

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Politics: Undergraduate Seniors
B.A. in Politics**

Key Assessment Findings

Undergraduate senior comprehensive exam: Introduction

The comprehensive exams in American Government, World Politics and Political Theory are capstone requirements for these Bachelor’s degree programs. All Bachelors’ students in the Politics Department must take and pass the comprehensive exam in order to earn the degree. Students take this exam within the last year of coursework. If a student fails his or her first exam, then he or she may retake the exam once per semester until he or she passes, before he or she may earn the degree.

Bachelor’s level comprehensive exam: Rubric and Key Assessment Findings

Each comprehensive exam question is graded by the professor who wrote the question. Each professor grades each question in accordance with the department’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. The rubrics examine three key areas: Critical Thinking/Analytical Skills, Knowledge of Literature and Concepts, and Clear/Effective Writing. Each of the three key areas are graded on the same 3-point scale.

**Table of Results
Student Learning Assessment Rubric
Department of Politics
B.A. in Politics
AY 2011-2012**

Rubric for BA 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	46	19.01%	159	65.70%	37	15.29%	2.04	0.59	243
2) Knowledge of Literature	37	15.29%	152	62.81%	53	21.90%	1.93	0.61	243
3) Clear/Effective Writing	38	15.70%	184	76.03%	20	8.26%	2.07	0.48	243

The table above reflects the individual results of three essay parts of the B.A. Senior comprehensive exams during AY 2011-2012, which is why the total number is so much higher than the number of students who took comps. In AY 2011-2012, 84 students took comprehensive exams, 81 of which took the three essay portions detailed above. 1 earned “Pass with Honors,” 79 earned “Pass,” and 4 earned a “Fail.” Over the last year, 80 out of 84 comprehensive exam

takers have met or exceeded expectations. Over the last academic year, the program's comprehensive exam performance average has been approximately 2.01, based on the 3 point rubric described above. After reviewing the B.A. exams, the Department of Politics feels confident that students are meeting and even exceeding departmental expectations.

Bachelor's level comprehensive exam: Curricular Improvements

No major changes to the exam format have been made during the 2011-2012 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 B.A. program. The rubric will continue to be used during AY 2012-2013, and it will be revised and improved as necessary.