

Assessment Report of Student Learning Outcomes  
Fall 2007  
Due: February 1, 2008

Department/Program: Government Program (Dept. of History & Government)

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Mission Statement

The faculty and staff of the Government major are committed to serving the diverse population of our university in ways appropriate to all members of the community. To do so we offer **courses satisfying general education requirements** that include substantive knowledge of American government and which encourage critical reasoning, writing and communication skills; **elective courses** which appeal to a wide variety of interests and help students gain liberal arts skills and knowledge; **a major curriculum** with either an American or international track that covers the important topics of the fields of political science and prepares students for graduate study or employment in government, business, non-profit organizations, law, political staff, community and public service, public affairs, or education; and **a graduate curriculum** that prepares students to serve the broader community as professionals.

In addition, faculty of the major are committed to participation in activities which enrich students' understanding of current political topics and their ability to connect with the wider deaf and hearing world through sponsorship of programs and activities both on and off campus. The faculty is also committed to supporting research and education that reflect this mission.

Student Learning Outcomes/Goals at Program Level  
Knowledge and skills

Increase understanding of American political history and political processes (major and pre-major students)  
Practice academic skills appropriate to college level courses and college educated people (major and pre-major students)  
Explain core academic information about American and foreign political systems, issues of political theory and ideology, and international relations. (major level students)  
Develop (practice?) skills in the following :

Reading, understanding, synthesizing and criticizing appropriate professional literature in the major; (major level students)  
Creating research-based projects and presentations in the major using appropriate sources and citation systems. (major level students)  
Understanding, using, producing and critiquing quantitative information in the major. (major level students)

Understand professional expectations related to:

Working independently and in groups (major and pre-major students)  
Professional qualifications and education and how they can prepare for and obtain such qualifications and education. (major level students)

## **Values and citizenship**

Become better citizens through understanding the general principles, history and theory of democracy and specifically understanding the evolution of the institutions, processes and policies of the American political system; (major and pre-major students)  
Be aware of the rights and responsibilities of citizens of their community, their country and the wider world. (major and pre-major students)  
Be aware of the ways in which governments impact their lives and the ways in which they can impact government systems. (major and pre-major students)  
Develop a sense of professional ethics and responsibility with regard to their roles as students and citizens. (major and pre-major students)

## **Public and Deaf Life**

Engage in activities outside of the classroom including internships, participation in political campaigns, voter registration drives, mock trials, model United Nations, issue awareness campaigns, study abroad and travel study and other opportunities so that they can learn about the world of politics through active engagement. (major level students)  
 Develop skills and knowledge necessary to advocate for issues and causes that can be advanced in the public arenas. (major level students)

Outcome(s) Assessed for Fall 2007

- Reading, understanding, synthesizing and criticizing appropriate professional literature in the major
  - Understanding, using, producing and critiquing quantitative information in the major

Learning Outcomes Linked to Student Learning Opportunities

Learning Outcome	Student Learning Opportunities (Write major learning opportunities.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1. Reading, understanding, synthesizing and criticizing appropriate professional literature in the major</li> </ul>	1. Research Paper  2. Examination Essays  3. Book Reviews  4. Readings
2. Understanding, using, producing and critiquing quantitative information in the major	1. Worksheets  2. Information Searches in Microcase

	3. Examination Essays 4. Readings & Class Discussion
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### Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods

Learning Outcome (List the outcomes indicated above.)	Assessment Method (Indicate at least 2 multiple & varied assessment methods.)
1. Reading, Understanding , synthesizing and criticizing appropriate professional literature in the major.	1. Survey of student opinions.  2. Evaluation of student portfolios by professors.  3. Survey of reading assignments in course syllabi.
2. Understanding, using, producing and critiquing quantitative information in the major.	1. Survey of student opinions.  2. Evaluation of student portfolios by professors. 3. Aggregate percentage of objective exam and homework questions (related to understanding of quantitative information).

### Analysis and Use of Assessment Results

Learning Outcomes <i>Student will be able to:</i>	Direct/Indirect Assessment Measures	Analysis of Assessment Results	Use of Assessment Results (Action Taken)
1. Demonstrate skills related to: (a)Reading,	1. Applied Rubrics (attached) to	Subgoal (a):	a) and b)Professors are encouraged to continue to expose

<p>(b)Understanding , (c)synthesizing and (d)criticizing appropriate professional literature in the major.</p>	<p>evaluate work in student portfolio. (subgoals b-d)</p> <p>2. Results from end of course survey questions students (see attached form). Subgoals a-d)</p> <p>3. Analysis of course syllabi by professors according to rubric (attached) subgoal a.</p>	<p>Students demonstrated skill in reading a variety of appropriate literature (see Tables). All students agreed that they were reading appropriate professional literature in each course.</p> <p>(b) The vast majority of students have at least a limited understanding of material from the professional literature and a clear majority of majors have a clear understanding of the main points of the professional literature. More than 90% of students agreed that courses this semester increased their ability to understand the professional literature.</p> <p>(c ) The overwhelming majority of students demonstrated an ability to use multiple sources in a sequential manner but few are able to identify relationships between sources or reconcile</p>	<p>students to a wide variety of professional literature in its many forms.</p> <p>c) and d) Professors will develop more short assignments where students need to explicitly synthesize and critique professional literature to better prepare them for larger scale assignments like research papers.</p>
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		<p>contradictions.</p> <p>(d) Most, but not all students are able to use/select credible sources of information, but few are able to state shortcoming and limitations in these sources.</p>	
<p>2. Demonstrate skills related to: (a) Understanding, (b) using, (c) producing and (d) critiquing quantitative information in the major.</p>	<p>1. Applied Rubrics (attached) to evaluate work in student portfolio.(subgoals b, &amp; d)</p> <p>2. Results from end of course survey questions students (see attached form) (subgoals a,- d).</p> <p>3. Percentage of objective questions correct from homework and exam questions related to understanding quantitative data (see attached rubric, subgoal a only)</p>	<p>a) Vast majority students demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning of quantitative data.</p> <p>b) The vast majority of students were able identify significant data and describe its meaning, and many students were able to identify patterns in either bivariate data or time series analysis.</p> <p>c) no work required in courses this semester required students to produce quantitative data, although a majority of students felt that discussions about such data this semester improved their ability to produce such data.</p>	<p>a) and b) Courses will continue to utilize quantitative data and its use will expand to other courses where it was not highlighted; this will be more evident in Fall 2008 than in Spring. Lab assistants will be better trained to assist students doing homework related to quantitative programs.</p> <p>c) Professors in 3 courses have created joint research project requirement to encourage production of quantitative data for Spring semester 2008.</p> <p>d) Required Research Methods course this Spring will more strongly</p>

		<p>d) Most students were able to identify significant data and at least one weakness in the data but few ere able to identify multiple weaknesses or suggest ways of resolving weaknesses in quantitative data.</p>	<p>focus upon critiquing the uses of quantitative data.</p>
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Sharing of Results

With whom will you share these results and why?

*Shared with Department Chair, Members of the Government Program and interested faculty members in the History program to both improve curriculum coordination and future assessment efforts.*

## Closing Reflections

Please discuss these questions at a department meeting. The answers should reflect the thoughts of the department and note where there are different perspectives.

1. Did you have a positive or negative experience with assessment this semester?  
Please elaborate.

*Probably more time and planning was necessary.*

2. Do you think that this kind of University-wide focus on assessment has the potential to improve teaching and learning? Please elaborate.

*Yes—and we are already starting to implement some of the results in our teaching over the next few semesters.*

3. What would you change about the assessment process?

*This was rushed into when we were doing many other things such as changing the general education curriculum. Hopefully there where be more time to do a more thorough job of this in the future.*

4. What other thoughts come to mind that might not fall under the three questions above.

**Supplemental Evidence of  
Academic Rigor, Effective Pedagogy and Student Learning**

Please share electronically other evidence of effective teaching, student learning, and assessment related to your department program's outcomes. This might include syllabi, curriculum mapping, a few (2 – 4) samples of student work, rubrics, etc.

## **Narrative Explanation of Government Program Assessment Results**

Goal 1) Reading, Understanding , synthesizing and criticizing appropriate professional literature in the major.

**Results:** The results are as follows:

- Students were given the opportunity to read professional literature in a wide variety of formats in the courses offered in the fall of 2007. **See Table 1.**
- Students were able to demonstrate high degrees of comprehension of the professional literature based on the review of work in student portfolios. Students displayed lower levels of competency, as would be expected, in the higher level skills of synthesizing and critiquing the professional literature. **See Table 2 and Rubrics.**
- Responses from the student survey reinforce this. **See Table 4.**

**Conclusions:** Students need to develop better skills in synthesizing and critiquing professional literature.

**Limitations:** It should be noted that the portfolio review for this single semester can be misleading because:

- Students were taking different numbers of major courses (some students evaluations depended upon work in a single course while others took as many as four or five major courses in the semester)
- Some students portfolios were incomplete (Because they received an incomplete for the course)
- Students may be at very different levels of their academic careers: some were taking advanced courses for the first time while others are ready to graduate.

**Suggestions:** The findings this semester should be compared and integrated into the finding for Spring 2008 when the Department offers Research Methods and Senior Seminar courses which focus more fully on these skills.

Goal 2) Understanding, using, producing and critiquing quantitative information in the major.

**Results:** The results based upon portfolio review are as follows:

- By and large students performed well in understanding quantitative data and almost as well in using it. The major weakness discovered is in their ability to critique it. (This semester there was no requirement for the production of such data so that subgoal could not be assessed). **See Table 3 and Rubrics.**
- The results from the student survey generally support these finding with the exception of the subgoal related to critiquing quantitative information. There they seem to over-estimate their improvement

in critiquing; or there may have been a lack of opportunities for them to demonstrate this skill after they acquired it.

**Conclusions:** Students need to be given more opportunities to produce and critique quantitative data.

**Suggestion:** For Spring 2008, program professors are coordinating a project that will require students in the Senior Seminar course to produce survey data. Support will be provided by the Research Methods professor. Quantitative Research will also be encouraged in the class on Presidency, again with the support of the Research Methods professor.

**Limitations:** The same limitations apply here as did with goal 1 with the addition of the fact that the percentages shown for subgoal a) are based on different numbers of question.

**TABLE 1: Reading Professional literature**

*Based on the syllabus for each course, classify the kinds of readings of professional literature (not textbooks) required of students in Fall 2007 Government courses:*

	Gov 301	Gov 360	Gov 329	Gov 384	Gov 391
None					
Summary in text	X	X	x	x	x
Newsy (NYT, Economist)	X	X	x	x	
Prof. Journal article(exc.)	X	X	x	x	
Prof. Journal art.	X		x	x	
Books, chapter (exc)	X	X			
Books, chapter entirety (mod)	X	X		x	x
Books, chapter entirety (classic)				x	x

**Table 2: Understanding, Synthesizing & Criticizing Professional Literature**

Student code number	Understanding	Synthesizing	Criticizing
001	5	5	4
002	5	3	3
003	4	3	3
004	3	3	3
005	3	3	3
006	5	4	3
007	4	3	3
008	5	4	4
009	4	4	4
010	4	4	3
011	4	3	2.5
012	3	1.5	1
013	4	3	3
014	2	1.5	1
015	4	3.5	4
<b>Average</b>	3.9	3.2	3.0

Note: when 2 raters disagreed by one level of the rubric the score is averaged.  
See attached rubrics.

**Rubrics for evaluating Understanding, synthesizing & Critiquing professional lit:**

**Understanding:**

1. No evidence of use or understanding of professional literature
2. Uses quotation from professional literature, but they are not coherent; no summarizing
3. quotes and some summaries, demonstrate a limited understanding of the source material
4. extensive paraphrasing of source material and demonstrates a clear understanding of the authors main points
5. extensive paraphrasing rather than quotes and demonstrates substantial understanding of author's main points and at least some of the subtle points.

**Synthesizing**

1. No evidence of use of professional literature
2. Use of only a single source
3. Use of multiple sources but in a sequential manner—points are not related between multiple sources
4. Use of multiple sources to support the same point; is able to identify relationships between material treated by different sources
5. Is able to present multiple sources in a coherent way, identifying relationships between various sources in the literature and recognizes contradictions and dissimilarities.

### **Critiquing**

1. no evidence of use of professional literature
2. relies on source(s) that seem to have no demonstrated credibility (non-authoritative web pages, etc.)
3. Reliance on more dependable sources but does not explicitly evaluate or bolster their credibility
4. Recognizes shortcoming in sources used (author ignored this evidence or was politically biased, conclusions not supported by data, etc.)
5. Recognizes shortcomings in sources and is able to offer a sensible evaluation of the source.

**Table 3: Understanding, Using and critiquing Quantitative information**

Name/student code	Understand (% of correct responses)	Use	Produce	Critique
001	(92%) 5	5	Na	5
002	1	5	Na	2
003	(100%) 5	5	Na	4
004	(78 %) 4	3	Na	3
005	(74%) 4	3	Na	3
006	(85%) 4	5	Na	4
007	(100%) 5	3	Na	4
008	(100%)5	3	Na	3
009	(83%)4	5	Na	3
010	(50%) 2	4	Na	3
011	(87.5%) 4	2	Na	2
012	(91%) 5	3	Na	3
013	(50%) 2	4	Na	3
014	(87%) 4	3	Na	3
015	(91%) 5	4	na	3
<b>Averages</b>	3.9	3.8		3.2

*Note: No assignments this semester required the production of quantitative data.*

### **Rubrics: Quantitative analysis**

Understanding, using, producing and critiquing quantitative information in the major.

- Understanding quantitative information in the major:
  - Based on the assignments in the student portfolio, what percent of objective questions based on quantitative understanding (including maps, charts, tables as well as statistical techniques) did the student get correct?

(30% or less= no understanding; 30-50%-developing understanding; 50-70 % basic understanding; 70-90 % good understanding; 90-100% mastery)

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- Using quantitative information in the major:
  - Based on the assignments in the student portfolio, evaluate the student's ability to describe patterns depicted in quantitative data.

(1-not demonstrated; 2- student is able to identify significant data but demonstrates little or no understanding of it; 3-student is able to identify significant data and describe its basic meaning; 4-students is able to identify patterns in the data; 5-student is able to identify patterns in the data and discuss the implications of those patterns)

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- Using & producing quantitative information in the major.
    - Based on the assignments in the student portfolio, evaluate the student's ability to find and produce quantitative information.
    - I suspect this does not apply to the assignments in the portfolio thus far.
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- Critiquing quantitative information in the major.
    - Based on the assignments in the portfolio, student is able to identify the limits and weaknesses of particular pieces of quantitative information.
- (1-not demonstrated; 2- student is able to identify significant data but demonstrates little or no understanding of its limits; 3-student is able to identify significant data and identify at least one weakness; 4-students is able to identify at least two or more limitations or weaknesses in specific quantitative data; 5-student is able to identify several weaknesses in the data and either relate how that weakens the point that was being made and/or suggest means of improving the data).
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**Table 4: Government Major Student Survey Results related to Professional Literature & Quantitative Analysis (Fall 2007)**

<b>Question</b>	<b>S.Dis.</b>	<b>Dis.</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>S. Agree</b>
<b>1. (Read)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>2. (Underst)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>3. (Critic)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>4. (Synth)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>5. Opp. (use/Learn)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>6. (Crit Q I)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>7. Improved Use of QI</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>8. Produce QI</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>9. Better Understand QI</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>44%</b>

See attached survey questions.

## Additional Course Evaluation Questions for Government Major Courses

Please answer the following questions to assist the Department in evaluating our program/courses in relation to the MSCHE evaluation process.

Please do not put your name on this paper.

Course Number: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please circle the appropriate answer:*

1. I felt this course gave me an opportunity to read appropriate professional literature in the major.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree

2. I felt this course increased my substantive understanding of professional literature in the major.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree

3. I feel this course increased my ability to criticize information about topics in the field.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree

4. I feel this course increased my ability to see how to bring together (synthesize) various sources of information related to topics in the field.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree

5. I was given the opportunity to use/learn about quantitative information in this course such as statistics, tables, surveys, etc.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree

6. After taking this course, I feel that I am better able to criticize the use of quantitative information in the field.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree

7. After taking this course, I feel that I am better able to use quantitative information in my own research.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree

8. After taking this course, I feel that I am better able to produce quantitative information through producing surveys or other methods.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree

9. After taking this course, I feel that I am better able to understand the use of quantitative information in the major.

Strongly disagree      disagree      neutral      agree      strongly agree