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2017

Academic Learning Compact : Political Science [Effective 2017]

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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Academic Learning Compact: Fall 2017- Spring 2018

“... to ensure student achievement in undergraduate and graduate degree programs ...”



Academic Learning Compacts
POLITICAL SCIENCE
Academic Year: Fall 2017 & Spring 2018

Due: May 21, 2018

Academic Program-linked College Mission-based Goals/Objectives

In the matrix on the following page, please place an X in the grid that identifies the degree program goals and objectives that align with the institutional mission-based goals/objectives and the College based goals/objectives. These goals/objectives need to be documented in your ALC data.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG GOALS & OBJECTIVES		COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES GOALS & OBJECTIVES		UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS											
				Anthropology	Biology	Criminology	Literature & Writing	Environmental Science (BA)	Graphic Design	Political Science	Psychology	History	I.S.S.	Journalism (BA)	World Languages
Academic Performance	Use sustained evidence of SLO's and student achievement for continuous improvement	Initiate and expand graduate programs and develop formal academic ties to other graduate programs within the USF system								X					
	Offer certificate, undergraduate and graduate programs that meet regional needs									X					
	Implement and support information and instructional technologies that facilitate effective pedagogies									X					
	Enhance programs that specifically support academic excellence									X					
	Increase student awareness of participating in a global society									X					
Student Engagement	Create a freshman experience that enables students to thrive and move successfully through to graduation	Our students will have critical skills and a broad outlook that will make them engaged and productive citizens Incorporate civic engagement, service learning, and experiential learning into their classes, when appropriate													
	Foster institutional pride and strengthen connections within the campus community									X					
	Enhance opportunities for increased student involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities									X					
Diversity & Inclusion	Insure an inclusive community where differences are respected and valued	Cultivate a vigorous liberal arts culture by recruiting talented diverse students, maintaining small class sizes, and mentoring those students we have. Encourage free discussion, foster critical thinking, demand that our students write, and work across disciplines								X					
	Attract and retain a diverse student population									X					
	Increase the diversity of faculty and staff										X				
Research & Creative Activities	Create a vibrant culture of faculty research and creative scholarship	Make significant and meaningful contributions to ongoing dialogues in our academic fields. We expect our undergraduate and graduate students to engage in research in collaboration with faculty								X					
	Promote and support undergraduate research as a meaningful aspect of campus life									X					
	Enhance and support research and scholarly collaborations with community partners										X				

Academic Learning Compact: Fall 2017- Spring 2018

“ . . . to ensure student achievement in undergraduate and graduate degree programs . . . ”

Academic Program: Political Science

Chair/Coordinator: Thomas Smith

Date: May 21, 2018

Summary Statement – Academic Program Performance in Fall 2017- Spring 2018

Provide a summary statement about academic program performance over the previous year including high points and low points

This academic year the Political Science program offered multiple courses in each of the major sub-fields of the discipline: Political Theory, American Politics, International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Public Law. The program is well balanced, with students taking classes in a program core and across subfields. Our main teaching need is a tenure-track professor in American Politics to teach institutions and behavior classes at the heart of the program. We are pleased to see that our number of majors rose again this year. The College of Arts & Sciences counted 90 Political Science majors at USFSP as of August 2017.

On campus, our students were engaged in political clubs, student government, and the St. Petersburg Conference on World Affairs. Students continued to distinguish themselves with awards and scholarly recognition, such as nomination for membership in the Tampa Bay Council on Foreign Relations. A political science student was USFSP's outstanding graduate for Spring 2018. Our program graduates were offered admission and scholarships to an array of graduate programs and law schools again this year.

We exceeded our goals in most of our ALC issue areas. One of the sections of American National Government fell well short of its content goals, and we have developed a plan to respond. The 2016-2017 ALC found an unacceptably low number of students engaged in internships and other fieldwork experiences. In 2017-2018, with the help of the College's internship coordinator, we turned those numbers around, tripling the number of internship placements. We continue to be challenged in the area of multiculturalism/diversity.

Looking forward, there is a great deal of untapped potential in the program and among our students. A 2011 study by the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University found that political science is the largest of the social sciences by number of graduates, and that graduates in the field have the third highest median earnings of all social science graduates, after statistics and economics. Working with the College and the University we have carried out some marketing and other public outreach initiatives to attract more students, but we can do much more.

Summary Statement – Impact of Changes Made in Fall 2017- Spring 2018

Provide a summary statement about the changes that were made in your program resulting from the ALC's in the preceding Academic Year. Include both the high points and low points

The most troubling finding in the 2016-2017 ALC was that Political Science faculty had overseen only three internships, unacceptably low for a program that prides itself on fieldwork experiences. Working with the College of Arts & Sciences internship coordinator we turned that number around. In 2017-2018 we offered a total of nine internships, all of them substantial. We're committed to continue raising the number and range of internship opportunities.

We made pedagogical changes in response to the Multiculturalism/Diversity outcome in last year's ALC. The professor clarified the debate assignment instructions and expanded the background information to provide students with the building blocks for multiple arguments. Even with these changes we unfortunately we fell short again this year. For 2018-2019, the professor will develop an in-class group activity in which students will work in teams to develop alternative arguments prior to the first debate assignment.

The 2016-2017 ALC also found deficiencies in the areas of critical thinking and writing, especially in blue-book essays. The professor in Contemporary Political Thought adopted a means of "anchoring" essay length and detail, which helped improve this year's writing and critical thinking outcomes. In addition, the program's on-line version of POS 2041 was redesigned in Fall 2017, with updated materials developed and new lectures recorded in the wake of the 2016 presidential election.

Academic Program: Political Science

Responsible Person: Thomas Smith

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):

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



Academic Program: Political Science
Person Responsible: Thomas Smith

ALC GOALS ESTABLISHED FOR DATA COLLECTION: Fall 2017 & Spring 2018

1. Content / Discipline Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019
Demonstrate an understanding of American political institutions, culture and behavior.	In the final examination for POS 2041 (American National Government), students will evaluate American political institutions, culture, and behavior.	80 percent of students will successfully identify three distinct differences between 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).	In Summer 2017 88 percent (38/43) of students in POS 2041 scored a 70 percent or higher on the final examination. In Fall 2017, 48 percent (14/29) scored a 70 percent or higher. In Spring 2018, 100 percent (31/31) of students in POS 2041 scored at least a 70 percent on the final examination.	In two out of three classes we surpassed the content / discipline skills goals. We will further develop the civic engagement component of the class as a way to reinforce the “in-class” SLOs. The lectures for that class were updated and re-recorded in Fall 2017 to bring the course content up to date. The professor is also developing a version of the class that relies wholly on open-source texts, lest the poor showing in Fall 2017 was due to lack of access to textbooks.

2. Communication Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019
<p>Demonstrate written communication skills through written assignments</p>	<p>Students must complete writing assignments in two different upper-level political science courses.</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>During Fall 2017, 95 percent of students (18/19) scored a 70 percent or higher on the 10-page writing assignment in POS 4614 – Constitutional Law I. The paper required critical thinking, legal reasoning, and creative use of legal precedents.</p> <p>During Spring 2018, 94 percent of students (34/36) earned at least a 70 percent on the 7-8 page essay assignment in POT 4064 – Contemporary Political Thought. The assignment focused on effective writing and compelling arguments – not always with success.</p>	<p>In the Constitutional Law class the professor devoted more resources and class time to the writing assignment, sharing sample Supreme Court bench memos and devoting class time to having students workshop their drafts in small groups. In the Political Theory class most of the papers were, again, good but not great. While writing and citation format have improved over past years (these have been the subject of past ALCs), the arguments themselves need tending. In Spring 2019, the professor will devote class time to a discussion and writing exercise on developing rigorous political theory arguments.</p>

3. Critical Thinking Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019
Demonstrate ability to understand and articulate the philosophical, legal and political factors influencing the government and politics of nations	Students will write essays in POT 4064 (Contemporary 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 4064 (Contemporary Political Theory).	In Spring 2018 94 percent (34/36) of students in POT 4064 earned at least a 70 percent on the final exam in the class. The blue book essays were nonetheless underdeveloped both in terms of length, use of evidence, and the complexity of arguments.	The 2016-2017 ALC found that the arguments in student essays were often underdeveloped. In response, the professor devoted class time to “anchoring” essay length and complexity and also talking about the way to build a coherent argument. There was some improvement in this year’s outcomes, but still work to be done, especially in the logical development of arguments, which will be addressed at greater length in the class in Spring 2019

4. Civic Engagement (optional):

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019
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.	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.	Between Summer 2017 and Spring 2018 the political science program oversaw 9 internships. Eight of the nine students (89 percent) received positive evaluations. The number of internships rose markedly from 2016-2017. Several classes entailed assignments related to civic engagement.	We intend to expand the number of internships and other hands-on learning and research experiences offered to our students. A message will be sent to all political science majors outlining possibilities and encouraging them to participate. These learning experiences will become an integral part of the program, possibly serving as a capstone option.

5. Multiculturalism / Diversity				
Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2018 & Spring 2019
<p>Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and the impact of this diversity in global and/or domestic politics.</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to American politics and government</p>	<p>At least 80 percent of students will produce compelling arguments exploring both sides of major debates in global politics. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 80 percent (average) on two debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics).</p> <p>Students will write debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics) in which they present diverse viewpoints on contemporary global crises and events.</p>	<p>At least 80 percent of students will produce compelling arguments exploring both sides of major debates in global politics. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 80 percent (average) on two debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics).</p>	<p>In Spring 2018, 72 percent of students in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics) scored 80 percent or higher on the two debate assignments.</p>	<p>We fell short on this goal again this year. A number of the below 80 scores were the result of students presenting only one effective argument. For next year, the professor will develop an in-class, group activity in which students will work in teams to develop alternative arguments prior to the first debate assignment.</p>



Academic Program: Political Science

Person Responsible: Thomas Smith

ALC GOALS ESTABLISHED FOR DATA COLLECTION: Fall 2018 & Spring 2019

1. Content / Discipline Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
Demonstrate an understanding of American political institutions, culture and behavior.	In the final examination for POS 2041 (American National Government), students will evaluate American political institutions, culture, and behavior.	80 percent of students will successfully identify three distinct differences between 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).		

2. Communication Skills:

Academic Learning Compact: Fall 2017- Spring 2018

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Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
Demonstrate written communication skills through written assignments	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		

3. Critical Thinking Skills:

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
Demonstrate ability to understand and articulate the philosophical, legal and political factors influencing the government and politics of nations	Students will write essays in POT 4064 (Contemporary 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 4064 (Contemporary Political Theory).		

4. Civic Engagement (optional):

Learning Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
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.	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.		

5. Multiculturalism / Diversity				
Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
<p>Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and the impact of this diversity in global and/or domestic politics.</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to American politics and government</p>	<p>At least 80 percent of students will produce compelling arguments exploring both sides of major debates in global politics. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 80 percent (average) on two debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics).</p> <p>Students will write debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics) in which they present diverse viewpoints on contemporary global crises and events.</p>	<p>At least 80 percent of students will produce compelling arguments exploring both sides of major debates in global politics. Corroborating Evidence (ALC Requirement Only): At least 80 percent of students will score at least 80 percent (average) on two debate papers in CPO 2002 (Introduction to Comparative Politics).</p>		

*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.