Draft   # POLS 1101 - American Government (Gilmer)

Reporting Period	<	2016-2017	>

Course Description

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

Program Outcomes/Goals

POG1   ## Critical Thinking, Reading & Writing

Produce graduates who read, articulate thought through writing and think critically.

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO1   #### 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.

Supported Initiatives

2	Standards	3	General Education	0	Institutional Priorities	14	Strategic Initiatives

Measures

M1   ### Government Issue Online Discussion

Students will participate in a online discussion where they will present arguments and conclusions based on the analysis and evaluation of key political topics that are relevant to the connection between the study of American Government and modern day key political issues. Students are required to complete an original post answering the question. In addition, students are required to respond to at least two of their classmates with substantive responses directly related to the content or arguments that other students have made.

Methodology

Student essays will be evaluated using stated grading criteria or a rubric.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment

Target

A minimum of 70% of students will score a 70% or higher on their Government Issue Online Discussion assignment.

Target	Findings	Improvements Achieved from Previous Action Plans	Improvement Type	Status

70%   This class,   :   Met
                                 POLS 1101-
                                 55:
                                 American
                                 Government,
                                 was a
                                 traditional,
                                 face-to-face
                                 class that
                                 met at the
                                 Gilmer
                                 Center
                                 campus of
                                 Dalton State
                                 College in
                                 Ellijay,
                                 Georgia
                                 during the
                                 Fall 2016
                                 semester. To
                                 measure
                                 students'
                                 ability to
                                 analyze,
                                 evaluate
                                 and provide
                                 convincing
                                 reasons in
                                 support of
                                 conclusions,
                                 I examined
                                 the grades
                                 from the
                                 online
                                 government
                                 issue
                                 assignment
                                 that students
                                 completed
                                 during the
                                 semester.
                                 An average
                                 of 82
                                 percent
                                 (N=26/32)
                                 students
                                 who
                                 completed
                                 the
                                 assignment
                                 earned at
                                 least a 70%
                                 on the
                                 assignment,
                                 whereas
                                 only 18
                                 percent
                                 (6/32) did
                                 not earn the
                                 necessary
                                 points. This
                                 illustrates
                                 that the
                                 target of
                                 70% of
                                 students
                                 earning a
                                 70% or
                                 better on the
                                 government
                                 issue online
                                 discussion
                                 assignment
                                 was met,
                                 and that
                                 students in
                                 POLS 1101-
                                 55 (Fall
                                 2016)
                                 showed an
                                 ability to
                                 analyze,
                                 evaluate
                                 and provide
                                 convincing
                                 reasons in
                                 support of
                                 their
                                 conclusions.

Analysis of Finding and Evaluation Results

This measures success can be tied to the amount of time that we spent in class discussing current events and the election during the Fall 2016 semester. Students in POLS 1101-55 were required to participate in in-class discussions, small group workshops and short in-class writing assignments related to their views on the elections and the current events that were shaping the events that were playing out during the election. I believe that another area that increased the success of this assignment is that my students at the Gilmer campus were significantly more likely to have known one another prior to the class (and approximately 20 percent of the class were dual enrollment students who were in High School together). This familiarity made them more comfortable participating in the small group discussions and workshops as they didn't have to engage in any of the "getting-to-know-you" phases that classes taught on the main campus are often struggling to deal with. Finally, we were in an extremely politically charged environment during this past semester and I believe that this hyper-focus on politics made American Government more relevant to their real lives that it normally seems like it is. They were more likely to be having conversations about politics outside of class than normal, and thus the conversations that were occurring in class simply became extensions of conversations that were already occurring. Even students who were generally disinterested in politics seemed more likely to participate in the online nature of the conversation as there was not an immediate (or visceral) reaction from classmates regarding their opinions.

While the overall target was met, I still think that there were students who were hesitant to be honest about their opinions for fear of ridicule from the class. Ironically, this was especially true of liberal leaning students who were in the minority in this particular section of the course. I think that the political climate may have been too politically charged for those who didn't do well to share their true opinions about the election and the current political climate.

SLO2 # Articulate Constitutional Principles and Processes Fundamental to Democracy

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

Supported Initiatives

| 2 | Standards | 1 | General Education | 0 | Institutional Priorities | 14 | Strategic Initiatives |

Action Plans for Improvement

Action Plans for Improvement Description

Although students met the target for this particular measure, I feel that their success could be improved in several key ways. First, I have found that student success increased when I provided video lectures for them as a study tool for their examinations. In the past I have done this for material covered later in the semester, (usually as a response to getting behind in the material and needing to give students an opportunity to re-examine material at their leisure). As a result, I ill create video lectures for all of the material covered in the course to aid students in their preparation. In addition, I plan on creating "Working study guides" which will help students prepare for the examination while still recognizing that they are responsible for test preparation in an introductory course.

Due Date
May 01 2017

Status
Planned

Measures

M1 ## Examination on the Constitution and American Federalism

Students will complete an examination with questions directly related to the creation and implementation of the Constitution and the role of American federalism in our governmental processes.

Methodology

For the examination, students will be graded on whether they correctly answer the questions on the examination.

Source of Evidence: Standardized test

Target

A minimum of 70% of students will score an 75% or better on their first examination.

Target	Findings	Improvements Achieved from Previous Action Plans	Improvement Type	Status

70%	This class, POLS 1101-55: American Government, was a traditional, face-to-face class that met at the Gilmer Center campus of Dalton State College in Ellijay, Georgia during the Fall 2016 semester. To measure students' ability to articulate constitutional principles and processes fundamental to democracy, I examined the grades from their first examination on the constitution and American federalism. I am using all of the questions because I believe that the entirety of the examination speaks to the principles and processes that are essential to understanding democracy in America. An average of 94 percent (N=30/32) students who completed the assignment earned at least a 75% on the examination, whereas only 6 percent (2/32) did not earn the necessary points. This illustrates that the target of 70% of students earning a 70% or better on the government issue online discussion assignment was met, and that students in POLS 1101-55 (Fall 2016) showed an ability to articulate constitutional principles and processes fundamental to democracy.	Fall 2016 represents the first time I have officially assessed the extended campus section of this course; therefore, there is no Action Plan to which to refer. However, future assessments of this course will include reference to my current action plan in order to ensure consistent improvement.	:	Partially Met

Analysis of Finding and Evaluation Results

It is important to note that this success on this particular target is a bit deceptive. Although students had a high degree of success, I am not entirely sure that their success is fully illustrative of their knowledge or success of the course material. The major reason for student's success is after dismal results in their original (or raw) test scores, I allowed students to make corrections to their examinations to earn up to half of the points they missed on the examination. In order to be eligible to earn these points students had to indicate the questions that they had gotten incorrect, find the correct answer (including page number) and provide a detailed description of why their answer was incorrect. I allowed students to do this because they were adjusting to my style of the examination for the first time during the course of the semester. In addition, students appeared to be having some difficulty reconciling the way that I explained things in class with the way that the textbook presented information. Indeed, if you examine the Raw examination scores (the scores without questions that more than 65% of the class missed and without a curve applied) only approximately 59% (N=19/32) of the students score above a 75% on their first examination. Again, I believe that some of this is due to the trouble that students experienced with reconciling the very "academic" nature of the textbook versus my more real-world example reliant approach to teaching political science and American government. In addition, the first examination occurs only about 3 weeks into the semester and students have usually not acclimated to the difference between high school and college yet and are usually unprepared to take an examination (especially one where a study guide has not been provided).

POG2 ## Social Sciences and History

Produce graduates who demonstrate an understanding of the forces shaping contemporary society as revealed through the social sciences and history.

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO1 ### 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.

Supported Initiatives

| 2 | Standards | 1 | General Education | 0 | Institutional Priorities | 14 | Strategic Initiatives |

Measures

M1 ### Multiple Choice Examination on Civil Liberties, Civil Rights & the Media

Students will take a multiple choice examination covering the Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and the Media in America. The entire examination (75 multiple-choice questions) covers these three topical areas (each topical area is specific to a chapter).

Methodology

For the examination, students will be graded on whether they correctly answer the questions on the examination.

Source of Evidence: Test/Exam/Quiz

Target

A minimum of 70% of students will score a 75% or higher on their fourth multiple-choice examination dealing with major forces and events that have shaped American society.

Target	Findings	Improvements Achieved from Previous Action Plans	Improvement Type	Status

70%   This class,   :   Exceeded
                 POLS 1101-
                 55: American
                 Government,
                 was a
                 traditional,
                 face-to-face
                 class that met
                 at the Gilmer
                 Center
                 campus of
                 Dalton State
                 College in
                 Ellijay,
                 Georgia
                 during the Fall
                 2016
                 semester. To
                 measure
                 students'
                 ability to
                 articulate an
                 understanding
                 of the major
                 forces, events,
                 and
                 influences that
                 have shaped
                 society, I
                 examined the
                 questions
                 from their
                 fourth
                 examination. I
                 am using all of
                 the questions
                 because I
                 believe that
                 the entirety of
                 the
                 examination
                 speaks the
                 forces that
                 have shaped
                 society in
                 America. An
                 average of 80
                 percent
                 (N=26/32)
                 students who
                 completed the
                 assignment
                 earned at
                 least a 75%
                 on the
                 examination,
                 whereas only
                 20 percent
                 (6/32) did not
                 earn the
                 necessary
                 points. This
                 illustrates that
                 the target of
                 70% of
                 students
                 earning a
                 70% or better
                 on the
                 government
                 issue online
                 discussion
                 assignment
                 was met, and
                 that students
                 in POLS
                 1101-55 (Fall
                 2016) showed
                 an ability to
                 articulate
                 constitutional
                 principles and
                 processes
                 fundamental
                 to democracy.

Analysis of Finding and Evaluation Results

I believe that there are several reasons that students were able to meet the target on this particular examination. First, I believe that the fact that this was the final examination in the course (and the students last significant way to improve their grades before the end of the semester) that students put a significant amount of time and effort into preparing for these examinations. Although it is anecdotal, I had more students contact me with questions about information regarding terms or concepts that we covered in class than I had for the first three examinations combined. I believe that this illustrates that students were more engaged in the information than they may have been for the first three examinations. Second (and potentially the most impactful piece of information) is that I created video lectures for the students for all of the information that would appear on Examination #4. This allowed students to hear the information in class and then, at their leisure, review the information via video at home. I had several students comment on how they believe that this helped them to be more successful on their last examination. In addition, I think it likely helped students who had less than exceptional attendance get caught up on material that they may have missed when they didn't attend class. From a cursory glance at the students whose test grades improved the most from Test #3 to Test #4, I believe it is fair to note that students who did not attend class regularly likely benefitted from being able to access information at their own pace (as opposed to simply not having the information if they missed class under normal circumstances.

Related Projects

There are no related projects to this project.

Project Collaborators

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Project Attachments

Civil Rights & Liberties Examination (Fall 2016)

TestCorrectionAssignment.pdf

POLS_1101_Fall_16_Gilmer.docx

Constitution & Federalism Exam (Fall 16)

GovernmentIssueOnlineDiscussion.pdf

Comments

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