

EWU Programmatic SLO Assessment
AY 2015-16 and “Closing the Loop” for AY 2014-15

Degree/Certificate: **Bachelor of Arts**
Major/Option: **Political Science**
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Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2015-2016

Part I – for the 2015-2016 academic year

1. Student Learning Outcome:

Political Science, Student Learning Outcome #1:

Demonstrate basic knowledge, skills and values related to various forms and structure in governments and relate those specifics to political and policy outcomes as necessary for responsible and active participation as both national and international citizens.

2. Overall evaluation of progress on outcome: Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;
 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;
 SLO met without change required

3. Strategies and methods: Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

The method of assessment was systematic analysis of all students’ in class exams in Winter 2015, GOVT 330 Federalism, State and Local Government. This was done through a content analysis of these students’ abilities to understand the historical and philosophical context of federalism, constitutional interpretations of the state and national relationship, the branches of state government, and means with which citizens can participate in their state government through lectures and a close reading of the texts. These terms and ideas were chosen because they are accepted as the critical foundations of the class and are essential to know in communicating knowledge of federalism and state government and the goals of SLO #1 dovetail well with the rigors of this course.

This method of assessment was used because many of the concepts and ideas which are foundational and enduring to federalism and state government are of a complex enough of a nature that other forms of evaluations such as a survey instrument might not be subtle enough to capture much of the nuance and higher level thinking we hope to find. Furthermore, by using the students’ writing samples we are able to capture more readily their ability to identify all aspects of the SLO.

4. Observations gathered from data: Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.

a. Findings:

Students were able to begin to find a deeper understanding of the nuances of federalism and how it has evolved over time. They also demonstrated knowledge of the importance of subjective interpretations of the meaning of various constitutional clauses. They also showed a great understanding of the branches of government at the state level and their similarities to the federal level. Students also were able to identify various ways they can effect democratic change in several states.

b. Analysis of findings:

This analysis demonstrates many positives in meeting this SLO and a few things that need to be improved upon.

On the positive side, students showed a greater understanding of the branches, roles, and dynamics in state governments. They also showed a strong understanding of the ways and rationale for political participation at the state level.

There were weaknesses in their understanding of the nuances of federalism. Students did have a harder time appreciating the role of the courts and evolution of interpretation of constitutional clauses critical to understanding the federal relationship.

5. What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?

- a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

We will look for more user friendly work for the students to read. I will also provide take home writing assignments to see if a different environment might assist in their endeavors.

- b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

Fall 2016: identify other potential readings

Winter 2017: reorganize syllabus

Spring 2017: reorganize reading and lectures to allow for more time and discussion

6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

The assessment process is optimal and evaluating writing appears to be the best way to understand student knowledge of the subject.

PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP
FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2014-15 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

1. Student Learning Outcome(s) assessed for 2014-15

Introduction

The SLO assessment will be focusing on closing the loop from the 2014-2015 assessment which focused on SLO #6

Below are the findings from the AY 2014-2015 assessment

<u>AY 2014-15 Assessment</u>
1. Student learning outcome
Government Department Assessment, SLO #6: Demonstrate analytical and conceptual skills, reading skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills and be able to effectively apply those skills to political issues.
1. Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:
<i><u>X</u> SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming</i> Students were not learning about philosophical underpinnings of legislative government A plan was outlined that included these two steps: Discussions were to occur and a plan implemented
Strategies implemented during 2016-17 to improve student learning, based on the 2014-15 assessment.
The class was going to have a restructured reading focusing more on the writing that were appropriate for including Mills and Rousseau.
2. Summary of results
The class will not be taught until next Winter, but I have spent a large amount of time finding the appropriate readings and believe that this area will be improved upon.
2. Projected changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.
New textbooks are always being evaluated and additions and refinement to the technological aspect of the course will continue.