

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Program Name: Political Science and International Relations (LA)

Assessment Year: 2008-2009

Step One: Who Are You and What Do You Do?

I.A. Mission Statement:

The department has four core missions:

To equip our students with the capacity to analyze and interpret political events and governmental processes, and to insure that they are “politically literate” by the time they graduate.

To encourage and support the research programs of colleagues in the department.

To participate actively in the civic life of SUNY New Paltz, through contributions to faculty governance and the curriculum review process.

To prepare students for graduate study and/or relevant careers where they can make productive contributions to society

I.B. Scope of the program (what are the boundaries of your program):

What we are: professors, political scientists, colleagues, advisers to students

We offer two majors – one in Political Science and an interdisciplinary major in International Relations - and minors in each of these disciplines, as well as a minor in Law and Politics. Our aim is to offer programs that integrate academic rigor with real world experience. We offer courses in the five disciplinary sub-fields of American Politics, Political Theory, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Law, as well as a course in political science research methods. The programs in Political Science and International Relations allow students to develop strong research, analytical, and written skills, and to fulfill their USST, SSCI, WRLD and WEST categories for GEIII, as well as their Systematic Inquiry and Effective Expression (written) competency categories. Our Law and Politics minor introduces students to the fundamentals of the legal system (its structure, processes and vocabulary), although it approaches law through the eyes of the political science discipline, rather than as a “prep” course for law school. We provide a liberal arts major to students in the Childhood Education (1-6/Political Science) and Adolescent Education (7-12/Social Studies) programs.

We prepare students for careers in government, non-governmental organizations, political operations, research institutes/think tanks, and education (at the elementary and secondary levels and, also, in higher education settings).

I.C. What activities/processes contribute to the program? (How do you do what you do?)

The following activities promote the learning objectives of the Department:

*Advising—We advise majors, non-majors and any SUNY New Paltz student interested in applying to law school. We guide students in course selection for Study Abroad programs, we encourage internships, and we evaluate the records of foreign students to determine course equivalents that will satisfy requirements in our majors.

*Curriculum—Through a process of regular program review, we develop new courses to respond to developments in the discipline, based on the interests and expertise of faculty and on the available resources. We supplement regular course offerings in Political Science and International Relations with selected topics courses, and, over time, we submit those new courses to the campus governance process for approval in the permanent curriculum.

*Teaching—Faculty use a range of pedagogical techniques to promote student learning. At times, department members have team-taught or have presented guest lectures in a colleague’s class. Tenured faculty conduct peer observations of adjuncts and untenured faculty each semester.

*Faculty Development and Research—We encourage faculty development and research by supporting travel to professional conferences. Faculty publish in peer-reviewed, scholarly publications. Many department members have been

successful in obtaining college support for student research assistants, and have also received funding for college programs (e.g., SURE, AYURE) that promote student-faculty collaborative research.

*Service—Faculty serve on campus-wide and LA&S committees, and also are officers of national and regional disciplinary associations (e.g., American Political Science Association, New York State Political Science Association, New York State Conference on Asian Studies).

*Out-of-Class Activities—The Department sponsors the Political Science student club, which meets weekly to discuss topical, political issues, schedules department and other faculty members to discuss their research with students, organizes candidate nights during campaign season, sponsors outside speakers, and undertakes, with the supervision of a faculty adviser, an annual trip to Washington, D.C. We also maintain a chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Student Honor Society, where outstanding students are inducted into membership in a ceremony each spring. We provide a variety of internship opportunities for students, in the local region, in Albany, and in Washington, D.C. We strongly encourage students to study abroad for a semester, and we assist them in selecting appropriate programs. We also participate annually in the Harvard Model United Nations program, and we are the home institution in 2007-2009 for the SUNY Model European Union.

*Community Involvement—Faculty serve as expert commentators for local media, and contribute to the intellectual vitality of the campus and local community through public lectures and other educational activities.

Step Two: Where are you heading and what performances show your progress?

II.A. priority goals for the next five years:

1. Student Goals:

think critically

understand and apply political science concepts and methods

gather and evaluate information systematically

express ideas clearly, orally and in writing

make a coherent argument and offer appropriate support

effectively participate in government as informed and engaged citizens

2. Program Goals:

maintain a coherent curriculum with a diverse range of course offerings

support excellence in faculty teaching

support excellence in faculty research

maintain effective advising procedures that promote timely graduation

continue to offer enrichment programs

maintain departmental service in faculty governance

prepare students for graduate study and/or relevant careers

track career development of department graduates

II.B. What is the performance you desire to gauge your progress?

1. Desired student performance

think critically

understand and apply political science concepts and methods

gather and evaluate information systematically

express ideas clearly, orally and in writing

make a coherent argument and offer appropriate support

effectively participate in government as informed and engaged citizens

2. Program Performances

curriculum: regularly offer essential courses and develop appropriate new courses.

faculty research: To develop and support active faculty research programs

effective teaching: Regular discussion of effective teaching strategies.

student advising: meet regularly with students, and work with the Dean of Student Advising and Registrar to encourage coherent progress through the major, satisfaction of the general education requirements, and facilitate timely graduation

enrichment programs: continue to support the activities of Pi Sigma Alpha, the Political Science Club, the Model United Nations, the Model European Union, and internships and study abroad programs.

service: participate actively in university governance and community service
 career development: positive feedback from graduates about the sufficiency and relevance to their careers and grad school performance of the writing and quantitative training received in PS courses

Step Three: Describe your methodology

II.B. 1 and 2 Desired Performance	III. A. What aspects of the performance are critical to measure?	III.B. How (by what means) will you gather the data	III.C. When will assessment begin	III.C. Who is Responsible for What?
1. Student Learning: a. think critically b. apply political science concepts and methods c. gather and evaluate information systematically express ideas clearly, orally and in writing make and support a coherent argument effectively participate in government	Ability to think critically, understand and apply political science concepts and methods, gather and evaluate information, demonstrate understanding of social science literature, express ideas clearly, make and support a coherent argument	Essays: -submitted by students in seminar each semester (rubric to be developed in Fall 2008) -submitted by students in intro course in 1 sub-field each semester (rotating basis)	Fall 2008	Department assessment sub-committee (3 members on an annual rotating basis)
2. Program Performances a. curriculum:	Course offerings	Study of course schedule and course syllabi	Fall 2008	Department assessment sub-committee
b. faculty research	Publications, presentations, professional conference attendance	Faculty Annual Reports	Spring 2009	Department chair
c. effective teaching:	Effective teaching	Peer review and SEI	Fall 2008	IR compiles SEI statistics and chair summarizes report for department assessment subcommittee
d. student advising	Coherence of student programs and timely completion of program requirements	Chair review of major plans	Fall 2008	Department assessment sub-committee
e. enrichment:	Regular functioning of student club and honor society, internships, study abroad programs	Club Adviser report to department	Fall 2008	Department assessment sub-committee
f. service	Types of service by faculty: college, community, discipline	Faculty Annual Report	Spring 2009	Department chair
g. prepare for graduate study and/or relevant careers	Relevance and sufficiency to grad school and careers of writing/quantitative skills developed in PS courses	Alumni survey	Spring 2009	Alumni survey committee

IV. Resources and Support Needed

The proposed assessment plan requires the assistance of Institutional Research in providing SEI data; we will work with the Registrar in integrating the major plan into the student progress report, and with the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs to insure that the Department continues to contribute to the general education program.

III.B. How (by what means) will you gather the data	III.C. When will assessment begin	III.C. Who is Responsible for What?
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Alumni survey	Spring 2009	Alumni survey committee
Study of course schedule and course syllabi	Fall 2008	Department assessment subcommittee
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Chair review of major plans	Fall 2008	Department assessment subcommittee
Club Adviser report to department	Fall 2008	Department assessment subcommittee
Faculty Annual Report	Spring 2009	Department chair