Program (Major, Minor, Core): MA in Political Science  
Department: Political Science  
College/School: College of Arts and Sciences  
Person(s) Responsible for Implementing the Plan: Political Science graduate committee, Political Science assessment coordinator  
Date Submitted: November 13, 2015

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<th>Program Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Curriculum Mapping</th>
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<td><strong>What do you expect all students who complete the program to know, or be able to do?</strong></td>
<td><em>Where is the outcome learned/assessed (courses, internships, student teaching, clinical, etc.)</em>?</td>
<td><em>How do students demonstrate their performance of the program learning outcomes? How does the program measure student performance? Distinguish your direct measures from indirect measures.</em></td>
<td><em>How does the program use assessment results to recognize success and &quot;close the loop&quot; to inform additional program improvement? How/when is this data shared, and with whom?</em></td>
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| 1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of how political systems operate within the context of their chosen MA track | This will be assessed in core courses, which will vary according to the student’s chosen specialization, but will include the following courses:  
POLS 5100: Seminar in American Politics  
POLS 6700: American Political Thought  
POLS 5760: Feminist Theory  
POLS 5770: Feminist Epistemology | Exams, papers, class presentations, and public research presentations. Also, all students will take a “field exam” in their chosen specialization, which will capture knowledge of the core courses in their field of study. | Each student’s progress is reviewed every semester by the student’s adviser and the program director. This enables the program director to assess both individual progress and the overall impact of our curriculum. Areas of concern (or great celebration) will be brought to the attention of the department faculty for further consideration. |
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| POLS 5150: Gender and American Politics  
POLS 5700: History of Political Thought  
POLS 5510: Democratization  
POLS 5550: Politics of Economic Development  
POLS 5690: Theories of World Politics  
POLS 6310: Policy Process | All faculty submit reports on student learning in at least one of their graduate classes annually to the department assessment director. The assessment director analyzes, bundles, and condenses them. The department meets to discuss his report at the department August retreat. In addition, the department’s graduate committee meets at least once a semester to review student and department-wide outcomes and consider curriculum and/or advising changes. | All faculty submit reports on student learning in at least one of their graduate classes annually to the department assessment director. The assessment director analyzes, bundles, and condenses them. The department meets to discuss his report at the department August retreat. In addition, the department’s graduate committee meets at least once a semester to review student and department-wide outcomes and consider curriculum and/or advising changes. |

2. Students will evaluate, critique, and synthesize competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study.  

This will be assessed in core courses, which will vary according to the student’s chosen specialization. See list of core courses under learning outcome #1.  

Research papers and field exams. Students who choose to write an MA thesis will also demonstrate these learning outcomes.  

See above

3. Students will produce original research and seminar projects that investigate political processes in a methodologically-sound and persuasive manner and contribute to ongoing scholarly debates.  

This will be assessed in core courses, which will vary according to the student’s chosen specialization. See list of core courses under learning outcome #1. It will also be assessed amongst our students who choose to write an MA thesis.  

Research papers and presentations, particularly in our research methodology courses. Students who choose to write an MA thesis will also demonstrate these outcomes.  

See above

4. Students will present the  

This outcome will be assessed in  

Class presentations. Students also  

See above
all courses that require students to present their research in class (which is nearly all of our courses). Also, we will assess our students who choose to write an MA thesis at the oral defense of their thesis. have the opportunity to present their research at the department’s regular “brown bag” series. Students who choose to do an internship or MA thesis will also have an oral defense of their work, where this outcome can be assessed.

5. Students will analyze the values that inform political institutions, behavior, and policies. This outcome will be assessed primarily via students’ field exam and by their written work in elective courses. Students demonstrate this outcome by actively identifying the values that inform political institutions, behavior, and policies, both in their own research and in the work of others. See above

6. Students will demonstrate honest and ethical research practices. This outcome will be assessed across the entire curriculum, as honest and ethical research practices are at the core of the research endeavor. Students demonstrate this outcome by following best practices for honest and ethical research throughout their graduate career. See above

1. It is not recommended to try and assess (in depth) all of the program learning outcomes every semester. It is best practice to plan out when each outcome will be assessed and focus on 1 or 2 each semester/academic year. Describe the responsibilities, timeline, and the process for implementing this assessment plan.

The department (led by the graduate committee and director of graduate studies) will act deliberately in assessing our six learning outcomes. During AY 15 – 16, the department will assess the sixth outcome (honest and ethical research practices), then move on to assess subsequent outcomes in subsequent semesters.

2. Please explain how these assessment efforts are coordinated with Madrid (courses and/or program)?
There is no MA program in Political Science in Madrid, consequently MA assessment efforts presently exist only in St. Louis. We have a joint program in which students will study in Madrid, Budapest, and St. Louis in the works; once it is in place we will coordinate MA-level assessment with Madrid.
3. The program assessment plan should be developed and approved by all faculty in the department. In addition, the program assessment plan should be developed to include student input and external sources (e.g., national standards, advisory boards, employers, alumni, etc.). Describe the process through which your academic unit created this assessment plan. Include the following:

   a. Timeline regarding when or how often this plan will be reviewed and revised. (This could be aligned with program review.)

At the end of each semester, faculty teaching graduate courses (or courses that include graduate students) will submit an assessment report to the department’s assessment coordinator. This report will assess progress on the learning outcome being assessed that year. The assessment coordinator will compile these reports and submit an overall graduate program assessment to the director of graduate studies. The director, in consultation with the graduate committee, will report to the full faculty on assessment results and suggestions. This will coincide with annual program review in order to provide timely information to faculty in order to revise and update curriculum and assessment practices.

Each year, the department selects a different learning outcome to assess, moving across the categories of outcomes. The department tends to select outcomes to study where we start out thinking students may not be learning quite what we expect.

   b. How students were included in the process and/or how student input was gathered and incorporated into the assessment plan.

Several of our MA students were consulted during the original process of drafting learning outcomes for our graduate program. Student input will continue to be solicited in order to enhance and improve the assessment process. In particular, we want to make sure that our students understand our expectations of what they will learn and have an opportunity to express their own expectations. Going forward, we will introduce a discussion of program learning outcomes into the new student orientation meeting.

   c. What external sources were consulted in the development of this assessment plan?


   d. Assessment of the manageability of the plan in relation to departmental resources and personnel.
The department has been assessing student learning outcomes for over a decade at the undergraduate level and, at the graduate level, for as long as programs have existed. In the past, we tended to combine undergraduate and graduate assessment, so the main additional work in this plan involves greater attention to specifically MA outcomes and greater involvement of the graduate committee in the assessment process.