General Education Assessment Report

Social Sciences

Spring, 2017

The University at Albany, SUNY

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Director of Assessment

Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness

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Categories Assessed: Social Sciences, Writing & Critical Inquiry

Background

During the spring semester of the 2016-17 academic year, the University at Albany assessed the degree to which students were achieving student learning objectives in Social Sciences and Writing & Critical Inquiry. As with previous assessments the sample was chosen to be generally representative of the categories rather than completely random, and instructors who had completed assessments in other General Education categories within the past 5 years were exempted. In the Social Sciences category, 61 courses met the General Education requirement, with a total enrollment of 4938. The population of courses that meet the General Education requirement represents 8 departments (50 courses) from the College of Arts and Sciences; 3 departments (9 courses) from Rockefeller College; and 1 course each from the School of Public Health and the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity. The sample selected consisted of 32 classes from 12 different academic units, with student N=3305 (66.9% of the Social Sciences General Education population). Enrollments in courses selected for the sample ranged from 30 to 414\(^1\). Three courses were specifically excluded from sampling due to very low enrollments.

Of the 33 classes sampled, 18 instructors submitted completed forms at the end of the semester. Six instructor submitted forms that were either incomplete or supplied beginning of semester data and examples but did not provide end of semester data. 6 instructors provided no response at all. Data collected represents a maximum N=2244, which is 68% of the sample, and 45% of the population. This represents both a significantly larger N and a higher percentage of the population of students taking courses meeting this General Education requirement than the assessment of the Social Sciences General Education requirement completed in the spring of 2011.\(^2\)

The instructor participation rate on this administration of the General Education assessment was better in this category than it was in 2011. We believe this is attributable to 2 factors: 1) better communication from IRPE, including earlier notification of selection for the sample, and a pre-notification of all instructors in the two categories by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Associate Dean for General Education; and 2) regular and repeated communication from the Dean's Office in the College of Arts and Sciences to instructors who were selected to be part of the sample. Instructors mapped their courses to specific learning objectives, reflected on assessment results, and discussed how

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\(^1\) Sampling is conducted prior to the start of the semester, and figures represented for both the sample N and individual course enrollments reflect enrollment at the time of sampling—and thus is not necessarily reflective of the number of students who were actually assessed as part of the administration of this General Education assessment.

\(^2\) In the 2011 administration of this assessment, respondents represented an N=460, or 19% of the sample. An assessment of the Social Sciences category was administered in 2006, but the author was unable to locate a report from that assessment; only locating a data file that indicated that indicated that 11 courses were sampled, representing an N=1430.
their findings would influence their course design and pedagogy for these courses in future semesters. This is exactly what we hoped the assessment process would produce. Appendix B illustrates these activities and reflections.

Course Embedded Assessment

Social Sciences assessment results indicate that the majority of students “Exceeded” or “Met” expectations - as shown in the composite graph below, as well as graphs for each of the individual learning objectives on the following pages. Large majorities of students were reported to have either met or exceeded each of the five learning objectives, ranging from a low of 70% for objective 5 to a high of 82% for objective 2. It is critically important to note that these results were somewhat skewed by the results from two large classes (respondents 3 & 4). In one class of 430 students, the instructor classified all students as having either “Met” or “Did Not Meet” the learning objectives, and did not classify any students as having “Exceeded” or “Approached”. In another class, the instructor classified all 188 of the students as having either “Met” or “Approached”, and did not classify any students as having “Exceeded” or “Did Not Meet” the learning objectives. This creates obvious problems, and a review of the submissions of these instructors has been noted as an item for follow-up by the General Education Assessment Committee in the Recommendations section of this report.3

![Composite graph showing Social Sciences General Education results.](image)

**Figure 1:** Summary of Social Sciences General Education results.

The Learning Objectives for the category are as follows:

Social Sciences courses enable students to demonstrate:

1. an understanding that human conduct and behavior more generally are subject to scientific inquiry;

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3 See figure 13 on page 9 for an illustration of the effect that the results submitted for these two classes has on the rest of the population.
2. an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena;
3. an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions;
4. knowledge of the major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences;
5. an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, such as observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, employment of mathematical analysis, employment of interpretive analysis.

Figure 2: Social Sciences Learning Objective 1
2) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena.

Due to rounding, values may not equal 100%

Figure 3: Social Sciences Learning Objective 2

3) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions.

Due to rounding, values may not equal 100%

Figure 4: Social Sciences Learning Objective 3
4) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.

Due to rounding, values may not equal 100%

Figure 5: Social Sciences Learning Objective 4

5) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, such as observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, employment of mathematic

Due to rounding, values may not equal 100%

Figure 6: Social Sciences Learning Objective 5
Comparison to 2012 & 2009 results:

In comparison to the 2012 assessment of this General Education category, we see a drop of between 3 and 15 percentage points in the students who exceeded or met each of the five learning objectives. In comparison to the 2009 assessment of this General Education category, we see a drop of 8 percentage points on learning objective one, a gain of 6 percentage points on learning objective 2; a gain of 11 percentage points on learning objective 3; a drop of 10 percentage points on learning objective 4; and a drop of 9 percentage points on learning objective 5. As noted in footnote 3, and illustrated in Figure 14, much of this can be attributed to the effect that two large courses had on the rest of the population. When we compare 2017 results to the 2012 and 2009 results without those two large courses in the 2017 population, the situation improves dramatically. Despite the overall decrease, the 2017 results show that significant majorities of students in the assessment exceeded or met the learning objectives in all 5 categories.

Figure 7: “Exceeded” and “Met” 2017, 2012, 2009 by Learning Objective

Figures 8-12 on the following pages compare 2017 data to 2012 and 2009 results in each of the five Learning Objectives.
1) Students will demonstrate an understanding that human conduct and behavior more generally are subject to scientific inquiry.

![Bar Chart](image1)

Figure 8: Learning Objective 1, 2017, 2012, 2009

2) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena.

![Bar Chart](image2)

Figure 9: Learning Objective 2, 2017, 2012, 2009
3) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions.

![Learning Objective 3](image)

Figure 10: Learning Objective 3, 2017, 2012, 2009

4) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.

![Learning Objective 4](image)

Figure 11: Learning Objective 4, 2017, 2012, 2009
Comparison between UHS and On-campus student populations

In the Social Sciences category, UHS instructors report more favorable evaluations of student performance than On-campus instructors. While this is not uncommon when looking at the “Exceeded” and “Met” numbers separately, in this particular case we see clear differences even when the “Exceeded” and “Met” numbers are combined. This may partially be attributable to the particularly
small UHS sample, but it’s important to note that UAlbany students trail UHS students in all 5 categories—by between 13 and 20 percentage points depending on category.

The number of UHS students who “did not meet” the learning objectives is between 2% and 4% for each of the learning objectives. In comparison, the number of on-campus students who “did not meet” the learning objectives is between 6% and 11% for each of the learning objectives.
2) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena.

![Bar chart showing comparison of results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Social Sciences Learning Objective 2.](image)

Figure 16: Comparison of Results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Social Sciences Learning Objective 2

3) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions.

![Bar chart showing comparison of results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Social Sciences Learning Objective 3.](image)

Figure 17: Comparison of Results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Social Sciences Learning Objective 3
4) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.

Figure 18: Comparison of Results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Social Sciences Learning Objective 4

5) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, such as observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, employment of mathematical analysis, employment of interpretive analysis.

Figure 19: Comparison of Results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Social Sciences Learning Objective 5
It is important to note that the majority of students who enroll in University in the High School courses tend to be highly motivated and high performing. In fact, only juniors and seniors with an overall average of B or better are allowed to enroll in UHS classes. One could reasonably expect students who have a high average overall to perform well in these classes. Additionally, on-campus students taking courses meeting this General Education requirement may be doing so only to fulfill the General Education requirement, and that is a potential explanation of differences in performance appear to exist across these populations.

We also recognize that the UHS courses cover the same material as the on-campus offerings, but do so in a year-long format rather than the standard semester format. Additionally, the typical UHS course meets every day, not a few times a week. Both of these could be contributing factors to explain the high performance of UHS students relative to their on-campus counterparts.

**Inclusion of graduate students and contingent faculty**

Since the Spring of 2009, we have made a concerted effort to include courses taught by graduate student instructors, contingent faculty (typically under the title of “Lecturer”), and professional staff teaching on a part time basis in the general education assessment sample. As shown in Figure 20, below, contingent faculty teach a disproportionate percentage of the introductory undergraduate courses that meet the General Education requirements in this category. 22 of the 61 courses meeting the Social Sciences general education requirement during this assessment period were taught by tenured or tenure track faculty (36%), while 35 (57%) were taught by lecturers. The remaining 4 courses (7%) were taught by individuals in titles other than lecturer, but not on the academic tenure track (Visiting Assistant Professor or professional faculty lines). While this result is not surprising, and these ratios have remained fairly consistent, it does demonstrate why any valid assessment in this category would need to include non-tenure-related instructors. We will also point out that while we often receive requests to exempt graduate students from participating in these assessments we are generally unable to do so. In this cycle, the former Director of Academic Assessment made an exception and allowed a tenured faculty member who had not been selected to participate to voluntarily replace a graduate student who had been selected.
Time required to complete assessment:

The general education assessment forms that faculty are requested to complete record the length of time it took them to prepare data for and complete the beginning and end of semester assessment forms (see Figure 21 and Appendix C). The average for the required preparation of the data and the completion of both the beginning of semester section of the form was 72 minutes. End of semester form preparation and completion too an average of 183 minutes.5

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4 Note that “responded” indicates that the instructor submitted either the beginning of semester forms, the end of semester forms, or both. It is not an indication of the completeness or “correctness” of their submission.

5 When the extreme outliers seen in figure 21 were removed, time to completion at the end of the semester dropped to 87 minutes.
**Figure 21: Reported time required to complete assessment forms**

**Recommendations:**

1) We recommend that GEAC give further review to the submissions of respondents 3 and 4 to determine if their method of classification critically skew the results of this assessment. If that finding is in the affirmative, we can either:
   a. Re-run the results of the data while suppressing their responses of respondents 3 and 4
   b. If determined necessary by GEAC we can invalidate the results of this entire assessment and conduct assessment of this category again in the 2018-19 academic year.

2) **Graduate student/contingent faculty** - With great thanks to the deans and department chairs we were able to secure the participation of graduate student instructors, contingent and part time faculty in assessments of student learning in General Education courses. IRPE must continue to work with the deans and chairs to make clear to graduate student instructors, contingent and part time faculty, that General Education Assessment is included as part of their contractual responsibilities, and if selected for the sample, they are expected to participate without additional remuneration.
Appendix A: Student Learning Objectives – Social Sciences

Social Sciences courses enable students to demonstrate:

1. an understanding that human conduct and behavior more generally are subject to scientific inquiry;
2. an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena;
3. an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions;
4. knowledge of the major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences;
5. an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, such as observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, employment of mathematical analysis, employment of interpretive analysis.
## Appendix B: End of Semester Reflections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent #</th>
<th>Learning Objective #</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am pleasantly surprised at how well the students did on their exams overall compared to other places I have taught. I think I would add more content on the methods of our discipline and how we go about asking questions in future classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The students responded well to my mix of lecture and media in class. Their exam scores mostly reflect that. I think in future classes I would incorporate more media and perhaps guest lectures that would provide a more comprehensive perspective on native peoples’ issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The students really excelled in their class presentations, but I could have been more explicit about my expectations for their papers. Overall they did a good job, but lacked some focus. They did, however, make excellent strides in understanding and disseminating information about the diversity of modern and past native groups in North America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Overall, I am pleased that the overall concepts and models were well understood with a few exceptions. They got a perspective on how we study native people and some of the major conclusions and interpretations of that study, as well as learning about the incorporation of native views and collaboration with living peoples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>I think this could be strengthened in the future, although through our conversation and their independent research projects I believe most students were exposed to anthropological approaches to the study of native cultures. More time could be spent on how we build hypotheses and test them in future classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1) Is a large lecture course that enrolls over 400 students. Helpful teaching strategies include fostering in-class lecture discussion in a large lecture hall environment; using video content to illustrate real-world interaction; and describing to students how the course’s conceptual content is relevant to their own everyday communicative experiences. (2) I am always seeking to update my lectures with content reflecting new developments in scholarship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students can understand a simple, definitional question on opportunity cost. I should spend more time on circular flow diagram.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students understand the concept of absolute advantage and they can calculate opportunity cost in a more quantitative question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I will spend more time on the consequences of a price ceiling in the long-run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I spent a lot of time on this chapter. Most students understand the basics of demand and supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students struggle with terms of trade because it is a more quantitative concept. I can do more Clicker questions on this topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The students need more illustrations than what the textbook provides. They’re not used to think as Economists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Many students already took finance class, and are familiar with these materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The concepts and theory are straightforward, but the students may need more training in Math before they take Economics courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 11  | 1   | (1) Giving examples that are close to people’s daily life and relate them to the theory.  
   |     | (2) Give richer examples.                                                                                                    |
| 11  | 2   | (1) Practice questions related. Lead students to think further about effects of economic behavior and policy, especially after second and further stages.  
   |     | (2) Explain in more details about the differences in similar concepts.                                                                 |
| 11  | 3   | (1) relate theories to reality.  
   |     | (2) Emphasize connections between concepts and methods in analysis.                                                                 |
| 11  | 4   | (1) thoroughly instruct on definitions, concepts and methods.                                                                 |
| 11  | 5   | (1) practice in class on the board on graphing and calculation techniques.                                                                 |
| 12  | 1   | Overall, students did quite well, especially the in-class activities were enjoyed by them. This helped them to question human behavior and inquire more through scientific examination rather than taking things for granted. |
| 12  | 2   | Students did very well research on a topic of their choice. On which they collected political cartoons and analyzed how mainstream thoughts and uncritical thinking can be problematic. Also, they learned how to think and inquire critically on a topic. This also required them to evaluate information and their sources such as being aware of fake news sources. |
| 12  | 3   | Textbook materials dealt with major debates and questions in the field of human geography and quizzes were aimed at testing that. Overall, students did well, especially when multiple answers were correct.  
   |     | The documentary movies that the students watched were focused on major areas relevant to the discipline. They were able to compare movies on the same issues based on different perspectives and examined how social scientists can answer the same question in different ways. Students did very well in this assignment. |
| 12  | 5   | Research papers were intended to make the students demonstrate their comprehension and examination of a topic. They chose a socially relevant topic and structured an argument. Based on their research using various tools they were expected to gather evidence to support their argument and come out with solutions which they thought are pertinent based on their research. Students did very well in this assignment. They enjoyed researching on the topic and that was demonstrated impressively on their completed assignments. However, they were not very good in citing sources of the information and ideas, even though they were required to attend an information literacy session with a librarian on how to cite sources. I think the next time, I would want to see an earlier draft of their bibliography/works cited page before they submit their final assignment. |
| 13  | 1   | I fear the number of students who did not do well on this question were perhaps not in class the day the topic was covered. But it also indicates that this needs to be rethought and presented more clearly. |
| 13  | 2   | I remember a lot of good discussion in class when this topic was presented. Students did well on this essay. |
| 13  | 3   | Of the 9 students who “did not meet” 6 simply failed to participate in the online discussion and therefore received a score of 0. |
Both class discussion as well as section discussion helped prepare the students for this online discussion forum. I set up clear guidelines in terms of how much to write, how to use academic prose, and how to disagree respectfully with other students.

| 13 | 4 | The final exam covered a range of topics testing students on their knowledge of major concepts and issues in the field of linguistics. It is certainly regrettably that 22 students did not meet or exceed this objective. I suspect there is a strong correlation between students attending lecture and section and those doing well on this exam. While section attendance is graded, lecture attendance is not. Perhaps that needs to change. |
| 13 | 5 | Of the 10 students who “did not meet” 5 simply failed to participate in the online discussion and therefore received a score of 0. Both class discussion as well as section discussion helped prepare the students for this online discussion forum. I set up clear guidelines in terms of how much to write, how to use academic prose, and how to disagree respectfully with other students. |
| 14 | 1 | The results are exactly what I would expect. I offer lots of examples during lecture to help students understand the concepts at both an intellectual level and at a more practical level (as psychology applies to their own lives). Students who come to lecture and study the lecture handouts and notes, tend to do well. I know that a number of students, for whatever reason, chose not to come to lecture. I think this subset of non-attenders end up with poorer scores, but that is just my hunch. |
| 15 | 1 | Most students seemed to grasp these concepts quite well as reflected by the data presented here. It is an area however, that requires even more emphasis in terms of lecture and assessment. We have an antiscientific movement in our country of late and it is important for students to be constantly reminded that the study of behavior is like every other phenomenon that scientists study. It must be done in a rigorous manner according to the scientific method and there are no shortcuts for obtaining valid and reliable information on behavioral change. |
| 15 | 2 | Of all the learning objectives in this course, this one (understanding logical reasoning vs assumptions) illustrates a high level of student understanding. Not only do I include many questions on the exams that tap into this, but as illustrated here most students seem to grasp the difference. I would not modify what I would do here significantly except to drop some of the questions in which students demonstrated the least success in answering correctly. |
| 15 | 3 | I believe that one of the strengths of my teaching style in this survey course is how much time I spend on the classic experiments in our discipline. The data here seems to back up that I have successfully met this objective. While I am constantly revising this objective by deleting older and adding more recent experiments, I strive to tell students about the stories behind the experiments and how often serendipity plays such an important role. I would not significantly change what I do here. |
| 15 | 4 | I spend a fair amount of time on theory, include questions that tap into student understanding of such theories, but I think that I could do a better job here. The data would suggest that I need to revise the material I present in class to allow students to more fully appreciate and understand different theoretical approaches to the study of behavior. One area in particular, is the different theoretical approaches that psychologists use in the assessment and treatment of behavior disorder. This is something I will be working on in the future as I continue to shape and mold this course. |
Of all the learning objectives for this course, I think that this is the one (scientific methodology) that is the weakest. To improve upon this, I will be including more in class discussion about specific methods and I will be rewriting exams to include more questions designed to assess whether or not students understand the material.

1) Using Top Hat (a student-response based learning system) is a strategy to help them meet their learning objectives; you can give the students sample questions and see how they do in real time. From there, you can make adjustments in your teaching so that they understand the concepts better.

2) I think I will take more advantage of Top Hat than I did before for the questions under this learning objective.

There’s nothing I would change. The students did well.

1. What helped with this learning objective is frequently referencing redacted studies and their results. I try to bring in topics that are interesting to the class. Like for Valentine’s Day we discussed how we could use redacted to understand the practices surrounding Valentine’s Day and how those practices impact us.

2. I would like to be able to give my students more opportunities to do short writing assignments where they read and cite redacted articles on topics that they are interested in. I do think-pair-share in class to help facilitate some discussion, but since the class is so large I never get a chance to hear from everyone. In the future I want to spend more time talking to students in small groups while they work on questions in class. I would also like to include more news stories in class and discuss how we could understand them as redacted.

One strategy I use in class is to debunk stereotypes and “common sense” with redacted data. One example is having true/false quizzes (that are not graded) on material we have not covered yet and then go over which ones are actually true and false. This tends to stick with the students.

2. One thing I would change is spending more time giving feedback to students when they do rely on everyday thinking instead of redacted thinking for a topic.

The main strategy I use to meet this objective is doing think-pair-share in class and having students come up with a sociological question they would like to answer. I do this when we discuss methods, but also during other topics. I think ask them to explain how they would answer this question. After they are done in pairs I ask the class to share and we discuss the questions including how the question might need to change or how the methods might need to change.

2. One change I would make is spending more time reinforcing the difference between sociology and other disciplines. Some students have trouble forming a redacted question, sometimes even at the end of the semester. I think it will be helpful if at the start of the semester I spend more time showing how a redacted would focus on a topic vs a redacted or redacted or a redacted.

I used a textbook that most of the students found to be accessible so they were more likely to do the reading, I also used a testing software through the publisher that gave students the opportunity to review the material. I make sure to review the major concepts during lecture and include activities during class time that help to reinforce them.

2. There are no changes I would make.

I make sure to discuss methods the whole semester. When we discuss specific studies I point out the methods used. I also mention if a specific content area uses particular methods. For example when I discuss household labor I bring up time diaries since they are a method not often used for other topics. Having my students read journal articles is really helpful for them understanding methods. The out of class writing assignment is especially helpful cause I give them feedback and can see exactly what they are getting.

2. The one change I would make is having student read more journal articles.

This objective was fairly easy for students to grasp. The nature of the questions (matching) made it such that there was a weird distribution. I would not change anything.
We went through the nature of scientific thinking in class but some of the concepts are harder for students to grasp. We practiced the ideas behind one of the matching questions but some students still struggled with one of the concepts. In the future, I would provide more examples in class.

The students largely did well on average in this area. The scores were a bit lower on the short answer than the other parts of the exam as the students really had to demonstrate knowledge there. We practiced the material in class but some students did not read which impacted their score. I repeatedly stressed the importance of specific studies and readings in class so I don’t think there was anything more that I could have done.

The students did quite well in this area. We actually practiced some multiple choice questions in class so that they learned how to apply theoretical concepts in an exam situation. I would not change anything.

While many students did well here, this was the area that some students struggled the most because there was a lot of detail about specific types of data collection. In the future, I would try to add some more time to go over this material again.

Of the eight students who did not meet this learning objective, seven of the students did not hand in one or, in several cases, both assignments which, combined, was worth 31% toward the final grade. I accept late assignments with a 2 point (out of 100) per day penalty. The percentage of enrolled students in this class who did not complete the required assignments was much higher than previous classes.

My exams are weighted toward the lectures and my expectation is that, in addition to doing the required readings prior to class, students will attend class. There is a strong correlation between student test course and class attendance. Overall, class attendance, on the average, was lower than in previous classes contributing to a lower median score. The exam was not curved.

I was very pleased with the students who completed the assignment. As the results indicate, in many instances, the students did an excellent job demonstrating their knowledge of the article. All seven students who did not meet this objective never completed the assignment. The syllabus, along with my verbal reminders to the students, clearly indicates the due date of the assignment and the fact that I accept late assignments with only a 2 point per day penalty.

Clear instructions on the exercise was helpful in helping these students meet these objectives. For this assignment, I would not make any changes if I taught the course again.

Clear instructions on the writing assignment, both in class and on Blackboard, helped the students achieve this objective. In addition, pre-selection of the specific hazard aided in the students having a consistent expectation of how to conduct the risk analysis (and compare their results with other students in the class). If I were to teach this course again, I would provide a more detailed rubric for grading to students, so they can better understand the components of the memo and how they were to be graded on individual components.

Overall, for these components of the in-class writing exercises, I would have provided more background on scale construction and how to select between different configurations of scales. There is room for improvement on this item should I teach the course again.

Human behavior of stakeholders in politics/governance was a core part of all three learning units. The strategy was to use lecture, discussion section activities, and assessments that clearly targeted the idea of behavior (congressional, judicial, etc.). I am pleased with this particular approach to this learning objective.

Strategies: Workshops and discussion on fake news in discussion section, workshops & on-line activity on locating good sources, lecturing on approaches to scientific questions, and assessments of student ability to think critically about controversial policy issues.
The next time I teach this course I’d like to plan activities that give students naïve tasks related
to answering a social phenomenon and how they might address it. Then as a class would could
run through the problems of systematic study of that phenomena together.

| 29 | 3 | As with Goal 1, human behavior of stakeholders in [redacted] was a core part of all three learning
units. I discussed

(EDITORS COMMENT: The instructors comment just ended here.)

| 29 | 4 | Based on the assessments, the vast major of students can describe at least a number of
concepts and models in political science. I used the same strategies as the goals above:
discussion (every Friday) where they discussed models and had activities; lecture; activities in
lecture, and assessments.

| 29 | 5 | I did not focus too much on this goal during the semester. While students were exposed to
these issues on a couple of occasions, I did not make a commitment to make this a primary goal
for them.

I would focus time on one particular model to take students carefully, step-by-step through the
method particular researchers used and include an assessment for it on a test.

| 33 | 1 | In-depth reading of the assignments is/was key. I plan to emphasize that need more, and to
adjust the syllabus more readily when schedule issues (i.e. snow days) cause a mismatch
between planned and actual timing of specific topic coverage.

| 33 | 2 | Students failing to meet this objective either did not attend class or did not complete major
grading elements. No adjustments planned.

Key to success is the critique and analysis of research paper methodology.

| 33 | 3 | See objective 2: only failing to attend prevented success here.

| 33 | 4 | This is the primary fact-retention-based objective. Success was directly correlated with investing
time into study and seeking help. No changes planned, although I plan to emphasize the role of
seeking help at office hours and by appointment.

| 33 | 5 | No issues or planned changes; linking methodologies to both research studies and real-life
examples appeared to be a best-practice approach to retention.
Appendix C: Time to Completion and Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent #</th>
<th>Time to Complete Form 1 (in minutes)</th>
<th>Time to Complete Form 2 (in minutes)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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<td>This is my second semester at the University, and my first to teach this class. So, this is a new prep and will likely change in the future. It may have benefited from knowing more about the GenEd requirements prior to the beginning of class, but I will certainly be more aware of these guidelines when I teach my next GenEd course.</td>
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<td>This assessment was enormously cumbersome for a survey course such as [redacted] particularly given that evaluation of learning and performance during the semester was based on 4 large multiple choice exams (100 items each). To abstract relevant items for each learning objective required a good deal of data manipulation and additional scoring and calculations. I had 2 of my TAs working on this for several weeks. There must be a more efficient way to do this. We ended up having to re-create subscales for each objective from exam items, and then recompute scores. With multiple versions of the exams, this took an enormous amount of time. Moreover, because the 5 Gen Ed Objectives were integrated throughout the semester and course content, we had to go back and abstract relevant items from exams that would represent the objective being addressed. Again, this was time consuming and not something one can readily do with few clicks of a mouse. Going forward, I think the process could be streamlined for [redacted] and similar large lecture courses. This course, by definition, covers the 5 objectives, but they are integrated throughout the course. Thus, it is not a simple matter to pull items from exams to evaluate objectives, not to mention rescore those items to fit the Results categories of the GE assessment. A better way to do this would simply focus on the grade distributions overall. This form of assessment would include many more data points (i.e., all items of the exams), thus increasing the reliability and validity of the evaluation of learning. If you really want to evaluate objectives, look to the syllabus and course textbook. Virtually all good [redacted] textbooks cover the 5 learning objectives as outlined for a course such as [redacted]. I used such a textbook and it was required reading.</td>
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I hope some of this is helpful.

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<th>The present form seems to work quite well. The number crunching at the end for each learning objective can be somewhat cumbersome but it is manageable.</th>
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<td>For Learning Objectives #1 and 3-5, because I only had 3 questions per learning objective, there was no way for students to score in the “met” category. If they missed 2 or 3 questions (out of 3), they were in the “did not met category;” if they missed 1 question out of 3, they were in the “approached” category; if they got all 3 questions correct, they were in the “exceeded” category. So basically this assessment is biased by how many questions are used for each learning objective. The more questions included, it is likely that the students will do much better. Overall, I think this gen ed assessment is a huge waste of faculty’s time, which could be better spent on research or other endeavors. It is completely subjective and biased. They university should test students on their gen ed knowledge after their junior year.</td>
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<td>The way some of the learning objectives are worded makes it kind of difficult to separate what assessment tools measure that objective. For example I would say my course as a whole measures learning objectives 1 and 4. While I picked specific activities and questions that best measured that objective, I would say the final grade in the class measures those two objectives. It was quite time consuming to see what students met what objectives since I have a large class and use multiple choice exams. If all of the questions on a specific exam did not cover an objective I would have to individually count which students got which questions right or wrong. The report from the test scanning services that provides which questions individual students got wrong is in pdf format so I couldn’t import into Excel and have it count them for me. If I only used one question to evaluate that objective it would take no time to figure out, but for learning objective 5 about half of the first exam covered that material. The most accurate way to figure out how many students fell into each category was to count how many of the methods questions they each got right. I did have a quiz that I gave in class that only covered learning objective 5, but I did not think it was appropriate to only use that as my assessment since the students had a chance later on to demonstrate how well they understood methods.</td>
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<td>Please note that the entries here are relevant up to the date this form was completed (3/13/17). Though the syllabus is fixed at the beginning of the semester, the actual topics and examples used in class can vary from semester to semester. Teaching social science entails teaching students how to pay attention the world around them. An example: when I last taught this course a few years ago, immigration was not a high profile issue (both in discussions of [redacted] and [redacted]), and this semester, of course</td>
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it is. I capitalize on that to direct students to contemporary examples of broader constructs: for example, widely repeated rhetoric about the link between immigration and crime has not held up to systematic scientific inquiry, and it is important to discuss with students actual data on crime on these topics.

Further, particularly in a relatively small group (redacted: students, 29), much of what transpires in class is actual discussion, but not punctuated by assessment attempts such as quizzes. What social scientists try to instill in students (particularly freshmen, particularly non-social science majors) is a habit of mind – thinking about social behavior in scientific terms, while acknowledging the significance of values and ideology (particularly in criminal justice, but probably on most other topics as well). Much of students' demonstration of this will occur, in this class, in group and class discussions, which of course are not "graded."