

**University of Dayton Political Science Department
2011-12 Assessment Report
November 7, 2012**

Goal #1: All Political Science graduates will demonstrate proficiency conducting empirical research, understood to include the articulation of a thesis and the marshaling and evaluation of relevant data.

Measures:

1. 100% of POL majors will complete POL 207 by the end of their sophomore year or within one semester of declaring POL as their major.
2. 80% of graduating POL majors will report in exit interviews that they employed research skills learned in POL207 in upper-level POL electives.
3. In 80% of sampled POL research assignments, students will earn at least a “proficiency” score conducting empirical research. A rubric will be used to assess this sample.

Results:

1. POL did not achieve this goal with the graduating class of 2012. Exit survey data from this class indicated that 47% had completed POL 207 by the end of their sophomore year. Fifty-three percent completed POL207 during their junior or senior years.
2. POL did not achieve this goal with the graduating class of 2012. Only 2% responded that they regularly employed research skills learned in POL207; 58% said they did so “occasionally,” and 40% responded that they never employed research skills learned in POL207.
3. The department has not yet constructed the assessment rubric and used it to evaluate empirical research assignments. We will do that this academic year.

What is the department doing in response to these results?

These results are not surprising to the department. The graduating class of 2012 completed their major requirements under an advising system that allowed them to take POL207 at any point during their four years. Many delayed taking it until their junior or senior years because POL207 was not explicitly linked, in a developmentally appropriate way, to upper-level POL electives. With the department intentionally advising majors to take POL207 by the end of their sophomore year, we anticipate reaching Measure #1 in the next two years.

We anticipate the revamped POL207, which focuses on research design and introduces multiple research methods including case study, surveying and polling, focus groups and elite interviewing, and experimental design, will help us meet Measures #2 and #3. The department is updating syllabi from upper-level electives so they reference the revamped POL 207 course—making the link explicit. The department also is assessing how many upper-level electives assign empirical research projects and explore ways to bolster that facet of the curriculum.