General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: POLS 15
GE Area: US2-US3, D3

Results reported for AY: 2018-2019
# of sections: 27
# of instructors: 11

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Department Chair: Melinda Jackson
College: Social Sciences

Instructions: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be electronically submitted to <curriculum@sjsu.edu>, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by October 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1

To be completed by the course coordinator:

(1) What GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

US2/US3 SLO 2: Students will be able to explain how political decisions are made, their consequences for individuals and society, and how individuals and groups may affect the decision-making process. As students analyze the meaning and content of the democratic process as it has evolved in the United States and California, at a minimum, they should be able to describe:

a) the foundations of the political system, including the evolution of the philosophies of the U.S. and California constitutions, political culture, separation of powers, bureaucracy, federalism, and relations among various levels of government. Students should also analyze the evolving institutions of government, including a study of the powers of the President, Congress, and the Judiciary.

Area D: SLO 4: Students will be able to apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national, and/or international levels.

What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

US2/US3 SLO 2a was assessed by the different faculty in the fall and spring using a variety of tools such as quizzes, exams, short papers, and Canvas activities. In Fall 2018, between 30%-90% of students met this learning outcome with a grade of C- or better on this assignment across different sections. In Spring 2019, between 42% and 100% of students met this learning outcome with a grade of C- or better on this assignment across different sections. There was wide variation between the sections in the spring for several reasons: assignments used to assess learning outcomes varied significantly and the Canvas Discussion activities used by one professor had high overall grades. In Fall 2018, grades were low on one assignment in a large section of the course.

Area D3 SLO4 was assessed in 12 sections by eight instructors in Spring 2019 using Canvas Discussion Board activities, a final exam essay, local government papers, a city council report, or a 1000-1500-word policy paper requiring students to research a current policy issue in US politics, describe the history and current status of this policy, and explain their own opinion on related issues. (Note: different sections of the course meet the 1500-word writing requirement using a variety of assignments.) Between 52% and 98% of students met this.
learning outcome with a grade of C- or better on this assignment across different sections. D3 outcomes are higher than reported last year. Overall, these ranges are typical for an introductory course such as this.

(3) What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)

Beginning and end-of-semester meetings are held for Pols 15 faculty to review student learning outcomes, the assessment schedule, and assessment tools, including the possibility of using shared assignments to assess some of these learning outcomes. We are working a quiz collaboratively for use in Spring 2020 assessments. How this assignment would be integrated into individual courses while preserving individual teaching styles will be examined further.

Part 2

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

All sections of this course are aligned with the GELOs, however we are working to ensure greater consistency in the types of assignments and assessments used across different sections of the course.

(5) If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE GELOs for writing.