

**Course Assessment Report
Washtenaw Community College**

Discipline	Course Number	Title
Political Science	220	PLS 220 08/09/2019- Politics and the Media
Division	Department	Faculty Preparer
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Social Sciences	Donna Wasserman
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

I. Review previous assessment reports submitted for this course and provide the following information.

1. Was this course previously assessed and if so, when?

No

2. Briefly describe the results of previous assessment report(s).

3.

4. Briefly describe the Action Plan/Intended Changes from the previous report(s), when and how changes were implemented.

5.

II. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome

Outcome 1: Describe the historical development and technological changes in the mass media environment in the U.S.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2022
 - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
 - Number students to be assessed: All students
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric

- Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome-related questions
- Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2019	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
15	15

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

One section of PLS 220 was offered Winter 2019, and all students in that section (15) were included in the assessment.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #1 was assessed using an essay exam. The essay exam included three essay questions, and each essay question included a component asking students to describe the historical development and technological changes in the mass media in the United States—the first essay focused on the local news coverage, the second on foreign affairs news coverage, and the third on election coverage. Essays were scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes
 The average score across all three essays was 84.3% (92 points out/110 possible points), with 86.7% scoring 70% or higher. For the local news coverage essay, the

average score was 83.6%, with 93% scoring 70% or higher. For the foreign affairs news coverage essay, the average score was 87.3%, with 93% scoring 70% or higher. For the campaign news coverage essay, the average score was 82.9%, with 86% scoring 70% or higher.

The standard of success is 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for Outcome #1 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students generally performed well in writing essays addressing and analyzing the required material in their essay responses. Students did especially well when asked to describe historical and technological changes in the media landscape in various areas of news coverage.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Although the standard of success was met for Outcome #1, overall, most students' essays could have done better incorporating the lecture, reading, and video materials from class as supporting evidence in their essay responses. Some students also needed to do a better job analyzing the consequences of historical and technological changes on media content and the political system.

Outcome 2: Articulate the role of the mass media in the United States.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2022
 - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
 - Number students to be assessed: All students
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome-related questions
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty
- 1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2019	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
15	15

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

One section of PLS 220 was offered Winter 2019, and all students in that section (15) were included in the assessment.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #2 was assessed using an essay exam. The essay exam included three essay questions, and each essay question included a component asking students to describe the role of the mass media in the U.S. political system—the first essay focused on the mass media’s role in providing information on state and local affairs, the second on foreign affairs, and the third on election campaigns. Essays were scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The average score across all three essays was 84.3%, with 86.7% scoring 70% or higher. For the local news coverage essay, the average score was 83.6% with 93% scoring 70% or higher. For the foreign affairs news coverage essay, the average score was 87.3% with 93% scoring 70% or higher. For the campaign news coverage essay, the average score was 82.9% with 86% scoring 70% or higher.

The standard of success is 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for Outcome #2 was achieved.

- Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students generally did well addressing and analyzing the required material in their essay responses on this outcome.

- Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Although the standard of success was met for Outcome #2, as was the case for Outcome #1, students overall needed to better incorporate the lecture, reading, and video materials used in class as supporting evidence in their essay responses.

Outcome 3: Identify the factors influencing media content in and outside of the U.S.

- **Assessment Plan**
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2022
 - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
 - Number students to be assessed: All students
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome-related questions
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

- Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2019	

- Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
15	15

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

One section of PLS 220 was offered Winter 2019, and all students in that section (15) were included in the assessment.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #3 was assessed using an essay exam. The essay exam asked students to identify and describe different models of the news making process (mirror, professional, political, and business), the news content that would result from the factors derived from each model, and to explain which model(s) best described the actual news content. Essays were scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The average score on this essay exam was 89.7% (89.7 points out of 100 possible points), with 93% scoring 70% or higher.

The standard of success was 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for Outcome #3 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students generally demonstrated a good understanding of the factors that could influence media content in and outside of the U.S. based on the different models of the news making process.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Although the standard of success was met for Outcome #3, once again, students needed to better incorporate the lecture, reading, and video materials from class as supporting evidence in their essay responses. While most students were able to identify and describe the different models, some students were less successful when it came to applying the consequences of these differences on the news product.

Outcome 4: Articulate the interaction of the news media profession and government officials/politicians/campaigners.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2022
 - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
 - Number students to be assessed: All students
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome-related questions
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2019	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
15	15

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

Only one section of PLS 220 was offered Winter 2019, and all students in that section (15) were included in the assessment.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #4 was assessed using an essay exam. The essay exam asked students to articulate how the news media profession and politicians interact when it comes to controlled and uncontrolled media and to describe the consequences of these interactions on citizens, politicians, and governance. The essays were scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The average score on this essay was 82.9% with 86% scoring 70% or higher.

The standard of success was 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for Outcome #4 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students were able to articulate the interactions between the news media and politicians and the differences in these interactions in controlled versus uncontrolled media.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Once again, most students needed to better incorporate the lecture, reading, and video materials from class as supporting evidence in their essay responses. Some students did not do as well in addressing the consequences of the interactions between politicians and the news media on governance.

Outcome 5: Identify the effects of the news media on the public's perceptions of the political world.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Departmental exam

- Assessment Date: Winter 2022
- Course section(s)/other population: All sections
- Number students to be assessed: All students
- How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric
- Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome-related questions
- Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2019	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
15	15

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

One section of PLS 220 was offered Winter 2019, and all students in that section (15) were included in the assessment.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Outcome #5 was assessed using two essay exams. The first essay exam asked students to identify the effects of news media coverage on the public's perception of the political world depending on different models of the news making process. The second essay exam required students to identify the effects of news coverage on the public's perception and knowledge of the political world in three different areas—state and local politics, international affairs, and election campaigns. Essays were scored using a departmentally-developed rubric.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The average score on the first essay exam was 89.7% (89.7 points out of 100 possible points), with 93% scoring 70% or higher. For the second essay exam, the average total score was 83.6%, with 93% scoring 70% or higher on the local news question, 93% scoring 70% or higher on the foreign affairs news question, and 86% scoring 70% or higher on the elections campaign news question.

The standard of success was 70% of students will score 70% or higher, and so the standard of success for Outcome #5 was achieved.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students generally performed well in identifying the effects of the news media on the public's perception of the political world. Students were especially adept at identifying the effects of news coverage on the public's level and quality of political knowledge.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Once again, most essays needed to do a better job incorporating the lecture, reading, and video materials from class as supporting evidence in their essay responses.

III. Course Summary and Intended Changes Based on Assessment Results

1. Based on the previous report's Intended Change(s) identified in Section I above, please discuss how effective the changes were in improving student learning.

N/A.

PLS 220 has not been assessed in the past.

2. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

Overall, PLS 220 is an important course for our students because it teaches them to think in a more nuanced and critical way about media coverage of politics and its consequences. The assessment process demonstrated that students learned to recognize the forces shaping the information they receive in various news outlets and the consequences for our political system. I was surprised to learn a common shortcoming across all learning outcomes was students' weakness when it came to incorporating assigned political science literature as supporting evidence in their arguments.

3. Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

A copy of this assessment report will be distributed to all departmental faculty.

4. Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
Course Assignments	Add more emphasis and practice related to incorporating lecture, reading and video materials from class as supporting evidence in essays.	This is an area in which students can improve across all outcomes.	2020

5. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

6.

III. Attached Files

[PLS 220 w'19 Assessment Data](#)

[PLS 220 w'19 Essay Rubrics](#)

Faculty/Preparer: Donna Wasserman **Date:** 08/14/2019
Department Chair: Gregg Heidebrink **Date:** 08/15/2019
Dean: Scott Britten **Date:** 09/25/2019
Assessment Committee Chair: Shawn Deron **Date:** 10/18/2019