

Course Outcomes Guide (COG)

Directions: Please complete this form to document your progress toward improving student learning. For each item, indicate your progress and your anticipated next steps. Thank you!

Course Title: PLS 101 (SP/17)

Date: 5/16/17

Instructor: Andrew B. Kramer

Expected Learning Outcomes

- 1) Demonstrate knowledge of terms and facts of this subject
- 2) Apply basic knowledge to new situations
- 3) Solve problems
- 4) Communicate solutions
- 5) Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior

Assessment (How do or will students demonstrate achievement of each outcome?)

- Outcome No. 1: evidenced by short answer & fill-in-the-blank questions 2 & 5 on the Contracts quiz.
- Outcome No. 2: evidenced by application of law to facts in short essay questions Nos. 7 & 8 in the Contracts quiz
- Outcome No. 3: evidenced by question No. 10 – unconscionability short essay – in the Contracts quiz
- Outcome No. 4: evidenced by Application 10-2 – Oral report on Pre-Nup Briefing activity in Family Law quiz
- Outcome No. 5: evidenced by application of Participation Rubric

Validation (What methods have you used or will you use to validate your assessment?)

- All Outcomes: students must achieve no less than 80% of the total points available in these questions.

Results (What do your assessment data show? If you have not yet assessed student achievement of your learning outcomes, when is assessment planned?)

- Outcome No. 1: 83% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 2: 88% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 3: 83% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 4: 100% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 5: 100% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO

Follow-up (How have you used or how will you use the data to improve student learning?)

Having just completed my first academic year at HCC, and replacing a long-standing, high-ranking professor of Paralegal Studies, it is only now that I am able to have some perspective on the SLOs in the PLS program.

My concerns are as follows:

- 1) The SLOs for all introductory PLS courses (PLS 101, PLS 102 and PLS 103) seem to be similar and not course/material specific.
- 2) The SLOs for all introductory PLS courses, as above, are overly generalized formulations and, therefore, difficult to measure and assess, e.g., “solve problems” and “demonstrate professional and ethical behavior”. As an additional example, among the curricular goals of PLS 101 is student proficiency in a number of specific areas of legal subject matter (Tort, Contract, Family Law, Wills, etc.). Yet, not one SLO in PLS 101 allows the instructor a tailored focus on assessing proficiency in these areas. Consequently, the instructor faces the herculean task of fashioning assessments that cannot be measured with specificity. For example, student mastery of SLO No. 1 (Demonstrate knowledge of terms and facts of this subject) cannot adequately be measured in a course in which no fewer than 5 discrete “subjects” are covered.

My recommendations are:

- 1) Revise the PLS SLOs to a smaller number of more relevant and applicable goals for student performance in material/skills-specific areas
- 2) Revise the PLS SLOs to allow for greater instructor options for measurement and, therefore, for the creation of more meaningful assessments of student learning
- 3) Upon the completion of the HCC Courtroom, incorporate a new SLO that assesses practical courtroom processes that support the substantive material

Budget Justification (What resources are necessary to improve student learning?)

HCC Courtroom: As discussed in Unit Planning and explored thereafter, a mock courtroom will:

- a) Allow students to experience the setting in which much of their professional work will take place
- b) Allow students to apply and combine all anticipated SLOs in a hands-on setting in which students communicate, demonstrate knowledge, act professionally and apply knowledge to diverse factual scenarios