Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
PLS 4600, Political Science Capstone

Please check one:  ☒ New course  ☐ Revised course

PART I: CATALOG DESCRIPTION

1. Course prefix and number, such as ART 1000:  PLS 4600
2. Title (may not exceed 30 characters, including spaces):  Political Science Capstone
3. Long title, if any (may not exceed 100 characters, including spaces):

4. Class hours per week, lab hours per week, and credit [e.g., (3-0-3)]:  3-0-3
5. Term(s) to be offered:  ☒ Fall  ☒ Spring  ☐ Summer  ☐ On demand
6. Initial term of offering:  ☒ Fall  ☐ Spring  ☐ Summer  Year:  2011
7. Course description (not to exceed four lines):  Analysis of classic and contemporary issues in Political Science research, with an emphasis on integrating undergraduate coursework and research experience.
8. Registration restrictions:
   a. Identify any equivalent courses (e.g., cross-listed course, non-honors version of an honors course).  none
   b. Prerequisite(s), including required test scores, courses, grades in courses, and technical skills. Indicate whether any prerequisite course(s) MAY be taken concurrently with the proposed/revised course.  

   Completion of PLS 1153G/1193G, PLS 2001, and PLS 2033; three of the following: PLS 2103, PLS 2253G/2293G, PLS 1003 and PLS 2703; and 9 hours in Political Science Field Requirements.
   c. Who can waive the prerequisite(s)?  

   ☐ No one  ☒ Chair  ☐ Instructor  ☐ Advisor  ☐ Other (Please specify)
   d. Co-requisites (course(s) which MUST be taken concurrently with this one):  none
   e. Repeat status:  ☒ Course may not be repeated.
                  ☐ Course may be repeated to a maximum of hours or times.
   f. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to which registration in the course is restricted, if any:  

      Restricted to undergraduate Political Science majors and Political Science majors with International Studies Option or Civic and Nonprofit Leadership Option who have completed at least 75 hours, and have completed the course prerequisites.
   g. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to be excluded from the course, if any:  

      Restricted to undergraduate Political Science majors and Political Science majors with International Studies Option or Civic and Nonprofit Leadership Option who have completed at least 75 hours, and have completed the course prerequisites.
9. Special course attributes [cultural diversity, general education (indicate component), honors, remedial, writing centered or writing intensive] writing intensive
10. **Grading methods** (check all that apply): ☒ Standard letter ☐ C/NC ☐ Audit ☐ ABC/NC (“Standard letter”—i.e., ABCDF--is assumed to be the default grading method unless the course description indicates otherwise.)

11. **Instructional delivery method:** ☒ lecture ☐ lab ☐ lecture/lab combined ☐ independent study/research ☐ internship ☐ performance ☐ practicum or clinical ☐ study abroad ☐ other
PART II: ASSURANCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

1. List the student learning objectives of this course:

   1. Students will demonstrate an analytical understanding of the scholarly issues central to the study of Political Science.
   2. Students will integrate concepts and theories learned in other Political Science courses.
   3. Students will communicate their understanding and integration of Political Science research and issues both orally and in writing.
   4. Students will identify and apply methods used to conduct Political Science research.
   5. Students will demonstrate the knowledge, ability and skills necessary to write and present Political Science research.

   a. If this is a general education course, indicate which objectives are designed to help students achieve one or more of the following goals of general education and university-wide assessment:
      • EIU graduates will write and speak effectively.
      • EIU graduates will think critically.
      • EIU graduates will function as responsible citizens.

   b. If this is a graduate-level course, indicate which objectives are designed to help students achieve established goals for learning at the graduate level:
      • Depth of content knowledge
      • Effective critical thinking and problem solving
      • Effective oral and written communication
      • Advanced scholarship through research or creative activity

2. Identify the assignments/activities the instructor will use to determine how well students attained the learning objectives:

   --Reactive readings journal (objectives #1, 2, 3 and 4)
   --Reflective essay (objectives #1, 2, and 3)
   --Class discussion and participation (objectives #1, 2, 3, and 4)
   --Research project (objectives #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)
   --Poster presentation of research project (objectives #3 and 5)

3. Explain how the instructor will determine students’ grades for the course:

   --Reactive readings journal 20%
   --Reflective essay addressing the relevance of PLS in society 15%
   --Class participation 15%
   --Research poster presentation 10%
   --Research project 40%

4. For technology-delivered and other nontraditional-delivered courses/sections, address the following:
   a. Describe how the format/technology will be used to support and assess students’ achievement of the specified learning objectives:
   b. Describe how the integrity of student work will be assured:
c. Describe provisions for and requirements of instructor-student and student-student interaction, including the kinds of technologies that will be used to support the interaction (e.g., e-mail, web-based discussions, computer conferences, etc.): NA

5. For courses numbered 4750-4999, specify additional or more stringent requirements for students enrolling for graduate credit. These include:
   a. course objectives;
   b. projects that require application and analysis of the course content; and
   c. separate methods of evaluation for undergraduate and graduate students. NA

6. If applicable, indicate whether this course is writing-active, writing-intensive, or writing-centered, and describe how the course satisfies the criteria for the type of writing course identified. (See Appendix *.)

    Seventy-five percent of the course grade will be based on writing, with shorter assignments (the reactive journal and reflective essay) spread throughout the semester. The research paper will be revised during the semester, with attention paid to both content and writing quality.

PART III: OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

Provide a week-by-week outline of the course’s content. Specify units of time (e.g., for a 3-0-3 course, 45 fifty-minute class periods over 15 weeks) for each major topic in the outline. Provide clear and sufficient details about content and procedures so that possible questions of overlap with other courses can be addressed. For technology-delivered or other nontraditional-delivered courses/sections, explain how the course content “units” are sufficiently equivalent to the traditional on-campus semester hour units of time described above.

Most weekly meeting will focus in part on analyzing and discussing, in a seminar format, contemporary research questions in Political Science. In addition, class meetings will offer students the opportunity to develop, refine, and revise their research projects.

Week 1: Introduction; Understanding the Research Process
What is research? How do we develop research ideas? Is Political Science research relevant? What are the politics of Political Science research? What do Political Scientists do?
Workshop: brainstorming ideas; conducting literature searches

Weeks 2-3: What Do Political Scientists Study? What Should We Study?
What paradigms currently guide Political Science research? Do these paradigms make sense? Do the major fields in Political Science make sense in today’s world? How are the fields evolving? How is research becoming more interdisciplinary? What skills are needed to meet the demands of new research?
Workshop: developing and writing research questions and research proposals

Week 4: Political Science Methodologies
What are the flaws in traditional Political Science methodologies? How can we develop better techniques to answer our research questions?
Workshop: selecting and developing a methodology; addressing validity and reliability issues; addressing research ethics
Weeks 5-6: Studying Political Behavior
What is the major research being conducted on political campaigns, socialization, organizational behavior, political parties, public opinion, and social capital?
Workshop: developing and writing a literature review; using scholarly sources; interpreting quantitative data

Weeks 7-8: Studying Equality & Justice
What is the major research currently being conducted on gender, economic, and ethnic equality and justice?
Workshop: developing and conducting an analysis

Weeks 9-10: Studying Institutions & Elites
What is the major research being conducted on political institutions, international organizations, politicians, elites, and leadership?
Workshop: writing an analysis; understanding the peer review process

Weeks 11-12: Studying Democracy & Policy
What is the major research being conducted on democratization and public policy?
Workshop: developing and writing a discussion/conclusion

Week 13: Research Workshop
How do we put research together in Political Science? Focus on citations, style, and presentation techniques.

Weeks 14-15: Poster Presentations
Students will present their research in poster panels, with all PLS faculty invited to participate

PART IV: PURPOSE AND NEED

1. Explain the department’s rationale for developing and proposing the course.
   a. If this is a general education course, you also must indicate the segment of the general education program into which it will be placed, and describe how the course meets the requirements of that segment.
   b. If the course or some sections of the course may be technology delivered, explain why.

   Our departmental assessment indicates a need for integrating PLS coursework, as well as coursework from General Education, minors, and electives, in this culminating experience. This seminar style course will allow students to integrate what they’ve learned as undergraduates, develop their critical thinking and writing skills to evaluate the field of Political Science, and apply their skills in their own research. This course will also improve the department’s assessment plan, as it offers an opportunity for the department to evaluate student’s knowledge of Political Science, critical thinking and writing skills, and oral communication skills.

2. Justify the level of the course and any course prerequisites, co-requisites, or registration restrictions.

   As a major capstone course, this course is appropriate for second-semester juniors and senior level students who have completed the bulk of their undergraduate coursework. The restriction to majors only will allow for a true seminar experience, with a focus on shared learning and discussion.

3. If the course is similar to an existing course or courses, justify its development and offering.
a. If the contents substantially duplicate those of an existing course, the new proposal should be discussed with the appropriate chairpersons, deans, or curriculum committees and their responses noted in the proposal.

b. Cite course(s) to be deleted if the new course is approved. If no deletions are planned, note the exceptional need to be met or the curricular gap to be filled.

This course is not similar to any existing course.

4. Impact on Program(s):

   a. For undergraduate programs, specify whether this course will be required for a major or minor or used as an approved elective.

   b. For graduate programs, specify whether this course will be a core requirement for all candidates in a degree or certificate program or an approved elective.

If the proposed course changes a major, minor, or certificate program in or outside of the department, you must submit a separate proposal requesting that change along with the course proposal. Provide a copy of the existing program in the current catalog with the requested changes noted.

This course is required for undergraduate PLS majors and PLS majors with the International Studies option.

PART V: IMPLEMENTATION

1. Faculty member(s) to whom the course may be assigned:

   If this is a graduate course and the department does not currently offer a graduate program, it must document that it employs faculty qualified to teach graduate courses.

   Any qualified faculty member in PLS will be able to teach this course, but its initial assignment will be to Dr. Mueller and Dr. Barria.

2. Additional costs to students:

   Include those for supplemental packets, hardware/software, or any other additional instructional, technical, or technological requirements. (Course fees must be approved by the President’s Council.)

   None

3. Text and supplementary materials to be used (Include publication dates):


**PART VI: COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER**

If the proposed course is a 1000- or 2000-level course, state either, "A community college course may be judged equivalent to this course" OR "A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course." A community college course will not be judged equivalent to a 3000- or 4000-level course but may be accepted as a substitute; however, upper-division credit will not be awarded.

Community college courses will not be judged as equivalent.

**PART VII: APPROVALS**

Date approved by the department or school: December 2, 2009

Date approved by the college curriculum committee: December 11, 2009

Date approved by the Honors Council *(if this is an honors course):*

Date approved by CAA: January 21, 2010

*In writing-active courses, frequent, brief writing activities and assignments are required. Such activities -- some of which are to be graded -- might include five-minute in-class writing assignments, journal keeping, lab reports, essay examinations, short papers, longer papers, or a variety of other writing-to-learn activities of the instructor's invention. Writing assignments and activities in writing-active courses are designed primarily to assist students in mastering course content, secondarily to strengthen students' writing skills. In writing-intensive courses, several writing assignments and writing activities are required. These assignments and activities, which are to be spread over the course of the semester, serve the dual purpose of strengthening writing skills and deepening understanding of course content. At least one writing assignment is to be revised by the student after it has been read and commented on by the instructor. In writing-intensive courses, students’ writing should constitute no less than 35% of the final course grade. In writing-centered courses (English 1001G, English 1002G, and their honors equivalents), students learn the principles and the process of writing in all of its stages, from inception to completion. The quality of students' writing is the principal determinant of the course grade. The minimum writing requirement is 20 pages (5,000 words).