

Core Course Review Documentation

Foundational Component Area: Undergraduate Inquiry and Creativity

Component Area Option? Yes
Yes - Government
Yes - Undergraduate Inquiry and Creativity

Proposed Course: Politics in Action: POLS 2503
Credit Hours: 3
Proposed by: Political Science, Midwestern State University
Date: Fall, 2015

Please document how the proposed course meets each of the following requirements. (You may provide a written explanation or copy and paste the appropriate information from the syllabus.)

Content: *Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect the human experience.*

Students enrolling in **POLS 2503 Politics in Action** will examine the following content:

- Introduction to policy research.
- Introduction to policy formulation.
- Examine the foundations of a political community.
- Examine decision making procedures of a political community.
- Examine the role of compromise and bargaining in political decision making.
- Participate in the political process of a political community.

SKILLS: *Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.*

Students enrolling in **POLS 2503 Politics in Action** develop the following skills:

- Students will display effective communication skills.
- Students will critically examine and analyze a major challenge of the selected political community.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of ethical decision making in addressing problems in a political community.
- Students will demonstrate a contextual understanding of one's place in a political community.

Throughout **POLS 2503 Politics in Action** students will engage in a series of learning activities designed to foster communication skills, critical thinking, personal responsibility, and social responsibility:

- an overview of policy research
- an introduction to a larger political community
- examination of the dynamics of a specific political community

These activities will be designed to develop policy research skills and then have students put these skills into action during the Public Policy Simulation Project.

ASSESSMENT OF CORE OBJECTIVES: *Assessments should be authentic, intentional and direct. The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement:*

Public Policy Simulation Project: Students will participate in a month-long political simulation in which they must combine their policy research skills with their knowledge of a selected political community to participate in the simulation. Students will be assigned a specific political actor from the selected political community and conduct intensive research in response to a specific political issue facing the community. Based on their research of the political community, students will be required to produce a Policy Proposal. This final project is worth 30

This Proposal will consist of a 2-3 page written document based on ethical research and reflecting the viewpoints of their selected political actor. In the process of researching and writing this proposal, students must consider the ethical and social dimensions of the suggested policy and critically evaluate the plausibility of the selected proposal. The Policy Proposal will represent the culmination of the research and simulation project and will be used to assess student progress towards these

four learning objectives: critical thinking skills, communication skills, personal responsibility and social responsibility.

Sample Simulation Project: The selected political community will be based on the theme of the course. Possible themes include the courts, city councils, the European Union, or Model United Nations. To demonstrate how these simulations will be implemented in Politics in Action the following example is included. In this example the selected political community is the European Union. The example simulation is then the European Union and the policy research paper is based on this selected simulation. Furthermore, the example syllabus is based on the theme of the European Union. The following is an example of a policy proposal writing project used in Politics in Action: The European Union. The assessment of each of these core learning objects is described following the example.

Example of European Union Simulation and Policy Proposal

Policy Proposal

Council of Ministers Term Assignment: Throughout the semester, you will undergo a simulation as representatives on the EU's Council of Ministers. Students will be put into groups of no more than 2 students (3 depending on class size) and each group will be assigned to represent one of the 29 current EU member states in the Council's activities. During the semester each student will be tasked with writing two (2) short papers, 2-3 pages in length, discussing and explaining their member state's position on issue areas to be assigned to the class as a whole. These short papers, in addition to improving your scholarly writing and research abilities, will provide your group with the information needed to participate in two week-long Council of Ministers simulations in class. In these simulations the Council Members (your groups) will meet jointly to discuss a pressing problem facing the European Union. Within these joint meetings, the Council will be charged with drafting and passing a plan to address the assigned problem. Class sessions during each week-long simulation will be structured as if they were Council meetings, and students will use the time to propose, debate, and vote on legislation to deal with the problem at hand.

Each simulation will last one week. Students will be assigned an EU member state to represent, and each EU member state will carry with it a pre-assigned voting weight in the Council that corresponds with population, i.e. larger member states like Germany have more voting power than smaller member states such as Malta. For legislation to pass in the Council it must accord to the common Council procedure of a qualified majority, meaning 255 of 345 possible votes in the Council must vote in favor.

To achieve this majority you will have to be knowledgeable of your assigned country's realistic position on the issue as well as those positions of the other member states. You will have to negotiate and compromise with your fellow member states, and so it is wise to identify areas of common ground and difference in order to achieve a solution that can pass. During the first simulation, the Council will be charged with coming up with a solution to the current debt crisis. More information on the crisis and possible solutions will be handed out nearer to the simulation. The second simulation will deal with whether the EU should expand to include Turkey as the newest EU member. Again, more information will be handed out nearer to the simulation date.

Groups will be graded based on the quality and thoroughness of each of the short papers as well as the performance in the simulation. Points in the simulation will be awarded for how closely the agreed upon plan fits with your member state's preferences, as well as for your group's overall performance in the simulation. Each short paper will be worth 10% of your final grade. Performance in each simulation will also be worth 5% of your final grade. In its entirety, the simulation will comprise 30% of your individual final grade.

Purpose: This assignment is intended to help students prepare for their participation in a political simulation. In this assignment you will develop a policy proposal based on an issue facing the selected political community. Your proposal should be based upon your assigned country and provide a clear position on the issue facing the political community. In this paper, political actors should develop a response to the selected political issue. This response should include a justification of why this proposal provides a more effective solution to the problem than rival solutions. This justification must include a review of the ethical and social implications for the adoption of this policy. This policy proposal should serve as the basis for your participation in the political simulation.

In preparing for the upcoming political simulation develop a policy proposal based on your assigned country that addresses the following political issue:

How Should the European Union respond to the growing Debt Crisis?

This paper should be 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages and submitted electronically on D2L by the assigned due date. The paper should be written according to academic conventions of grammar and mechanics, as well as style. This requires the inclusion of a thesis statement, a body which develops the thesis, and a conclusion.

Critical Thinking Skills - *to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information*

During the Public Policy Simulation Project students will be required to develop a proposal to address a contemporary issue facing a political community. In this proposal students must critically

evaluate the selected proposal in terms of rival policies to justify its adoption by the political community. Students' ability to achieve this learning objective will be assessed with the critical thinking rubric attached below. This and all of the attached rubrics were adapted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities templates to fit the Political Science discipline.

Communication Skills - *to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication*

During the Public Policy Simulation Project students will be required to develop a policy proposal in response to the contemporary issue under consideration. Students will then present this argument in a 2-3 page double spaced written essay. The written communication rubric attached below will be used to assess the learner's progress towards the core learning objective of communication skills.

Personal Responsibility - *to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making*

During the Public Policy Simulation Project students will be required to ethically evaluate their proposed policy to address the issue facing the selected political community. Progress towards the development of personal responsibility will be assessed with the attached personal responsibility rubric.

Social Responsibility - *to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities*

During the Public Policy Simulation Project students will be required to examine the consequences of a proposed policy for their assigned political actor and the larger political community. Student progress towards the development of social responsibility will be assessed with the attached social responsibility rubric.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: *Provide any additional information supporting course inclusion in the core (optional).*

PLEASE ATTACH THE FOLLOWING

1 Syllabus

Course Description:

POLS 2503 introduces students to political action. Students will learn how to conduct policy research and develop a policy that addresses a selected political issue. These skills will then be put into action as students' attempt to persuade their peers to adopt their policy during a political

simulation. In this course students will be participating in a simulation of the European Union.

Texas Core Objectives:

This course will support the development of the following state mandated core learning objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

Texts:

Kenealy, Daniel, John Peterson and Richard Corbett. (2015). *The European Union How Does it Work?*, 4th Edition. Oxford University Press.

Additional Readings available on D2L.

Expectations, Examinations, and Grading:

This course will include lecture over policy research and the European Union. Following lectures, the class will explore issues facing the European Union in discussions that will culminate in a series of political simulations. Lecture will not reproduce the texts. Students are expected to attend class and behave in an adult fashion. During discussions, students are expected to actively participate in order to fully explore these themes. There will be two examinations and a final exam. Students will also be required to participate in a political simulation. As a component of participation in the simulation students will be required to produce policy proposal papers. The highest grading scale will be 90 (A), 80 (B), 70 (C), and 60 (D). If for any reason you should have to miss a test you must inform the instructor prior to the time of the test and proper documentation is required for any makeup test. The percentage breakdown of the course grade is as follows:

Grading:

- Examination One: 20%
- Examination Two: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%
- Policy Proposal Simulation Project 30%
- Class Participation: 10%

Calendar The following course schedule represents the schedule of readings and topics for the course. The readings are located below each topic. Student's should read the assigned readings

prior to class.

- Lesson One: What is Political Action and Public Policy?
Anderson, James (2012). “The Study of Public Policy” in *Public Policymaking, 8th edition*. Cengage.

Section One: Public Policy

- Lesson Two: Political Actors and Political Communities
Anderson, James (2012). “The Policy-Makers and their Environment” in *Public Policymaking, 8th edition*. Cengage.
- Lesson Three: Conducting Political Research
Shively, Phillips. “Political Theories and Research Topics” in *The Craft of Political Research, 9th edition*. Pearson.
- Lesson Four: Developing Political Solutions
Anderson, James (2012). “Policy Formulation: Problems, Agendas, and Formulation” in *Public Policymaking, 8th edition*. Cengage.
- Lesson Five: Adopting Policies
Anderson, James (2012). “Policy Adoption” in *Public Policymaking, 8th edition*. Cengage.
- Exam One

Section Two: The European Union

- Lesson Six: What is the European Union
Kenealy, Daniel, John Peterson and Richard Corbett. (2015). “Introduction” in *The European Union How Does it Work?, 4th Edition*. Oxford

- Lesson Seven: Historical Context
Kenealy, Daniel, John Peterson and Richard Corbett. (2015). “How Did We Get Here” in *The European Union How Does it Work?, 4th Edition*. Oxford
- Lesson Eight: European Union Institutions
Kenealy, Daniel, John Peterson and Richard Corbett. (2015). “The EU’s Institutions” in *The European Union How Does it Work?, 4th Edition*. Oxford.
- Country Assignments
- Lesson Nine: Member States
Kenealy, Daniel, John Peterson and Richard Corbett. (2015). “Member States” in *The European Union How Does it Work?, 4th Edition*. Oxford
- Exam Two

Section Three: European Union Simulation

- Lesson Ten: Policymaking in the European Union
Kenealy, Daniel, John Peterson and Richard Corbett. (2015). “How Policies are Made” in *The European Union How Does it Work?, 4th Edition*. Oxford
- Lesson Eleven: Simulation I: Expanding EU to include Turkey
Policy Proposal Paper I due.
- Lesson Twelve: Debriefing and Review of Simulation Results
Kenealy, Daniel, John Peterson and Richard Corbett. (2015). “EU Expansion and Wider Europe” in *The European Union How Does it Work?, 4th Edition*. Oxford
- Lesson Thirteen: Simulation II: Resolving the Debt Crisis
Policy Proposal Paper II due.
- Final Exam

2 Assessment for Critical Thinking Skills

Undergraduate-Level Critical Thinking Rubric

Critical Thinking, undergraduate-level work in Political Science will be evaluated through the assessment of a final writing project in the areas of explanation of argument, evidence, student's position, and conclusions. A summary chart is provided to explain how work will be assessed. In addition, the areas of evaluation used are outlined below.

Skill	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Explanation of Argument					
Evidence					
Student's Position					
Conclusions					

Explanation of Argument:

- Does the student clearly state the contemporary political issues examined?
- Does the student comprehensively describe the contemporary issue examined?
- Does the student deliver the relevant information necessary for a full understanding of a contemporary political issue?

Evidence:

- Does the student use authoritative sources?
- Does the evidence employed enable the student to develop a comprehensive analysis of a contemporary political issue?
- Does the student thoroughly evaluate the viewpoints/positions of the authoritative sources?

Student's Position:

- Does the student's position take into account the complexity of the contemporary political issues?
- Does the student acknowledge the limits of their position?
- Does the student synthesize other's points of view within their position?

Conclusions:

- Are the student's conclusions logical?
- Do the student's conclusions reflect an informed evaluation?
- Do the student's conclusions demonstrate an ability to place evidence and perspectives in priority order?

3 Assessment for Communication Skills

Undergraduate-Level Written Communication Rubric

Written, undergraduate-level work in Political Science will be evaluated through the assessment of a final written project in the areas of argumentation and analysis, evidence and documentation, structure and style, and grammar and mechanics. A summary chart is provided to explain how work will be assessed. In addition, the areas of evaluation used are outlined below.

Skill	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Argument and Analysis					
Evidence and Documentation					
Structure and Style					
Grammar and Mechanics					

Argument and Analysis:

- Does the paper contain a clear thesis statement or research question?
- Does the paper have a clear hypothesis and argument, appropriate for college-level work?
- Does the main argument of the paper match or answer the research question or thesis statement?
- Are the main argument and key points clear?
- Does the paper clearly address the research question and hypothesis or thesis statement throughout?
- Does the paper develop its main points well?
- Does the paper address other research in the field to place its argument in conversation with other work?
- Does the paper address counterarguments and possible limitations of the research presented in the paper?

Evidence and Documentation:

- To what extent does the paper support its claims?
- What types of support are utilized and are they appropriate for college-level work?
- Are source materials clearly documented in accordance with citation guidelines given in the course or in college-level writing courses at Midwestern State University?
- Is there analysis of the sources or is evidence used too descriptively?
- Does the evidence offered in the paper help to further the overall argument?

Structure and Style:

- Is the paper clearly organized?
- Does the paper include required elements of the assignment?
- Is the style of the paper appropriate for a college-level course in Political Science?
- Is the tone of the paper appropriate for a college-level course in Political Science?

Grammar and Mechanics:

- Does the paper employ appropriate grammar?
- Does the paper make use of punctuation and mechanics?

4 Assessment for Personal Responsibility

Undergraduate-Level Social Responsibility Rubric

Personal Responsibility (*to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making*) undergraduate-level work in Political Science will be evaluated through the assessment of a final written project in the areas of ethical self awareness, understanding different ethical perspectives, ethical issue recognition, and application of ethical perspectives. A summary chart is provided to explain how work will be assessed. In addition, the areas of evaluation used are outlined below.

Skill	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Ethical Self-Awareness					
Understanding different Ethical Perspectives					
Ethical Issue Recognition					
Application of Ethical Perspectives					

Ethical Self-Awareness:

- Did the student discuss core ethical beliefs?
- Did the student discuss the origins of core ethical beliefs?
- Did the student connect core ethical beliefs with the origins of core ethical beliefs when examining a contemporary political issue?

Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives:

- Did the student identify political science theory relevant to the contemporary political issue?
- Did the student accurately apply political science theory to a contemporary political issue?
- Did the student accurately identify and apply political science theory to a contemporary political issue?

Ethical Issue Recognition:

- Did the student recognize an ethical issue when presented with a complex political issue?
- Did the student recognize cross relationships among multiple political issues?
- Did the student identify an ethical issue and link this issue with broader political implications?

Application of Ethical Perspectives:

- Did the student independently apply ethical principles to contemporary political issue?
- Did the student correctly apply ethical principles to a contemporary political issue?
- Did the student consider the full implications of the application of ethical principles to a contemporary political issue?

5 Assessment for Social Responsibility

Undergraduate-Level Social Responsibility Rubric

Social Responsibility (to include cultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities) undergraduate-level work in Political Science will be evaluated through the assessment of a final written project in the areas of diversity of communities and cultures, ethical issue recognition, application of ethical perspectives, and civic context. A summary chart is provided to explain how work will be assessed. In addition, the areas of evaluation used are outlined below.

Skill	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Diversity of Communities and Cultures					
Analysis of Knowledge					
Civic Identity					
Civic Contexts					

Ethical Issue Recognition:

- Did the student demonstrate an adjustment in their attitudes and beliefs based on learning from diversity of communities and cultures?
- Did the student promote others engagement with diversity?
- Did the student demonstrate adjustments in their own attitudes and promote engagement with diversity based on their learning from diversity of communities and cultures?

Analysis of Knowledge:

- Did the student connect political science theory to civic engagement?
- Did the student connect political science theory to their own participation in civic life?
- Did the student display an understanding of the connection between civic engagement and contemporary public policy?

Civic Identity:

- Did the student identify lessons learned from civic engagement experiences?
- Did the civic engagement experience shape the student's civic identity?
- Did the civic engagement experience strength the student's commitment to public action?

Civic Context:

- Did the student demonstrate an ability to identify a civic aim for a community?
- Did the student demonstrate a commitment to work within community contexts to achieve a civic aim?
- Did the student identify a civic aim and demonstrate a commitment to work within a civic context to achieve this aim?