

## **Political Science DLOs**

**DLO 1:** Explain the nature and structures of political power globally and in diverse societies.

**DLO 2:** Analyze the various and complex ways in which politics serves the pursuit of justice or injustice.

**DLO 3:** Develop and refine your own political voice by engaging a diversity of political worldviews.

**DLO 4:** Demonstrate effective oral and written argumentation skills about contested political phenomena.

**DLO 5:** Ask important questions about politics and answer them by utilizing methods and evidence appropriate to the questions.

## **Institutional Learning Outcomes**

1. Demonstrate expertise in integrating ideas, methods, theories, and practices within and across academic/disciplinary areas of study. (Disciplinary/Interdisciplinary Knowledge)
2. Seek, analyze, contextualize, and incorporate information to expressly enrich understanding of the world. (WASC Information Literacy)
3. Develop the ability to sustain curiosity and to think critically, creatively, and independently. (WASC Critical Thinking)
4. Develop skills to collaborate effectively and ethically as leaders and team members. (WASC Oral and Written Communication)
5. Communicate effectively within and across academic, professional, and social contexts. (WASC Oral and Written Communication)
6. Use deductive reasoning and statistical methods to gather, interpret, and evaluate data critically, in order to assess the reasonableness of solutions to scientific, civic, and personal challenges. (WASC Quantitative Reasoning)
7. Demonstrate an understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and sustainability through local, global, and ethical perspectives.

## **Questions:**

1. Which DLOs are addressed in my classes (of course, this should be completed in your department's curriculum map)?
2. Do I currently have any assignments or parts of assignments that demonstrate student learning for the DLOs?
3. How can I package the information for the department?

**DLO 1:** Explain the nature and structures of political power globally and in diverse societies.

This could be viewed as a knowledge based DLO – explain political structures is something I do in POL S 102 – American and California Government. There are some comparative elements in this class so the information I have is limited. But, I have several questions about the structure of the US governing system that could be utilized.

For instance:

1. Under the current system, and looking ahead to the 2024 Presidential elections, assume the Republican candidate gets 47 percent of the popular vote in Ohio, the Democratic party candidate receives 43 percent of the popular vote in Ohio, and the Green party candidate receives 10 percent of the popular vote in Ohio. Assuming Ohio has 100 electoral college votes, in the current system, the Republican candidate would receive:

- a. No electoral college votes because he/she did not get a majority of popular votes
- b. No electoral college votes unless he/she forms an alliance with the Green Party candidate
- c. All 100 electoral college votes
- d. 47 electoral college votes plus the votes cast by the independents

2. Again looking towards the Presidential 2024 elections, assume this time that the Republican party candidate receives 45% of the popular vote in California, the Democratic party candidate receives 54% of the popular vote, and Green party candidate receives 1% of the popular vote in California. Assume that California has 100 electoral college votes. How would the electoral college votes be distributed if we used proportional representation to assign electoral college votes?

- a. The Republican candidate would get 45 votes, the Democratic candidate would get 54 votes and Green party candidate would get 1 vote.
- b. The Republican would get 45 votes and the Democrat would get 55 votes
- c. The Democratic party candidate would get 100 votes
- d. None of the above

3. The state of Alaska determined that marijuana used for purely recreational reasons was constitutional under the Alaskan Constitution. Cities in California are attempting to legalize prostitution. All of these are examples of what major concept in the US Constitution.

- a. Federalism
- b. Separation of powers
- c. Checks and Balances
- d. Inherent powers

4. Under the Constitution, the state government is allowed to:

- a. Enter into treaties with other nations
- b. Regulate intrastate commerce
- c. Regulate interstate commerce and commerce with Indian Nations

d. Coin money

5. The Framers of the Constitution intended to insulate the United States Supreme Court from overt political pressure and electoral politics by:

- a. Having justices elected
- b. Giving justices 14 year terms
- c. Having justices appointed by the President
- d. Giving justices life tenure
- e. A and D
- f. C and D

6. One of the checks on the president in the system of checks and balances is that

- a. The House has the power to confirm or reject presidential appointees
- b. The Senate can override a presidential veto
- c. Congress can override a presidential veto
- d. The Supreme Court can impeach and convict a president

If these are the questions I use, I would pull responses from these questions for the department DLOs. I might then report that students who got 5-6 questions correct receive a 3, students who got 3-4 questions correct receive a 2, and students getting 2 or fewer questions correct get a 1. I would not score the entire exam for department DLO assessment because certain questions might not get to the heart of a DLO (although in an entry level class where the DLO is knowledge based, most questions might apply).

**DLO 2:** Analyze the various and complex ways in which politics serves the pursuit of justice or injustice.

Since I teach mostly constitutional law classes, this DLO is more aligned with my classes. I could pull several questions regarding the political nature of the Supreme Court, the ways rights are defined by the Court (and why that matters to the pursuit of justice), the political and personal preferences of judicial players and its impact on justice, etc. When I score the questions below, for instance, I could report those scores to the department for use with assessment of DLO 2. Ideally, this information is combined with information from political theory classes, for example, to get a better view of student success.

1. As we learned, the Supreme Court defines the level of legal scrutiny categories of rights receive. Explain why the definition of a right as requiring strict scrutiny vs. rational/low scrutiny matters for the pursuit of civil rights. I would be sure to provide examples of how these concepts protect, or fail to adequately protect, civil rights.
2. It is highly significant that the 6-3 majority opinion in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003) used the Due Process Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment instead of just using the Equal Protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. How does use of the Due Process clause, in this case, advance the rights of same-sex individuals more than only using Equal Protection would have provided? What is the Court about the right to engage in consensual sexual behavior among adults using Due Process?
3. The composition of the Court is likely to have a large impact on abortion cases and individual liberties. How does Court composition impact judicial decisions and what does the current composition mean for the protection of individual liberties? **Could this question be made more specific to the DLO?**

**DLO 3:** Develop and refine your own political voice by engaging a diversity of political worldviews.

How might I incorporate class discussion about legal cases and outcomes to evaluate this DLO? Or is this better evaluated in a standard assignment?

**DLO 4:** Demonstrate effective oral and written argumentation skills about contested political phenomena.

In my classes, this DLO could be evaluated in part through examination questions (see examples below). However, during semesters in which I am teaching POL S 347B (American Constitutional Law: Rights, Liberties, and Justice), the assigned group project might be a better method of assessment. There are several elements of the rubric of that assignment that could be used to gauge department DLOs as well as institutional DLOs.

First, for instance, the questions below from an examination could be used to assess a student's ability to make a cogent argument.

1. We have talked a great deal about the value of judicial independence or judicial accountability to the rule of law and the functioning of a representative democracy. Given the structure of our government and the concepts of individual rights vs societal rights inherent in the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, do you think judicial independence or judicial accountability is more "important" and why?

Second, I assign a group project in POL S 347B asking students to represent the "liberal" or "conservative" positions on a currently docketed Supreme Court case and convince the court (me) that their position is the legally correct option by using case law as evidence. I select 4 current cases, assign students to either the liberal or conservative position per case, and create 8 total groups. Each group is then expected to write a complete legal argument supporting their position and defend that position using case law. The groups then present those arguments in a classroom presentation, with each side presenting their arguments, and taking questions from the class. Group projects are graded using the following rubric:

Rubric for Group Project, POL S 347B

1. Logical construction of argument (15) (Critical thinking)
2. Review of legal progression of issue well covered (10) (Information literacy)
3. Appropriate use of case law to support argument (15)
4. Tiered argument relying on both constitutional and statutory analysis (10) (DLO 4, POL S)
5. Use of variety of case law (state, local, international as appropriate) (10)
6. Prepares for and anticipates counter points (10) (DLO 4)
7. Integration of individual assignments into a coherent group project presentation and case brief (10) (Team work)
8. Oral presentation understandable with appropriate use of visuals (10) (DLO 4, PS, Oral Communications)
9. Grammar, spelling, organization, citations, etc in written case brief (10)



**DLO 5:** Ask important questions about politics and answer them by utilizing methods and evidence appropriate to the questions.

1. We demand uniform, consistent and impartial judicial decisions made by judges who are unbiased and objective and who understand theirs is the role of an umpire in the criminal justice system. We also know, however, that for a variety of reasons, judicial decisions often fall short of these requirements. Based on what you now know of the state and federal judiciaries, what prevents judges from handing down uniform, consistent and impartial decisions? If you were designing a new constitutional scheme, how would you structure the judiciary to encourage more consistency in rulings? You might want to consider how you feel about concepts like judicial activism, judicial restraint, judicial independence, judicial accountability, countermajoritarian rulings, and tyranny of the majority before answering the question. Be sure to justify your answer using the theoretical perspectives advanced by others and examples from court rulings.

2. Do you believe judicial review is consistent with the notions of democracy? Why or why not. Using case law, support your conclusions. You will not be graded on your position on judicial review but will be graded on your ability to support your position using case law.

3. Using the Court's ruling in *Katz v. US (1967)*, do you think the use of face recognition technology at a pro-sports game would be constitutional? Why or why not? A complete answer will explain the two prong test articulated in *Katz*, apply that test to face recognition technology, and support those conclusions with examples from case law.