Department of Political Science Handbook

This Handbook includes Political Science Department policies and procedures.

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Advanced Placement (AP) Scores

It is possible in some circumstances for incoming students to obtain credit for work done before college. For examples, the Department has approved credit for the College Board Advanced Placement tests for POLS 114 and, potentially, for political science electives. To obtain credit, be sure to have an official score sent directly from AP to the University. A complete AP course listing for the University can be obtained at [http://www.uwrf.edu/Admissions/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&PageID=24931](http://www.uwrf.edu/Admissions/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&PageID=24931), and information about requesting scores for transmission to the UW-RF can be obtained at [http://apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com). Locate the FAQ for supplemental score requests and use the UW-RF code: 1918.

Class Schedules

The Department will schedule courses to avoid overlap. No single-section courses will overlap and if multiple-section courses overlap, they will be scheduled in such a way that students could still take both/all courses. Insofar as practical, the Department will reserve a timeslot (e.g. Noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) for department meetings.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Scores

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Department of Political Science awards credit for the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Subject Examination in American government, as approved by the UW-RF Faculty Senate. Students may take CLEP examinations only if they are high school graduates or have completed the equivalent based on the Tests of General Educational Development. Students will be considered for CLEP Subject Examination credit only if they have not already taken a college level course in the same areas as the CLEP examination. Students interested in knowing more about the CLEP tests, costs of examinations or registering for examinations should contact the Testing Office in the UW-RF Counseling Center, 24 E. Hathorn Hall, phone (715) 425-3884. Information about the CLEP American Government examination may be found on the CLEP website at [http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/exams.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/exams.html).
Course Structure

The Department of Political Science policy regarding the expectations of courses is as follows:

- 100 and 200 level courses emphasize the development of critical thinking, and the understanding of basic concepts of political analysis. This is accomplished through the use of written work (e.g. book reviews, essay examinations, oral presentation, and critical essays).
- 300 and 400 level courses emphasize deeper analysis of specific topics within political science and the development of independent research and analysis skills on the part of students. This is accomplished through extensive written work (e.g. empirical analysis, simulations, research papers, and projects).

Evaluations

The Department of Political Science policy regarding the frequency of administering student evaluations is that they are administered each fall and spring semester.

Independent Readings

The limited staff time and resources of the Department constrain the use of independent readings to exceptional circumstances. Students who have taken advanced coursework in Political Science and developed a solid background in the discipline can request enrollment in an independent readings course if they want to pursue a specialized topic that goes beyond regular course expectations. In all cases, independent reading courses are not to be used for the purpose of accommodating scheduling preferences of students, and can occur only if faculty permission is granted. Students enrolled in independent Reading courses will typically complete three books (or their equivalent) for each credit earned, and complete papers, and other requirements as defined by the instructor.

Independent Study

The limited staff time and resources of the Department constrain the use of independent study to exceptional circumstances. Students who have taken advanced coursework in Political Science and developed a solid background in the discipline can request enrollment in an independent study course if they want to undertake a substantial research project that goes beyond regular course expectations. In all cases, independent study courses are not to be used for the purpose of accommodating scheduling preferences of students, and can occur only if faculty permission is granted. Students enrolled in independent study courses will complete research, papers, and other requirements as defined by the instructor.

Internships

Internships are designed specifically for political science majors and minors who have completed significant work within the program (e.g. a minimum of four courses in the major or minor). This requirement is designed to ensure that the students who participate in internships have a solid foundation in political science before they begin their experience. Instructor consent is also required.
Performance Evaluation Guidelines.¹

The Political Science Program’s Criteria for Renewal/non-renewal and Promotion are as follows, in order of priority:

I. **Personnel and Program Needs of the Department.**

II. **Professional educational preparation and experience.**

III. **Effectiveness in teaching.** Includes:

   A) The faculty member’s syllabi for all courses are reviewed to assess whether they are consistent with the Program’s goals and conform to Departmental expectations. In addition, whether the faculty member has designed new courses and revised existing courses (as needed by the Program) that are consistent with its goals, is also considered.

   B) Review and assessment of the results of the standard “student evaluations” used by the university for all courses taught from the faculty member’s initial employment until the specific personnel decision. Student evaluations are used to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, focusing specifically on the issue areas addressed by the evaluation questions.

   C) Peer classroom evaluations for courses taught from the faculty member’s initial employment until the specific personnel decisions. Peer evaluations are conducted by the members of the faculty member’s retention and/or promotion committee. These observations are conducted each semester prior to a specific retention and/or promotion vote. Each member making such an evaluation writes a short narrative describing the classroom visit, and includes this in the faculty member’s professional portfolio. The following criteria are utilized:

   - Class presentation and teaching materials (i.e. syllabus, assignments, assessment procedures, examples, and other relevant materials) are consistent with the course outline and departmental goals.
   - Class presentation is organized and coherent.
   - Instructor is motivated and enthusiastic.
   - Instructor utilizes visuals, technology, and other aids (as appropriate).

   Effectiveness in teaching might also include the supervision of a reasonable number of independent study, independent reading, or internship projects, based on departmental expectations and policies.

IV. **Advising.**

   A) Effective advising is demonstrated by the scheduling and holding of regular office hours, by meeting with advisees during the course registration process and by being available to them at other times as might be necessary,

¹ Modifications to performance evaluation guidelines require approval by the Dean and the Provost.
B) Effective advisors are expected to advise an appropriate number of students each year according to their goals and interests, and the requirements of their programs.
C) Effective advising includes familiarity with departmental, college, and university requirements,
D) Advising includes writing letters of recommendation,
E) Advising expectations also include advising student organizations, as appropriate.

V. Service to the department, college, university, community and larger publics. This must include engaging in regular and/or special projects that assist in meeting departmental goals. It also includes a combination of:
A) Serving on college and/or university committees,
B) Participating in professional associations,
C) Utilizing one’s professional expertise in providing reasonable assistance to those outside the university (local, regional and/or national) who might benefit from such assistance, or
D) Involvement in other appropriate professional service.

VI. Scholarly activity. This includes consistent activity in one or more of the following:

A) Scholarly activity demonstrated via presentations, submission of manuscripts and/or publication of articles or reviews in scholarly journals, books, and/or book chapters,
B) Applying for, and receiving grants that assist in the pursuit of research is also considered evidence of scholarly activity,
C) Research and related activities completed as a consultant in an applied setting, assuming that it is related to the faculty member’s area of expertise, is also evidence of scholarly activity.

Scholarly activity might also include serving as a conference chair or discussant, collaborating in undergraduate research projects, or reviewing manuscripts (personnel utilizing these options are also expected to be engaged in one or more of the activities identified in A-C).

Seniority

The Department has adopted the use of seniority for purposes of defining basic issues, such as office assignments, and summer and J-term teaching opportunities.

Style Guides

The Department has adopted the use of the American Political Science Association (APSA) writing style for all political science courses. For representative examples of its use, consult http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPSA.html. The UW-RF library also has the full Style Manual for Political Science. It can be accessed in the reference section: JA86.A44 2001