to make sure adjuncts that were not part of this survey are acquainted with the results and encouraged to address this outcome as a priority in their teaching of POS 111. Also, by continuing and expanding this approach over several years, more meaningful longitudinal data will be generated.

Outcome #: 2
Outcome Title: “Students will be able to identify and explain the structure, powers and functions of the major institutions (Congress, the Executive and judicial branches).”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Type (choose by bolding): Program</th>
<th>Outcome Description: In terms of the basic goals of Political Science, this outcome is one of the central goals in the most important course, American Democracy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmark for success</strong></td>
<td>For the objective tests of student performance, SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and post-test means for each intended learning outcome. The present study employed a repeated-measures design, and a statistically significant improvement ($p &lt; .05$) in student performance across the pre and post-tests for each learning outcome was predicted. This result would confirm that the students’ comprehension of Sociology concepts improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Description of assessment process:**   | 1. The Assessment Plan called for the analysis of this learning outcome with only one distinct method, the objective measurement of student performance based on a pre and post test of student learning. This year assessment data was collected from students in POS 111 (American Democracy).  
2. A significant improvement in student performance across the pre and post-test would confirm that the students' being able to identify and explain the structure, powers and functions of the major institutions improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.  
3. This was the third year this measure was used. For the foreseeable future, this outcome will be measured in what amounts to an efficient research cycle, with data collected in the spring and analyzed in the fall.  
4. 67 students from POS 111 completed both the pre- and post-test. |
| **Results**                              | SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Data from pre- and post-tests were collected and entered into SPSS, with scores included for analysis only if scores for both tests were available. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 67 students. For Outcome 2, the mean score of the post-test ($M = 3.03$) was significantly greater than the mean score of the pre-test ($M = 2.18$), $F(1, 66) = 42.96, p < .01$. |
**What did the department learn?**

1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) A statistically significant improvement in being able to identify and explain the structure, powers and functions of the major institutions was observed this year on the objective assessment, with significant improvement in demonstrated ability in this area across the semester.
2) In line with results from previous years for this measure.
3) The objective measures supported the conclusion that there was significant improvement.

**Student performance summary**

1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

1) Measurements indicated strong student performance in increased ability in this area.
2) This outcome will continue to be measured, with ongoing refinement of the instrument.

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**Outcome #: 3**

**Outcome Title**: “Students will demonstrate increased ability in critical thinking”

**Outcome Type** (choose by bolding): **General Education**

**Outcome Description**: This General Education outcome should naturally flow out of instruction in Political Science.
**Benchmark for success**

1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?

**For the objective tests of student performance, SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and post-test means for each intended learning outcome. The present study employed a repeated-measures design, and a statistically significant improvement ($p < .05$) in student performance across the pre and post-tests for each learning outcome was predicted. This result would confirm that the students’ comprehension of Sociology concepts improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.**

**Description of assessment process:**

1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?
2) How do these methods show students are learning?
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?
4) How many students made up the sample size?

**1.** The Assessment Plan called for the analysis of this learning outcome with only one distinct method, the objective measurement of student performance based on a pre and post test of student learning. This year assessment data was collected from students in POS 111 (American Democracy).

**2.** A significant improvement in student performance across the pre and post-test would confirm that the students’ ability in critical thinking improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.

**3.** This was the second year this measure was used. For the foreseeable future, this outcome will be measured in what amounts to an efficient research cycle, with data collected in the spring and analyzed in the fall.

**4.** 67 students from POS 111 completed both the pre- and post-test.

**Results**

What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

**SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Data from pre- and post-tests were collected and entered into SPSS, with scores included for analysis only if scores for both tests were available. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 67 students. For Outcome 3, the mean score of the post-test ($M = 3.52$) was significantly greater than the mean score of the pre-test ($M = 3.15$), $F(1,66) = 4.17, p < .05$**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'10-'11 Outcome 3 Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What did the department learn?
1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

4) A statistically significant improvement in demonstrating increased ability in critical thinking was observed this year on the objective assessment, with significant improvement in demonstrated ability in this area across the semester.
5) This is the third year this outcome has been measured and is was a significant improvement over last year.
6) The objective measure did supported the conclusion that there was significant improvement.

### Student performance summary
1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

4) Objective measurements indicated strong student performance.
5) This outcome will continue to be measured, with ongoing refinement of the instrument.

### Outcome #: 4

**Outcome Title:** “Students will demonstrate increased respect for diversity and global awareness.”

**Outcome Type** (choose by bolding): General Education

**Outcome Description:** This Basic Education goal fits well with the basic thrust of political science.

**Benchmark for success**
1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?

For the objective tests of student performance, SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and post-test means for each intended learning outcome. The present study employed a repeated-measures design, and a statistically significant improvement ($p < .05$) in student performance across the pre and post-tests for each learning outcome was predicted. This result would confirm that the students’ comprehension of Sociology concepts improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.

**Description of assessment process:**
1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e., pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?
2) How do these methods show students are learning?
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?
4) How many students made up the sample size?

1. The ’09-’10 Assessment Plan called for the analysis of this learning outcome with only one distinct method, the objective measurement of student performance based on a pre and post test of student learning. This year assessment data was collected from students in POS 111 (American Democracy).
2. A significant improvement in student performance across the pre and post-test would confirm that the students’ respect for diversity and global awareness improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.
3. This was the third year this measure was used. For the foreseeable future, this outcome will be measured in what amounts to an efficient research cycle, with data collected in the spring and analyzed in the fall.
4. 67 students from POS 111 completed both the pre- and post-test.

**Results**

What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Data from pre- and post-tests were collected and entered into SPSS, with scores included for analysis only if scores for both tests were available. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 67 students. For Outcome 4, the mean score of the post-test (M = 3.06) was significantly greater than the mean score of the pre-test (M = 2.48), F(1,66) = 13.84, p < .01.

**What did the department learn?**

1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

3) A statistically significant improvement in respect for diversity and global awareness was observed this year on the objective assessment, with significant improvement in demonstrated ability in this area across the semester.
4) This was in line with previous years for this measure.
6) The objective measures supported the conclusion that there was significant improvement.

**Student performance summary**

1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and

3) Measurements indicated strong student performance in increased ability in critical thinking.
4) This outcome will continue to be measured, with ongoing refinement of the instrument.
Part 2: Current Academic Year Assessment Plan

- Current Academic Year: 2011-2012

Intended Learning Outcomes (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)

1) The same 4 Learning Outcomes will be measured this year.

Assessment Method(s) (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)

As an objective test of student performance, SPSS for Windows will be used to compare pre- and post-test means for each intended learning outcome. The study will employ a repeated-measures design, and a statistically significant improvement ($p < .05$) in student performance across the pre and post-tests for each learning outcome is predicted. This result would confirm that the students’ comprehension of Political Science concepts and the General Education goals improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.

As noted above, the problematic results on Outcome 3 motivates a basic reexamination of the assessment instruments to try to get a more reliable result.

Benchmarks (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)

1. For each of the outcomes, statistically significant improvement across the pre-post tests will be the benchmark.

Have you submitted a separate budget worksheet? (Choose by bolding; for information about this worksheet, please refer to the specific budgeting e-mail sent by the committee chairperson.)

Yes   No

Please submit this report (including both last year's summary and this year's plan) in a Word document to the Program Assessment committee chairperson (Cheyne Bamford: cheyne.bamford@arapahoe.edu). If you have any questions about the process, please contact the chairperson.