

ASSESSMENT WEBSITE INFORMATION

College: Humanities and Social Sciences

Degree Program: Political Science BA

Chair/Director: Levenbach

DATA SAY:

In each of the last three academic years, between 29% and 46% of students enrolled in the core BA-POSC course Introduction to Political Analysis have withdrawn prior to the end of the semester. (37% across the period, N=92.) The rate of student withdrawals was noted to be strongly correlated with class size.

SO WHAT:

Introduction to Political Analysis is the only upper-division course required of all POSC majors. Mastery of the concepts and skills introduced therein are fundamental to the degree. Discussions with students have revealed that students were not able to master the material and felt intimidated by the topic. Among the several reasons for this, both class size and quantity of the material were identified as problematic.

HOW WE CHANGED:

Policies regarding the granting of course overrides have been changed in order to limit the number of students allowed to register for the class in a given semester. This may require a shift to offering the course more frequently than once per year in order to accommodate demand. Furthermore, the faculty have agreed to split the course into two courses (one centered on research design and data collection, the other on data analysis) so as not to overwhelm students with the amount of material and allow a deeper mastery of the separate topics.

WHAT WE GOT:

Because the class is offered during Spring semesters, the loop has not yet been closed.

