**Department of Political Science, January 2019**

**ASSESSMENT OF DEPARTMENTAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES, Undergraduate major**

The Political Science department will ask all students to take an online entrance assessment when they declare their major (or, for students who declare at admission time, when they arrive on campus) and an online exit assessment when they file for graduation. These assessments will be voluntary—no consequences will follow from not taking them—but they will be presented to students declaring the major or filing for graduation simply as part of the process, in the hope that this “nudge” leads most of them to take for granted that it is something that they should do.

The department Curriculum Committee will undertake a study of the results every Winter quarter, setting the past year’s entrance and exit assessments against data from previous years. The committee will circulate a report of their observations to the department every Spring quarter, including any related proposals for improvements to our undergraduate curriculum/program or to our assessement procedures.

This assessment will assess all 8 departmental learning objectives. The LOs are in bold below, followed by related questions for the entrance/exit exams. We will also use the entrance and exit exams to gather other survey data about our students, with prospective survey questions summarized at the end of this document. The entrance and exit exams will be anonymous, with no identifying information retained. Our purpose is to evaluate how well we are doing with our overall pool of students.

*Learning Objectives 1-6 can be assessed with Likert-scale (subjective) questions.*

**1. Recognize and describe major variations in political institutions and policy processes**

* **including variation over time among democracies, between democratic and non-democratic systems, across issue areas within countries, and across levels of governance from local contexts to the global arena.**

LIKERT QUESTIONS:

* I know some salient differences between US political institutions and those of other countries and can explain them to others.
* If I wanted to achieve something in a local government context, in influencing US national policy, or in international affairs, I have a concrete sense of how I could work to pursue my goals.

**2. Recognize the roles played by various actors, groups, and movements in political and cultural processes**

* **including the social and material power resources to which they may have access, and factors that advantage certain social groups and exclude or marginalize others.**

LIKERT QUESTIONS:

* I understand and can explain to others how people influence American politics, and why people in American society might vary in their ability to influence politics and policy outcomes.
* I understand and can explain to others how some social groups may have economic, cultural, or political-institutional advantages or disadvantages in acquiring and exercising political power.

**3. Identify the defining principles of major political ideologies and apply their perspectives to political issues**

* **including liberalism, conservatism, socialism, fascism, etc.**

LIKERT QUESTIONS:

* I can identify and explain to others the major themes and variations of liberal and conservative ideologies in today’s American politics and apply them to some major political issues.
* I can identify and explain to others some core beliefs of the ideologies of socialism, fascism, environmentalism, and political Islamism in ways that would be recognizable to their proponents.

**4. Describe how power, agency, and authority are constituted, disseminated, and exercised**

* **including similarities and differences within and across groups, countries, and in the international arena.**

LIKERT QUESTIONS:

* I understand and can explain to others the different bases of political authority and a variety of reasons why people accept authority.
* I can competently discuss similarities and differences in how people are empowered or disempowered in local American politics, other countries, and international affairs.

**5. Analyze, interpret, and explain why and how political processes or policy outcomes vary**

* **including across countries, policy realms, and time.**

LIKERT QUESTIONS:

* I can brainstorm multiple plausible explanations about why political outcomes like the shape of governments, laws, elections, wars, etc. might turn out differently over space and time.

**6. Identify and describe several analytical methods that political scientists use to study political phenomena.**

LIKERT QUESTIONS:

* I can identify the kinds of evidence that would support or undercut rival hypotheses about political outcomes.
* I can critique arguments about political events or outcomes by assessing whether they present compelling evidence.

*Learning Objectives 7, 8, and 9 can be assessed by behavioral questions about what students have done at UO.*

**7. Construct a sustained argument evaluating a theoretical claim against alternative theoretical traditions or perspectives and appropriate evidence**

* **including in a written paper, oral presentation, or other creative output.**

In courses or projects within the Political Science program at UO, I have:

* Written a paper that evaluates one hypothesis or argument about politics with attention to alternative arguments and evidence.
* Written a policy memo that analyzes options for an organization or government to take certain actions.
* Made an oral presentation that makes a theoretical argument about politics with attention to alternative arguments and evidence.
* Undertaken an independent research project that makes a theoretical argument about politics with attention to alternative arguments and evidence.

LIKERT QUESTIONS

* Because of my courses in political science, I have become a stronger analytical writer.
* Because of my courses in political science, I have become better at oral presentations on complex topics.
* Because of my courses in political science, I am more capable of undertaking independent research in support of a theoretical argument.

**8. Demonstrate engagement with social and political issues**

* **including through politically-related employment or internships, regular critical reading about current events, or other forms of policy and political experience.**

While studying political science at UO I have:

* Held an internship with some relevance to politics, public policy, law or social movements.
* Held a paid job with some relevance to politics, public policy, law or social movements.
* Read regularly (at least once a week for an extended period) in-depth and critical writing about current events.
* Volunteered with a political or public-policy organization.
* Participated in a demonstration or other event oriented toward politics or public policy.

SURVEY QUESTIONS (the Curriculum committee may add other data-gathering questions to this survey over time):

[ENTRANCE and EXIT] Did you declare your major in your freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior year?

[ENTRANCE and EXIT] How would you rate your interest in politics (5-point scale)?

[ENTRANCE] We have six career paths. Which one interests you most?

ENTRANCE] Which career path sounds the next most interesting to you?

[EXIT] Which career paths did you complete, if any?

[EXIT] Did you work closely with a Political Science faculty member on an individual project while at UO?

[EXIT] How positive or negative do you feel overall about your experience at UO (5-point scale)?

[EXIT] How positive or negative do you feel overall about your experience in the political science department specifically (5-point scale)?

[EXIT] How would you rate advising support for your PS studies (5-point scale)?