

Assessment Plan 2019-2024

TCNJ Department of Political Science

In this assessment cycle, the Political Science department will focus on collecting time series data on student achievement in breadth of knowledge in the discipline. The department will also assess depth of knowledge and communication. While the other three learning goals are not evaluated in this assessment cycle, they remain guiding pedagogical objectives of the department and will be measured in the next assessment cycle. This organized and systematic plan meets requirements and adheres to the spirit of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

Political Science learning outcomes.

1. Breadth: Students will demonstrate an understanding of political science and politics, including defining key concepts in the discipline and their application to the major fields.
2. Depth: Students will demonstrate a deep understanding of at least one subfield.
3. Critical Thinking: In discussions and assigned papers students will show advanced skills in critical thinking so that they may understand complex relationships and concepts, identify underlying assumptions, and dissect a scholarly text.
4. Original research: Students will conduct original research projects with data collection and methods of analysis characteristic of political science.
5. Communication: Students will demonstrate communication skills by presenting oral and written arguments that are cogent, compelling, and well-substantiated.
6. Civic life: Students will graduate prepared for professional life and civic participation in a diverse society.

Assessment methods.

For the purpose of comparison over time, modification of the assessment instruments should be minimal and gradual. However, improvements are encouraged.

In order to simplify implementation and interpretation, all methods are designed to assess on an intuitive percentage scale of grades. For example, scores of 80-89 represent B-quality work, with 80 and 81 corresponding to B- work and 88 and 89 correspond to B+ work.

- *General test* of concepts in Political Science. Similar to an exam in an introductory course, students will answer multiple choice questions in an online exam that gauge their knowledge across the subfields of political science. Grades will be produced automatically.
- *Depth test* – Similar to an essay question on an exam, students write a brief (150-300 word) essay that answers an open-ended question in the subfield of their choice. The prompt should let students form their own thesis and use as evidence their preferred method or cases. The objective of this assessment is to judge the degree to which the student can use efficiently concepts and methodology appropriate to the subfield and use whatever evidence or cases the student knows best. Essays are graded by all faculty with each assessing questions their subfield.
- *CSA rubric* - Assess work presented in class or at the Celebration of Student Achievement using a standard rubric.

The following describes the schedule, means, and anticipated results of this assessment period.

Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Learning objective	1: Breadth	1: Breadth	5. Communication	2. Depth	1: Breadth
Assessment method	General test administered to seniors	General test administered to incoming freshmen and seniors	CSA rubric	Depth test to graduating seniors.	General test administered to incoming freshmen and seniors
Comparison	Baseline for comparison to 2011 seniors and 2014 seniors.	Static (previous year) and dynamic: compare 2020 freshmen to 2024 seniors.	Baseline for future comparisons.	Compare competency across subfields; gather number who self-identify in each subfield; baseline for future comparisons.	Dynamic: how cohort improves and changes in cohorts across time.