

TO: UGEC

FROM: Neal Coates, POLS Chair

RE: Capstone Courses for Department of Political Science

DATE: April 23, 2014

Last year the Criminal Justice courses and instructor moved from the former Department of Sociology and Family Studies to be housed in the Department of Political Science. We began working to improve the degree and offerings, instructors, recruiting, to make the degree a major, and to pursue scholarships for CJ students.

Our Visiting Committee was here March 27 and has endorsed a number of improvements in the CJ program, including the addition of several courses. They also endorsed the hiring of a second very good teacher who is now on campus.

The ACU degree for POLS students is a B.A. The current degree for CJ students is a B.S. in POLS with emphasis in Criminal Justice. This fall we will apply for approval for a B.A. and B.S. in Criminal Justice. The new designation will be POLC (POLS is for political science courses).

This memo is about the capstone for POLS students and the capstone for the CJ students. The Department proposes to use existing POLS 499 Public Service Internship as the capstone for POLS students and to use existing SOCI 499 Sociological Practice II for CJ students. POLS 499 is a long-standing course in our POLS curriculum but is not currently a required course. We will apply for it to be so this fall. In the meantime we can require students to take it and they will all gain the value of the internship. SOCI 499 is also already required for all CJ students, and this fall we will apply to have it designated as POLC 499.

Having these two courses, POLS 499 and SOCI/POLC 499, serve as the capstones provides consistency in the Department with regard to meeting learning outcomes for the conclusion-type of learning experience for all our students. The learning outcomes have been, as much as possible, incorporated in both courses in a similar fashion, as can be seen in the two applications. The LOs have different impacts, though, on POLS 499 and SOCI/POLC 499 in the context of the particular courses.

It is our proposal to have POLS majors follow the lead of the CJ students, that an internship experience be required. This provides an excellent opportunity to combine the matriculation of all students with impending employment and/or graduate studies. We already have faculty teaching these courses.

Current catalog descriptions:

POLS 499 Public Service Internship

Links public-sector employment with classroom work. Exposure to public-sector problems and opportunities. Prerequisite: junior standing and approval by the department internship director. For majors only.

SOCI 499 Sociological Practice II

A supervised on-the-job learning experience within an approved work setting relevant to academic and career goals and designed to provide constructive sociological assistance to community organizations. May be repeated for up to 3 credit hours.

