




JUNE 21, 2019

PLSC ASSESMENT FOR UNIVERSITY
GENERAL EDUCATION CORE COURSES
2017-18

PEARL K. DOWE, CHAIR
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
428 MAIN | University of Arkansas | Fayetteville, AR 72701



WHAT UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES GUIDE STUDENT LEARNING IN COURSES THAT CARRY SOCIAL SCIENCES CREDIT?

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of nine hours of social science courses, students will be able to:

- (SSLO1) Articulate a method of inquiry in one of the social sciences
- (SSLO2) Identify and/or explain human organization and behavior
- (SSLO3) Identify and/or explain challenges associated with the diversity encountered by individuals, organizations, and/or societies
- (SSLO4) Identify and/or explain how technology affects individuals, groups, and/or social institutions
- (SSLO5) Identify and/or explain the changes caused by the increasing interconnectedness of today's world

HOW DOES THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE INTEND TO ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING OF THESE OUTCOMES IN PLSC 2003 AND PLSC 2013?

The Department of Political Science offered two University Core courses during the 2017-18 academic year: PLSC 2003 (American National Government) and PLSC 2013 (Introduction to Comparative Politics). We will offer two sessions of PLSC 2203 State and Local Politics in the Fall of 2018 and as an online course during Summer 2019.

The Department of Political Science offered 23 on-campus sections of PLSC 2003 (2 in summer 2017), ranging from 75 to 150 students per section, for a total of 1,931 seats and four on-line sections (2 in summer 2017) ranging from 35-100 students through Global Campus for a total of 410 seats. Total seats offered were 2,341. The courses offered in the Fall 2017 semester were taught by two tenured faculty members, a clinical assistant professor, a visiting professor, two lecturers and six graduate teaching assistants. One on-line section was taught by a lecturer and tenured faculty member during the summer.

PLSC 2003									
	Summer 2017			Fall 2017			Spring 2018		
	Seats	Enrolled	Faculty	Seats	Enrolled	Faculty	Seats	Enrolled	Faculty
001	35	21	Lect.	75	73	VAP	75	75	VAP
002	35	32	Inst.	75	74	GA	150	160	NTT
003				149	148	NTT	75	75	GA
004				150	155	NTT	75	75	Lecturer
005				150	150	TT			
006				75	75	GA			
007				75	75	GA	75	74	GA
008				75	75	GA			
009				150	150	Inst.	75	74	GA
010							75	75	
011				72	72	GA	75	75	Inst.
012				75	74	GA			
013-INT				30	12	TT	35	33	NTT
901	35	24	TT	35	36	Lecturer	35	34	Lecturer
902	35	30	TT	100	96	TT	100	98	TT
TOTALS	140	107		1286	1265		845	848	

The Department of Political Science also offered seven on-campus sections of PLSC 2013, ranging from 75 to 130 students per section (including one summer online course), for a total of 582 seats. Currently there are no on-line sections of PLSC 2013 offered. These courses were taught by a tenured faculty member, one lecturer and two graduate teaching assistants.

PLSC 2013									
	Summer 2017			Fall 2017			Spring 2018		
	Seats	Enrolled	Faculty	Seats	Enrolled	Faculty	Seats	Enrolled	Faculty
001				75	74	Lect.	75	75	GA
002	35	35	Lect.	120	120	TT	72	72	Lect.
003				75	75	GA	130	129	TT
004							75	75	GA
TOTALS	35	35		270	269		277	276	

The department utilizes pre and post-tests as an assessment tool. The data discussed is for both Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters. The pretest items were administered within the first two weeks of class in each of the two courses. The same questions were administered again during the last week of classes. The items covered a set of approximately 8 core concept related to whether this class is part of their major or is only being utilized as a general education requirement.

The distribution of pre-and post-test of selected students in PLSC 2003 and PLSC 2013 cover core items of the discipline that first year students should have command of after course completion. Each semester the faculty teaching these courses provide a report summarizing the results of the assessment to the department chair and the departmental assessment committee who then analyze these findings and then produce a comprehensive report for the departmental faculty.

Review of the overall performance pre-and post-test should result in one of three outcomes: improvement of student post-test scores over the pre-test; no-improvement, and the decline in post-test scores compared with the pre-test. For those assessments that result in improvement in post-test outcomes, instructors may choose to take no action or examine ways to further improve positive outcomes. Results that include no improvement or decline should prompt instructor review of the course content, course objectives, classroom techniques, and assessment tools. Additionally, instructors in those courses where the assessment tools are distributed may select to interview a sample of students on the specific items of concern for additional feedback, to identify barriers, and to develop teaching strategies that may better serve underperforming or at-risk students. The departmental assessment committee will conduct regular assessment, reports, and reviews on an annual basis.

HOW IS THE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT KEYED TO THE UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION CORE CURRICULUM LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES?

Here are the 4 questions that will be included on the first examination and all subsequent examinations for PLSC 2003.

1. Which of the statements about voter turnout in the United States is true?
 - a. Voter turnout is significantly higher in the United States than other democracies.
 - b. Voter turnout tends to be significantly lower in the United States than other democracies.
 - c. Voter turnout in the United States is at the level of most democracies.
 - d. Voter turnout in the U.S. presidential elections varies wildly and can range from 10 percent of eligible voters to 80 percent of eligible voters.

Question 1 is keyed to SSL01 and SSL02.

2. What statement about voter registration is false?
 - a. Unlike in some democracies, voter registration in the United States has historically been the responsibility of the individual citizen, not the government.
 - b. During certain eras, states have used laws to discourage registration and voting by certain racial and socio-economic groups in their population.
 - c. In recent decades, the Supreme Court has not allowed states to use literacy tests and poll taxes to disenfranchise voters.
 - d. With the enactment of the Motor-Voter Act of 1993, citizens found it more difficult to register to vote.

Question 2 is keyed to SSL02 and SSL04.

3. In 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *University of California Regents v. Bakke* that:
 - a. All affirmative action plans are unconstitutional.
 - b. All schools must use race as the sole factor when deciding admission.
 - c. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was unconstitutional.
 - d. Race can be used as one of many factors when deciding college admissions.

Question 3 is keyed to SSL03.

4. In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that:
 - a. Ethnic minorities have no rights to equal treatment.
 - b. The segregation of public school facilities by race violates the equal protection clause of the Constitution.
 - c. The national government does not have the power to force any type of action on local school boards.
 - d. Separation of races for certain reasons does not violate the Constitution.

Question 4 is keyed to SSL02 and SSL03.

PLSC 2013 Introduction to Comparative Politics

Here are the 4 questions that will be included on the first examination and all subsequent examinations for PLSC 2013.

1. Which of the following is **not** one of the areas in which countries may have to enact reform in order to qualify for membership in the European Union?
 - a. Democratic governance
 - b. Domestic electoral practices
 - c. Economic policies
 - d. Human rights standards

Question 1 is keyed to SSL02 and SSL05.

2. Which of the following is **not** one of the common motives behind creating transnational institutions?
 - a. Reduce conflict
 - b. Enhance regional trade
 - c. Subordinate member states
 - d. Facilitate cooperative policymaking

Question 2 is keyed to SSL02 and SSL05.

3. The main difference between parliamentary and presidential systems is that:
 - a. Parliamentary systems are better
 - b. Parliamentary systems have many parties
 - c. Presidential systems are more stable
 - d. Presidential systems separate executive & legislative power

Question 3 is keyed to SSL01 and SSL05.

4. Proportional Representation electoral systems tend to be better than Single-Member District Plurality electoral systems at:
 - a. Increasing voter turnout
 - b. Translating national party support levels into seats in parliament
 - c. Producing two-party or two-party dominant systems
 - d. Improving economic and social policymaking

Question 4 is keyed to SSL01 and SSL02.

HOW WILL THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE USE THE DATA GENERATED BY THIS INSTRUMENT TO PLAN CURRICULAR AND PEDAGOGICAL CHANGES THAT MIGHT BE NECESSARY IN PLSC 2003 and PLSC 2013?

In many ways, the PLSC assessment is the stereotypical “work in progress.” Knowledge improvements also vary by instructor both overall and from question-to-question. This variation exists even sometimes when comparing a given instructor teaching multiple sections in one semester. The greatest improvements typically occur in areas where students score the lowest. For example, pre-test scores for Question #3 in PLSC 2003 often range from 29-80% percent correct. Post-test scores however are often 37-97% correct. By contrast, the post-test results for Question #4, which 80 percent of students correctly answer the question in the pre-test, only improve an additional 10 percent.

While most areas show significant, it is not atypical for nearly half of the students in PLSC 2013 to get questions #1 and #4 incorrect in the post-test. In the material is more challenging than that in the other questions for the two classes, but instructors in PLSC 2013 may want to discuss how to improve student learning outcomes in SSL02 and SSL04 or change the wording of the questions.

In addition the department needs to examine differences between students who major in PLSC or INST or related areas and those who come from other disciplines. This difference may be important in retention efforts, both within those programs for majors and at the university-level for non-majors.

FALL 2017- PLSC 2003 PRE-TEST

PLSC 2003	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4	Total	.% 1	.% 2	.% 3	.% 4
Taylor	57	57	40	114	134	42.54%	42.54%	29.85%	85.07%
Tumlison	35	32	14	59	69	50.72%	46.38%	20.29%	85.51%
Dye	39	31	22	65	71	54.93%	43.66%	30.99%	91.55%
Parry	39	55	45	116	134	29.10%	41.04%	33.58%	86.57%
Hyman	36	25	31	60	67	53.73%	37.31%	46.27%	89.55%
Button	26	35	19	64	71	36.62%	49.30%	26.76%	90.14%
Naylor	66	45	38	104	114	57.89%	39.47%	33.33%	91.23%
Diallo	32	23	18	51	68	47.06%	33.82%	26.47%	75.00%
Sebold	148	71	233	87	290	51.03%	24.48%	80.34%	30.00%

FALL 2017- PLSC 2003 POST-TEST

PLSC 2003	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4	Total	.% 1	.% 2	.% 3	.% 4
Dye	47	28	52	55	61	77.05%	45.90%	85.25%	90.16%
Parry	72	42	33	77	89	80.90%	47.19%	37.08%	86.52%
Taylor	54	41	43	76	88	61.36%	46.59%	48.86%	86.36%
Diallo	52	49	47	56	63	82.54%	77.78%	74.60%	88.89%
Hyman	64	54	28	61	70	91.43%	77.14%	40.00%	87.14%
Button	26	31	28	45	48	54.17%	64.58%	58.33%	93.75%
Sebold	262	284	278	254	285	91.93%	99.65%	97.54%	89.12%

**SPRING
2018-
PLSC
PRETEST**

PLSC 2003	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4	Total	.% 1	.% 2	.% 3	.% 4
Garcia- Rios	38	64	26	63	71	53.52%	90.14%	36.62%	88.73%
Dye	34	20	19	59	72	47.22%	27.78%	26.39%	81.94%
Looney	16	12	13	22	30	53.33%	40.00%	43.33%	73.33%
Hyman	29	20	19	50	70	41.43%	28.57%	27.14%	71.43%
Button	33	21	26	49	54	61.11%	38.89%	48.15%	90.74%
Naylor	37	34	26	51	69	53.62%	49.28%	37.68%	73.91%
Diallo	26	30	21	46	67	38.81%	44.78%	31.34%	68.66%
Sebold	80	55	46	125	150	53.33%	36.67%	30.67%	83.33%
Stewart	40	29	28	75	91	43.96%	31.87%	30.77%	82.42%

SPRING 2018 PLSC 2003 POST-TEST

PLSC 2003	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4	Total	.% 1	.% 2	.% 3	.% 4
Garcia- Rios	15	17	13	27	32	46.88%	53.13%	40.63%	84.38%
Dye	32	20	33	38	41	78.05%	48.78%	80.49%	92.68%
Sebold	130	135	107	141	145	89.66%	93.10%	73.79%	97.24%
Hyman	57	23	23	62	65	87.69%	35.38%	35.38%	95.38%
Button	17	11	17	25	26	65.38%	42.31%	65.38%	96.15%
Stewart	27	30	24	48	56	48.21%	53.57%	42.86%	85.71%

FALL PLSC 2013 PRE-TEST

PLSC 2013	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	Total	.% 1	.% 2	.% 3	.% 4
Ryan	34	56	63	32	97	35.05%	57.73%	64.95%	32.99%
Sullivan	33	45	61	13	67	49.25%	67.16%	91.04%	19.40%
Mauchline	31	51	49	24	72	43.06%	70.83%	68.06%	33.33%

FALL PLSC 2013 POST TEST

PLSC 2013	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	Total	.% 1	.% 2	.% 3	.% 4
Ryan	19	30	34	14	39	48.72%	76.92%	87.18%	35.90%
Sullivan	35	45	45	28	63	55.56%	71.43%	71.43%	44.44%
Mauchline	10	13	21	9	22	45.45%	59.09%	95.45%	40.91%

SPRING PLSC 2013 PRE-TEST

PLSC 2013	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	Total	.% 1	.% 2	.% 3	.% 4
Jackson	25	77	45	17	57	43.86%	69.00%	78.95%	29.82%
Mauchline	24	40	43	21	60	40.00%	66.67%	71.67%	35.00%

SPRING PLSC 2013 POST-TEST

PLSC 2013	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	Total	.% 1	.% 2	.% 3	.% 4
Jackson	20	47	60	31	67	29.85%	70.15%	89.55%	46.27%
Mauchline	9	18	25	14	26	34.62%	69.23%	96.15%	53.85%