

**Texas A&M International University
Core Curriculum Institutional Effectiveness Review (CCIER)**

Core Curriculum Academic Discipline: SOCIAL SCIENCES, Political Science

Assessment Period Covered: Sept. 1, 2010 to May 31, 2011

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List Other Academic Discipline Faculty:

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The Core Curriculum Institutional Effectiveness Review is directed at Goal 1: Academics of the Texas A&M International University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:

Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services, to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in their chosen careers.

Institutional Mission

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

Core Curriculum Mission

At Texas A&M International University, the Core curriculum introduces students to academic disciplines which form the foundation of human thought: mathematics, science, history, language, literature, the arts, and social and behavioral sciences. Our Core is conceived to open new areas of learning for our students and to foster skills necessary for success in higher education.

As they move through this course of study, students are encouraged, as their knowledge increases, to develop the capacity to articulate and support a thesis, to think critically, to synthesize their observations and to perceive analogies and relationships between seemingly diverse ideas and intellectual pursuits.

Previous Year Results

Of the 253 students who took the HIST 1301 pretest in the spring and fall 2009 semesters, the average total grade was 48.9% correct. On the 10 global history questions (LO #3), the average score was 48.9% correct.

Of the 216 students who took the HIST 1301 posttest in the spring and fall 2009 semesters, the average total grade was 68.8% correct. On the 10 global history questions (LO #3), the average score was 70.2% correct.

This pilot program in testing freshman history students is showing good results for student performance (19.9% increase in overall scores), just .1% short of the goal of a 20% improvement. For the global history domain, the improvement was 21.3% between pretest and post-tests. The results also confirm anecdotal evidence of freshman students' lack of prior knowledge of American history and the quality of instruction in our program.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Exemplary Educational Objectives for the following academic discipline:

SOCIAL SCIENCES

1. To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
2. To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.
3. To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
4. To develop and communicate explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
5. To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural and global forces on the area under study.
6. To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.
7. To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.
8. To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.
9. To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.
10. To analyze critically, assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
11. To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.
12. To identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

Outcome(s)

From the list above, identify the outcome(s) that will be focused upon this year. (It is recommended that academic disciplines rotate through their entire set of Exemplary Educational

Objectives over a multi-year period. Thus, disciplines are encouraged to focus only on a few outcomes each year.) To facilitate the completion of this report, please refer to the Core Curriculum Matrix completed for each academic discipline.

3. To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.

6. To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.

Please indicate if the outcome(s) is (are) related to writing (*Write On, TAMIU!*).

Methods of assessment to be used:

The explanation should identify and describe the type of assessment(s) that will be used (e.g., survey, questionnaire, observation instrument, test, rubric to evaluate performance, standardized examination, action research, interviews, etc.), who will provide the information, and how the data will be obtained.

Students take a standardized objective pre-test/ post-test quiz of 60 questions within the first two weeks of the course and during the final week of the course (PSCI 2305: American National Government and PSCI 2306 American State Government). The differences between the average total scores made by the students address outcomes #3 and #6.

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place:

Within the first two weeks of each semester and during the final week of each semester. This procedure is under test for Fall 2010 and for full implementation for Spring 2011.

Criteria/Benchmark(s) for assessing students' progress in meeting the exemplary objective(s) selected:

There will be an improvement of 15% on the average score from pre-test to post-test for each outcome.

Section II: Analysis of Results

What were the results attained?

Describe the primary results or findings from your analysis of the information collected. This section should include an explanation of any strength(s) or weakness(es) suggested by the results.

Academic year 2010-2011

Administration

The assessments were administered online through the ANGEL e-learning system. Students were limited to one minute per question overall. Students had a window of approximately one week to complete the assessments at the beginning and end of the course.

Student participation was incentivized by a grade penalty for failing to complete the assessments; students received a 2.5% grade deduction for each assessment (pre and post) they failed to complete by the deadline.

Results

General Observations: A review of the post-test performance on individual questions indicates that virtually all of the questions on both assessments performed reasonably well in discriminating between successful and less than successful students, although the per-question discrimination scores varied widely—as we would expect on an assessment with questions of varying difficulty.

PSCI 2305 (American)

The average pretest score was 44%, based on 165 students (out of 194 students). Participation rate was 85%. The average posttest score was 57%, with 161 students responding. We would have expected students to get approximately 25% right by sheer guessing; again, presumably students come into the course with some baseline knowledge about American government to at least eliminate some of the more implausible answer options.

The average improvement in scores for the 161 students who took both the pre-test and post-test in PSCI 2305 American National Government in 2010-2011 year was approximately 13 percentage points.

PSCI 2306 (Texas)

The average pretest score was 42%, based on 205 students (out of 254). Participation rate was 80%. The average posttest score was 59%, with 185 students responding. We would have expected students to get approximately 25% right by sheer guessing; again, presumably students were coming into the course with enough baseline knowledge about Texas government to at least eliminate some of the more implausible answer options.

The average student improvement from the pretest to the posttest, based on the 174 students who completed both, was approximately 17 percentage points.

What were the conclusions reached?

Include a brief description of the procedure used for reaching the conclusion(s) based on the evidence collected and describe the process used to disseminate the information. Use the Meeting Minutes template found at: <http://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/iep/resources.shtml>. Once completed, submit the minutes to integrate@tamtu.edu.

These results are about equal to or slightly better than our expectations. We do need to make certain that all faculty are participating in this effort to give the results better validity. This was discussed at 1st Dept, meeting of 2011-2012, August 24, 2011.

Describe the action plan formulated:

Based on the conclusion(s), describe the action plan to be implemented to improve or maintain student learning in the core academic discipline, including a timeline for implementation.

It seems likely that the courses will not be changed, or we may try to improve on the benchmark set for 2011-2012. However, our major effort will be to “encourage” stronger participation in the pre-test/ post-test process by placing a stronger emphasis on the instrument by all faculty.

Section III: Resources

Resource(s) to implement action plan:

Describe the resources that will be needed to implement the action plan. Also indicate if the resources are currently available, or if additional funds will be needed to obtain these resources.

Funding

- New Resources Required
- Reallocation of current funds

Physical

- New or reallocated space

Other

- Primarily faculty/staff time
- University/rule procedure change only

Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan):

None required.