Proposed Core Addition: POLS 2305

GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL SCIENCE
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME ALIGNMENT FORM

Course Prefix/Number: POLS 2305
Course Title: Federal Government
Brief Course Description: A general introduction to American government with emphasis on the U.S. Constitution, federalism, political institutions, political participation and public policy.

Foundational Component Area: Government/Political Science. Courses in this category focus on the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights.

*Choose at least one Core SLO from the Core Objective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>ASU SLO</th>
<th>Course SLO</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking*</td>
<td>CT1: Gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.</td>
<td>Students will develop critical thinking skills and the ability to critically evaluate the American political environment and explain the development of constitutional democracy.</td>
<td>Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can think critically about American politics and governance.</td>
<td>VALUE Rubric for Critical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication*</td>
<td>CS1: Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication.</td>
<td>Students will gain and be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of the three branches of government and the general principles and characteristics of federalism.</td>
<td>Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can effectively communicate a basic knowledge of American political governance and federalism using a written artifact.</td>
<td>VALUE Rubric for Written Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility*</td>
<td>SR2: Demonstrate knowledge of civic responsibility.</td>
<td>Students will gain and be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of the American political system and demonstrate the importance of participating in the American civic and political life.</td>
<td>Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can demonstrate specific knowledge of American civic life and political system.</td>
<td>VALUE Rubric for Civic Engagement-local and global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>PR1: Demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td>Students will exhibit the skills necessary to understand and evaluate political outcomes and evaluate the responsibility of civic engagement. Students will demonstrate an understanding of different strategies for political participation and knowledge of rights and responsibilities of citizenship.</td>
<td>Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student understands ethical decision making and responsibilities as citizen using a written artifact.</td>
<td>Value Rubric for Ethical Reasoning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Choose at least one SLO (more than one can be chosen).*
Political Science 2305
Federal Government (3-0)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A general introduction to American government with emphasis on the U.S. Constitution, federalism, political institutions, political participation and public policy.

Political Science 2305 is the first half of a two-sequence course with Political Science 2306 being the second course which combined will satisfy the 6 SCH Angelo State University Core Curriculum requirements in Political Science. Political Science 2305 is designed to introduce the student to the American federal system of government. This introductory survey course covers the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights. In addition it will analyze on how citizens are linked to their governmental institutions and are able to communicate with their elected representatives. Lectures and discussion will normally supplement the text, not merely explain it. Exams will cover lectures as well as course readings.

The core objectives, learning outcomes, assignments/general activities, and assessments are identified below.

CORE OBJECTIVES:

- Critical Thinking: gather, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.
- Communication: develop, interpret and express ideas through effective written communication.
- Social Responsibility: demonstrate knowledge of civic responsibility.
- Personal Responsibility: demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Student will explain the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution and constitutional democracy.
2. Student will describe the effects that historical, social, political, cultural, and global forces had on the U.S. Constitution.
3. Student will demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the national government.
4. Student will demonstrate knowledge of the origins and evolution of the U.S. political system, with a focus on growth of political institutions and the key components of the political system.
5. Student will understand the American federal system and explain the ways in which different political systems divide and share power between their central and state governments.
6. Students will evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, political parties, campaigns and elections in the political system.
7. Students will describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens and be able to comment on the role of civic engagement in U.S. politics and political culture.
8. Student will analyze political issues, demonstrate critical thinking skills, and develop a critical approach to the study of government.
## SUMMARY MATRIX

Below is a table which details which core requirements are applicable to this course, the activities in which you will participate to develop the skills in the required areas, how your mastery of those areas will be assessed, and the level of expertise you are expected to demonstrate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>University SLO</th>
<th>Course SLO</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking</strong>*</td>
<td>CT1: Gather, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.</td>
<td>Students will develop critical thinking skills and the ability to critically evaluate the American political environment and explain the development of constitutional democracy.</td>
<td>Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can think critically about American politics and governance.</td>
<td>VALUE Rubric for Critical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong>*</td>
<td>CS1: Develop, interpret and express ideas through effective written communication.</td>
<td>Students will gain and be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of the three branches of government and the general principles and characteristics of federalism.</td>
<td>Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can effectively communicate a basic knowledge of American political governance and federalism using a written artifact.</td>
<td>VALUE Rubric for Written Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Responsibility</strong>*</td>
<td>SR2: Demonstrate knowledge of civic responsibility.</td>
<td>Students will gain and be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of the American political system and demonstrate the importance of participating in the American civic and political life.</td>
<td>Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can demonstrate specific knowledge of American civic life and political system.</td>
<td>VALUE Rubric for Civic Engagement-local and global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>PR1: Demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td>Students will exhibit the skills necessary to understand and evaluate political outcomes and evaluate the responsibility of civic engagement.</td>
<td>Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student understands ethical</td>
<td>Value Rubric for Ethical Reasoning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students will demonstrate an understanding of different strategies for political participation and knowledge of rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

decision making and responsibilities as citizen using a written artifact.

Educational and critical thinking objectives for students:

1. Don’t accept any assertion of fact on its face. Try to take a step back from ideology and listen carefully to different sides in a debate being prepared to see the logic in what people of different viewpoints have to say.
   a. For those who accept the prevailing traditions and opinions as matters of blind faith, the meaning of new and challenging ideas and experiences may frighten them and are rejected out of hand. Or new experiences are subconsciously distorted and serve only to reinforce previously held assumptions.

2. If you’re making a decision that nobody else is going to check and it’s never going to need justification, than going by your gut or “what I think” is perfectly acceptable. But if you have to walk into a boardroom, you must have arguments to support your case. You can’t convenience others by simply saying “I feel this way”.
   a. Students shouldn’t be arguing whether stem cell research is good or bad, they should be studying the arguments various parties have made about stem cell research.

3. Finally, a good liberal arts course should help to transform a student who knows little about the material in the beginning into a student who knows something about it at the end. It introduces you to questions you did not know how to ask and provides you with the skills necessary to answer them, at least personally. As college students, you should go beyond tradition and opinions that fit into your comfort zone, to question, to reason and make conscious choices based on knowledge and understanding. So a classroom should be where political agendas are analyzed, not embraced.

List of Textbooks Required and Recommended Readings:

Varies by instructor. Student should consult the syllabus for the particular section of Pols 2305 in which they enroll.

COURSE FORMAT, REQUIREMENTS, & ASSESSMENT:

1. Attendance & Participation: You are expected to attend all classes. Attendance will be taken for every class, and the student is cautioned that excessive absences will jeopardize their final grade for the course. Students who miss 3 or fewer classes will have 3 percentage points added to their final grade average. (For example, a student with a final average of 87% would have their grade raised to 90%).
2. **Technology Requirements:** Students are expected to regularly check their ASU email. Additional technology requirements vary by instructor. Student should consult the syllabus for the particular section of Pols 2305 in which they enroll.

3. **Method of Evaluation:** There will be a total of 3 examinations, 2 midterms and a final. Each test will have 50 objective questions and be worth 100 points for a total 300 points. **On Blackboard,** there are the chapter objectives for each chapter along with 75 questions for each test. From these questions, I will select 43 to 50 questions for the exam. The instructor may, at his discretion, add **up to 7 questions** that come from lecture notes. If a student should happen to miss one of the midterm exams, they may make up one missed exam. **All make up exams will be given on Wednesday, April 27th at 2 pm.** The make-up exams will be 60% objective and 40% short answer essay. Your final grade will be determined by the total of number of points you earn for the class.

**Extra Credit (Writing Assignment for Assessment of Core Objectives)**
Each student will research, present, and write a research paper on a particular government topic to be named in class in order to demonstrate critical thinking skills, to improve written communication skills, and to consider the importance of social responsibility and personality responsibility in one’s civic and community life. Students may receive assessments in any/all of the core objective areas during the course. Assessment rubrics for the written assignments will be based on the value rubrics suggested by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. The written assessment assignment will contribute up to one-half of a letter grade of extra credit points. Failure to complete assessment assignment will result in a loss of one full letter grade for the overall course grade.

**Grading Scale:**
A - 90%  B - 80%  C - 70%  D - 60%  F - Less than 60%

Additional methods of evaluation vary by instructor. Students should consult the syllabus for the particular section of Pols 2305 in which they enroll.

4. **Academic Honesty:** Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the university Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the ASU Student Handbook. See the Current Student page on the ASU homepage (URL address: http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/) and click on Academic Honor Code. Acts of academic dishonesty and misconduct as referenced in Angelo State University's Student Handbook will be referred to the Dean of Students.

5. **Religious Observances:** Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.

6. **Accommodations for Disability:** ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.
The Student Affairs Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Affairs Office, Suite 112 of the Houston Harte University Center, at 325-942-2047 (phone) or 325-942-2211 (fax) or by e-mail at studentservices@angelo.edu to begin the process. The Student Affairs Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

7. **Classroom etiquette:** A proper learning environment is one in which all points of view, all questions asked, and all questions answered are treated with tolerance and respect. The overall goal of classroom decorum is for all of us to treat each other with respect and dignity. Any behavior that disrupts this leaning environment such as late arrivals or early departures is unacceptable and inappropriate behavior will be subject to appropriate sanction.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week 1: United States Constitution
Week 2: Federalism
Week 3: Civil Liberties
Week 4: Civil Rights
Week 5: Public Opinion and political socialization
Week 6: Interest Groups
Week 7: Political Parties
Week 8: Political Participation, Voting and Elections
Week 9: Congress
Week 10: Presidency and Bureaucracy
Week 11: Federal Judiciary
Week 12: Domestic Policy
Week 13: Domestic Policy and Foreign Policy
Week 14: Wrap-up
Week 15: Final exam

Additional or alternative subject matter may be included and varies by instructor. The order in which the topics will be discussed may vary by instructor. Students should consult the syllabus for the particular section of POLS 2305 in which they enroll.
The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Framing Language

This rubric is designed to be transdisciplinary, reflecting the recognition that success in all disciplines requires habits of inquiry and analysis that share common attributes. Further, research suggests that successful critical thinkers from all disciplines increasingly need to be able to apply those habits in various and changing situations encountered in all walks of life.

This rubric is designed for use with many different types of assignments and the suggestions here are not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of text, data, or issues. Assignments that cut across presentation mode might be especially useful in some fields. If insight into the process components of critical thinking (e.g., how information sources were evaluated regardless of whether they were included in the product) is important, assignments focused on student reflection might be especially illuminating.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Ambiguity: Information that may be interpreted in more than one way.
- Assumptions: Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof." (quoted from www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions)
- Context: The historical, ethical, political, cultural, environmental, or circumstantial settings or conditions that influence and complicate the consideration of any issues, ideas, artifacts, and events.
- Literal meaning: Interpretation of information exactly as stated. For example, "she was green with envy" would be interpreted to mean that her skin was green.
- Metaphor: Information that is (intended to be) interpreted in a non-literal way. For example, "she was green with envy" is intended to convey an intensity of emotion, not a skin color.
**Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric**

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

**Definition**

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone 4</th>
<th>Milestones 3</th>
<th>Benchmark 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explaination of issues</strong></td>
<td>Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.</td>
<td>Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.</td>
<td>Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence of context and assumptions</strong></td>
<td>Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.</td>
<td>Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</strong></td>
<td>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).</td>
<td>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</strong></td>
<td>Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.</td>
<td>Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints, related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
written communication value VALUE rubric

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

framing language

This writing rubric is designed for use in a wide variety of educational institutions. The most clear finding to emerge from decades of research on writing assessment is that the best writing assessments are locally determined and sensitive to local context and mission. Users of this rubric should, in the end, consider making adaptations and additions that clearly link the language of the rubric to individual campus contexts.

This rubric focuses assessment on how specific written work samples or collections of work respond to specific contexts. The central question guiding the rubric is “How well does writing respond to the needs of audience(s) for the work?” In focusing on this question the rubric does not attend to other aspects of writing that are equally important: issues of writing process, writing strategies, writers’ fluency with different modes of textual production or publication, or writer’s growing engagement with writing and disciplinarity through the process of writing.

Evaluators using this rubric must have information about assignments or purposes for writing guiding writers’ work. Also recommended is including reflective work samples of collections of work that address such questions as: What decisions did the writer make about audience, purpose, and genre as she compiled the work in the portfolio? How are those choices evident in the writing? In the content, organization and structure, reasoning, evidence, mechanical and surface conventions, and citation systems used in the writing? This will enable evaluators to have a clear sense of how writers understand the assignments and take it into consideration as they evaluate.

The first section of this rubric addresses the context and purpose for writing. A work sample or collections of work can convey the context and purpose for the writing tasks it showcases by including the writing assignments and surface conventions. But writers may also convey the context and purpose for their writing within the texts. It is important for faculty and institutions to include directions for students about how they should represent their writing associated with work samples. But writers may also convey the context and purpose for their writing within the texts. It is important for faculty and institutions to include directions for students about how they should represent their writing contexts and purposes.

Faculty interested in the research on writing assessment that has guided our work here can consult the National Council of Teachers of English/Council of Writing Program Administrators’ White Paper on Writing Assessment (2008; www.wpacouncil.org/whitepaper) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication’s Writing Assessment: A Position Statement (2008; www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/123784.htm).

written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Content Development: The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- Context of and purpose for writing: The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: who is reading it? who is writing it? Under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writer’s intended effect on an audience. Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to work through complexity or confusion; or they might want to argue with other writers, or they might want to convey urgency or humor; they might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.
- Disciplinary conventions: Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer’s purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.
- Evidence: Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers’ ideas in a text.
- Genre conventions: Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts and/or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. lab reports, academic papers, poetry, webpages, or personal essays.
- Sources: Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

sources: texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

framing language

This writing rubric is designed for use in a wide variety of educational institutions. The most clear finding to emerge from decades of research on writing assessment is that the best writing assessments are locally determined and sensitive to local context and mission. Users of this rubric should, in the end, consider making adaptations and additions that clearly link the language of the rubric to individual campus contexts.

This rubric focuses assessment on how specific written work samples or collections of work respond to specific contexts. The central question guiding the rubric is “How well does writing respond to the needs of audience(s) for the work?” In focusing on this question the rubric does not attend to other aspects of writing that are equally important: issues of writing process, writing strategies, writers’ fluency with different modes of textual production or publication, or writer’s growing engagement with writing and disciplinarity through the process of writing.

Evaluators using this rubric must have information about assignments or purposes for writing guiding writers’ work. Also recommended is including reflective work samples of collections of work that address such questions as: What decisions did the writer make about audience, purpose, and genre as she compiled the work in the portfolio? How are those choices evident in the writing? In the content, organization and structure, reasoning, evidence, mechanical and surface conventions, and citation systems used in the writing? This will enable evaluators to have a clear sense of how writers understand the assignments and take it into consideration as they evaluate.

The first section of this rubric addresses the context and purpose for writing. A work sample or collections of work can convey the context and purpose for the writing tasks it showcases by including the writing assignments associated with work samples. But writers may also convey the context and purpose for their writing within the texts. It is important for faculty and institutions to include directions for students about how they should represent their writing contexts and purposes.

Faculty interested in the research on writing assessment that has guided our work here can consult the National Council of Teachers of English/Council of Writing Program Administrators’ White Paper on Writing Assessment (2008; www.wpacouncil.org/whitepaper) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication’s Writing Assessment: A Position Statement (2008; www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/123784.htm).

written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Content Development: The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- Context of and purpose for writing: The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: who is reading it? who is writing it? Under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writer’s intended effect on an audience. Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to work through complexity or confusion; or they might want to argue with other writers, or they might want to convey urgency or humor; they might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.
- Disciplinary conventions: Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer’s purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.
- Evidence: Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers’ ideas in a text.
- Genre conventions: Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts and/or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. lab reports, academic papers, poetry, webpages, or personal essays.
- Sources: Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

sources: texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.
**Written Communication VALUE Rubric**

*for more information, please contact value@aacu.org*

**Definition**
Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Context of and Purpose for Writing**
Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work. | Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context). | Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions). |

| Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience). |

**Content Development**
Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work. | Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work. | Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work. |

| Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work. |

**Genre and Disciplinary Conventions**
Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices. |

| Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices. |

| Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation. |

| Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation. |

**Sources and Evidence**
Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing. |

| Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing. |

| Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing. |

**Control of Syntax and Mechanics**
Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors. |

| Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors. |

| Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage. |
The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

**Definition**

Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from Civic Responsibility and Higher Education, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life-enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

**Framing Language**

Preparing graduates for their public lives as citizens, members of communities, and professionals in society has historically been a responsibility of higher education. Yet the outcome of a civic-minded graduate is a complex concept. Civic learning outcomes are framed by personal identity and commitments, disciplinary frameworks and traditions, pre-professional norms and practice, and the mission and values of colleges and universities. This rubric is designed to make the civic learning outcomes more explicit. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. For students this could include community-based learning through service-learning classes, community-based research, or service within the community. Multiple types of work samples or collections of work may be utilized to assess this, such as:

- The student creates and manages a service program that engages others (such as youth or members of a neighborhood) in learning about and taking action on an issue they care about. In the process, the student also teaches and models processes that engage others in deliberative democracy, in having a voice, participating in democratic processes, and taking specific actions to affect an issue.
- The student researches, organizes, and carries out a deliberative democracy forum or a special issue, one that includes multiple perspectives on that issue and how best to make positive change through various courses of public action. As a result, other students, faculty, and community members are engaged to take action on an issue.
- The student works on and takes a leadership role in a complex campaign to bring about tangible changes in the public’s awareness or education on a particular issue, or even a change in public policy. Through this process, the student demonstrates multiple types of civic action and skills.
- The student integrates their academic work with community engagement, producing a tangible product (piece of legislation or policy, a business, building or civic infrastructure, water quality or scientific assessment, needs survey, research paper, service program, or organization) that has engaged community constituents and responded to community needs and assets through the process.
- In addition, the nature of this work lends itself to opening up the review process to include community constituents that may be a part of the work, such as teammates, colleagues, community agency members, and those served or collaborating in the process.

**Glossary**

*The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.*

- Civic identity: When one sees her or himself as an active participant in society with a strong commitment and responsibility to work with others towards public purposes.
- Service-learning class: A course-based educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity and reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.
- Communication skills: Listening, deliberation, negotiation, consensus building, and productive use of conflict.
- Civic life: The public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation as contrasted with private or personal interests.
- Politics: A process by which a group of people, whose opinions or interests might be divergent, reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy. Political life enables people to accomplish goals they could not realize as individuals. Politics necessarily arises whenever groups of people live together, since they must always reach collective decisions of one kind or another.
- Government: "The formal institutions of a society with the authority to make and implement binding decisions about such matters as the distribution of resources, allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflicts." (Retrieved from the Center for Civic Engagement Web site, May 5, 2009.)
- Civic/community contexts: Organizations, movements, campaigns, a place or locus where people and/or living creatures inhabit, which may be defined by a locality (school, national park, non-profit organization, town, state, nation) or defined by shared identity (i.e., African-Americans, North Carolinians, Americans, the Republican or Democratic Party; refugees, etc.). In addition, contexts for civic engagement may be defined by a variety of approaches intended to benefit a person, group, or community, including community service or volunteer work, academic work.
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Civic Engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from Civic Responsibility and Higher Education, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity of Communities and Cultures</th>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Reflections on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.</th>
<th>Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.</th>
<th>Expresses attitudes and beliefs as an individual, from a one-sided view. Is indifferent or resistant to what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Knowledge</td>
<td>Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
<td>Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline making relevant connections to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
<td>Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
<td>Begins to identify knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline that is relevant to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Identity and Commitment</td>
<td>Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.</td>
<td>Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or herself as it relates to a growing sense of civic identity and commitment.</td>
<td>Evidence suggests involvement in civic-engagement activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of civic identity.</td>
<td>Provides little evidence of her/his experience in civic-engagement activities and does not connect experiences to civic identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Communication</td>
<td>Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further civic action.</td>
<td>Effectively communicates in civic context, showing ability to do all of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.</td>
<td>Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.</td>
<td>Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Action and Reflection</td>
<td>Demonstrates independent experience and shown initiative in team leadership of complex or multiple civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.</td>
<td>Demonstrates independent experience and team leadership of civic action, with reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.</td>
<td>Has clearly participated in civically focused actions and begins to reflect or describe how these actions may benefit individual(s) or communities.</td>
<td>Has experimented with some civic activities but shows little internalized understanding of their aims or effects and little commitment to future action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Contexts/Structures</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability and commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability and commitment to work actively within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.</td>
<td>Demonstrates experience identifying intentional ways to participate in civic contexts and structures.</td>
<td>Experiments with civic contexts and structures, tries out a few to see what fits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

**Definition**

Ethical Reasoning is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

**Framing Language**

This rubric is intended to help faculty evaluate work samples and collections of work that demonstrate student learning about ethics. Although the goal of a liberal education should be to help students turn what they've learned in the classroom into action, pragmatically it would be difficult, if not impossible, to judge whether or not students would act ethically when faced with real ethical situations. What can be evaluated using a rubric is whether students have the intellectual tools to make ethical choices.

The rubric focuses on five elements: Ethical Self Awareness, Ethical Issue Recognition, Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts, Application of Ethical Principles, and Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts. Students' Ethical Self Identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues. Presumably, they will choose ethical actions when faced with ethical issues.

**Glossary**

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Core Beliefs: Those fundamental principles that consciously or unconsciously influence one's ethical conduct and ethical thinking. Even when unacknowledged, core beliefs shape one's responses. Core beliefs can reflect one's environment, religion, culture or training. A person may or may not choose to act on their core beliefs.
- Ethical Perspectives/concepts: The different theoretical means through which ethical issues are analyzed, such as ethical theories (e.g., utilitarian, natural law, virtue) or ethical concepts (e.g., rights, justice, duty).
- Complex, multi-layered (gray) context: The sub-parts or situational conditions of a scenario that bring two or more ethical dilemmas (issues) into the mix/problem/context for student's identification.
- Cross-relationships among the issues: Obvious or subtle connections between/among the sub-parts or situational conditions of the issues present in a scenario (e.g., relationship of production of corn as part of climate change issue).
Ethical Reasoning VALUE Rubric
for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

**Definition**

Ethical Reasoning is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self-identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

_Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Student discusses in detail/analyzes both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs and discussion has greater depth and clarity.</td>
<td>Student discusses in detail/analyzes both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts</td>
<td>Student can name the major theory or theories she/he uses, can present the gist of said theory or theories, and attempts to explain the details of the theory or theories used.</td>
<td>Student can name the major theory or theories she/he uses, and is only able to present the gist of the named theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Issue Recognition</td>
<td>Student can recognize ethical issues when presented in a complex, multilayered (gray) context AND can recognize cross-relationships among the issues.</td>
<td>Student can recognize ethical issues when issues are presented in a complex, multilayered (gray) context OR can grasp cross-relationships among the issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts</td>
<td>Student can independently apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, accurately, and is able to consider full implications of the application.</td>
<td>Student can independently (to a new example) apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, accurately, but does not consider the specific implications of the application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts</td>
<td>Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of and can reasonably defend against the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, and the student's defense is adequate and effective.</td>
<td>Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of, and respond to the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, but the student's response is inadequate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>