Millikin University
Student Learning in the Political Science Major

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Executive Summary

The Department of Political Science supports the mission of the University in preparing students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and a personal life of meaning and value. The mission of the department is to produce graduates who achieve the following seven learning outcome goals:

1. Identify key questions, fundamental concepts, and theoretical frameworks critical to an understanding of the political world;
2. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to American politics;
3. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to comparative politics;
4. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to the area of international relations;
5. Solve complex problems by demonstrating a mastery of substantive knowledge in the discipline's main subfields;
6. Follow scientific and humanistic methods to design and carry out politically-oriented research projects by utilizing sufficiently advanced social research methods;
7. Communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as colleagues in the field.

The major's core curriculum introduces students to each of the main subfields of political science at both the introductory and advanced levels, grounding them in the basic conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the discipline. Majors also receive training and acquire functional competency in elementary descriptive and inferential statistics. The program requires students to unite theory and practice through a politically-oriented internship. Finally, the major curriculum culminates in a senior thesis project and presentation, designed to integrate students' specific learning in a subfield (or across subfields) with advanced political science research practices.

In addition to regular assessment in the classroom, we assess student learning at two specific points in students' academic careers: First, through pre and post tests in introductory courses at the beginning of their careers and through a senior research project.

The department developed an assessment plan in 2008-9 but barely implemented it that year, assessing only one section of the introductory American Government course. There was a more extensive assessment in 2009-10 and the department's results were mixed. Student learning in three of our goals (#'s 2,4,7) was rated as **GREEN** and student learning in three goals (#'s 1,5,6) was rated as **YELLOW**. We need to develop some way to assess student learning regarding goal 3.

Report

<u>Learning Goals</u>

The Department of Political Science supports Millikin University's three prepares of professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and a personal life of meaning and value. The mission of the department is to produce graduates who can:

1. Identify key questions, fundamental concepts, and theoretical frameworks critical to an understanding of the political world;
2. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to American politics;
3. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to comparative politics;
4. Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to the area of international relations;
5. Solve complex problems by demonstrating a mastery of substantive knowledge in the discipline's main subfields;
6. Follow scientific and humanistic methods to design and carry out politically-oriented research projects by utilizing sufficiently advanced social research methods;
7. Communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as colleagues in the field.

The successful graduate of the Department of Political Science is one who has a broad understanding of the institutions and processes of government – at both the domestic and international levels – and the manners by which citizens participate in the policy process. The successful graduate of our department also has a broad understanding of the methods by which we examine political processes and an ability to design, carry out, and communicate the findings of original research.

<u>Snapshot</u>

The faculty of the Department of Political Science in 2009-10 consisted of just one full-time person. The department was able to take advantage of two adjuncts, Dr. Dick Dunn and Ms. Amy Hodges, who have extensive academic training and/or relevant career experience, to offer five courses in 2009-10. In addition, two Philosophy professors, Dr. Robert Money and Dr. Eric Roark, each offered a cross-listed Political Science/Philosophy course. Department faculty also contribute to the university's general education offerings: all of Dr. Dunn's courses were cross listed as IN 251s and three of Dr. Jervis's courses were cross-listed as IN 350s.

In 2008-9, the department implemented a new core curriculum. Political science majors complete 23 credits of a common core (including a required internship experience and senior thesis defended before the department's faculty) plus elective hours, for a total of 41 credit hours. The department also adopted an initial assessment plan for the major in 2008-9.

Additionally, the department sought and was successful in establishing an affiliation between Millikin University and The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. This new relationship significantly broadens the number of potential internship experiences for the department's majors, although no majors participated in the Washington Center program in 2009-10.

The department had 19 majors this past year and graduated 5. Graduates go into a variety of post-BA vocations and experiences. A significant percentage (3 of 5 in 2010) go to law school. Other students have continued their education in graduate programs, including those in political science, public administration, and international relations. Still others have gone on to become practitioners of the political arts in a variety of public service positions. Thus, the department's curriculum provides the foundation for a variety of politically-relevant careers.

The Learning Story

"Uniting Theory and Practice" continues to guide the development and execution of the department's major curriculum. With this principle in mind, the department revised its curriculum to enhance the preparation upon which majors can build their advanced coursework; through the curriculum's revision the department's faculty also reiterated the importance of discipline-appropriate research skills. The revision of the curriculum also stressed the importance of professional preparation through the inclusion of a senior thesis research project. The curriculum moves students toward gaining the necessary skills to be successful in their professional lives-- solid written and oral communication skills as well as critical and analytical thinking skills--and toward meeting the department's learning goals. (See curriculum map in Appendix I).

In the first year of the major curriculum, students set about the task of acquiring basic knowledge in the various subfields of the discipline. The first course majors take, Introduction to Politics (PO 100), provides students with a foundation in the discipline's basic concepts and theoretical frameworks. These basic concepts and theoretical frameworks inform majors' other introductory work in PO 105 (The American Political System) and PO 221 (Introduction to International Relations) and form the basis upon which majors' more advanced work is built.

In their second year, students acquire basic research skills through either the department's Methods of Political Research (PO 280) course or a sequence of courses from the Department of Mathematics. This requirement gives students the opportunity to examine and employ the various humanistic and scientific methods political scientists employ to analyze political activity. Additionally, majors take a course in macroeconomics. These courses provide majors with the essential foundational experiences we expect our majors to employ in their upper-level courses and senior-year thesis.

In the second and third years, political science majors broaden their knowledge through electives. Students' particular interests guide their choice of electives, and through these intensive elective studies, each major develops a line of inquiry leading to a senior thesis project. Additionally, during this time, majors complete an internship experience (PO 371) and professional development course (PO 410, although this course has not yet been offered), adding

practical political and vocational knowledge to the resources with which they can complete their major requirements.

The political science curriculum requires majors to integrate basic and enhanced knowledge of political phenomena, research skills, and the practical experiences gained over the course of the previous three years into a senior thesis project (PO 450). Majors work with faculty members to develop research proposals which they then execute in written form and defend before the department's faculty at the conclusion of their senior year.

Just as the curriculum assists the department in achieving its goals for student learning outcomes, so too does the advising process. Advising in the department facilitates and integrates reasoned choices that promote the student's growth as a person and as a major. In order to realize this mission, we try to help students:

1.   Develop plans of study for successfully achieving their degree and career goals,
2.   Select courses each semester to progress toward fulfilling their plans of study,
3.   Use the resources and services on campus to assist in fulfilling their plans of study, and
4.   Graduate in a timely manner.

At least once a semester, students meet in person with their academic advisors to discuss progress toward fulfilling the plan of study.

Assessment Methods

The department's faculty believes that, while we assess student learning in each of our classes and in many different ways throughout our majors' movement through the curriculum, there are key times when we should assess our majors' progress: during the assimilation of the basic knowledge from the discipline's subfields and as they complete a senior thesis project.

In a discipline such as ours, it is critical that majors have a solid foundation on which to build their later studies. We have designed the major's introductory sequence with that principle in mind and are committed to assessing student learning in these courses in order to insure that students attain proficiency in the discipline's central concepts, characteristics, and theories. Successful completion of – and learning in – the introductory courses contributes directly to students' ability to fulfill Learning Goals 1 – 5.

The senior thesis project provides an opportunity for us to assess how effectively our students have mastered comprehensive knowledge of the discipline. Students in PO 450 work closely with faculty members to develop a proposal – a process in which students report on their progress, try out various formulations of a central thesis or idea for exploration, find and locate sources to be used, etc. The faculty assesses each proposal on the basis of the rubric for the Thesis Proposal (see Appendix III). Students complete a substantial written essay – generally between 20-25 pages. This essay forms the basis for majors' PO 450 grade, and we assess the quality of the written work by employment of the rubric for the Written Thesis (see Appendix III) in conjunction with our own intuitive judgments regarding the quality of the writing, the difficulty of the subject matter, etc. (Learning Goals 5 and 6). Each student then makes a formal

presentation of their senior thesis to political science majors and faculty members, and we assess the quality of the oral presentation by employing the rubric for the Oral Presentation (see Appendix III) (Learning Goal 7)

Assessment Instruments

In the department of political science, assessment of goals 1 – 4 involves the administration of pre- and post-tests in introductory classes (see Appendix II) to gauge student learning over the course of the semester. The department proceeded with initial efforts at collecting assessment data in the spring term of 2009 but did so more extensively in 2009-10.

Answering 85 to 100 percent of the instrument's questions correctly qualifies a student for a rating of "excellent"; 64 to 84 percent correct a rating of "adequate;" and below 63 percent correct a rating of "nominal." The department employed the following assessment criteria to evaluate student progress in achieving learning goals:

"**GREEN** light" (an acceptable level or clearly heading in the right direction and not requiring any immediate change in course of action): 80% or more of the students ranked "adequate" or "excellent";

"**YELLOW** light" (not an acceptable level; either improving, but not as quickly as desired or declining slightly. Strategies and approaches should be reviewed and appropriate adjustments taken to reach an acceptable level or desired rate of improvement): 60% to 80% of the students ranked "adequate" or "excellent"; and

"**RED** light" (our current status or direction of change is unacceptable. Immediate, high priority actions should be taken to address this area): fewer than 60% of the students ranked "adequate" or "excellent".

In the department of political science, assessment of goals 5-7 involves the faculty's application of the department's rubric to senior theses (see Appendix III) to gauge student learning over the course of their Political Science careers. Applying a GPA-like formula (5.0 for excellent, 4.5 for excellent/good, 4.0 for good, 3.5 for good/adequate, etc.) allows for a calculation of attainment of each learning goal on a scale from 5.0-1.0. The department employed the following assessment criteria to evaluate student progress in achieving learning goals:

"**GREEN** light" (an acceptable level or clearly heading in the right direction and not requiring any immediate change in course of action): score of 4.0 or above;

"**YELLOW** light" (not an acceptable level; either improving, but not as quickly as desired or declining slightly. Strategies and approaches should be reviewed and appropriate adjustments taken to reach an acceptable level or desired rate of improvement): score of 3.0-3.9; and

"**RED** light" (our current status or direction of change is unacceptable. Immediate, high priority actions should be taken to address this area): score less than 3.0

Assessment Results

Learning Goal 1: Identify key questions, theoretical frameworks and concepts critical to an understanding of the political world.

Intro to Politics	**Pre-Test**	**Post-Test**
Mean Correct Answers	6.0/10	7.3/10
Nominal (0 – 63 % Correct)	62.5%	31.3%
Adequate (64 – 84% Correct)	31.3%	50%
Excellent (85 – 100% Correct)	6.3%	18.8%
Number of Students	16	16

Rating for Goal 1: **YELLOW**

Learning Goal 2: Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to American politics

American Politics	**Pre-Test**	**Post-Test**
Mean Correct Answers	19.6/35	35/35
Nominal (0 – 63 % Correct)	67.6%	0%
Adequate (64 – 84% Correct)	32.4%	0%
Excellent (85 – 100% Correct)	0%	100%
Number of Students	37	37

Rating for Goal 2: **GREEN**

Learning Goal 3: The department needs to find a way to assess student learning of this goal. See "improvement plans" below.

Learning Goal 4: Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to international relations

International Relations	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean Correct Answers	5.6/10	7.8/10
Nominal (0 – 63 % Correct)	80%	20%
Adequate (64 – 84% Correct)	20%	80%
Excellent (85 – 100% Correct)	0%	0%
Number of Students	5	5

Rating for Goal 4: **GREEN**

Learning Goal 5: Solve complex problems by demonstrating a mastery of the substantive knowledge in the discipline's main subfields.

This goal was measured by Dr. Jervis's application of the "analysis" portion of the department's rubric for senior thesis written papers. Three of those were judged to be excellent, one good/excellent, one good/adequate, one adequate, and one nominal. Applying a GPA-like calculation to these scores results in a 3.86 "GPA."

Rating for Goal 5:   **YELLOW**

Learning Goal 6: Follow scientific and humanistic methods to design and carry out politically-oriented research projects

This goal was measured largely by an examination of the bibliography of senior thesis papers and by students' discussion of the literature within the paper, itself. Three of the papers were judged "excellent" using the department's rubric; one was judged "excellent/good," one "adequate," and two "nominal." Applying a GPA-like calculation to these scores results in a 3.5 "GPA."

Rating for Goal 6:   **YELLOW**

Learning Goal 7: Communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as colleagues in the field.

> Five of the seven senior theses were judged to be "excellent" using the department's rubric and two were deemed to be "nominal," resulting in a 3.86 "GPA." As for oral communication of the paper's results, the six students who completed the class in the spring gave oral presentations to their classmates. These were graded by the instructor and the class members and all six earned scores above 90%.

> Rating for Goal 7: **GREEN**

Improvement Plans

Despite the somewhat discouraging nature of these results, the department will not make major changes to its courses or assessment plan in 2010-11. There are two reasons for this. One, this assessment plan has only been comprehensively implemented for one year, so it does not provide enough evidence to stimulate drastic changes. In addition, the department is undergoing significant transition in 2010-11, bringing in a new full-time faculty member whose views should be sought before major changes are undertaken.

Still, certain things are planned that might improve the **YELLOW** ratings on the three learning goals:

> Learning Goal 1: Our new faculty member, Dr. Bobbi Gentry, will be teaching the introduction to politics course in the fall. She will be replacing Dr. Jervis, who has always questioned the inclusion of such a requirement, believing that students learn more in introductory courses to each of the discipline's subfields (as in Millikin's international relations and American government courses) than they do in a general introduction to political science course. This might suggest a future change to the curriculum, but in the short run, Dr. Gentry will teach the course and perhaps have assessment results reflecting student's better attainment of Learning Goal 1.

> Learning Goal 3: The current curriculum does not include an Introduction to Comparative Politics course (although, apparently, it had done so prior to 2008), so it is difficult to assess this goal. There is some comparative analysis in the Introduction to Politics course, so perhaps a second pre- and post-test could be given in that course to measure students' learning of comparative politics concepts.

> Learning Goals 5 and 6: Greater effort must be made in the senior seminar course to have students review the scholarly literature on their topic and to apply it more closely and clearly to the topic. Dr Jervis emphasized this issue to students when discussing their projects, and it seems clear that about two-thirds of the students understood what is needed but there is still the one-third that does not. One way to do so might be to institute a system similar to that used on JMS projects in which students write a much more extensive project statement before embarking on extensive research. A problem

with that solution is that students have only a semester to complete the department's thesis requirement.

This assessment exercise has stimulated other questions that will be pursued in the next year, once Dr. Gentry is on board:

The post-test results for the American Government course, Goal 2, seem exceptionally and unrealistically good, with all students earning 100%. However, there will be a new instructor of this course in the fall, Dr. Gentry, so any problems with the pre-test/post-test in that course may be addressed.

Is there a need for some sort of assessment of students' progress in the middle of their Political Science careers and not just at the beginning and end of it? There was, apparently, some discussion of doing so in the original assessment plan on which this report is based, but no mechanism was ever implemented.

Given the importance assigned to practical experiences by the department and the institution, there should probably be some way to assess student learning in their internships.

Appendix I: Curriculum Map for Political Science

University Goals

1. Professional success
2. Democratic citizenship in a global environment
3. A personal life of meaning and value

Department Goals
1.   Identify key questions, fundamental concepts, and theoretical frameworks critical
         to an understanding of the political world;
2.   Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to
         American politics;
3.   Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to
         comparative politics;
4.   Identify the fundamental concepts, characteristics, and theories central to
         the area of international relations;
5.   Solve complex problems by demonstrating a mastery of substantive knowledge in
         the discipline's main subfields;
6.   Follow scientific and humanistic methods to design and carry out
         politically-oriented research projects by utilizing sufficiently advanced
         social research methods;
7.   Communicate effectively political knowledge to general audiences as well as
         colleagues in the field.

Curriculum Map of Core PO Courses' Applications to Department Learning Goals

Learning Goals	Core PO Courses						
	PO 100	PO 105	PO 221	PO 280	PO 371	PO 410	PO 450
(1) Identify Key Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories in the Political World	•						
(2) Identify Key Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories in the American system		•					
(3) Identify Key Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories in Comparative Politics	•						
(4) Identify Key Concepts, Frameworks, and Theories in International Relations			•				
(5) Solve Problems by Integrating Substantive Knowledge				•	•		•
(6) Follow Scientific/Humanistic Methods to Carry Out Research				•			•
(7) Communicate Political Knowledge Effectively						•	•

Appendix II: Pre- and Post-Tests for Introductory Political Science Courses

PO 100 Intro to Political Science

1.   What is politics?

   a.   the art of argumentation and debate
   b. the process by which groups of people make decisions
   c. competition between government actors
   d. duplicitous interactions that result in a corrupt society

2.   What is power?

   a. the ability to use force
   b.   the possession of significant capabilities, e.g., military and economic resources
   c.   the ability to achieve one's goals, to influence others to get the outcome one wants
   d.   status, or position in society

3.   Agents of political socialization include:

   a.   family
   b. schools
   c. the media
   d. all of the above

4.   A state is:

   a   legal entity that possesses territory, sovereignty and a government
   b.   a culturally cohesive community that shares political aspirations
   c.   the only important actor in international relations
   d.   the highest form of political organization

5.   Sovereignty is:

   a. a king or queen
   b. the ability to act independently from external actors or internal rivals
   c. international law, as laid out by the UN security council
   d.only guaranteed when a state has a written constitution

6.   Capitalism advocates:

   a. the limited provision of social goods via the state
   b. encourages individual responsibility
   c. a laissez-faire approach to market management

d. all of the above

7.   In a country with a unitary system of government

a. the central government possesses all legitimate power
b. power is divided between the central government and regional governments
c. here are three branches of government, executive, legislative, and judicial
d. the government is illegitimate

8.   Which of the following is <u>not</u> a necessary attribute of democracy?

a. periodic elections
b. checks and balances
c. popular involvement in politics
d. free and independent media

9.   In international politics, the primary distinction between the "North" and the "South" is

a. political
b. economic
c. demographic
d. environmental

10.   In the years since World War II

a. there have been no wars between the world's great powers
b. the world has developed ways to prevent a repeat of the WWII-like Holocaust
c. there has been a reduction in the number of wars
d. Europe has seen more wars than Asia

PO 105: The American Political System

Pre-test

Circle the letter in front of each correct answer.

1. What are the two major purposes government seems to have served throughout history?
        a. Creating a national identity and accumulating money in a treasury
        b. Defending borders and promoting freedom
        c. Maintaining order and providing public goods like drinking water and roads
        d. Representing the people and protecting minorities

2. What is the source of the power of the U.S. government?
        a. The President and his White House staff
        b. A small group of wealthy people with business connections
        c. The people of the United States
        b. The state governments that sent delegates to write the original Constitution

3. What fundamental values (beneficial, desirable end states or traits to be advanced, enhanced and promoted) did the people who wrote the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution set out to guide government and political decision making?
        a. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
        b. The general welfare of the people and the equality of all mankind
        c. Order, freedom and equality
        d. Justice and domestic tranquility

4. What do we call the sequence of the basic political values someone uses to think about political issues?
        a. Political socialization
        b. Socioeconomic variable
        c. Party identification
        d. Political ideology

5. How do participants in U.S. government and politics use its fundamental values?
        a. As measurement standards to assess what is important
        b. As evaluation standards for judging their behavior and the behavior of others
        c. As guidelines to decide how to distribute available resources
        d. All of the above
        e. Only b. and c.

6. How does U.S. democracy operate?
        a. A stable small group of elites sharing vast wealth and business connections consistently influences government decisions.

b. Different groups with interests common only among their separate memberships influence government decisions; no one identifiable group regularly prevails on different issues.

c. Employed bureaucracies familiar with the details of daily operations provide legislators and executives with the information they need to know to make decisions.

d. Republicans and Democrats alternatively win/lose elections and establish programs to benefit their supporters when in office.

7. How far back can we date the American aversion to paying taxes?
   a. As soon a Europeans began to settle in the original 13 colonies
   b. The colonial period after the French and Indian War
   c. The early years under the new U.S. Constitution
   d. During the Civil War

8. When was the U.S. Constitution written?
   a. 1492
   b. 1776
   c. 1787
   d. 1812

Match the definitions below to their specific U.S. government basic principle:

Basic U.S. Government Principles

Definitions

9. _____ Republicanism	a. Each government branch has some scrutiny and control over the other branches
10. _____ Federalism	b. Lawmaking, law-enforcing, and law-interpreting powers are assigned to separate and independent government branches
11. _____ Separation of Power	c. Power is divided between a national government and state governments
12. _____ Checks and Balances	d. The people are the source of the government's power, which is exercised by elected representatives
	e. Power is concentrated in one political party
	f. A small group of people actually makes most government decisions

Match the following government activities with the different spheres of government authority were they can be exercised:

a. Define marriage   c. Coin money   e. Lay and collect taxes
b. Charter banks   d. Set foreign policy   f. Establish local
                                                                                governments

Only a National Power	Shared National and State Power	Only a State Power
13. _____	15. _____	17. _____
14. _____	16. _____	18. _____

19. What is public opinion?
    a. The collective attitudes of individuals on an issue or question
    b. The underlying attitudes of people about their government
    c. The reports of journalists about what people think
    d. The support or opposition of people to candidate proposals

20. From childhood through young adulthood, what are the major agents in promoting political awareness and developing political opinions in the United States?
    a. Family and school
    b. Community and peers
    c. Radio, magazines and the Internet
    d. All of the above
    e. Only a. and b.

21. Who benefits from the fact people are free to participate or not participate in United States politics and government?
    a. No specific group
    b. The poor
    c. The wealthy
    d. Political parties

Match the correct year with when of the following groups got the right to vote?
    22. _____ Women   a. 1971
    23. _____ Former slaves   b. 1920
    24. _____ Eighteen year olds   c. 1870

25. How many political parties does the U.S. Constitution require?
    a. An unlimited number
    b. Three: Republican, Democratic and Libertarian
    c. Two: Republican and Democratic
    d. None

26. Which activity listed below <u>distinguishes</u> a political party from an interest group?
    a. Advocating for a particular constituency
    b. Organizing voters
    c. Sponsoring candidates for public office under the organization's name
    d. Having agendas to get improvements in problem areas

27. Which preliminary election early victories are important for political party presidential hopefuls?
    a. Illinois and Utah
    b. California and Connecticut
    c. Iowa and New Hampshire
    d. District of Columbia and Wyoming

28. Which policy position below does both the Republican and Democratic Party support?
    a. Diversification/affirmative action programs
    b. Trade unionism/organization of workers
    c. Reductionism/downsizing government
    d. Capitalism/private ownership of the means of production

29. What is the basis for each state's Electoral College vote for president?
    a. One vote for each of its congressional representatives and senators
    b. One vote for every 600,000 registered voters
    c. One vote for each delegate attending the candidate's national party convention

30. What is the origin of our civil rights and civil liberties?
    a. The Creator
    b. The Bible
    b. Our human nature
    c. Previous government abuses

31. American public opinion on affirmative action:
    a. Is overwhelmingly positive
    b. Differs dramatically by the race of the respondent
    c. Is overwhelmingly negative
    d. Differs dramatically by the gender of the respondent

32. Under the First Amendment, freedom of speech:
    a. Is absolute and cannot be limited in any way
    b. May be limited when it is used to incite imminent lawless action that is likely to occur
    c. Does not apply when the Ku Klux Klan burns a cross to express its opinion of black people
    d. Will not permit skinheads to carry a Nazi flag down the main street of a Jewish community

33. The Fourth Amendment includes:
     a. The right to counsel
     b. The prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment
     c. The right to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure
     d. The right against self-incrimination, i.e., to be compelled to be a witness against yourself

34. *Miranda v. Arizona* was the Supreme Court decision that required specific constitutional rights warnings to be given:
     a. To anyone a police officer talks to
     b. To everyone under suspicion of illegal activity
     c. To everyone stopped for a traffic violation
     d. To anyone in police custody when interrogated by the police

35. What standard is the Supreme Court using now to determine if the imposition of a death sentence or the particular way that will be used to execute a prisoner is cruel and unusual?
     a. Any punishments used when the Constitution was written are acceptable.
     b. Punishments involving pain in the statutory proposed method or in the actual way they are carried out are unacceptable.
     c. The evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society determine whether a punishment is acceptable.
     d. Public opinion sets the standard for what punishments are acceptable for particular crimes.

PO 221: Introduction to International Relations

1.   International politics is the study of:

    a.   diplomatic, military and political relations between states
    b.   the global economy
    c.   peoples, groups and organizations that act internationally
    d.   all of the above

2.   Which theory emphasizes a cooperative approach to international politics?

    a.   idealism
    b.   realism
    c.   Marxism
    d.   neorealism

3.   The contemporary international system could be best described as:

    a.   multipolar
    b.   bipolar
    c.   unipolar
    d.   tripolar

4.   Sovereignty is:

    a.   a king or queen
    b.   the ability to act independently from external actors or internal rivals
    c.   international law, as laid out by the UN security council
    d.   only guaranteed when a state has a written constitution

5.   A state is:

    a.   a legal entity that possesses territory, sovereignty and a government
    b.   a culturally cohesive community that shares political aspirations
    c.   the only important actor in international relations
    d.   the highest form of political organization

6.   The "security dilemma" states that:

    a.   no state will ever achieve absolute security
    b.   all states need security, but rarely invest enough in it
    c.   when states attempt to increase their security, they make others feel less secure
    d.   without a strong state like the U.S., there will be insecurity in the international system

7.   The logic behind the nuclear strategy of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) is

    a.   deterrence
    b.   elimination of all weapons
    c.   ensuring first strike capability
    d.   supporting defense systems such as ballistic missile capability

8.   The possible unification of Islamic countries would be an example of

    a.   irredentism
    b.   nationalism
    c.   transnationalism
    d.   globalism

9.   The administrative body of the United Nations is called the

    a.   Secretariat
    b.   Security Council
    c.   General Assembly
    d.   Economic and Social Council

10.   The primary distinction between the "North" and the "South" is

    a.   political
    b.   economic
    c.   demographic
    d.   environmental

Appendix III: Evaluation Rubrics for Senior Thesis

Thesis Proposal: Assessed by Department Faculty.

	Excellent	Adequate	Nominal
Knowledge Sources (Goals 1 – 4)	[**6 points**] Reflects a high level of integration of multiple sources of information and knowledge acquired in political science courses.	[**4 points**] Demonstrates only occasional integration of information from multiple sources and political science coursework.	[**2 points**] Demonstrates little or no integration of information from multiple sources.
Method (Goal 5)	[**5 points**] Presents a clear research design, including discussion of hypotheses to be tested, pertinent data, as well as methods skills acquired in the program and relevant to the project's execution.	[**3 points**] Research design and hypotheses present, but proposal falls short in tying in pertinent data and relevant methods.	[**1 point**] No clear design or hypotheses, few – if any – connections to relevant data and methods. Proposal suggests methods incorrect for research question.
Clarity (Goal 7)	[**3 points**] Very few grammatical errors, if any. Sentences clearly express ideas, and paragraphs are coherent wholes. Overall structure is logical and coherent and contributes to overall strength of proposal.	[**1 points**] Common errors in usage and sentence structure. Sentences and paragraphs may run too long or too short. Variation in coherence of paragraphs and clarity of logic.	[**0 points**] Many spelling and grammar errors, use of incomplete sentences, inadequate proof reading.

Written Thesis: Assessed by Department Faculty.

	Excellent	Adequate	Nominal
Literature Review (Goal 1)	[**6 points**] Presents a well-organized review of pertinent political science literature. Demonstrates clearly how previous findings relate to the project at hand. Builds toward a clear hypothesis.	[**4 points**] Review of pertinent political science literature present; however, connections to current project tenuous or – in a few cases – absent.	[**2 points**] Superficial to no connection of project to pertinent political science literature.
Analysis (Goal 5)	[**5 points**] Makes clear connections between findings in the data and established knowledge in the field. Demonstrates superior mastery of the material. Suggests – and explores – areas for possible future research.	[**3 points**] Connections between findings and established knowledge present, but analysis fails to make some of them clearly. Demonstrates ample mastery of the material. Only suggests – without much elaboration – future avenues of research.	[**1 point**] Few to no connections between established knowledge in the field and the project's findings. Questionable mastery of the material.
Clarity (Goal 7)	[**3 points**] Very few grammatical errors, if any. Sentences clearly express ideas, and paragraphs are coherent wholes. Overall structure is logical and coherent and contributes to overall strength of proposal.	[**1 points**] Common errors in usage and sentence structure. Sentences and paragraphs may run too long or too short. Varied coherence of paragraphs and clarity of logic.	[**0 points**] Many spelling and grammar errors, use of incomplete sentences, inadequate proof reading.

Oral Presentation: Assessed by Department Faculty.

	Excellent	Adequate	Nominal
Organization	**[5 points]** Presentation communicates the work's central idea in a clear organizational pattern.	**[3 points]** Exhibits some connections between major points and the work's central idea but may be disorganized at points.	**[1 point]** Confused, jumbled, disorganized presentation.
Delivery	**[5 points]** Clear, confident presentation. Student fields audience questions in manner that illustrates command of the topic.	**[3 points]** A good presentation but lacking somewhat in clarity or confidence.	**[1 point]** An awkward, weak presentation but a presentation made nevertheless.
Technical	**[4 points]** Student uses notes effectively, meets time constraints, exhibits directness and competence, and avoids mannerisms that might otherwise detract from presentation.	**[2 points]** Student makes occasional eye contact, relies occasionally on notes, and speaks intelligibly.	**[1 point]** Student overly tied to notes, does not make eye contact with audience, speaks unintelligibly