

EWU Programmatic SLO Assessment
AY 2013-14 and “Closing the Loop” for AY 2011-12

Degree/Certificate: **Bachelor of Arts**
Major/Option: **Government**
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Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2013-14

Part I – for the 2013-14 academic year

1. Student Learning Outcome:

Government Department, **Student Learning Outcome #6:**

Demonstrate analytical and conceptual skills, reading skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills and be able to effectively apply those skills to political issues.

2. Overall evaluation of progress on outcome: Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

- SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;
 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;
 SLO met without change required

3. Strategies and methods: Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

The method of assessment was systematic analysis of all students’ papers and in class exams in Spring 2014, GOVT 317 American Political Thought. This was done through a content analysis of these students’ abilities to understand the historical and philosophical context of such concepts as democracy, equality, individualism, localism, and constitutionalism through the reading of primary text historical document. These terms and ideas were chosen because they are accepted as the critical foundations of American political thought throughout the discipline and the goals of SLO #6 are dovetail well with the rigors of this course.

This method of assessment was used because many of the concepts and ideas which are foundational and enduring to political thought of a complex enough of a nature that other forms of evaluations such as a survey instrument might not be subtle enough to capture much of the nuance and higher level thinking we hope to find. Furthermore, by using the students’ writing samples we are able to capture more readily their ability to identify all aspects of the SLO.

4. Observations gathered from data: Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.

a. Findings:

Students demonstrated an increased knowledge of these ideas and how they have systemically incorporated into American political theory and the dynamic nature of these concepts and the majority of students were able to appreciate the

importance of these concepts to the political dialogue in the United States. However, students do have some challenges situating these concepts in their historical framework, in particular the changing nature of property rights and civil rights, especially between the Antebellum and modern South.

b. Analysis of findings:

This analysis demonstrates many positives in meeting this SLO and a few things that need to be improved upon.

On the positive side, the students show a detailed and sophisticated understanding of many of the concepts of American political thought and how some aspects of these ideals have remained constant over the past 200 years while other aspects have changed dramatically. Moreover, these students are able to demonstrate these findings through a very advanced and impressive writing ability which is able to synthesize these diverse ideas into coherent and conceptually logical papers.

The major place where a weakness was demonstrated was in articulating these ideas about Antebellum America. Many students expressed difficulty in understanding parts of American history in which large parts of society were excluded from the polity and do not want to engage in debates about parts of the nation's past.

5. What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?

- a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

While primary source readings on the expansion of Civil Rights and universal suffrage are broadly included throughout the reading. The course will be revamped to provide more time to focus on figures such as Fredrick Douglass, Abigail Adams, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, WEB DuBois and William Graham Sumner.

- b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

Fall 2014: identify other potential readings

Winter 2014: reorganize syllabus

Spring 2014: reorganize reading and lectures to allow for more time and discussion

6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

The assessment process is optimal and evaluating writing appears to be the best way to understand student knowledge of the subject.

PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP
FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2011-12 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

1. Student Learning Outcome(s) assessed for 2011-12

Introduction

There was no SLO assessment submitted for AY2012-2013; thus, the 2012-13 assessment could not include a “closing the loop” element. The last SLO report that did find a loop to close was the 2011-12 report. Thus, in this report, I will discuss closing the loop from that year’s assessment.

Below are the findings from both the AY 2012-13 and the AY2011-12 assessments:

<u>AY 2011-12 Assessment</u>
1. Student learning outcome
Government Department Assessment, SLO #3: Be able to apply an understanding of foundational and enduring political thought and ideas throughout history to questions of politics and policy at the national and international levels.
1. Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:
<i>__X__ SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming</i> <i>Students were not retaining as much material throughout the quarter</i> A plan was outlined that included these two steps: <i>Discussions were to occur and a plan implemented</i>
Strategies implemented during 2013-14 to improve student learning, based on the 2011-12 assessment.
Simply, technology was leveraged to assist this SLO. All powerpoints were put on the class Canvas site to allow students to recall past lectures. In addition, “Learning Assessment” tests were created to assist students in understanding their progress through each section of the course. Also, “Bonus lectures” were put online to assist students in understanding material by presenting it in a different fashion. The Department also began using PLUS groups where experienced upper-class students tutored the class.
2. Summary of results
Using the technology and additional resources, the loop has been closed as more students have more and different opportunities to gain and retain course material in manners that are convenient and compatible for them.
2. Projected changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.
New textbooks are always being evaluated and additions and refinement to the technological aspect of the course will continue.