

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements  
 Department of Politics: Off Campus Programs  
 Master’s Program in International Affairs  
 Master’s Program in Congressional and Presidential Studies**

**Key Assessment Findings**

***Master’s level comprehensive exam: Introduction***

The comprehensive exams in International Affairs (MAIA) and in Congressional and Presidential Studies (CAPS) are capstone requirements for these Master’s degree programs. All Master’s students in CAPS and MAIA must take and pass the comprehensive exam in order to earn the degree. Students take this exam either in the last semester of coursework or in the semester following the completion of coursework. If a student fails his or her first exam, then he or she may retake the exam one time and still earn the degree if he or she passes the second attempt.

***Master’s level comprehensive exam: Rubric and Key Assessment Findings***

Each comprehensive exam question is graded on a “double-blind” basis, i.e., by the professor who wrote the question and a second professor with expertise in the area or subject matter related to the question. Each professor grades each question in accordance with the off-campus program’s comprehensive exam rubric, which is based on the following 3 point scale: exceeds expectations (Pass with Honors) 3 points, meets expectations (Pass) 2 points, and below expectations (Fail) 1 point. For each question in which a grade dispute emerges between the two grading professors, the question is sent to a third reader for evaluation. The majority evaluation of the disputed question determines the grade.

**Table of Results  
 Student Learning Assessment Rubric  
 Department of Politics  
 M.A. in Politics (Off-Campus Program)  
 AY 2009-2010  
 Rubric for MA Comprehensive Exams**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Critical Thinking /Analytical Skills	2	11%	16	84%	1	5%	2.05	0.40	19
2) Knowledge of Literature	2	11%	16	84%	1	5%	2.05	0.40	19
3) Clear/Effective Writing	2	11%	16	84%	1	5%	2.05	0.40	19

The table above reflects the results of the M.A. comprehensive exams in CPOL during AY 2009-2010. In AY 2009-2010, 19 MAIA and CAPS students took comprehensive exams. 2 earned "Pass with Honors," 16 earned "Pass," and 1 earned a "Fail." Over the last year, 18 out of 19 comprehensive exam takers have met or exceeded expectations. Over the last academic year, the program's comprehensive exam performance average has been approximately 2.05, based on the 3 point rubric described above. After reviewing the M.A. exams in the MAIA and CAPS programs in CPOL, the Department of Politics feels confident that students are meeting and even exceeding departmental expectations.

***Master's level comprehensive exam: Curricular Improvements***

No major changes to the exam format have been made during the 2009-2010 academic year. Student achievement has met or exceeded expectations, and students, faculty, and the department all believe that the exam is designed in such a way that it measures accurately and fairly student learning in the CPOL MA programs. The rubric will continue to be used during AY 2010-2011, and it will be revised and improved as necessary.