

2011-2012 APSU Teacher Unit

Annual Program Review

Government 7-12

I. Name of Program

Government 7-12

II. List of Reviewers

Dr. Marsha Lyle-Gonga (faculty)

Dr. William Gordon (faculty)

Dr. David Kanervo (chair)

III. Program Description

The certification program in government is offered in the Department of Political Science. It is a 30 hour program in the department, with three required courses (American National Government, International Politics, and Introduction to Public Policy) and seven upper level elective courses. Outside of Political Science, students also become certified in History by successfully completing World History I and II, American History I and II, two upper division History courses, and History 4950, Teaching Social Studies in the Secondary Schools. Students must also pass a course in macroeconomics and one in the geography of Europe, the Americas, and Australia. Finally, students complete the professional education minor.

IV. Changes in Program

No changes were made in the certification program in government during the past year. Very few students choose this teaching option. Those who do, have generally performed well and passed the Praxis exam on their first attempt. In fall, 2011, one student passed the exam on his fifth attempt. In spring, 2012, six students passed on their first attempt. Because of past student success the Political Science faculty have not seen a reason to change the program.

V. Program Strengths

Based on the data about student performance on the Praxis exam, it appears that students develop a good grounding in government from our courses. Last fall was the first time a government student failed the exam in the several years that I have reviewed the data. Last year's passage rate was 85.7%. That strong rate demonstrates the knowledge the students have gained from our program.

VI. Program Weaknesses

The weakness in the certification program for government teachers is that very few students choose to participate in it. Political Science majors have several options for careers and secondary teaching has not been a very appealing one for most Political Science majors. The larger number of students in the teacher education program last year is a result, I believe, of some renewed interest in serving as a teacher, and also the weakness in the job market in the other career options for political science students. Once the market for paralegals and government service improves, it would not be surprising for interest in teaching to wane again. The teaching of government is a low priority in the Tennessee educational system. Only one semester of government is required in high school. None is required in P-8 classrooms. Government is not a subject covered on the TCAP exams, so there is no incentive for Political Science students to want to teach government in high school; the state of Tennessee simply sees the material as relatively unimportant for students.

VII. Assessment of Candidates

There is virtually no data on candidates for certification in government because so few students choose that career option. There was no break out of government students for the exit survey of clinical teaching, the clinical teaching evaluation, the class and field experience disposition rating, or milestones II and IV. I suspect that no government students were in those categories for data to be reported. For the last seven students in the program the data show that six of the seven (85.7%) passed the Praxis exam on the first try and that eventually all seven did pass.

VIII. Assessment of Program Operations

Political Science majors are advised by one of the faculty members in that department in regard to the appropriate courses to take for certification in government. Students are advised about their education minor courses in the College of Education. The seven students who took and passed the Praxis exam in government during the past year have reported no problems with the operation of the certification program. The certification program in government appears to be functioning well for those who choose it.

IX. Summary of Proposed Changes

Based on the data that are available, no changes are proposed for the certification in government program because no problems have been identified.