

Competency: To explain the American political system and economic system (**Political**)

Competency Description: Northwestern has a broad based core curriculum that is central to the University’s mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents requirements for general education. The competency “to understand the American political system” is why PSCI 2010 U.S. Government is included as a Social Sciences option in the core curriculum.

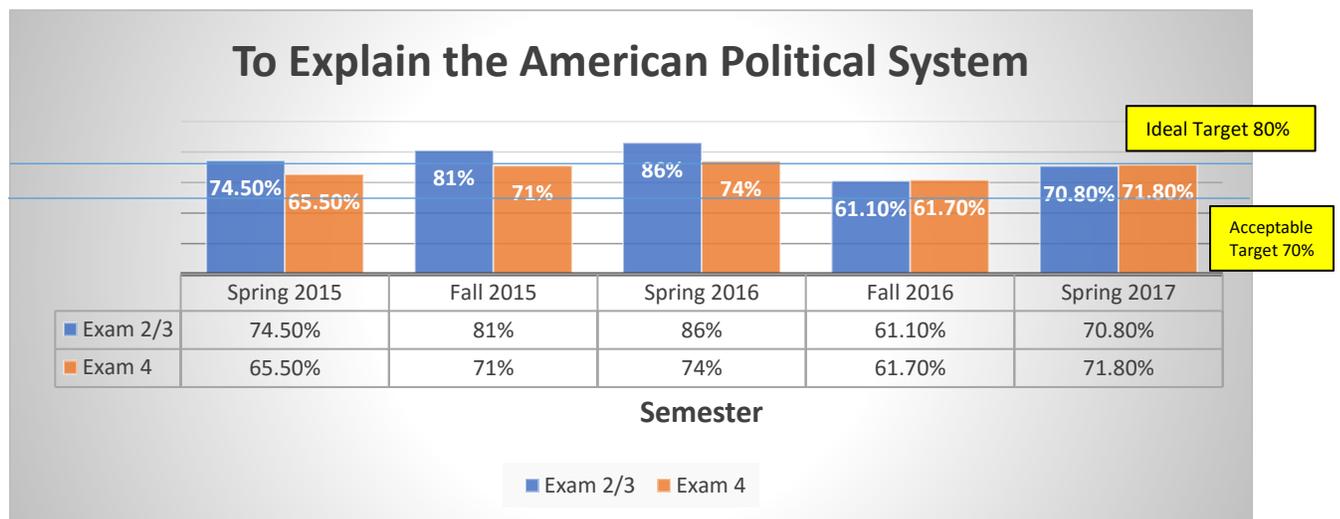
In order to measure student comprehension of the American political system, the results of two exams administered face-to-face and online to PSCI 2010 Introduction to United States Government every Fall and Spring Semester. First, the 2nd exam* of the class is used to measure student comprehension of inputs and processes of the U.S. political system, particularly covering three chapters of the textbook: Congress, Presidency, Federal Courts. Second, the 4th exam of the class is used to measure student comprehension of outputs of the political system in the form of public policy, both domestic policy and foreign policy, each of which has a related chapter in the textbook.

*Beginning in 2016, this was changed to the 3rd and 4th exams, reflecting a new order of topics, not a change in this measurement.

Student Learning Outcome: Students completing PSCI 2010 will be able to describe the history, selection, structure, and processes of the U.S. federal political institutions, as well as the major areas of domestic and foreign policy and how these have evolved in recent years.

Measure (including methodology and target). Two of four exams are utilized for this assessment. First, Exam 3 (previously Exam 2) covers material on the Congress, the Presidency, and the Federal Courts to achieve learning about political institutions. Exam 4 covers major domestic social and economic policies and major foreign policies of the United States. The questions involve historical, contemporary, and institutional knowledge.

Findings:



Analysis: Broken into the following

AY 14-15:

Overall, the target was met when the two exams are averaged. The analysis begins in Spring 2015. For Exam 2, the acceptable target was reached for exam 2 but not for exam 4, missing the acceptable target by 4.5%.

Acceptable Target: Exceeded for Exam 2 on political institutions, but not for Exam 4 on policies.

Ideal Target: Not reached for either exam.

Analysis: Looking ahead, I was reviewing available options for new texts and materials. I was intrigued with the idea of more opportunities for students to interact with data and to learn to assess their own learning via adaptive techniques.

AY 15-16:

Overall, the target was met. There was improvement over the previous year, which convinced me it would continue if I would choose new, more interactive materials.

Acceptable Target: Target met. Exceeded in both semesters and on both exams.

Ideal Target: Exceeded on Exam 2 in both semesters. The institutions exam consistently outperforms the policies exam. Students likely come into the class with more familiarity with Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts than they do with specifics of policies such as Social Security, Monetary Policy, and National Security Strategies.

Analysis: At this point the text I was using was outdated and a new edition was not available. I went forth with my decision to change back to a major publisher and to take advantage of more online utilities.

AY16-17:

Overall, the target was not met.

Acceptable target: It was exceeded in Spring 2017 for both exams. Not reached on Exam 2 in either semester.

Ideal target: Not reached in either semester on either exam.

Analysis: The student performance declined with the new material. Note there was also a decline in attendance, leading me to hypothesize that some students felt the new material substituted for, rather than complemented, class attendance. On the other hand, there was

notable improvement from Fall 2016 to Spring 2017, so it is likely that the new materials are working. Thus, for the upcoming year I am thinking of new ways to ensure necessary attendance. In addition, there was a publisher's error that caused me to only use the new material in very limited fashion. Most of the materials, quizzes, and activities made available were not made mandatory because of the lack of proper online access due to publisher's error. In the coming year, AY 17-18, the adaptive learning materials available via Norton's Inquizitive will be made fully accessible to students, and will be factored into their grade. The result should be higher exam grade performance indicating enhanced learning about American political institutions and public policies.

Decision / Recommendation. Going forward we plan to fully utilize the Inquizitive online adaptive learning resources. In addition, we will restore stringent attendance policies, and use the Inquizitive materials in class and not just on outside assignments. We will also review possible reasons the Policies exam are scoring lower than the Institutions exam; the fact that it is administered during Finals period could be pertinent.

Competency: To explain the America political and economic system ([Economics](#)).

Competency Description: Northwestern has a broadly based core curriculum that is central to the University's mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents requirements for general education. The competency "to communicate effectively in oral and written English" requires undergraduate students seeking a bachelor's degree to take three (3) hours of economics, usually accomplished by taking ECON 2000: Principles of Macroeconomics. Communication.

The Econ 2000 Macroeconomics course is a foundational course in Macroeconomics and is part of the core curriculum for many majors. Students have usually reached sophomore status by the time that they take the Econ 2000 course. It addresses the economy on a large scale and introduces students to workings of the economy through an understanding of key concepts, as well as, an understanding of the actions of key economic players. The students are immersed into this material on the very first day of class. It has been a highlight of the first-day lectures. Most students learn in 30 minutes more than what they have learned in their entire lifetime about economics. They are given a pre-test on the first day and it assesses their knowledge of economics before they actually take the class. The post-test is given on the day of the final to assure attendance participation and to assess their knowledge after they have taken the course. The pre-test enables the professor to address weaknesses and champion the course to address those weaknesses.

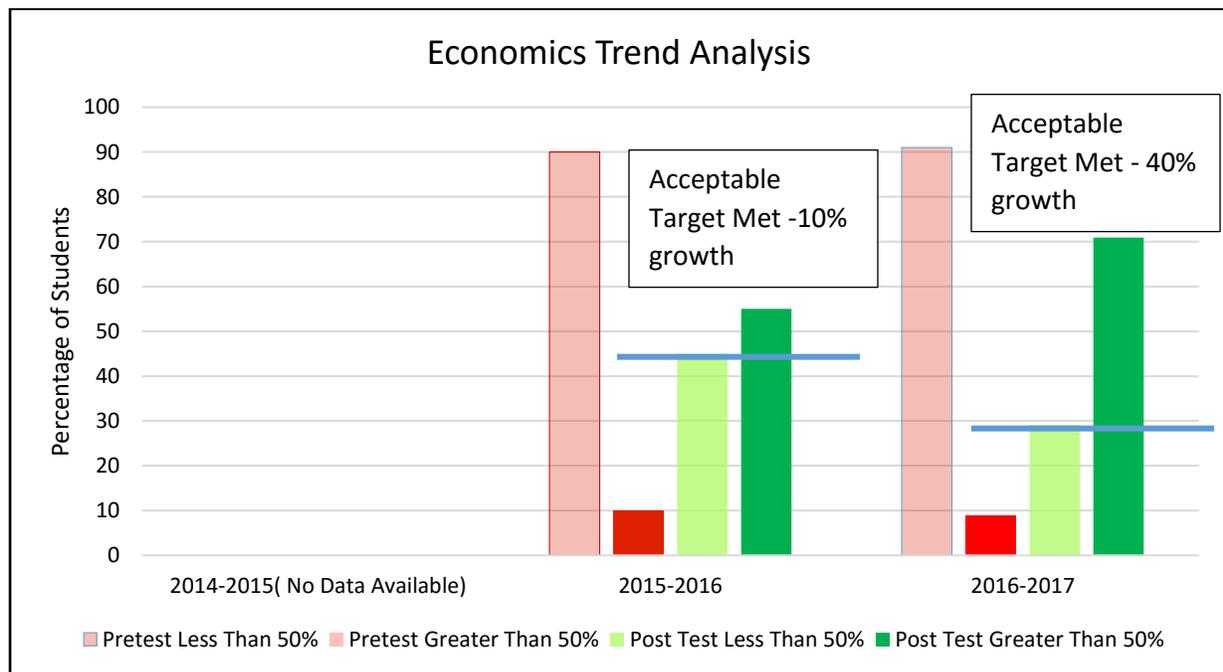
Student Learning Outcome: Students completing ECON 2000 be able describe the theory and practice of macroeconomics in America and how the economy works.

Measure (including methodology and target): This competency is measured using a pre-test on the first day of class to assess the students’ knowledge of economics before they actually take the course. The pre-test is used to shape course content and level of basic understanding. A post-test is then given on the last day of the course to assesses their knowledge after they have taken the course.

Acceptable target is a minimum of 10% growth in those scoring above 50% on the posttest. The goal is that 80% of participating students will meet this goal.

Ideal target is a score of 100 on the post-test with 100% of participating students meeting this goal.

Findings:



	2014-2015 (No Data Available)	2015-2016	2016-2017
Pretest Less Than 50%	N/A	90%	91%
Pretest Greater Than 50%	N/A	10%	09%
Post Test Less Than 50%	N/A	45%	29.1%
Post Test Greater Than 50%	N/A	55%	70.9%

Based on data derived from these assessments, students from 2015-16 and 2016-17 met and or exceeded the acceptable target and continue to strive to achieve ideal target.

Analysis:

AY 14-15:

Note: Data representing the pre and post-test average results were unavailable for the 2014-15 academic year.

AY 15-16:

The findings are of overall general improvement from the scores received on the first day of class.

Of the 40 students who took the test on day 1, only 10% passed the test successfully with a 59% or better score, with the highest score being 68%.

Of the same 40 students who took the test on the day of the final, 55% of the students passed the test with a 59% or better score with the highest score being 91%

Acceptable Target: Met

Ideal Target: Approaching

The findings show great improvement. The findings show over 87.5% of the 40 students who took the test had improved from the first test, but specific questions could be addressed more during the semester, which is what will cause the grades to improve even further.

Only the 40 students who took the exam on day one were used in the findings. Six students who had added the class late or who were absent on day one were not included. There were two students who took the exam on day one who were included in the findings although they did not take the exam on the day of the final. One of those students had dropped the class and the other did not turn it in. Impact is assessed as minimal.

AY16-17:

Of the 58 students who took the quiz on the first day of class in the Econ 2000 course, only 8.62% of the students made a 50% or better. No student achieved a higher than 50% score on the quiz.

Fifty-Five (55) students took the quiz on the day of the Final and 70.9% of students made a 50% or better. Actually, 52.73% of students who took the quiz made a 59% or better with the highest score being roughly 86%.

Acceptable Target: Met

Ideal Target: Approaching target

Although the findings showed great improvement. It is expected students who understand and become actively involved in the economy will want to learn more about how the "economy works" and what their role should be in it.

Decision/Recommendation:

The Economics/Business IQ test will continue to be used by the Economics Faculty on the first day of class to assess their current or existing knowledge of specific economic topics. Results will help faculty to determine specific topics that need to be taught during the semester. Finally, the test will be given again on the day of the Final to assess students' knowledge of those topics.

Economics Faculty will meet before the Fall semester of 2017 to discuss any relevant changes to the quiz that would encourage course collaboration for faculty and improve students' knowledge of the economic economy.

The above data is from Taskstream TK20, the University's assessment management system.