



Program Name	Date Completed
<b>Political Science</b>	<b>5/28/2026</b>
Report Completed By	Report Contributors
Joel Johnson	
<b>Brief Statement of Program Mission and Goals</b>	
To teach students about government, policy, and politics at the national, subnational, and international levels. To help students develop essential skills in critical thinking and communication.	

**Table IA Closing the Loop**

Report on at least one data-informed change to your curriculum during AY 2025-2026 that was implemented to improve student learning, in response to prior assessments or other data.

<b>A. Describe issues or SLOs addressed in the AY 2024-2025 cycle. Paste SLOs verbatim below.</b>
(KO1) Students should have factual knowledge of many aspects of politics and government that are central objects of study in each of the subfields in political science (American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory).
<b>B. In which academic year and semester was this SLO last assessed to generate data that informed the change(s)?</b>
AY2024-25
<b>C. What were the recommendations for change in the previous cycle? (See Column H in the previous cycle’s report.)</b>
“Knowledge: no specific changes are planned at this time, but the program is always changing its courses to improve student success. Given the increasing reach and power of AI, we have a particular adjustment in the works: <u>our classes will be reducing their online components (assignments, etc.) and shifting ever more into classroom exercises and assignments.</u> ”
<b>D. How were the recommendations for change acted upon?</b>
Re: adjustments for the AI age: Each faculty member in the Political Science Program has been active in course redesign and assignment experimentation to develop new approaches to fostering students’ learning and skill development.  Faculty have offered fewer at-home and online assignments and more on-paper, in-class assignments. In some sections of POLS 101 American National Government, this has been taken to the limit: 100% of course assignments are completed on paper in class, and the class has quizzes on readings every class session, to incentivize dedicated, close reading.



**E. How did the change(s) impact student learning? If the change was not effective, what are the next steps or new recommendations?**

The changes were effective. Courses became more challenging and students did more reading.

**Enter Table I Closing the Loop Comments Below**

### Table IB: Closing the Loop

Report on at least one data-informed change to your curriculum during AY 2025-2026 that was implemented to improve student learning, in response to prior assessments or other data.

**A. Describe issues or SLOs addressed in the AY 2024-2025 cycle. Paste SLOs verbatim below.**

(WO1) Students should be able to write papers on topics in political science that (a) exhibit clear prose and correct grammar and (b) present a central argument in a clear and coherent structure or fashion.

**B. In which academic year and semester was this SLO last assessed to generate data that informed the change(s)?**

AY2024-25

**C. What were the recommendations for change in the previous cycle? (See Column H in the previous cycle's report.)**

Writing: given the increasing reach and power of AI, our classes are shifting from standard writing assignments to other types of in-class exercises that improve written communication skills and analytical/reading skills. For example, our writing seminar class, POLS 251, has placed less emphasis on standard writing assignments and more emphasis on content analysis, grammatical editing, and reading comprehension as a way to improve writing proficiency. Our classes will continue to shift in directions like these in order to provide student learning in a way that avoids AI cheating and that can also harness the power of AI for student productivity."

**D. How were the recommendations for change acted upon?**

Re: adjustments for the AI age: Each faculty member in the Political Science Program has been active in course redesign and assignment experimentation to develop new approaches to fostering students' learning and skill development.

Writing assignments with AI assistance. For Spring 2026 versions of POLS 251 and 450, Prof. Joel Johnson restructured the course paper assignments so that students could complete them with the assistance of AI chatbots (Claude, ChatGPT, etc.). Students who chose to use AI were required to submit their AI dialogues along with their papers. Students were graded on how well they used the AIs as a tool, with success determined by how much they retained intellectual control and used AI reflectively. AI was not to be a substitute for thinking; it was a tool to help students develop and communicate their arguments.



**E. How did the change(s) impact student learning? If the change was not effective, what are the next steps or new recommendations?**

The AI-assisted writing assignments were partially effective. Some students used AI appropriately, and that fostered critical thinking and improved communication skills. Others did not use AI appropriately and thus did not improve their thinking and communication. Future iterations of these assignments will attempt to achieve greater success.

**Enter Table I Closing the Loop Comments Below**



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**Table IIA:** Annual assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in AY 2025-26

1. Include information to share assessment processes, results, and recommendations for improved student learning. Copy this table for each assessed outcome.

<b>A. Program SLO assessed in this cycle. Copy the SLOs verbatim from the assessment plan.</b>
(KO1) Students should have factual knowledge of many aspects of politics and government that are central objects of study in each of the subfields in political science (American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory).
<b>B. Semester and year this SLO was reported on prior to this cycle.</b>
AY2024-25
<b>C. Describe the assessment method for this SLO.</b>
<b>Knowledge 1:</b> There are two measures. <u>Direct measure 1:</u> one or more ranked faculty member(s) will assess the SLO in one (or more) course per academic year via a comparison of a pre-test and a post-test that are offered to the same students. The assessment standard is that the average post-test score will exceed the average pre-test score.  <u>Indirect measure 1:</u> From students' anonymous course evaluations of at least one core course per year—in particular, we report aggregate responses to Q18: "Learned from the course." The expected level of proficiency is that at least 50% of enrolled students (or respondents) respond "Strongly Agree" or "Agree," and we expect that at least 75% of students respond "Strongly Agree," "Agree," or "Neutral." (The response "Neutral" may indicate to a student that a course is on par with other courses.)
<b>D. Described student group(s) assessed. Provide the number of students or number of artifacts assessed.</b>
For the knowledge metric, we report data from 3 classes: three sections of POLS 101 and one section of POLS 202 (approximately 70 students total).
<b>E. Expected proficiency level and proportion of students who should reach this level.</b>
See section C above
<b>F. Assessment results and number of students who met proficiency level.</b>
<u>KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT:</u> Direct measure #1: Post-test vs. pre-test, results: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. POLS 101, Spring 2026: average test gain = 20pts (n=21). This average improvement <b>meets</b> the POLS program's assessment goal.</li></ol>



Indirect measure #1: responses to anonymous course reviews, Q18:

1. POLS 251, Spring 2026: 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they learned from the course. This average improvement **meets** the POLS program's assessment goal.
2. POLS 202, Fall 2025: 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they learned from the course. This average improvement **meets** the POLS program's assessment goal.
3. POLS 101, Fall 2025, Prof. Johnson: 73% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they learned from the course. This average improvement **falls just short** of the POLS program's assessment goal of 75%.

**G. Describe what results indicate about student performance.**

Students are learning. The Political Science Program effectively advances student learning.

**H. Describe program level changes/improvements planned for AY 2026-2027 informed by this assessment.**

No specific changes are planned at this time, but faculty will continue to improve upon and experiment with new and modified types of assignments to best advance learning in the AI age.

**Enter Table II AY 2026 Assessment Comments Below**



**Table IIB: Annual assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in AY 2025-26**

- 2. Include information to share assessment processes, results, and recommendations for improved student learning. Copy this table for each assessed outcome.

<b>I. Program SLO assessed in this cycle. Copy the SLOs verbatim from the assessment plan.</b>
(WO1) Students should be able to write papers on topics in political science that (a) exhibit clear prose and correct grammar and (b) present a central argument in a clear and coherent structure or fashion.
<b>J. Semester and year this SLO was reported on prior to this cycle.</b>
AY2024-25
<b>K. Describe the assessment method for this SLO.</b>
<b>Writing:</b> Direct measure 1: students' papers in an advanced course are assessed according to the writing assessment rubric. At least 80% of students will receive an average score of 2.5 or above, signifying that they are proficient across the four categories in the rubric.
<b>L. Described student group(s) assessed. Provide the number of students or number of artifacts assessed.</b>
For the writing metric, we report data from students in Spring 2026's POLS 450. 1 artifact was assessed for 7 students.
<b>M. Expected proficiency level and proportion of students who should reach this level.</b>
See section C above
<b>N. Assessment results and number of students who met proficiency level.</b>
86% of students (6 of 7) met the proficiency level. This percentage <u>meets</u> the POLS program's assessment goal.
<b>O. Describe what results indicate about student performance.</b>
Students are their writing skills. The Political Science Program effectively advances writing skills.
<b>P. Describe program level changes/improvements planned for AY 2026-2027 informed by this assessment.</b>
No specific changes are planned at this time, but faculty will continue to improve upon and experiment with new and modified types of assignments to best advance learning and skill development in the AI age. Those experiments are not incorporated into the program's assessment plan, but the program will continue to report on their outcomes.