

Dalton State College

Detailed Assessment Report 2015-2016 POLS 1101 (Gilmer)

As of: 8/15/2016 09:28 AM EDT

(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked *One-Time, Recurring, No Request*.)

Course Description

Surveys the structure and operation of the American federal government, the state government of Georgia, and American local government.

Prerequisites: READ 0098, unless exempt

Connected Document

[POLS1101-55 Course Syllabus](#)

Program Outcomes

PO 1: Students Will Read Critically

Graduates of associate's degree programs in the School of Liberal Arts will read critically.

PO 2: Students Will Think Critically

Graduates of associate's degree programs in the School of Liberal Arts will think critically.

PO 3: Demonstrate Competence in Written Communication

Graduates of associate's degree programs in the School of Liberal Arts will demonstrate competence in written communication.

PO 4: Competence in the Social Sciences

Graduates of associate's programs will be competent in the social sciences.

Outcomes, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

Outc. 1: Articulate Constitutional Principles and Processes Fundamental to Democracy.

Students will articulate the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation.

Relevant Associations:

General Education Goals Associations

6.4 Students will articulate the constitutional principles and governmental processes fundamental to American democracy and political participation.

7.2 Students will articulate the constitutional principles and governmental processes fundamental to American democracy and political participation.

9.3 Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation.

Institutional Mission Associations

2 Dalton State offers targeted bachelor's degrees, a full range of associate's degrees and career certificate programs, and a wide variety of public service activities.

Strategic Plan Associations

Dalton State College

3.1 Goal I: Renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet students' 21st century educational needs.

Related Measures

M 2: Multiple Choice Examination (Hipps, Spring 2015/Guo, Fall 2015)

Students will take a multiple choice examination covering the U.S. Constitution, Federalism and the fundamental principles of democracy (Chapters 1, 2 & 3). The entire examination (50 multiple-choice questions) covers these three topical areas (each topical area is specific to a chapter).

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

Connected Document

[Midterm Exam-fall2015-Guo](#)

Target:

A minimum of 75% of students will score a 70% or higher on their first multiple-choice examination covering the fundamental principles of democracy, the U.S. Constitution, and Federalism.

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Partially Met

In POLS 1101-55, a traditional class taught on the Gilmer campus during the Fall 2015 semester, 73% of students (No=24 of 31) earned a 70% or better on the middle term exam, which consists of 48 multiple-choice questions covering the fundamental principles of democracy, the U.S. Constitution, and Federalism. Seven students (No=7 of 31, or 22.5%) made a D or F grade on the exam, which is higher than anticipated, despite the fact that a study guide was given prior to the exam.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Class review session for midterm exam

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Will conduct an exam review session prior to the midterm exam. Although a study guide was given, a review session appears to be ...

M 5: Graded Examinations (Veve, Spring 2016)

(Spring 2016/Veve) Students will take four graded tests throughout the semester composed of multiple-choice, true-false, or matching questions. Some of the questions will assess their understanding of the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation. Grading Criteria: For the graded tests, students will be scored based on whether they correctly answer the questions.

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

Target:

(Spring 2016/Veve) A minimum of 70% of students will earn a 70% or better on the exam questions that pertain to the understanding of the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation.

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

(Veve, Spring 2016) In Political Science 1101-01, a traditional class taught on the Gilmer County campus during Spring Semester, 97% of students (28 of 29 students) earned better than 70% on exam questions that pertained to the understanding of the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation. Students did very well on questions concerning constitutional principles, although they had trouble with some applying some specifics in amendments like the right to a speedy trial located in the Sixth Amendment and the Taking Clause (Eminent Domain) in the Fifth Amendment. Students did very well understanding the First Amendment, the different parts of the First Amendment (such as freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and the responsibility of freedom of speech). Although students had trouble with some parts of the Bill of Rights that is not carried out by the states (such as the Third Amendment and parts of the Eighth Amendment that are not being carried out at the state level). (Veve, Spring 2016)

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Continue to provide students opportunity to complete homework for an acceptable grade and to help improve test grades

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

(Spring 2016/Veve) Requiring students to complete homework for this class is a new assessment tool for this class. This is to ...

Outc. 2: Articulate Understanding of Major Political Forces Shaping Society

Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society within the framework of a federal system of government.

Relevant Associations:

General Education Goals Associations

- 3.2 Students will express orally or in writing a broad understanding of an array of issues relating to culture, society, creative expression, or the human experience.
- 6.1 Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society.
- 6.3 Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate and analyze perspectives and values of diverse cultural groups and their historical experiences in the United States.
- 7.3 Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society.
- 9.1 Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments.
- 9.3 Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation.

Institutional Mission Associations

- 2 Dalton State offers targeted bachelor's degrees, a full range of associate's degrees and career certificate programs, and a wide variety of public service activities.

Strategic Plan Associations

Dalton State College

- 3.1 Goal I: Renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet students' 21st century educational needs.

Related Measures

M 3: TED Talk Worksheet assignment (Hipps, Spring 2015)

TED Talk Worksheet assignment

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target:

Eighty percent of students will score an 80% or better on the TED Talk Worksheet assignment.

M 4: Online Discussion (Guo, Fall 2015)

Students are required to participate in weekly discussions. Lesson Four Discussion focuses on campaign finance, which tackles directly on major Political Forces Shaping Society. Students will compose their response to the question and issued raised in the discussion prompt, and post their responses on D2L. They will need to make a minimum of two comments on postings made by other students. Description: Lesson 4 Discussion - Campaign Finance Many people feel that our political process has become inundated with too much money and influence from big businesses. With the recent Supreme Court decision that eliminated limits on how much individuals can spend in a single election cycle, some experts feel that we may be paving the way for large corporations and extremely wealthy individuals to basically buy political influence and leverage. Click the link below to gain more information about the recent Supreme Court decision. <http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/02/politics/scotus-political-donor-limits/index.html?iref=allsearch> Once you have watched the video, please address the following questions: Do you think there should be limits on the amount of money that people can give to a candidate in an election cycle? Do you think there should be a limit on the amount of money that a corporation can give to an individual candidate or party? Do you think money plays too big of

a role in presidential (and state & local) elections? What would your solution be to our current campaign finance situation in America? Once you have completed your initial post, read and respond to the posts of at least 2 of your peers. Your initial post and your peer responses should be substantive (well thought out and logically

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target:

Seventy percent of students will score a 70% or better on this online discussion assignment

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

In POLS 1101-55, a traditional class taught on the Gilmer campus during the Spring 2015 semester, 81% of students (N=25 of 31) earned a 70% or better on Discussion Four Assignment. Nineteen percent of students (N=6 of 31), however, submitted no posting or comments and consequently received 0 grade on this assignment, which is discouraging. Their reason for the non-submission is most likely due to missing the submission deadline. Although the goal was met, some actions can be taken to serve as a reminder about the assignment deadline.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Submission Deadline Reminder

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Will send a submission deadline reminder to students prior to the due date by using email or calendar auto notification..

M 6: Graded Examinations (Veve, Spring 2016)

(Spring 2016/Veve) Students will take four graded tests throughout the semester composed of multiple-choice, true-false, or matching questions. Some of the questions will assess their ability to articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society within the framework of a federal system of government.

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

Target:

A minimum of 70% of students will earn a 70% or better on the exam questions that pertain to their ability to articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society within the framework of a federal system of government

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

(Veve, Spring 2016) In Political Science 1101-01, a traditional class taught on the Gilmer County campus during Spring Semester, 80% of students (23 of 29 students) earned better than 70% on exam questions that pertained to their ability to articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society within the framework of a federal system of government. Students did very well on questions concerning historical questions involving the Founding Fathers. For example, students have demonstrated an understanding of political ideologies of John Marshall, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton specifically. However, students have a trouble understanding the Nullification Doctrine and what historical figure might be in support (or not be in support of Nullification) based on these ideologies. Students have demonstrated an understanding of well-known court cases.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Continue to provide students opportunity to complete homework for an acceptable grade and to help improve test grades

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

(Spring 2016/Veve) Requiring students to complete homework for this class is a new assessment tool for this class. This is to ...

Outc. 3: Analyze, Evaluate, & Provide Convincing Reasons in Support of Conclusions

Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons regarding issues pertaining to the structure and operation of American government.

Relevant Associations:

General Education Goals Associations

- 3.2 Students will express orally or in writing a broad understanding of an array of issues relating to culture, society, creative expression, or the human experience.
- 6.1 Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society.
- 7.1 Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate and analyze perspectives and values of diverse cultural groups and their historical experiences in the United States.
- 7.3 Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society.
- 9.3 Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation.

Institutional Mission Associations

- 2 Dalton State offers targeted bachelor's degrees, a full range of associate's degrees and career certificate programs, and a wide variety of public service activities.

Strategic Plan Associations

Dalton State College

- 3.1 Goal I: Renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet students' 21st century educational needs.

Related Measures

M 1: Government Issue Debate (Hipps, Spring 2015/Guo, Fall 2015)

Students will participate in a debate where they will present arguments and conclusions based on the analysis and evaluation of relevant political materials related to a concept relevant to Civil Rights and/or Civil Liberties in American

Government. Students are required to submit a short essay regarding the topic that they are assigned. This essay will be evaluated using stated grading criteria or a rubric.

Source of Evidence: Discussions / Coffee Talk

Connected Document

[The First Debate--Freedom of Speech--Handout-Guo-fall15](#)

Target:

A minimum of 70% of students will achieve a 70% or better on both the written and oral components of their American Government Debate.

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

In POLS 1101-55, a traditional class taught on the Gilmer campus during the Fall 2015 semester, 97% (No=30, out of 31) of the students who enrolled in the course for the Fall 2015 semester earned a 80% or better grade on their American Government debate assignment. One student who did not participate in the debate was allowed to make up the debate by submitting a longer essay on the topic, but received partial credit. The topic of the discussion is about the First Amendment Right of free speech. Students were given an assignment sheet in advance, and had a week of time to conduct preliminary research on the topic. To assist the student understanding of the topic, the instructor assigned a related video and presented a series of controversial cases decided by the court or covered by the media. Students also had a chance to work with an assigned peer group to prepare for the debate. The combined strategy seems to work fairly well. The grade consists of holistic grading of classroom participation in the debate and the summary essay submitted to the D2L drop box.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Increase Participation Opportunities

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015

One of the challenges for this assignment is getting students to participate in the conversational portion of the debates. I hav...

M 7: Graded Examinations (Veve, Spring 2016)

(Spring 2016/Veve) Students will take four graded tests throughout the semester composed of multiple-choice, true-false, or matching questions. Some of the questions will assess the student's ability to analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons regarding issues pertaining to the structure and operation of American government

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

Target:

A minimum of 70% of students will earn a 70% or better on the exam questions that pertain to the student's ability to analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons regarding issues pertaining to the structure and operation of American government.

Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

(Veve, Spring 2016) In Political Science 1101-01, a traditional class taught on the Gilmer County campus during Spring Semester, 86% of students (25 of 29 students) earned better than 70% on exam questions that pertained to their ability to analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons regarding issues pertaining to the structure and operation of American government. Students did very well on questions concerning how certain groups vote and how certain government actions take place, but have trouble answering questions about what should happen. For example the "Iron Triangle" is a term often used to describe how external forces sometimes influence agency decisions. The students are having had trouble "Connecting the dots" predicting what might occur in the future politically because of such external forces. (Veve, Spring 2016).

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

Continue to provide students opportunity to complete homework for an acceptable grade and to help improve test grades

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

(Spring 2016/Veve) Requiring students to complete homework for this class is a new assessment tool for this class. This is to ...

Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)

Increase Participation Opportunities

One of the challenges for this assignment is getting students to participate in the conversational portion of the debates. I have not had trouble getting students to participate in the writing component of the debate. Students have actually exceeded expectations in the quality of their submissions and participation. However, participation and success have lagged significantly in the oral component. I believe this is largely due to the fact that students have very little opportunity to participate in oral assignments during the semester. In light of this, I will significantly increase the number of mandatory oral presentations that students will complete during the course of the semester. By introducing low stakes opportunities to participate in public speaking, students will have the ability to familiarize themselves with public speaking and the criteria I am looking for in a successfully completed assignment.

Established in Cycle: 2014-2015

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):

Measure: Government Issue Debate (Hipps, Spring 2015/Guo, Fall 2015) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Analyze, Evaluate, & Provide Convincing Reasons in Support of Conclusions

Projected Completion Date: 08/2015

Responsible Person/Group: Instructor

Class review session for midterm exam

Will conduct an exam review session prior to the midterm exam. Although a study guide was given, a review session

appears to be necessary to highlight some important course information and help students better prepared for the exam.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: Medium

Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):

Measure: Multiple Choice Examination (Hipps, Spring 2015/Guo, Fall 2015) | **Student Learning**

Outcome: Articulate Constitutional Principles and Processes Fundamental to Democracy.

Implementation Description: Will be implemented next time the course is taught by the instructor at Gilmer Center.

Projected Completion Date: 08/2017

Responsible Person/Group: Baogang Guo

Additional Resources: None

Continue to provide students opportunity to complete homework for an acceptable grade and to help improve test grades

(Spring 2016/Veve) Requiring students to complete homework for this class is a new assessment tool for this class. This is to ensure students have the opportunity to comprehend and analyze concepts that they need to learn for this class. These homework assignments requires students to come up with answers supported by the textbook and the lectures. A few days after the homework is turned in the students can check their answers with a "cheat sheet" (an answer key with how I would answer the questions). In this case, students generally meet target for success.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):

Measure: Graded Examinations (Veve, Spring 2016) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate Understanding of Major Political Forces Shaping Society

Continue to provide students opportunity to complete homework for an acceptable grade and to help improve test grades

(Spring 2016/Veve) Requiring students to complete homework for this class is a new assessment tool for this class. This is to ensure students have the opportunity to comprehend and analyze concepts that they need to learn for this class. These homework assignments requires students to come up with answers supported by the textbook and the lectures. A few days after the homework is turned in the students can check their answers with a "cheat sheet" (an answer key with how I would answer the questions). In this case, students generally meet target for success.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):

Measure: Graded Examinations (Veve, Spring 2016) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate Constitutional Principles and Processes Fundamental to Democracy.

Continue to provide students opportunity to complete homework for an acceptable grade and to help improve test grades

(Spring 2016/Veve) Requiring students to complete homework for this class is a new assessment tool for this class. This is to ensure students have the opportunity to comprehend and analyze concepts that they need to learn for this class. These homework assignments requires students to come up with answers supported by the textbook and the lectures. A few days after the homework is turned in the students can check their answers with a "cheat sheet" (an answer key with how I would answer the questions). In this case, students generally meet target for success.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):

Measure: Graded Examinations (Veve, Spring 2016) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Analyze, Evaluate, & Provide Convincing Reasons in Support of Conclusions

Submission Deadline Reminder

Will send a submission deadline reminder to students prior to the due date by using email or calendar auto notification..

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: Medium

Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):

Measure: Online Discussion (Guo, Fall 2015) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate Understanding of Major Political Forces Shaping Society

Implementation Description: Will be implemented next time the course is taught by the instructor in Fall 2017

Projected Completion Date: 08/2017

Responsible Person/Group: Baogang Guo

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

What strengths and weaknesses did your assessment results show? In addition, please describe 2 to 3 significant improvements or continuous improvement measures you'll put in place as a result of your assessment findings.

Teaching at the Gilmer Center is somewhat challenging since students from that area tends to be less motivated for some reasons. This is not to say these students are not capable of higher achievement. I taught at the Gilmer Center several times and knew the students population well enough so that I was prepared to face some of the challenges. I believe motivation and constant engagement with students hold the key to student success there. To this end, I adopted the eCore American Government modules for teaching POLS1101-55 in Fall 2015 at the Gilmer Center. The modules' quizzes and online discussions were used to keep students focused on the continuing learning process, the debates and

discussions in class kept course content relevant to students' life and interests, The short video clips and multimedia content were designed to suite students' need for visual materials. These three approaches were significant improvement in comparison with the way how I taught this course at Gilmer before. The results seems to be more positive and the students performance is improvins. Obviously there are always rooms for further improvement. One challenge remains to be present is the poor student attendance record. One-third of students missed more than four class sessions. I understand most of our students in the area work full time, and it is a constant struggle for them to balance their time for work and school. This will surely have negative impact on their learning outcome. There are some factors that are beyond our control. But by making the course materials more interesting and fun to learn will help bring students back to classroom. A more rigorous attendance policy will help, but certainly not enough. (Veve, Spring 2016) In Political Science 1101-01, a traditional class taught on the Gilmer County campus during Spring Semester, had its challenges. The class had 9 area MOWR (dual-enrolled) students in the class. Eight of the nine MOWR students completed the course, the one student who did not complete the course told me that "they don't usually read the book" and that was the reason for their dropping of the course. The other students in this course who struggled had the same issues with reading the textbook. In preparation for 2nd, 3rd, and Final Exam I instituted a homework and homework "cheat sheet" answer keep to help students prepare for the exams and to keep students focused on the continuing learning process. The students at the Gilmer Center who really engaged with these homework sheets achieved higher grades on their exams and in the course. The students who missed more than 3 homework assignments in the semester made up all of the students who either dropped the course or made below 70 percent for their final grade. Attendance in this course this semester was very good as I had a strict attendance policy and this policy impacted part of their overall grade. Of the students who completed the course 95% of them had less than 3 absences in class. The students who missed more than 3 classes in the semester made up all of the students who either dropped the course or made below 70 percent for their final grade. Obviously there are always rooms for further improvement. There will always be some factors that are beyond our control. But by making the students apply course materials to homework and having a strict attendance policy helped bring students to classroom, engaged in the material, be more successful on test, and ultimately more successful in the overall course.