1. **AGSC Content Area of Alignment:** Area IV: History, Social and Behavior Sciences

2. **SLO(s) being assessed:** Student will...

   SLO 8: Students will be informed and engaged citizens of the U.S. and the world.

3. **Assessment Method(s):**

   [Explain how assessment for the measures associated with this SLO - not grading for the course as a whole - was conducted. You may cut/paste rubrics for inclusion here, identify faculty reviewing committees, or identify specific kinds of test questions important to your method. Is this the method you initially planned to use? Provide a separate paragraph for each method.]

   The Political Science Department has been slow in aligning its assessment efforts in GED courses with the way the University wants those courses to be assessed. This is not to say that there has been no assessment of those courses. In fact, a review of course syllabi for POLI 1050 and 1090 for AY 2011-12 shows a rich and diverse battery of means by which to assess student success in meeting course goals. Students are given the traditional midterm and final examinations or other regular general tests during the semester. There are also numerous quiz formats, typically of course readings. Despite the resource constraints involved in teaching large sections with minimal GTA support, instructors typically build regular or extra credit writing assignments into the course framework. Usually these are thought pieces, based on course reading assignments or web-based applications. Student success also is assessed through other means such as simulations, and participation in blogs and chats. Some instructors administer surveys to students that contain various indicators of subject matter mastery and engagement in politics—either at the end of the semester or in a pre-/post-test format at the beginning and end of the semester. This is a very prominent approach to assessment in the Political Science discipline. The major point here is that a good bit of assessment is and has been conducted in Political Science GED courses for some time. The plurality of approaches and indicators used is entirely appropriate, especially in that there is no “silver bullet” in assessment of social science learning, which is to say one disciplinary-endorsed approach. The pluralism in assessment thus should be applauded as it informs the assessment effort itself. Having said all of this, the fact remains that POLI 1050 and 1090 must be subjected to some Department-wide assessment, even while allowing for additional and individualized assessment tools at the discretion of instructors. While the Department is beyond the curve on this, a plan is now in place. First, the Department impaneled an Assessment Subcommittee on its Standing Committee on Teaching Effectiveness so assessment is now institutionalized in the Department. Second, that Subcommittee now is at work developing an initial assessment instrument that will produce measure results for this academic year. The most direct approach being considered is a survey that will elicit attitudinal data assessing how our students measure up with respect to SLO8. There will be surveys for attitudes involving engagement with national (POLI 1090) and international (POLI 1050) issues. Third, the data will be aggregated at the end of spring semester and distributed to the faculty. Fourth, there will be a faculty meeting at the end of spring semester devoted exclusively to a discussion of the implications of the findings for how we teach the courses, and how we might improve the means of assessment. All of this should place the Department firmly on track to utilize valid assessment measures to improve our delivery of GED courses.

4. **Findings: What assessment data did each assessment method produce?**

   Please see above

5. **How did you (or will you) use the findings for improvement?**
Department: Political Science
Representative: Gerry Gryski
Course Name / number: POLI1090/1097

[What questions / issues / concerns did your data raise for the faculty teaching the course? What discussion did the faculty have about the findings? What future actions to improve student attainment of this outcome will the department / program take as a result of this analysis?]

Assessment Subcommittee will aggregate data and there will be a department-wide discussion of findings and implications for improvement. Please see above.

6. Additional Comments:
[What else would you like the Committee to know about your assessment of this course or plans for the future?]

7. Committee Comments
Mean of rubric score = 1.29 (out of 4)
I think this submission is wrong headed in almost every respect. It begins by saying that the department "has been slow in aligning its assessment efforts in GED courses with the way the University wants those courses to be assessed." As far as I understand it, this completely misses the point. The department is to design its own assessments -- if the department feels as though it has a robust enough assessing procedure, even if it is diverse and unique to the professor, then it should aim only to find ways to translate that robust program into results that we can read. It may take some work, but we need some original thought and insight when it comes to assessing large classrooms with minimal TA support. The method that the department has chosen to follow now -- surveys -- will probably not be very informative, given the results from other departments. In other words, if the department feels as though its informal way of assessing for SLO 8 is good enough, then it should just concentrate on making the results of that informal way a bit more formal, rather than assessing in a way that it doesn't seem all that excited about (or, frankly, has put much real thought into). While they highlight the diverse measurement of course materials in relation to SLO 8 they did not aggregate the information.