

## **Political Science (MA) – CAL**

**Director/Chair: Dr. Jonathan Graubart**

**Assessment Lead: Dr. Kim Twist**

### **Step 1: Student Learning Outcome**

**DLO 2:** Design effective research questions about politics and use appropriate methods and evidence to answer them.

### **Step 2: Assessment Methods and Measures**

We assessed final papers in graduate seminars that focus on methods, using the following rubric:

1. Designs an effective research question and answers with methods and evidence appropriate to the question
2. Designs an effective research question and provides some evidence to support the question
3. Designs and answers a research question

We assessed this DLO in POL S 615 in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025: Of the 15 students in 615 in Fall 2024, 4 designed and supported a research question with evidence and 10 designed and supported a research question with appropriate and sufficient evidence. Of the 11 students in 615 in Spring 2025, 2 designed and supported a research question with evidence and 9 designed and supported a research question with appropriate and sufficient evidence.

### **Step 3: Criteria for Success**

70% of students demonstrating proficiency or mastery.

### **Step 4: Summary of Results**

There were 26 students across the two semesters. A total of 19 students (73.1%) demonstrated mastery and 6 students (23.1%) demonstrated proficiency.

## **Step 5: Action Plan**

Based on our 23-24 assessment, we added a week dedicated to writing papers, which included introductions, conclusions, lit reviews, citations, and the like. This week seems to have been successful, with a higher percentage of students demonstrating mastery in F24 and S25 than in F23.

Moving forward, our plan is to offer 615 in the spring only; this course will be taken by students in their first year (second semester). For S26, we plan to add a second week focused just on writing and to create more formative writing assessments for earlier in the class, too. We hope to see the effects of this focus on writing translate to the students' second-year progress in their substantive courses.