

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): Political Science and Public Affairs Degree or Certificate Level: MA Date (Month/Year): August 2022 In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2021-2022 In what year was the program’s assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2016 Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization?	Department: Political Science College/School: Arts and Sciences Assessment Contact: Ellen Carnaghan
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1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program’s student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

Outcome 2: Students will be able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail and identify the course(s) in which they were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

The department’s assessment of the MA learning outcome above included 8 graduate seminars taught by POLS faculty in 2021-2022 (below), as well as MA field exams that students take at the beginning of their final semester in the program.

Unless otherwise indicated, courses were offered in person in Saint Louis.

- POLS 5325 Public Sector Budgeting (S22, Cropf)
- POLS 5500 Russian Political Culture (S22, Carnaghan)
- POLS 5510 Democratization (F21, Carnaghan)
- POLS 5630 The European Union: Politics and Political Economy (S22, Blanch, *Madrid*)
- POLS 5664 International Political Economy in Times of Crisis (S22, Padilla, *Madrid*)
- POLS 5690 Theories of World Politics (F21, Fisunoglu)
- POLS 5930 Law and Religion (S22, Duncan)
- POLS 6330 Public Finance Theory (F21, Cropf)

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

Department Assessment Coordinator Ellen Carnaghan organized the assessment process—devising the Qualtrics survey, reminding faculty throughout the year of the learning outcome being assessed, and generating the Qualtrics report. Instructors for selected graduate seminars responded to the questions listed below. Each course instructor decided how to measure whether or not a student had met the learning outcome expectations. Graduate Coordinator Matthew Nanes summarized faculty responses to each question and wrote the assessment report.

Instructors responded to the questions below on a Qualtrics survey:

Q2 - This year, we agreed to examine this learning outcome: Students will be able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study. You can determine whether or not students achieved this outcome according to the goals of your class. How did your class contribute to this goal?

Q3 - Which of these instruments did you use to assess student learning for this report? (check all that apply)
One or more essays; One or more exam or test questions; A research design; Other, describe; A research paper

Q7 - Overall, what could MA students do well in regard to critiquing competing theoretical explanations and producing a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?

Q8 - Overall, what could MA students do less well in regard to critiquing competing theoretical explanations and producing a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?

Q9 - How did MA students compare to students from other departments in terms of being able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?

Q10 - What tactics were effective in enhancing students' ability to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?

Q11 - What changes do you expect to make in this class the next time you teach it, if any, in order to ensure that students will be able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?

Q12 - Do you have suggestions for changing the MA curriculum or approaches in individual courses in order to make sure that students will be able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?

In addition to the Qualtrics survey, the Department assessed MA field exam results and theses completed by graduating students. The three faculty on each exam and thesis committee assessed the results. The Graduate Coordinator summarized the results for this report.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Graduate coordinator's summary response:

- Overall, faculty assessed students positively on the targeted learning outcome. Across a wide range of substantive topics and evaluation mediums, students were proficient at identifying and recounting competing theoretical explanations and producing summaries of bodies of literature. Students could generally produce a comprehensive review of scholarly literature on a topic within their field of study (with the caveat that some students never attempted such a task because they failed to complete assignments). Faculty rated a majority of students as "Meets (but does not exceed) expectations," with nearly all remaining students rated as "Exceeds expectations."
- Students were somewhat less successful at critiquing existing literature rather than simply recounting theoretical perspectives. They were also less successful at evaluating theoretical explanations on the basis of accumulated evidence, and distinguishing those which are strongly supported by evidence from those which are not supported. Finally, some students did not excel at synthesizing and comparing between different theoretical perspectives, and identifying specific points of disagreement between perspectives.

- In some cases, students failed to complete intermediate assignments that involved writing a literature review, hampering opportunities to correct misunderstandings about what such a review should entail.
- Overall, our MA students are outstanding consumers of research in the sense that they consistently and effectively cite and summarize a relevant body of work, and place authors in conversation with one another. Where they struggle is in figuring out where to go from there, and how to generate knowledge based on their synthesis of existing work. One faculty member summarized this issue nicely, saying, “application comes easier to them than innovation.” This outcome is to be expected for students at the MA level, as innovation and knowledge production is a skill that most learn while completing a PhD. Outstanding MA students may learn to innovate effectively, and our program aspires to equip all MA students with the training and tools to do so, but the fact that most exhibit room for improvement in this regard is not surprising.
- We observed no perceptible difference in achievement of the learning outcome between St. Louis and Madrid. All St. Louis courses were taught face-to-face, so we cannot comment on differences across modality.

Student is able to:	Does not meet expectations	Meets (but does not exceed) expectations	Exceeds expectations	Outcome does not apply to this course
Identify relevant sources	STL: 1 M: 1	STL: 12 M: 2	STL: 7 M: 5	STL: 4 M: 4
Distinguish among competing theoretical explanations	STL: 1 M: 1	STL: 12 M: 5	STL: 7 M: 6	STL: 1 M: 1
Evaluate empirical evidence in support of theoretical explanations	STL: 1 M: 1	STL: 9 M: 3	STL: 10 M: 4	STL: 4 M: 4
Assess the persuasiveness of competing theoretical explanations	STL: 1 M: 1	STL: 8 M: 2	STL: 8 M: 5	STL: 3 M: 4
Identify gaps in existing scholarly literature	STL: 2 M: 1	STL: 9 M: 4	STL: 3 M: 3	STL: 5 M: 4

Responses to “Q2 - This year, we agreed to examine this learning outcome: Students will be able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study. You can determine whether or not students achieved this outcome according to the goals of your class. How did your class contribute to this goal?”

The class includes a review of all the types of theoretical explanations for when democracy arises and survives. Students critique these explanations in their midterm papers, final exams, and in an end-of semester research paper that involves testing a theoretically derived proposition with some kind of large or small N comparison.

Students read scholarly writings on culture as a way to understand politics and a variety of interpretations of Russian political culture. In their midterm paper and final exam, they critiqued competing theoretical explanations. MA students were required to include a literature review in their final research papers. (One MA student had not completed the final research paper by the end of the semester, and I evaluate her learning here based on her final exam.)

Students were asked to explore multiple theories of Constitutional interpretation and identify their adoption by actual Supreme Court justices through an interpretation of their judicial opinions in live cases.

MA students were required to do either a final exam or a research paper, which included a discussion of competing theoretical explanations. However, only the paper included a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature.

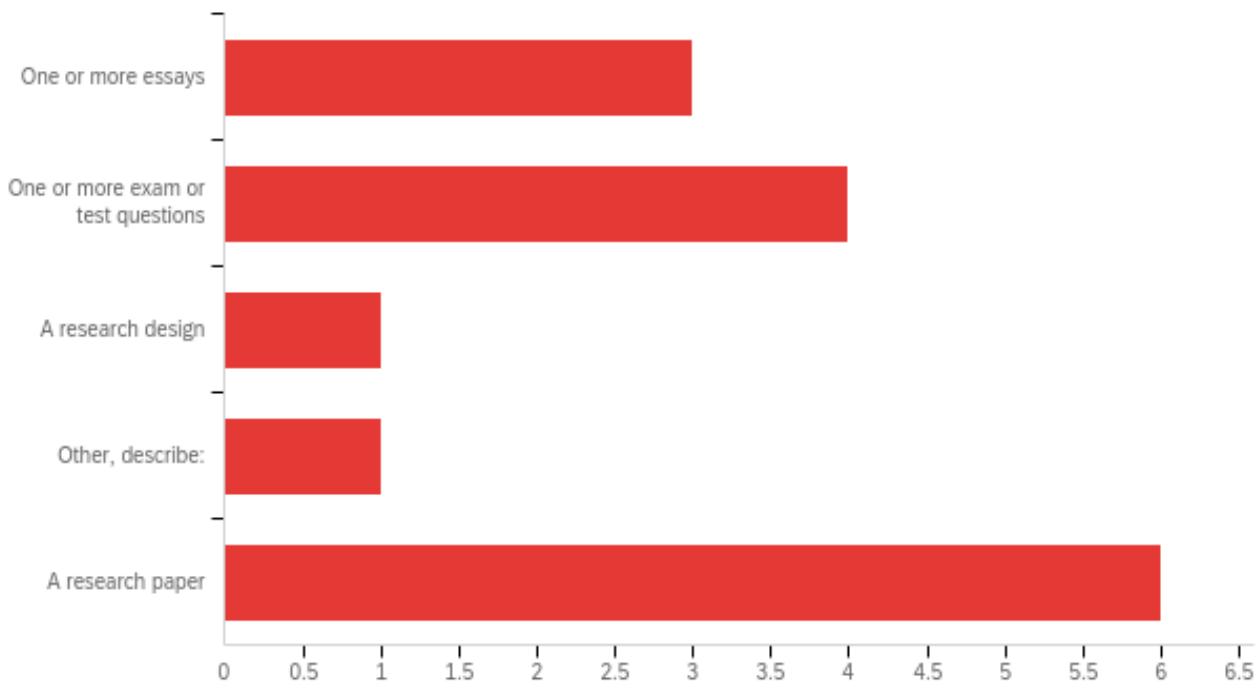
The 3 MA students submitted a budget project that included a written part and a presentation. However, 1 of them did not complete the course assignments because of illness. He is taking an incomplete in the course.

Students had to write a final paper that included a literature review. In addition, they had to arrange the same information visually for an infographic.

This course was initially taught by another professor and then midway through the semester she was unable to continue so I took over. For that reason, my responses will be somewhat affected by the fact that I did not design or implement the entire course, but only the last third of it. The MA students did in fact provide excellent scholarly reviews that were adequately or even thoroughly comprehensive in their field of study. This involved a research presentation and then a research paper, both of which achieved this goal. The research presentations were not very comprehensive, and because the other professor was leading that process, seemed somewhat weak, but by the time the papers were completed, under my further supervision, the outcome was successful.

POLS 5690 provides an overview of the major theoretical traditions and analytical approaches in International Relations. Students learn about major perspectives of IR, such as Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism, as well as more specialized approaches, such as Nuclear Deterrence and Proliferation, Democratic and Capitalist Peace, Balance of Power and Power Transition Theories, and International Trade and Globalization. The class covers seminal pieces as well as recent studies to help students understand the fundamental principles of the theories/topics covered as well as expose them to contemporary research. Students are required to lead discussions on certain topics, write critical reviews of weekly readings, and produce a final paper employing the theories we studied. Through the readings, assignments, assessments, and discussions using major theories and historical and current events, this class helps students critically evaluate different theories of international relations and assess the interrelation between politics and development.

Responses to “Q3 - Which of these instruments did you use to assess student learning for this report?”



Responses to “Q7 - Overall, what could MA students do well in regard to critiquing competing theoretical explanations and producing a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?”

Students can identify and compare theoretical explanations. They can assess how evidence supports various theoretical claims (although they sometimes continue to remember the claim even if the evidence is weak).

Students were quite proficient at critiquing competing theoretical explanations in their midterm essay, in class, and in the final exam (the last of which is included in this assessment). They could identify arguments, assess their

persuasiveness, and evaluate evidence. Actually producing a literature review named as such and involving work we may not have discussed in class was much harder for the MA students in this class.

The students were each excellent with two being particularly so. They understood the various approaches and the critiques of those approaches and could relay that information in thoughtful and critical ways both verbally and in writing.

They were able to successfully identify the different theoretical perspectives discussed in class (classical liberalism, Marxist socialism, Keynesianism, and Neo-Liberalism) and apply these constructs to examples, and provide their own examples. The student who chose to write a paper rather than do the final exam had to include a literature review on her topic, "Urban Food Deserts and the Political Economy of Nutrition".

The students were asked to prepare 3 separate budgetary scenarios using fictional budget data and to apply 2 different theoretical perspectives to justify their choices. Thus, they did not do a lit. review (the Ph.D. students did but this question does not ask about them). The MA students, however, did have to possess sufficient familiarity with the theories of Incrementalism and Mixed Scanning to pass the assignment. They were able to distinguish between the 2 separate theories and construct budget scenarios (Dire Straits, Neutral and Fat City) based on these theories.

In general, students excelled at identifying different schools of thought on their field of study, offering exhaustive reviews of the literature and summarizing their differences.

They could explain the theoretical approach, identify sources and put it into practice by giving examples. They could compare and contrast them and find the weaknesses and strengths of each.

I think all four MA students in the class achieved this outcome. Most of them were good at describing the main properties and components of the major theories and topics of IR. They were also able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the theories in comparison to each other. They all had some background on significant theories of IR and were knowledgeable about 20th-century history, which improved the quality of discussion when we covered them. Moreover, they were particularly good at interpreting contemporary political events using the theories of IR. In their final projects, some of the students went beyond the theories we covered and were able to use alternative theories.

Responses to "Q8 - Overall, what could MA students do less well in regard to critiquing competing theoretical explanations and producing a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?"

At least in terms of large bodies of literature, MA students are less likely to accomplish a wholly comprehensive review of scholarly literature. As a result, they are not in a good position to identify gaps.

Students were less able to identify gaps in existing literature, but to a degree that was the result of the nature of the class and the final paper assignment. The class pays considerable attention to the kinds of sources that might provide insight into political culture, and the final paper assignment is a direct engagement with those sources. As a consequence of this attention to evidence, students did not undertake a comprehensive review of the literature. Hence, they were not in a great position to identify gaps. Two of the MA students had trouble figuring out what a literature review would look like. Although students were required to hand in drafts of the final paper, they had not done so. If they had, I would have been able to identify the problems they were having earlier. Overall, none of the four MA students handed in the required drafts.

They were all strong and so this was not an issue from my perspective.

The time constraints of doing an exam made it difficult to determine the breadth of students' knowledge about competing theories. It was hard to tell if they didn't know or if they were unable to go into depth because of the lack of time.

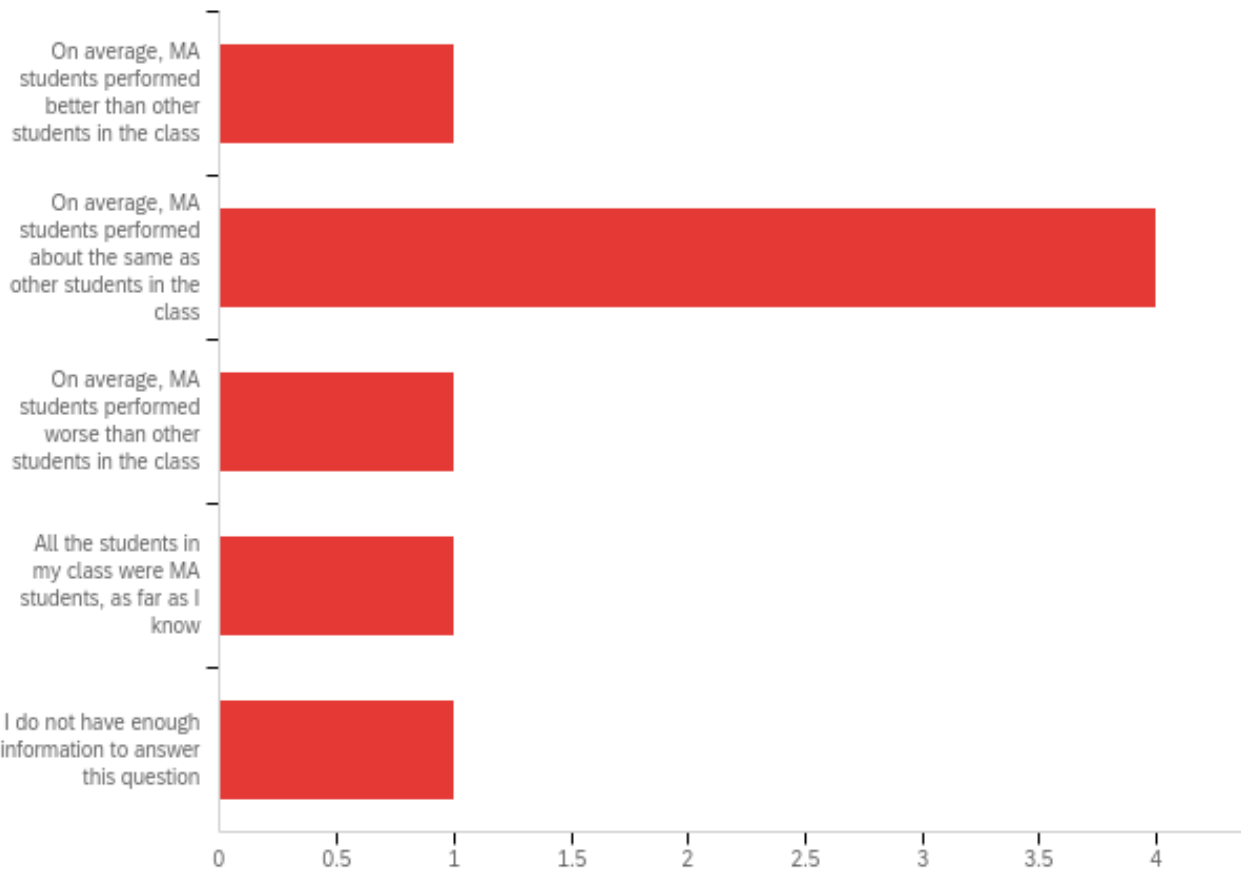
The weakest part was in presenting a persuasive argument using the theories to justify their choices. Both students did better on the written part (3 short policy memos) than on the Powerpoint presentation. Here, it was less the inability to critique competing theoretical explanations as it was their difficulty in applying the theoretical constructs to the data. However, this is difficult for many new Ph.D. students, too

Students were less adept at raising objections to competing theoretical claims or offering compelling counterarguments.

Identifying actual gaps in the literature and identifying the various versions of a theoretical approach by distinguishing nuances and fine details between various authors/scholars in one same theoretical approach was more difficult for the students.

Students struggled with more recent papers, especially when the paper was methodologically advanced. In topics that are inherently more deductive and require more abstract reasoning (such as Rational Choice or Nuclear Deterrence), they had a harder time understanding the major assumptions of the theories, so they often could not relax these assumptions and moved from the basic to more advanced discussions. Finally, they struggled to connect different levels of analysis and distinguish the impact of the international/structural and domestic/political dynamics when analyzing contemporary events.

Responses to “Q9 - How did MA students compare to students from other departments in terms of being able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?”



Responses to “Q10 - What tactics were effective in enhancing students' ability to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?”

Students produced short reading reviews for seven of the class sessions. This helped them identify theoretical explanations and critique evidence offered to support them. Students were required to hand in drafts of the research paper prior to the final version. For those who did so, this led to significant improvement.

Students produce reading reviews for six class sessions. These reviews help students identify arguments and they encourage closer attention to how research is presented in an article. In class, we example some of the assigned readings together to identify arguments, evidence, theoretical frameworks and literature reviews. While the ability to identify these parts of other people's research does not necessarily translate into the ability to do it oneself, it seemed to help students read effectively. Students were required to hand in drafts of the final research paper prior to handing in the final version. While not all students did this, those who did were able to correct many of the shortcomings of their first efforts.

Deep immersion in the historical record as well as contemporary sources and cases provided them with the ability to make strong distinctions and measured judgements.

The paper is a better format than the exam.

Using 3 written policy memos over the course of the semester rather than one final paper allowed them to get feedback after each memo. The assignments built on each other so that the final project marked the culmination of the previous 2. Overall, the final paper was the strongest component for both students, a reflection of the strategy. I would say that the most effective tactics included connecting theoretical claims to the institutional and ideological context in which the scholarly theories developed. By seeing what motivated scholars, students understood their thought process much better.

First they need to have read and summarized the theoretical claims in articles pertinent to the subject. They also need to become able to apply these theories to various cases and situations. Then they must also understand the strengths and weaknesses of each, and also how various authors and scholars within one same tradition may have nuanced differences and unique positions within that field of knowledge and theoretical approach.

Using various methods for teaching, reinforcing the information, and assessment ensures students with different needs can reach the learning outcomes. The relatively smaller size of the class helps to spend individual time with each student, understanding their level of comprehension, and tailoring the class to meet everyone's needs. The classes included some lecturing, some debates, student presentations, and discussion leadership. Furthermore, the class discussions took place in various ways. Most classes included some lecturing by me, then an organized discussion by students, and a student that presents a topic/paper related to the week's material and leads the class discussion. The class also included assignments that differ in length and complexity. There was a take-home final exam. In addition to the exam, the students had to prepare critical review papers that critiqued the readings and approach we covered for the week. Finally, the final projects included a research proposal as well as a literature review, rough draft, final presentation, and peer-review assignments. Dissecting this major assignment into smaller pieces compelled students to start working on the assignment earlier and enabled me to follow how they were doing (and provide frequent and detailed feedback).

Results from students' MA exams (taken by graduating students in their final semester). These results come from the three faculty serving on each Saint Louis committee and are summarized here by the graduate coordinator, who happens to have served on both committees:

- Both St. Louis students passed their written exams, one with a grade of "pass" and the other "pass with distinction."
- Both students met expectations regarding the construction of a comprehensive literature review. Faculty noted the completeness of the literature reviews in covering all relevant material that students could realistically have been familiar with. One student exceeded expectations in this regard by including substantial additional literature not covered in her classes.

- As in the faculty comments about coursework, students struggled to convincingly critique bodies of literature by identifying holes, either theoretical or empirical. Instead, their reviews were generally limited to summarizing existing work and grouping pieces by theme or topic.

Faculty from the Madrid campus commented on the following (summarized by Nanes):

- Students were effective in “plac[ing] their analysis in the right scholarly context, and map[ing] out effectively the theoretical field.”
- “They were also able to bring in supporting evidence and articulate an argument based on both theoretical explanation and empirical soundness.”
- Some students struggled to identify gaps in existing literature. “We do need to work with them individually across many supervision sessions to help them see a potential area of contribution based on a critique of the literature. In that sense, ‘application’ comes easier to them than innovation.”

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

- Overall, our MA students perform well on most things the program and courses require them to do. They are outstanding consumers of research in the sense that they consistently and effectively cite and summarize a relevant body of work, and place authors in conversation with one another. Where they struggle is in figuring out where to go from there, and how to generate knowledge based on their synthesis of existing work. One faculty member summarized this issue nicely, saying, “application comes easier to them than innovation.” This outcome is to be expected for students at the MA level, as innovation and knowledge production is a skill that most learn while completing a PhD. Outstanding MA students may learn to innovate effectively, and our program aspires to equip all MA students with the training and tools to do so, but the fact that most exhibit room for improvement in this regard is not surprising.
- Most faculty use multiple different techniques to help students acquire and practice the skills they need, and most emphasize steps in research design.
- Responses regarding what students do less well suggest the need for more intermediate assignments to provide opportunities for feedback and mentorship, particularly when it comes to identifying deficiencies in a body of literature.
- In a similar vein, we may wish to identify ways to build continuity for students across courses—for example, continuing one project in multiple courses.
- Greater time should be set aside for not just reading and discussing individual pieces of research, but synthesizing and analyzing literature as a complete body.
- A Madrid faculty member notes that “we should be very consciously teaching research design across a variety of courses, bearing in mind that some of our students come from related fields, with no PoliSci or IR in their background. We could also have more general thesis workshops to help prepare them for original research.”

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

- A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

A draft of this report was distributed to faculty on August 12, and the report was discussed at the department faculty retreat on August 19.

A summary of key points from the August 19 meeting:

- There was significant discussion about the value of intermediate assignments in helping students improve on this learning outcome. Faculty acknowledged that intermediate feedback is critical if students are to improve on any complex task, including this one.

- Faculty discussed best practices for holding students accountable for turning in. For example, it is potentially easier to avoid turning in a paper than to avoid doing a presentation. Also, more one-on-one meetings along the way may help hold students accountable.
- Faculty acknowledge some challenges that stem from having undergrad, MA, and even PhD students in the same classroom, each with different sets of program-level learning outcomes.
 - Faculty agreed that the outcome goals are applicable to all levels, but perhaps with different expectations for levels of achievement. We will revise our assessment procedures to account for this difference in expected achievement levels.
- Finally, some faculty question whether a “comprehensive” review of literature is reasonable or appropriate in a single semester class.
 - In response, other faculty clarified that learning outcome relates to skills being developed in classes, not the actual production of a comprehensive literature review. That is, even if students do not have time to produce a fully comprehensive review in each course they take, they should be developing the skills needed to produce such a review in their area of study.
 - Analysis and critique of a body of literature comes in the context of the assignment. It is self-contained. Does not imply that students should do this for an entire field. “comprehensive” is context-dependent.

We will take the following steps based on this discussion:

- Revise the assessment procedures to clarify what is actually expected and help faculty more accurately assess students’ achievement, particularly as it relates to students from different levels (BA, MA, PhD)
- Increase efforts to hold students accountable for intermediate assignments, both by changing the types of assignments and by increasing faculty-student meetings

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you’ve initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

Graduate Coordinator’s Summary

- Many faculty note the challenges of teaching undergraduate, MA, and PhD students in the same course in the context of this learning outcome applying primarily to MA students. To address this challenge, several faculty note the importance of working directly and separately with MA students on the literature review task.
- Several faculty also plan to introduce intermediate assignments throughout the semester to provide opportunities for feedback and mentorship on the comprehensive review of scholarly literature.
- Some faculty question whether a “comprehensive” review of literature is reasonable or appropriate in a single semester class. When we met to discuss the results of this assessment, it was clarified that the learning outcome relates to the skills being developed in classes, not the actual production of a comprehensive literature review. That is, even if students do not have time to produce a fully comprehensive review in each course they take, they should be developing the skills needed to produce such a review in their area of study.

Responses to “Q11 - What changes do you expect to make in this class the next time you teach it, if any, in order to ensure that students will be able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?”

I plan to spend more time with just the MA students talking about the literature review.

In this class, the undergraduate students are not required to produce a comprehensive literature review, but the MA students are required to do so. It appears that the MA students needed more explicit instruction than provided in this regard. In the future, I will plan to meet separately with the MA students to make sure that they better understand what a literature review is.

Increase the secondary literature required.

Assign a term paper rather than just the final exam for the MA students (Ph.D. students had to do both).

Have them work on integrating the written and presentation parts sooner maybe by having them submit a video presentation before the actual one in class. I would then use the video to assess their presentation strengths. Also, spend more time in class, on the theories (only 1 class was allocated to this last semester) and develop more examples of how they can be applied to actual budgets.

I would try to walk students through the process of critiquing scholarly theories by devoting several classes to the organization of debate maps on the chalkboard with the contributions of all students. This kind of activity emphasizes visual thinking and aims to refine their knowledge organizations.

I have been increasing my own bibliography for referencing various theories so that the students know where to go to look up the various theoretical views/approaches. I will also add a specific component to the rubric that requires them to identify the gaps and nuances of each theory.

Next time I teach POLS 5690, I will increase the amount and weight of discussions in the class. I also plan to include a couple of simulation activities throughout the semester, which will help students apply the theories to the situations they will face and better internalize them.

Responses to “Do you have suggestions for changing the MA curriculum or approaches in individual courses in order to make sure that students will be able to critique competing theoretical explanations and produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature in their chosen field of study?”

As I mentioned in my review of my other class, is comprehensiveness really the goal for an MA student?

It might be worth considering whether a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature is the goal of an MA program. While I would hope a student could do this in a thesis, I am less sure how often it would be accomplished in a semester class.

Making sure the students take the Methods course their first semester could help.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

- 1) The POLS assessment director responded to feedback from University assessment director Marissa Cope on our previous assessment by developing rubrics for faculty to fill out for every student. Faculty agreed to use the rubric and discuss what did or did not make sense for their classes. For the 2022 assessment, 8 instructors used the rubric.
- 2) Based on earlier assessments showing students needed more help with oral presentations, in Spring 2021, the POLS MA coordinator arranged an instructional workshop for faculty, presented by SLU Communications professor Tim Huffman. Some faculty have begun to employ what we learned.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

- 1) Discussion in our August retreat confirms that faculty approve of the rubrics used to evaluate each student.
- 2) Improvement in students' oral presentation will be assessed in future years after faculty implement techniques learned in our workshop on oral presentations.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

- For the 2020 assessment report, four of the six instructors reported that all POLS graduate students in their course met or exceeded expectation for both components of the learning outcome (designing research projects with appropriate methodologies and contributing to scholarly debates). Two instructors reported that 75-99 percent met expectations. No instructors reported any students who did not meet expectations.
- The outcome assessed for the 2021 assessment report included 5 components. In the 12 courses assess this year, instructors reported that at least 90% of students met or exceeded expectations for each component. Of this group, 50% or more exceeded expectations for each component. 2 students, or about 5%, did not meet expectations for two components. Four students, or about 10% did not meet expectations for three components.
- The outcome assessed for the 2022 report included 5 components. In all but one, faculty rated all but a single Madrid student as meeting or exceeding expectations (qualitative evidence reveals that student was undergoing a unique personal situation which prevented them from devoting attention to coursework). Only on the outcome "Identify gaps in existing scholarly literature" did two additional St. Louis students fail to meet expectations.

The ability to compare temporal progress in this way reveals the effectiveness of the rubric system, as it produces granular individual-level data.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

Faculty will consider ways to:

- Introduce more intermediate assignments to provide opportunities for feedback and mentorship
- Better tailor mixed-level classes to account for the different learning objectives of students at different levels
- Create assignments and projects that transcend a single course or semester, allowing students to synthesize across a broader range of substantive areas.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.