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Academic Learning Compact : Political Science [Effective 2012]

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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Academic Learning Compacts
POLITICAL SCIENCE
2012 – 2013
Due: May, 2013

Academic Program: POLITICAL SCIENCE

Person Responsible: Judithanne Scourfield-McLaughlan

Mission of Academic Program (include URL): Committed to the liberal arts tradition of intellectual curiosity and diversity, the Political Science program at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg offers students a rigorous program of study that prepares them for successful careers in a rapidly globalizing world. Students in the program examine basic questions of political science, including how nations struggle over power and wealth, how political communities reconcile claims of liberty, authority, and justice, and how governments and societies produce the laws and policies that influence our lives. Students choose courses from the major subfields of American politics, international relations and comparative politics, political theory and public law. Students develop critical analytical skills that allow them to understand and to explain political problems and issues at the local, state, national, and international levels. The USFSP program is unique in its focus on human rights and civil rights across the curriculum, as well as its commitment to civic engagement and experiential learning. A degree in political science will prepare students for positions in public service and the private sector, for law school, and for graduate work in political science, international relations, public administration, and related disciplines.

<http://www.usfsp.edu/hp/politicalscience.htm>

List Program Goal(s) / Objective(s):

Program Goals / Objectives must be mapped to College Goals / Objectives – use consistent nomenclature.

[Please note impact of any changes that were made as a result of 2010-11 assessment]

ALCs must address student learning in four areas: 1. Content/Discipline Skills; 2. Communication Skills; Critical Thinking Skills; and 4. Civic Engagement.

1. Content/Discipline Skills				
Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in 2013-14
1a. Demonstrate an understanding of American political institutions, culture	1. In the final examination for POS 2041 (American National Government),	80 percent of students will successfully identify three distinct differences between	<i>During the Fall 2012 semester, in POS 2041 American National</i>	Although this learning outcome is on track, faculty teaching POS 2041 will continue to strengthen

and behavior.	students will evaluate American political institutions, culture, and behavior.	American political institutions and behavior. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent and above on a final examination in POS 2041(American National Government).	<i>Government online. 88% of the students scored 70% and above on the final exam (93% of students who took the exam scored a 70% or above.).</i>	student skills by employing methods that link the study of American political institutions and political culture to current affairs. (See the Civics Project, described in #4)
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**Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.*

2. Communication Skills				
Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in 2013-14
2a. Demonstrate written communication skills through written assignments	1. Students must complete writing assignments in two different upper-level political science courses.	The political science department maintains a portfolio of samples of outstanding, average and unsatisfactory papers written for upper-level political science courses (student identification is redacted). These papers serve as examples for students as well as a basis for measuring performance. At least 75 percent of papers will be average to outstanding. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent on the major writing assignment or written portion of the final examination in two upper-level political science courses.	In Spring 2013, 96 percent of students in POT 4064 – <i>Contemporary Political Theory</i> scored a 70 percent or higher on the major writing assignment. Earlier findings on poor structure and citation in research essays led to systematically stressing these skills in class. As a result, student papers were improved this year. In Fall 2012, all students in POS 4614 <i>U.S. Constitutional Law I</i> participated in a mock oral argument simulation at Stetson College of Law. This assignment tested their oral advocacy and written communication skills. 87% scored a 70% or better on the assignment.	The findings suggest other areas of written communication that we will continue to stress: 1.) coherent development of argument; 2.) mastery of the texts; 3.) proper citation form; 4.) clarity of writing; and 5.) grammar and spelling.

**Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.*

3. Critical Thinking Skills				
Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in 2013-14
3a. Demonstrate ability to understand and articulate the philosophical, legal and political factors influencing the government and politics of nations	1. Students will write essays in POT 3003 (Introduction to Political Theory) in which they critically engage competing political and/or legal philosophies	Criteria for Success: At least 80 percent of students will successfully explicate the philosophies of two different theorists concerning issues of politics and/or law. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 70 percent on the final examination in POT 3003 (Introduction to Political Theory).	In Fall 2012, 93 percent of students scored at least a 70 percent on the final exam in POT 3003 – <i>Introduction to Political Theory</i> . Student engagement was very good. Expectations for the exam were clearly defined.	Although the findings are strong, the students will be encouraged to develop exam essays in greater depth.

**Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.*

4. Civic Engagement:				
Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in 2013-14
4a Relate theoretical knowledge with practical experience by engaging in internships in the student's area of interest. Internships may be served in local, state, and federal governments; the legal field, campaigns or public service, or in international or non-governmental organizations.	1. Students must complete either POS 4941 -- Fieldwork, or POS 3931 -- Practical Politics, or complete a civic engagement project in another class (e.g., Law and Politics, American National Government, or the Road to the White House).	At least 75 percent of students will receive a positive evaluation from the sponsoring agency or the supervising faculty member based on a standard set of questions. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): Students will prepare a written summary of their internship or civic engagement project.	<i>In 2012-13 students completed POS 4941 Field Work internships in Congressional Offices, the Pinellas County Public Defender's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office, among other placements. All students received positive evaluations from their supervisors.</i> <i>In Fall 2012, students in POS 2041 American National Government online completed a Civics Project.</i>	<i>We expect the findings to be strong, since we provide an orientation for students before they begin their placement. Professors check in with the supervisors during the semester to ensure that everything is going well. We will continue to provide adequate training and supervision of our students.</i> <i>We will continue to work with students to ensure that their reflection papers integrate material and concepts from their other Political Science</i>

			<p><i>This was not an internship, but students attended campaign events, volunteered at community agencies, visited with elected officials, attended city council/school board/neighborhood association meetings.</i></p>	<p><i>courses.</i></p> <p><i>We will utilize the pre-test/post-test surveys of students in American National Government to assess impact of the Civics Project and to develop ways to enhance students' understanding of American government through civic engagement opportunities.</i></p>
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**Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.*