

General Education SLOA Summary

General Education Category:

- A. Critically analyze and evaluate issues derived from the Social Sciences utilizing appropriate methodologies.
- B. Demonstrate an understanding of how culture, society and diversity shape the role of the individual within society and human relations across cultures.

Semester: Fall 2013 and Spring 2014

Data Summary: see attached which includes the grading rubric, data from grading rubric for each student and an average for each of the five grading elements.

Discussion of Analysis Results:

The data indicates:

- Students in general actively engaged in following a political topic through the news media.
- Students began the course with little to no media literacy, but they learned how to stay informed about a political topic, detecting levels and directions of bias.
- Students also gained an appreciation of balanced sources of information and an understanding of pitfalls that can occur when Internet information is accepted uncritically.
- Students do appreciate the value of diversity within society and government, although the role of the government in ensuring diversity remains problematic for many students.

Plan of Action (closing the loop):

The “news diary” is among the most useful assignments given in this class. Following the news regularly helps students understand that the material about government and politics presented in the textbook is not merely theoretical, but actually has relevance in the everyday lives of all Americans.

Among the weakest scores in the assessment are those that pertain to communication. Students at this level in general do not write well. While the students do not need to follow strict writing guidelines for the actual news journal, they do need to present the summation of the diary in the form of a short essay. The quality of this essay varies widely. Some essays are cogent and compelling; some are sloppy and vague. The essays reflect the quality of the individual student’s writing ability in general. Writing problems are a continual focus of energies in and out of the classroom. Among the methods used are individual coaching and use of the Learning Support Center.

One element incorporated in this assessment is the attention to understanding opposing points of view. Too often politics nowadays is associated with bombastic and insulting verbiage. This instructor attempts to counter this influence by explicitly requiring students to explore opposing points of view. We explore these views in class, as well as in written assignments. While students in general performed reasonably well in this regard, the objective of understanding other viewpoints merits persistent and perennial attention.

Discussion of Rubric

The instrument for assessing the students in this General Education class was the assignment that each student maintain a news journal throughout the term. The students must choose a topic that has bearing on national politics and then maintain a news journal throughout the term. Students were expected to read two news articles per week on the subjects that they had chosen and discuss these articles in journal entries.

Examples of subjects covered in student journals could be gay marriage, drug laws, national defense, or the economy. This journal is used as a subject for classroom discussion throughout the term, but the journal itself is not submitted until the end of the term.

At the end of the journal, students also include a summary of what they learned during the term by following this one subject through the past three months.

The journals and their summaries were assessed on the following criteria.

- A. Understanding of the issue being followed.
- B. Understanding political mechanisms and institutions relevant to issue followed.
- C. Communication of events and complex ideas.
- D. Willingness to investigate and understand opposing points of view.
- E. Comprehends the importance of diversity within US society and political system.

These elements in turn were assessed on a five-point scale.

Five (5): Excellent, demonstrates superior competency.

Four (4): Good, demonstrates above average competency.

Three (3): Average, demonstrates basic competency.

Two (2): Below average, demonstrates inadequate competency.

One (1): Demonstrates little to no competency.

Data from Grading Rubric

Fall 2013

POL101-01

18 students assessed

Average score: 17.38 out of 25

Average assessment: 3.47

POL101-02

16 students assessed

Average total score: 18.81 out of 25

Average assessment: 3.76

POL101-03

13 students assessed

Average total score: 17 out of 25

Average assessment: 3.4

Spring 2014

POL101-01

12 students assessed

Average score: 18.25 out of 25

Average assessment: 3.65

POL101—02

18 students assessed

Average score: 18.77 out of 25

Average assessment: 3.75

POL101-04

6 students assessed

Average score: 18.66 out of 25

Average assessment: 3.73