I. Unit Title: Social Sciences

School/College or University Division: Arts & Sciences

Unit Administrator: Albert Nylander

II. Educational Program Learning Outcome Assessment Plan (Academics)

Learner Outcomes identified for the major.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Learning Outcome</th>
<th>B. Data Collection &amp; Analysis</th>
<th>C. Results of Evaluation</th>
<th>D. Use of Evaluation Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should a graduate in the BS in Social Science Education major know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond?</td>
<td>What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome? 1. Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be/have been collected. 3. Explain the procedure to analyze the data.</td>
<td>What were the findings of the analysis?</td>
<td>List any specific recommendations. 2. Describe changes in curriculum, courses, or procedures that are proposed or were made/are being made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students in social science education should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

GE #'s 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

This information is collected from the Praxis II test scores and evaluation instruments from student teaching. Each student teacher is evaluated by the cooperating teacher, subject area university supervisor, and college of education supervisor. The data are tabulated and filed in an assessment report. All information

See Appendix for the Social Science Education Assessment Findings.

Additional field experiences are being added to methods in order to further improve teaching and student learning before practicum, beginning Fall 2008. The additional field experience should further improve the instructional skills of Candidates.
Students in social science education, who are licensed to teach history at the 7-12 school levels, should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level for the study of history. GE #’s 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8.

This information is collected from the Praxis II test scores, and evaluation instruments from student teaching. Each student teacher is evaluated by the cooperating teacher, subject area university supervisor, and college of education supervisor. The data are tabulated and filed in an assessment report. All information is analyzed by the subject area supervisor and discussed by the Social Science Education Committee.

See Appendix for the Social Science Education Assessment Findings.

Additional field experiences are being added to methods in order to further improve teaching and student learning before practicum, beginning Fall 2008. The additional field experience should further improve the instructional skills of Candidates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>D. Use of Evaluation Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>What should a graduate in the BA in Political Science major know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond?</em></td>
<td>1. What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome? 2. Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be have been collected. 3. Explain the procedure to analyze the data.</td>
<td><em>What were the findings of the analysis?</em></td>
<td>1. List any specific recommendations. 2. Describe changes in curriculum, courses, or procedures that are proposed or were made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students in political science will be able to think critically, and write clearly about politics and government in contemporary societies.

1) Senior Portfolios are collected by the department and evaluated by the Political Science Committee  
2) Oral internship defenses  
3) Internal course assessments

The Division of Social Sciences Assessment Committee has evaluated the graduating seniors’ portfolios in Political Science and found the students are sufficiently prepared in writing. This

Instructors will continue to require heavy writing assignments in all courses.

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Students in political science will understand the role of politics at the local, national, and international levels.

1) The Political Science Committee evaluated the BA curriculum in the fall to determine whether or not it was meeting the needed requirements to prepare students for understanding the international and comparative politics in a global world.  
2) Internal course assessments

The Political Science Committee evaluated the Political Science curriculum and found that students need more exposure to the Politics of Globalization, Comparative Politics, and International Politics. The following courses were added to the Political Science program to address these needs:  
PSC 302: Politics of Globalization
PSC 360: Comparative Politics
PSC 370: International Politics

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What should a graduate in the BS in Criminal Justice know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond? | 1. What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome?  
2. Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be/have been collected.  
3. Explain the procedure to analyze the data. | What were the findings of the analysis? | 1. List any specific recommendations.  
2. Describe changes in curriculum, courses, or procedures that are proposed or were made/ are being made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process. |
| Students will understand the role of criminal law and the judicial process in the study of criminal justice. | Students are given a pre and post test on basic and advanced concepts in criminal justice. This information is collected in SSC 101, Engaging the Social Sciences and SSC 499, Integrative Seminar in the Social Sciences. The instructor of this course tabulates all data and then writes an 90% of the students learned a lot from their advanced courses. 100% of the students considered the courses to be relevant and very important. (see page 12 in the SSC 499 report in the appendix) | For the Pre and Post Tests, 57% of | The new Social Justice and Criminology program will continue to incorporate courses in criminal law and judicial process. |

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analytical and summary report to be shared with all social science instructors. The chair of the division sends the report out to all, and seeks feedback.

the criminal justice questions were answered correctly. Four of 7 criminal justice students, scored above 60% on the assessment post-test. (see page 29 in the SSC 499 report in the appendix)

Students will be able to develop skills in critical thinking, synthesis and analysis of informational sources about social justice, and criminology.

In SSC 101 and 499, students are assessed on their abilities to understand the theoretical importance of academic programs such as social justice and criminology. The instructor for these courses provided pre and post tests, and focus groups (see the appendix for results). The procedures for collecting and analyzing these results are located in these documents in the appendix.

Most criminal justice students fail to see the importance of critically thinking and analyzing information based on theoretical driven courses related to social justice and criminology (see the whole SSC 499 report).

The undergraduate criminal justice committee recommended to the chair that the criminal justice program be changed in name to Social Justice and Criminology. This change was approved at the division level, dean’s office, academic council, and Institutions of Higher Learning. This name change and new focus takes place fall 2008.

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### A. Learning Outcome

**What should a graduate in the BS in Social Sciences major know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond?**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the disciplines of geography, political science, and sociology in terms of its history, content, purpose and methodologies.

### B. Data Collection & Analysis

1. **What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome?**
2. **Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be/have been collected.**
3. **Explain the procedure to analyze the data.**

1) Senior Portfolios
2) SSC 101 & 499 courses (see appendix for reports)

Overall, students answered 45 percent of the questions correctly. Students’ scores in Geography, Political Science, and Sociology ranged from 37 to 45 percent of the

### C. Results of Evaluation

**What were the findings of the analysis?**

Overall, students answered 45 percent of the questions correctly. Students’ scores in Geography, Political Science, and Sociology ranged from 37 to 45 percent of the

### D. Use of Evaluation Results

1. **List any specific recommendations.**
2. **Describe changes in curriculum, courses, or procedures that are proposed or were made/ are being made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process.**

SSC 101 & 499 courses were just required courses this past year. We did not have a large number of social science majors signed up for the SSC 499 course this year, but that will change.
Students will understand the impacts of social structures/institutions on their lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should a graduate in the MS in Community Development major know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond?</td>
<td>1. What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome? 2. Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be/have been collected. 3. Explain the procedure to analyze the data.</td>
<td>What were the findings of the analysis?</td>
<td>1. List any specific recommendations. 2. Describe changes in curriculum, courses, or procedures that are proposed or were made/are being made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will be prepared for work in community and economic development positions upon graduating.

| 1) Positions held by former students in various community and economic development fields. | A sample of our recent graduates find them in some of the following positions:  --Pursuing a Masters degree in Counseling at Delta State University  --Pursuing the Ph.D. in Human Capital Development at the University of Southern Mississippi  --Working for a Bank in Greenville  --Working for the Indianola Pecan House  --Working for the Clarksdale Public School System  --Working for the Walton Arts Center in Arkansas | This success provides the faculty with even more focus on exposing students to the core social science theories, especially those from community development and community and development sociology. Sociology of Community (COD 575), Community Development (COD 600), Delta in Global Context (COD/SOC 526), Sustainable Development (COD/SOC 521), Sociology of Development (COD 567), and Community Development (COD 680) will continue to be core |

Questions answered correctly. (see SSC 499 report in appendix)  

This coming year. We will have better results to determine the success or failure of this outcome at that time.  

SSC 101 & 499 will be reviewed for additional changes this coming year.

Students’ portfolios were reviewed, and there are some weaknesses translating conceptual approaches to practical experiences. More work will need to be done in the core courses to improve this SLO.
---Working as a teacher in Greenwood
---Research associate at the Mississippi State University Social Science Research Center
---Founder of the Mississippi Community Development Group based in Clarksdale
---Executive Director of Synergy for Home and International Development based in Kenya

---courses for this program. Keeping in tune with our former graduates and our current students, and the latest research will allow us to make improvements in course content and rigor of methods for community development graduate students.

---Students will communicate in an appropriate and effective manner, orally and in writing, to multiple types of audiences.

---1) Theses
---2) Practicum reports
---3) Professional presentations

---Eight students completed practicum reports this academic year. One thesis, “Exploring Health Status and Barriers to Health Care Access Among Mexican Immigrants in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta,” was written by Monica Rosas.

---We had several co-authored presentations on behalf of our students at professional conferences. Please see Faculty Merit Activities in the Appendix for more information.

---Faculty members will continue to focus on Social Theories, Research Methods, and Oral Presentations throughout the MSCD curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should a graduate in the MS in Criminal Justice major know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond?</td>
<td>1. What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome? 2. Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be/have been collected. 3. Explain the procedure to</td>
<td>What were the findings of the analysis?</td>
<td>1. List any specific recommendations. 2. Describe changes in curriculum, courses, or procedures that are proposed or were made/are being made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---Social Sciences Unit Plan and Report 2007-08
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>A. Learning Outcome</strong>&lt;br&gt;What should a graduate in the MS in Secondary Education major know, value, or be able to do at graduation and beyond?</th>
<th><strong>B. Data Collection &amp; Analysis</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome? 2. Describe how the data from these tools and/or methods will be/ have been collected. 3. Explain the procedure to analyze the data.</th>
<th><strong>C. Results of Evaluation</strong>&lt;br&gt;What were the findings of the analysis?</th>
<th><strong>D. Use of Evaluation Results</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. List any specific recommendations. 2. Describe changes in curriculum, courses, or procedures that are proposed or were made/ are being made as a result of the program learning outcome assessment process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to conduct, analyze, interpret and apply various works of scholarly research in order to develop responses to contemporary issues facing the field of criminal justice.</td>
<td>1) Comprehensive examinations</td>
<td>Comprehensive examination scores for 2008 graduates were analyzed. All students passed their written comprehensive exams.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will have an advanced knowledge of theories relating to crime causation in criminal justice.</td>
<td>1) Comprehensive examinations 2) Capstone Course Assessment 3) Internal course assessment of CRJ 630 — Criminal Justice Theory</td>
<td>The Graduate Coordinator evaluated all papers, presentations, and comprehensive examinations to determine overall success of students. All students passed their written comprehensive exams, and 6 of 8 students passed the Theory course</td>
<td>The Master’s in Criminal Justice has been renamed to Social Justice and Criminology. New courses will be developed to reflect this new emphasis on understanding theories of crime causation in criminal justice and the prevention of crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate an ability to critically analyze social phenomena by applying key social science concepts.</td>
<td>1) Comprehensive Exams</td>
<td>All students successfully passed the written comprehensive exam. All students performed exceptionally well on the first question, which asked students to write, at length, about the three main theoretical perspectives in the social sciences.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Goals

-- 2007-2008

Goal #1: Hire new faculty members in Geography, and Criminal Justice

We were able to fill an open position in Criminal Justice with Dr. Tiffiny Guidry, Ph.D., University of Arizona. However, we did not hire a new Geographer, so we still have a void in that area. Also, we were unable to fill Dr. Jerry Robinson’s line. This will negatively impact the division’s ability to maintain our high number of majors and graduates.

Goal #2. . . Improve the quality of feedback and increase the frequency of response to individual students in the program
See SSC 499 report in the appendix.

-- 2008-2009

Goal #1: Hire faculty in Geography, Social Justice & Criminology, and Social Science Education

We have an ad out to fill the Social Science Education position. Hopefully, we will be able to hire a Geography/GIT scholar this coming year. Additionally, we need to replace the position line vacated this past year with another Social Justice & Criminology person. We are in a catch 22 position at this time with the positions we have lost over the last several years. As indicated in the annual reports since 2004, it is difficult to sustain our number of majors and graduates when positions are not filled. We had a high of 83 graduates in 2005, but we have dropped since then.
SP’s 1, 2, 5 (probably all); QEP’s 2, 4

Goal #2: Continue to increase Indirect Funds through Grants and Contracts

The Social Science faculty continue to write proposals seeking funding for numerous projects. I encourage these scholarly activities for professional fulfillment and the greater good of the division. We have increased our indirect funds each year for the past three years. This helps the almost stagnant increase in our budget for university travel. We have been able to take trips for professional conferences to Jamaica, Grenada, Ireland, Italy, China, Mexico, Honduras, Sweden, Wales, and throughout the U.S. Most of these trips have included Delta State students, who have been co-presenters on many of the papers.

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SP’s (directly and indirectly all); QEP’s 1, 2, 3, 4

**Goal #3: Create a Social Science Computer Lab**
There is a great need to have access to a student computer lab in our division. All students in the division must take a required methods and statistics course. Also, we have three graduate programs, and it is essential that graduate students have access to computers. Thus, we are developing a plan at this time to create a small computer lab of four to five stations. We expect the lab to be of great benefit to our SSC 469 & 470 courses, and all graduate students.
QEP’s 1, 2, 4

**Goal #4: Increase the number of graduates in the Division by 10%**
We graduated 63 students this past year, which is down from a high of 83 students in 2005. The decrease was expected due to the loss of positions in the Division of Social Sciences. However, we are working to sustain and grow our numbers based on the current faculty lines. We are streamlining our graduate courses in methods and statistics, and we anticipate adding a few more courses online. It is the division’s expectation that these changes will increase our numbers; however, we cannot sustain anymore losses to faculty lines.
SP’s all; QEP’s all

**Goal #5: Continue to develop study abroad courses**
We expect to continue to internationalize our programs, and we are seeking ways to internationalize our students within the division.
SP 5; QEP’s all

**Goal #6: Expand marketing efforts for undergraduate and graduate degrees offered through the Division**
We are implementing a planning and marketing committee to better share our work in the division.
SP’s 3, 4, 5;

**Goal #7: Develop clear, step-by-step tenure/promotion guidelines**
The Tenure and Promotions committee will be developing specific guidelines for the division.

**Goal #8: Systematically plan and organize outreach/recruitment efforts in the local area High Schools and Community Colleges**
Several faculty members have volunteered to begin systematically recruiting our local delta schools.
SP’s 2, 4, 5;
Goal #9: Strengthen the relationship between the Division of Social Sciences and the Institute for Community-Based Research, the Madison Center and the Center for Community and Economic Development
The division maintains strong ties to these three centers. We will heighten our efforts this coming year to showcase these activities.

Goal #10: Increase Social Sciences visibility through our webpage
We plan to double our efforts in showcasing faculty activities, and becoming more user friendly.

-- 2008-2013

Goal #1: Develop an online program for the BS in Social Sciences
Goal #2: Develop concentrations in Gender Studies & GIS for the BS program
Goal #3: Restructure the Social Justice & Criminology curriculum to include tracks in Criminology, Social Justice Law, etc.
Goal #4: Increase the number of international students in the Division.
Goal #5: Enrich student learning by engaging more students in service learning projects as appropriate.

IV. Data and information for department:

The Division of Social Sciences aims at a broad development of the individual. Its goal is to present the main approaches to understanding our world and maintain a student-centered environment. In the process, faculty in the Division seek to develop certain skills and enduring habits of mind--intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, tolerance of and openness to different views and values, and the ability to communicate one's thoughts orally and in writing. In short, this philosophy of learning should enable students to embark on a lifetime of learning and to adapt to a rapidly changing world. It is also the mission of the Division to serve the Delta by developing programs of study that match the cultural needs of the region and state. To determine the extent to which the Division is meeting some of these needs, a brief presentation of trends is presented next.

Number of Graduates, Majors, and Credit Hour Production

In this section, a break down of the number of graduates for each program is displayed. In addition, multi-year comparisons of the number of majors in each program are presented.
Number of graduates

Table 1: Number of Graduates for six-year period (academic year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSE</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSCJ</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCJ</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Majors

Table 2: Number of majors (Fall)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSE</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSCJ</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCJ</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35*</td>
<td>40*</td>
<td>41*</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCD</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adjusted numbers: These numbers were for the whole year.

We increased our number of graduates this past year, and expect to increase it once again this coming year.
### Table 3: Credit Hour production for 2007-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>DATA</th>
<th>SUM UG</th>
<th>SUM GR</th>
<th>SUM UG</th>
<th>SUM GR</th>
<th>SUM UG</th>
<th>SUM GR</th>
<th>SUM UG</th>
<th>SUM GR</th>
<th>SUM UG</th>
<th>SUM GR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANT</td>
<td>SUM UG</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>SUM GR</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COD</td>
<td>SUM UG</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUM GR</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>SUM UG</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>606</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUM GR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO</td>
<td>SUM UG</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>522</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUM GR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC</td>
<td>SUM UG</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>1,179</td>
<td>747</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUM GR</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>SUM UG</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Source: Institutional Research

The division’s credit hour production has remained consistently around the 3500 mark for the fall semesters. This coming fall we will not have an Anthropology instructor so we will lose those general education numbers. Additionally, there will be a drop in the Geography numbers due to Dr. Owen’s leaving, and an adjunct instructor’s, Dave Kuhn, departure from the university. We desperately need to hire another Geographer.
Committees reporting to unit:
1. Criminal Justice undergraduate committee members are Albert Nylander, Garry Jennings, John Green, and Page Logan. All files are kept in the main office.
2. Merit Pay committee members are Garry Jennings, John Green, and Mark Bonta. All files are in main office.
3. Tenure and Promotion committee members are Garry Jennings, John Green, and Mark Bonta. All files are in main office.
4. Political Science undergraduate committee members are Garry Jennings, Leslie Fadiga-Stewart, and Arlene Sanders. Files are located in Garry Jennings’ office.
5. Social Science undergraduate assessment committee members are Albert Nylander, Mark Bonta, Amy Owen, Alan Barton, and Garry Jennings. Files are in the main office.
6. Social Science Education committee members are Albert Nylander and Amy Owen. Files are in the main office.
7. Honesty and Ethics committee members are Alan Barton, Paulette Meikle-Yaw, and Mark Bonta. Files are in the main office.
8. Community Development committee members are John Green, Alan Barton, Debarashmi Mitra, Paulette Meikle-Yaw, Albert Nylander, and Jerry Robinson. Files are located in John Green’s office.

V. Personnel:

Please see Faculty/Merit documents in the appendix for information on personnel.
SSC 101
ENGAGING THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Assessment and Professionalization in the Social Sciences

Spring Semester 2008

Division of Social Sciences
Delta State University

Prepared by:
Alan W. Barton

(edited by Albert Nylander for the Annual Report)
INTRODUCTION

Enhancing student engagement is the central mission of Delta State University (DSU) under the current Quality Enhancement Plan. The Division of Social Sciences (DSS) has incorporated this mission into the curriculum through two courses, which were offered for the first time during Spring semester, 2007. Students receive one credit for each of these courses. They take SSC 101: Engaging the Social Sciences during their first semester as a major in the Division of Social Sciences, and SSC 499: Integrative Seminar in the Social Sciences during their final semester before graduation. Each course meets once a week for two hours, for eight weeks.

SSC 101, Spring 2008

SSC 101: Engaging the Social Sciences was offered for the third time during the second half of Spring semester, 2008. The course was included in the 2007–08 catalogue, so new students in the DSS are required to take this course. During the semester, students were introduced to the degree programs and professors in the DSS, completed various assessment activities, visited their advisors to develop plans to complete their degrees, and learned about resources on campus to help them with studying, writing and technology.

Enrollment

Forty-two students signed up for SSC 101 at the beginning of Spring semester, 2008. Of these, 37 completed the course. Three students were No Shows, one showed up for only one class session, and one dropped the course after the third session when we discovered his major field was not in the Division of Social Sciences.

Eleven of the students were freshmen, seven were sophomores, thirteen were juniors and six were seniors.

Activities

During the semester, students engaged in several activities aimed at assessing the Division of Social Sciences. They also carried out activities designed to develop a professional approach to their studies.

Assessment

Students initiated a portfolio of their work which they will maintain over the course of their studies at DSU. They will complete the portfolio in SSC 499 and submit it just prior to graduation. The portfolio fulfills a requirement in the College of Arts and Sciences. During the
semester, we discussed the purpose and value of a professional portfolio, as well as strategies for compiling a portfolio including the types of materials to include. The students visited their advisors and discussed their portfolios, then on the last day of class they brought their portfolios in and two other faculty members, Dr. Paulette Meikle-Yaw, Dr. Leslie Fadiga-Stewart came to the class and along with the course instructor reviewed each student’s portfolio. The faculty made suggestions and encouraged the students to keep their portfolios up to date during their studies at DSU.

Students also wrote several essays to include in their portfolios during the semester (See Appendix B). First, students wrote brief in-class essays on assigned topics, and we discussed their essays with the entire class. Students then took their informal essays and expanded them, typed them up and submitted them. The instructor read and evaluated the essays, and returned them so the students could put them in their portfolios. The first in-class essay was on the topic: “What are your goals in college?” followed by a Statement of Purpose, which students completed out of class and submitted on March 26, 2008. The Statement of Purpose will also be included in the students’ portfolios. In the next in-class essay, students addressed the question: “Who are you?” then completed a Biographical Essay, which they turned in on April 2. The third in-class essay asked students to write about how they learn, and they then prepared an essay outside of class on their own preferred learning style, which was due on April 16. Next, students wrote an in-class essay on what college means to them, and prepared a Statement of Values to turn in on April 23, and to include in their portfolios. Students then wrote an in-class essay on what they wanted to learn in college, and in conjunction with their advisors they prepared a plan of the courses they intended to take and a plan for compiling their portfolios, which they submitted on April 30. During the class session on April 23, we discussed academic honesty and ethics and students wrote an in-class essay addressing the question: “Under what conditions would you cheat in a DSU course?” We followed this up with a discussion. On the last day of class, students wrote an in-class essay on how they would define an engaged student. They submitted their blue books with all of their essays during the last class session.

The other assessment activity was a pre-test of knowledge in the social sciences, completed on April 16, 2008. The instructor has compiled a database of questions on Sociology, Geography, Political Science, Research Methods, Social Science Education and Criminal Justice, which were submitted by faculty in the DSS. The questions are ranked on a five-point scale based on difficulty. More information and results from this exam are presented below.

Professionalization

An important aspect of both SSC 101 and SSC 499 is professional training. During the semester, we discussed the meaning of professionalism, and the instructor provided students
with tools to help and encourage them to take a professional approach to their studies. We used the concept of student engagement throughout the semester, introducing the concept as the current mission of DSU, and then discussing what student engagement means in various contexts. As mentioned, students wrote an in-class essay on the characteristics of an engaged student on the last day of class. The overall mission of these discussions is to orient the students towards viewing the university as a set of resources on which they can draw to learn.

On April 9, 2008, speakers from various campus centers came to class to introduce some of the resources available to students. Dr. Susan Allen Ford discussed the Writing Center and the importance of writing in one’s education. Ms. Susan Hines introduced the Technology Learning Center and its programs. Ms. Paula King spoke about the Counseling and Testing Center, and encouraged students to take advantage of counseling services and testing options. Ms. Diane Blansett told students about the Academic Support Lab and the types of assistance they could seek there. Mr. Michael Mounce from the Roberts-LaForge Library introduced students to the services that the reference librarians offer and the resources the library has available. These discussions provided students with knowledge that can help them through their academic programs and personal lives during college, and also encouraged students to view the university as a set of resources that they can use to improve themselves.

Introduction to the DSS Degree Programs

Over the course of the semester, students were introduced to many of the faculty members in the Division of Social Sciences, and to the degree programs the Division offers. Although most students enter this course with a declared major, discussing the degree programs gives all students a similar base of knowledge about the structure of the DSS. In addition, students in the same cohort have an opportunity to get to know their colleagues and better understand what other students who are enrolled in different degree programs are doing. This has the potential to integrate the students in the DSS.

Individual faculty members came to class to speak about their disciplines, discussing the degree program, courses that are offered, and what both students and graduates in the discipline are doing.

On March 19, Dr. Albert Nylander welcomed students to the Division of Social Sciences, and in response to a question from one student, Dr. Nylander informed the students of the proposed changes in the Criminal Justice program. On March 19, Dr. Garry Jennings also came to class to introduce the various degree programs and the general requirements for each. He gave all of the students a brochure that he prepared which neatly summarizes information on all of the degree programs. This is a very beneficial resource for all students in the Division of Social Sciences.
On March 26, Ms. Page Logan came to SSC 101 to talk about the Criminal Justice degree program. Ms. Logan used a creative exercise that tested students’ observational skills, and connected this to the field of Criminal Justice. The exercise was based on Ms. Logan’s own research and provided a good introduction not only to Criminal Justice, but also to the work of academics.

Dr. Amy Owen visited the class on April 2 to discuss the Social Science Education degree program. After briefly reviewing the requirements, Dr. Owen had the students get into small groups and prepare a lesson to teach the class. The lesson could be on anything the students thought they knew enough about to teach. The students had fun teaching these sessions, and learned a little about public speaking in the process.

On April 9, Dr. Leslie Fadiga-Stewart and Dr. Garry Jennings spoke to the class on the Political Science degree program. They reviewed the unique aspects of the Political Science program, and talked about some of the things students can do with a degree in Political Science. They also talked about several of the graduates from the DSU Political Science program, what they did while they were students, and what they are doing today. This was a well-conceived class session that helped the students think about setting goals, and provided role models for students interested in Political Science, and similar degrees.

During the sixth week, on April 16, Dr. John Green spoke to the class about the Applied Development Studies degree program. This is a relatively new degree program, which provides students with an opportunity to study community development at the undergraduate level. It is important that our students are aware of this option, since it is new, and hopefully some of the students in SSC 101 will opt to complete the ADS program, or will recruit their friends into the program.

On April 23, Dr. Mark Bonta introduced the discipline of Geography and discussed opportunities to study Geography at DSU. Dr. Bonta also spoke about his experiences as a geographer, including his extensive travels and time living overseas. His talk conveyed a sense of the exotic things one can do with a degree in geography. Also on April 23, Dr. Debarashmi Mitra spoke about the Sociology degree program. Dr. Mitra used data from a study conducted by the American Sociological Association to illustrate her talk. The data showed who studies sociology and what they do with their degrees.

The faculty members put a lot of work into preparing these sessions, and did a great job of conveying the diversity of opportunities available to students in the DSS. I hope that through these sessions, students build a greater appreciation for all of the degree programs and can build connections and friendships with students in other degree programs. This will give the Division of Social Sciences an increased sense of unity and a stronger identity, despite the range of fields that our Division spans.
Working With an Advisor

Students visited their advisors twice during the semester, as part of their professionalization training. On March 26, students were given an assignment to interview their advisor. The purpose was for the student to get to know their advisor, and to feel comfortable making an appointment and speaking with faculty. They were told to make an appointment with their advisor, and they were given a list of questions that served as a guideline for their interview (See Appendix B). The questions included some choices, and also required the student to come up with original questions for their advisor. Students carried out this assignment over a two-week period beginning March 26, and on April 9 they submitted essays describing what they learned.

The following week, on April 16, students were given another assignment that involved their advisor. They were required to develop a plan of the courses they needed to graduate, along with a calendar that showed when they intended to take these courses. To complete this assignment, the students had to access the DSU Undergraduate Bulletin and use the information presented in class on their degree program. They also had to print out a copy of their transcript. Once they had developed their course plan, students made an appointment with their advisor and met to review the plan. They also took their portfolios to this meeting, along with a brief statement they prepared on what they intended to include in their portfolios. The advisor had to sign a form confirming the meeting and students turned in their Plan for Graduation, their Advisor Form and a plan for their Portfolio on the last day of classes, April 30.

The purposes of these visits are, first, to create a situation in which students feel comfortable talking to their advisors, and second, to convey to students the importance of planning and preparation. Students had to prepare a plan for graduation before visiting the advisors, and hopefully took the message from this exercise that it is their responsibility to plan their schedules, and when they visit their advisors at the beginning of each semester, they should do so having already made their plans for the courses they intend to take.

Academic Honesty and Ethics

Another important aspect of the professionalization training involved a frank discussion of academic honesty and ethics. We discussed this topic on April 23. Students first wrote an essay on cheating in school, and then I introduced the norms that DSU has established regarding academic honesty, and why it is important to abide by these rules. We discussed what constitutes plagiarism, and I provided a variety of places students could go to learn what plagiarism is, and how to write papers correctly. We also discussed the sanctions for violating university policies on plagiarism and cheating. I made it clear that it is their responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism prior to submitting a paper or other work, and that when they submit work in a course they are representing it as their own work. I told them we do not
tolerate cheating in the Division of Social Sciences, and that violations would be sanctioned. I also told them that the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs keeps a record of cases of cheating, and that repeated offenses could result in expulsion.

Pre-Test of Knowledge of the Social Sciences

On April 16, 2008, the students in SSC 101 took an exam to measure their baseline knowledge in the social sciences. The results from this test will be compared to a similar test taken by students in SSC 499 as a means of assessing the growth in each student’s knowledge over their time in the Division of Social Sciences. A total of 31 students took the exam.

The exam consisted of forty multiple choice questions, each with five possible responses. There were five levels of difficulty, assessed by the faculty member who submitted each question. The most basic questions (Level 1) should be answered correctly by anyone with a high school education. Level 2 questions should be answered by someone who completed an introductory course in the field, and Level 3 questions should be answered correctly by someone who got an “A” in an introductory course. Level 4 questions should be answered correctly by someone who passed an advanced course in the field, and Level 5 questions would only be answered correctly by those getting an “A” in an advanced course.

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TABLE 1: RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT PRE-TEST
Number and Percent of Students Answering Question Correctly
Table 1 shows the percentage of students who answered each type of question correctly. There was at least one question for each discipline at each level of difficulty, although more than one question was asked for the subjects that have introductory courses that are part of the Core or Special Degree requirements in the Social Sciences. Overall the results show the test to be a reasonably good measure. While there was some variation in the questions on each subject, over 70 percent of all Level 1 questions were answered correctly, an appropriate percentage given that these questions should be answered by anyone with a high school diploma. The percentage of correct responses dropped at each level after that, from 48 percent of the Level 2 question to 26 percent of the Level 5 questions.

Table 2 shows the scores for each student on the test. The scores ranged from eleven correct responses (27.5 percent) to twenty-five correct responses (62.5 percent). The average score was 17.9 correct responses (57.7 percent).

Results provide a baseline of information to measure improvement after students have completed the program. Although each individual exam is not a good indicator of deficiencies in the program, over time we can use results from several exams to assess where the weaknesses are in student learning, and this can help the DSS to create teaching interventions that address those weaknesses.

**Conclusion**

This course has grown rapidly. After just three semesters, over forty students now register for the course, representing most of the degree programs in the DSS. Overall, the students seem to appreciate this course; they enjoy learning about the various degree programs and learning opportunities on campus. They also participate actively in the assessment exercises, and in particular take the portfolio assignment seriously. On the last day of class when faculty
members reviewed the students’ portfolios, most students showed that they had made an excellent start on compiling and maintaining their portfolios. The students also did a very good job on their in-class essays and on the essays they prepared for their portfolios. Hopefully these will help them think about their purpose in college, and plan their coursework and degree program effectively.
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APPENDIX A:  
COURSE SYLLABUS

ENGAGING THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES
SSC 101

COURSE SYLLABUS
SPRING 2008

Course Information:

Meeting Place: 229 Kethley Hall
CRN: 16265
Meeting Times: Wednesdays, 2:00–4:00 pm (Mar. 5–Apr. 30)

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Dr. Alan Barton
Telephone: (662) 846-4097
Office: 214 Kethley Hall
E-mail: abarton@deltastate.edu
Webpage: http://ntweb.deltastate.edu/vp_academic/abarton/

Office Hours:

The instructor holds regular office hours at the following times:
Monday 2:00–6:00 pm; Tuesday 2:00–6:00 pm; Wednesday 10:00–11:00 am; 1:00–2:00 pm

If you cannot make one of these times, contact the professor to set up an appointment.

Course Webpage:

Additional materials and updated course information can be found on the course webpage:
http://ntweb.deltastate.edu/vp_academic/abarton/SSC101SP08/SSC101Syllabus.htm

Course Overview:

This course is to be taken by all students during their first semester with a major in the Social Sciences (Sociology, Geography, Political Science, Social Science Education, Applied Development Studies, Social Sciences, Criminal Justice).
The purpose of the course is to introduce the various degree programs in the Social Sciences, to complete assessment activities in the Division of Social Sciences, and to better prepare you for academic life at DSU.

**Course Materials:**

You will need two items for this course. First is a **large blue book**, 8.5 x 11", which we will use for in-class writing assignments. The second item is a **2" or 3" binder** that you can use for your portfolio. You can purchase these items at the university bookstore, at a retail stationery store, or at various on-line sources.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Understand the various degree programs in the Division of Social Sciences.
2. Complete all assessment requirements for the Division of Social Sciences.
3. Begin a portfolio to collect and highlight the work you complete at DSU.
4. Learn about campus resources available to assist you during your time at DSU.
5. Develop a plan for completing your degree and strategies for successfully achieving your goals.
6. Build a more engaged student body in the Division of Social Sciences and at DSU.
7. Meet other students in the Division of Social Sciences.

**Responsibilities and Grading:**

Your primary responsibility in this course is to come to class each week, participate and complete all of the assigned work. We will do some in-class informal writing, and you will work outside of class on a portfolio of your work. You will also visit your advisor at least twice during the semester to complete assignments.

Each assignment is worth a specified number of points. There are a total of 100 points available over the course of the semester. If you finish the semester with at least 90 points, you will get an A in the course. If you finish with between 80 and 89 points, you will get a B. For 70 to 79 points, you will get a C, and for 60 to 69 points, you will get a D. If you finish with less than 60 points, you will get an F in the course and will have to repeat it the following semester.

**YOU are responsible** for your progress in this course, and in all of your courses at DSU. If you miss a class session, you should check with another student to see what you missed. “I didn’t know” is **NEVER** a valid excuse. If you don’t know something, it is your job to find out.
You are expected to comply with all academic standards and ethics as defined in the DSU Bulletin and Handbook. You are expected to do your own work in all of your courses. Plagiarism, fraud and other forms of cheating is NOT tolerated at DSU, and the minimum sanction for cheating in this course is a zero on the assignment. DSU’s Vice President for Academic Affairs monitors all cases of cheating on campus, and repeat violations will result in severe sanctions, including expulsion.

For more information on academic honesty, see the DSU Library's "Plagiarism Prevention: A Guide for Students," available on the library website.

16.9% of Mississippians have a college degree; For the U.S., the figure is 24.4% (Source: U.S. Census, 2000). When you finish your degree, you will join an elite group. What is your strategy for finishing your degree?

“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (Luke 12:48). Will you be ready to live up to the responsibilities of a college graduate?

Learning Opportunities:
You must complete all of the following activities:

(1) Attendance (25 points)
- You must attend all class sessions
- Please sign the attendance sheet at each class meeting; this is the official record of attendance, and you may not receive credit for attending if you do not sign the sheet
- For each class session that you miss, 4 points will be deducted from your attendance score
- You will not pass this course if you do not come to class
- You can be excused from one class period for illness or an official university activity that conflicts with the class, if you bring a note from a doctor or administrator verifying the reason for your absence
- If you cannot be in class for any other reason, please notify the instructor in advance, and you will receive half credit; For excused absences, you will receive half credit for additional absences after the first; The best way to notify the instructor is through e-mail

(2) In Class Discussion (15 points)
- You should participate actively in class discussions
- Disruptive and disrespectful behavior is not tolerated
- Make sure all cell phones and pagers are turned off during class

(3) Informal Writing and Portfolio Essays (15 points)
- We will use the blue books for informal in-class writing assignments; the instructor will collect and read your blue books twice during the semester
• You will prepare essays on the in-class writing during the semester; these essays will go in your portfolio
• The assignment for each essay is available on the Course Outline section of the on-line syllabus

(4) Working with Your Advisor I (10 points)
• Print out a copy of the advisor worksheet, found on the on-line syllabus
• On March 26, you will be given a sheet with various questions
• You then must schedule a meeting with your advisor, and discuss the questions on the sheet with him or her
• Type up your findings, along with your reflections on the meeting
• Turn this in on April 9

(5) Working with Your Advisor II (10 points)
• Prepare a Course and Graduation Plan and a Portfolio Plan, as specified in the assignment found on the on-line syllabus
• Between April 16 and April 30, schedule a meeting with your advisor, and discuss your plans with her or him
• Submit your Portfolio Plan and your Course and Graduation Plan, with your advisor’s approval form, on April 30

(6) Course and Graduation Plan (15 points)
• Prior to your second visit with your advisor, prepare a draft Course and Graduation Plan, specifying the courses you intend to take each semester and your plan for graduating from DSU
• Review your Course and Graduation Plan with your advisor at the second meeting
• Have your advisor sign the Advisor Approval Form attesting he/she has reviewed and approves of your Course and Graduation Plan
• See the assignment sheet for more information
• Submit your Course and Graduation Plan on April 30

(7) Portfolio Plan (10 points)
• During your time as a student in the Division of Social Sciences, you will be responsible for completing a portfolio of your work
• The portfolio is required for graduation, and you will not graduate unless you turn in a complete portfolio
• Prior to your second visit with your advisor, begin your portfolio, and complete a plan for your portfolio
• Be sure to include the essays you prepare for this course in your portfolio
• Review your portfolio and portfolio plan with your advisor at the second meeting
• You will submit your Portfolio and Portfolio Plan on April 30

(8) Critical Engagement (±10 points)
• You can earn or lose up to 10 points on your final grade, based on factors such as the motivation, interest, and improvement you demonstrate in the course

**Note:** ALL work that you submit, except in-class work, should be presented in a professional manner; that is, it should be typed, submitted on time, and if there are multiple pages, they should be attached with a staple or paper clip.

An international study of 13-year-olds ... found that Koreans ranked first in mathematics and Americans last. When asked if they thought they were "good at mathematics," only 23 percent of the Korean youngsters said "yes" -- compared to 68 percent of American 13-year-olds. The American educational dogma that students should "feel good about themselves" was a success in its own terms -- though not in any other terms.

--Thomas Sowell (quoted in J.M. Henslin, 2004)

### Course Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker/Activity/Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1: Course Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Mar. 5</td>
<td>Welcome to the Division of Social Sciences</td>
<td>Dr. Albert Nylander</td>
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<td>Chair of the Division of Social Sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Engaging the Social Sciences</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Course Goals and Activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Keys to Learning in College</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assessment-Based Education</td>
<td>Reading on Assessment in Education:</td>
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<td>What is a Generally Educated Person (<em>Peer Review</em>, Fall 2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Mar. 12</td>
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<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2: Goals in College; The Professional Portfolio</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Mar. 19</td>
<td>Creating a Professional Portfolio</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>Handout:</strong> Portfolio Components</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Setting and Achieving College and Career Goals</td>
<td><strong>In-Class Essay:</strong> What are your goals in college?</td>
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<td>Discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> Prepare a Statement of Purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day/Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Speaker/Activity/Assignment</td>
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</table>
| Wed. Mar. 26 | **Week 3: Your Advisor** | **Engaging the Social Sciences**  
Social Sciences Degree Program  
**Setting College Goals**  
Assignment: Interview Your Advisor (Due Apr. 9)  
Handout: Advisor Worksheet  
**Working with Your Advisor I**  
Background | Dr. Garry Jennings  
Ms. Page Logan  
**Submit:** Statement of Purpose  
**In-Class Essay:** Who are you?  
Discussion  
**Assignment:** Prepare a Biographical Essay  
(Due Apr. 2) |
| Wed. Apr. 2 | **Week 4: Strategies for Studying in College** | **Engaging the Social Sciences**  
Social Science Education Degree Program  
**Background**  
**In-Class Essay:** How do you learn?  
Discussion  
**Assignment:** Prepare an Essay on Your Learning Style (Due Apr. 16)  
Submit: Biographical Essay  
**What Do I Want to Know?  
How to Study in College; Active Learning Strategies** | Dr. Amy Owen  
Submit: Biographical Essay  
In-Class Essay: How do you learn?  
Discussion  
Assignment: Prepare an Essay on Your Learning Style (Due Apr. 16)  
Submit: Biographical Essay  
Discussion |
| Wed. Apr. 9 | **Week 5: Campus Resources** | **Engaging the Social Sciences**  
Political Science Degree Program | Dr. Leslie Fadiga-Stewart |
## Working with Your Advisor I

Submit: Responses and Reflections and Advisor Worksheet
Discussion

## The Value of a College Education

In Class Essay: What does college mean to you?
Assignment: Statement of Values (Due Apr. 23)

## Learning Opportunities on Campus

Ms. Susan Hines, Technology Learning Center
Ms. Paula King, Counseling and Testing Center
Dr. Susan Allen Ford, Writing Center
Mrs. Diane Blansett, Academic Support Lab
Mr. Michael Mounce, Roberts-LaForge Library Reference Dept.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker/Activity/Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 6: Assessing Social Science Knowledge</td>
<td>Engaging the Social Sciences Sociology Degree Program Applied Development Studies Degree Program</td>
<td>Dr. Debarashmi Mitra Dr. John Green</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning Style</td>
<td>Submit: Learning Style Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Apr. 16</td>
<td>Evaluating Learning</td>
<td>Pre-Test on the Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with Your Advisor II</td>
<td>In-Class Essay: What do you want to learn in college? Discussion Assignment: Meet with Your Advisor and Develop a Plan for Courses &amp; Graduation and a Portfolio Plan (Due Dec. 5)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Week 7: Ethics in College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Instructor/Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Apr. 23</td>
<td>Engaging the Social Sciences Geography Degree Program</td>
<td>Dr. Mark Bonta</td>
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<td>The Value of a College Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Academic Honesty and Ethics</td>
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<td><strong>Submit:</strong> Statement of Values</td>
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<td><strong>In-Class Essay:</strong> Under what conditions would you cheat in a DSU course?</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
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### Week 8: Student Engagement

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Apr. 30</td>
<td>Becoming an Engaged Student</td>
<td><strong>In-Class Essay:</strong> What is an engaged student?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Submit:</strong> Blue Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with Your Advisor II Maintaining Your Student Portfolio</td>
<td>Review Professional Portfolio with Division of Social Sciences Faculty</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Submit:</strong> Portfolio Plan; Plan for Courses &amp; Graduation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Course Evaluation</td>
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Learning is least useful when it is private and hidden; it most powerful when it becomes public and communal. Learning flourishes when we take what we think we know and offer it as community property among fellow learners so that it can be tested, examined, challenged, and improved before we internalize it.

~Lee Shulman

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### Additional Resources:

**Roberts-LaForge Library**  
Reference Desk: (662) 846-4431

**Writing Center**  
Bailey Hall 211  
(662) 846-4088

**Office of Career Services**  
H.L. Nowell Union 300  
(662) 846-4646

**Academic Support Lab**  
H. L. Nowell Union 311  
(662) 846-4654

**Counseling & Testing Center**  
O.W. Reily Student Health Center  
(662) 846-4690
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In a brief (1-2 page) narrative, explain what you hope to accomplish in your studies at DSU. Address the following questions:

Why have you chosen to pursue a college education?
What are your goals in college?
Why are you studying social sciences?
What do you plan to do with your college education?

Type up your essay, and submit it in class on March 26.

This essay will go in your portfolio. Keep this version of your essay to turn in with your final portfolio.

INTERVIEW WITH YOUR ADVISOR

For this assignment, you will speak with your advisor, learn about him/her, and summarize what you learn in an essay.

To begin this assignment, contact your advisor and set up a meeting at some point between March 26 and April 9. It is best if you arrange a meeting before April 4, and it also would be best to meet during your advisor’s regular office hours.

If you do not yet have an advisor, see Linda Douglas in Kethley 205.

Read over the Advisor Worksheet to prepare for the interview. Your interview should last approximately 15 minutes. Collect information that will help you address the questions on the worksheet. Use a separate sheet of paper to take notes and record the answers. This does not have to be a “formal” interview – it should be more like a conversation with your advisor, and you can talk about any topics you like. At some point during the conversation, however, you should collect information to complete the worksheet.
Note that under the section on “Interests,” you only need to ask your advisor two of the five questions listed. You also should come up with two questions on your own, prior to the interview. You should pose these questions to your advisor and record the responses.

Once you have completed the interview, sit down and type up the responses in a narrative. Your essay should introduce the reader to your advisor and convey who he or she is.

Turn in both your narrative and your interview worksheet/notes at the beginning of class on April 9.

**ADVISOR WORKSHEET**

Student’s Name_______________________________________

Advisor’s Name_______________________________________

Interview Date and Time________________________________

**Academic Credentials**

Where did your advisor go to school?

What degrees does your advisor hold?

What subjects did your advisor study?

What are your advisor’s current areas of scholarship?

What significant scholarly contributions has your advisor made?

**Background**

What is your advisor’s home town?

How long has your advisor worked at Delta State?

Where has your advisor worked prior to Delta State?

What types of jobs has your advisor had besides being a professor?

**Interests**

*Ask 2 of the following:*
Who has had a significant influence on your advisor? How?

What sorts of community work and activities is your advisor involved in?

What kind of entertainment does your advisor enjoy (e.g. sports, television, reading, movies, music)? What is your advisor’s favorite _______ (e.g. team, TV show, book, movie, song)?

What qualities does your advisor like to see in students?

What are the characteristics of a good teacher?

Come up with 2 additional questions on your own, pertaining to your advisor’s interests, and ask them during the interview. Make sure your questions are professional in nature.

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Question: What have you done in your life?

Assignment: In a brief (1-2 page) narrative, tell the story of your life. Focus on your professional experiences and accomplishments.

These questions may help you think about your essay:

What characteristics define who you are? How did you develop these characteristics?

What experiences have meant the most to you in your life? How have these experiences shaped you?

What are the most important accomplishments in your life? What did you learn from these accomplishments?

Where do you see yourself in five years? How do you plan to get there?

Type up your essay, and submit it in class on April 2.

This essay will go in your portfolio. Keep this version of your essay to turn in with your final portfolio.

LEARNING PREFERENCES

Question: What is your preferred learning style?

Assignment: In a brief (1-2 page) narrative, explain how you prefer to learn.

These questions may help you think about your essay:
How do you like to receive information (e.g. hearing, reading)?
How do you process information so that you will remember it?
What conditions are most conducive to you learning and remembering information?
What types of information are you most likely to remember?

Type up your essay, and submit it in class on April 16.

This essay will go in your portfolio. Keep this version of your essay to turn in with your final portfolio.

**STATEMENT OF VALUES**

In a brief (1-2 page) narrative, state what you value and what effect your values will have on your education. Address the following questions:

What are your most cherished values?
Where did you learn these values?
What does going to college mean to you?
How will your values shape your educational experiences?

Type up your essay, and submit it in class on April 23.

This essay will go in your portfolio. Keep this version of your essay to turn in with your final portfolio.

**COURSES, GRADUATION AND PORTFOLIO PLAN**

In this assignment, you will create two documents. First is a plan for graduation, which includes the courses that you plan to take while at DSU. Second is a plan for your portfolio. You will review these documents and your portfolio with your advisor, have your advisor approve these documents, and submit them on the last day of class.

**Course and Graduation Plan**

(1) If you do not have a current copy of your transcripts, acquire a copy from the registrar’s office or from your on-line account.

(2) Using the DSU Undergraduate Bulletin 2007-08, find your degree program and make a copy of the page that lists the courses required for your degree. Develop a schedule that identifies which semester you have taken or intend to take each course. You should group the courses according to the conventions in your area of specialization, (e.g. General Education Requirements, Special Degree Requirements, Core Requirements, Concentration Requirements and Electives), as discussed in class.
Keep your transcript and a current copy of your Course and Graduation Plan in your portfolio.

You can view the DSU Undergraduate Bulletin 2007-08 at:

**Portfolio Plan**

(3) Using information presented in class, prepare a plan for your portfolio. Note the types of documents you intend to include in your portfolio at the end of your studies. Keep the plan with your portfolio.

**Meeting with Advisor**

(4) Print out a copy of the Advisor Approval Form from the course website

(5) Arrange a meeting with your advisor. You should schedule a meeting at a time that is convenient both for you and your advisor. It is best to visit your advisor during her/his regular office hours.

(6) Take your portfolio, including the Portfolio Plan, your Course and Graduation Plan, and the Advisor Approval Form to the meeting with your advisor.

(7) Review your portfolio and Portfolio Plan with your advisor, then review your Course and Graduation Plan. Have your advisor complete the Advisor Approval Form.

Submit a copy of your Course and Graduation Plan, your Portfolio Plan and your completed Advisor Approval Form by the beginning of class on April 30.

**ADVISOR APPROVAL**

Student Name_________________________________________

Degree Program__________________Semester_________________

Advisor_____________________________________________

I have reviewed and approve of the Portfolio Plan and the Course and Graduation Plan for my advisee.

Comments:_____________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________
Elements of a Professional Portfolio

During your time at Delta State, you will maintain a professional portfolio that documents your work. You will begin this portfolio during SSC 101, and should keep it updated as you progress through your degree program. During your last semester before graduation, in SSC 499, you will learn how to create useful portfolios for specific purposes, and you will submit an assessment portfolio which is required for graduation.

Purpose of the Professional Portfolio

The professional portfolio is a workbook that documents your activities and accomplishments. The portfolio that you will compile at DSU serves two purposes:

1. It provides evidence of your abilities, skills, knowledge, and accomplishments, and is useful to you in your job search and on-going professional development;

2. It shows your growth over your time at DSU, and is useful to the Division of Social Sciences in evaluating and assessing our programs.

Compiling a Portfolio:

In compiling your portfolio, you should keep most or all of the work that you do at DSU, such as course papers, writing assignments, projects, exams, practical projects, and the like. You should also keep any evaluations you get from instructors, your advisor, or others, and evidence of awards and honors you receive. You may also want to keep evidence of work experience, athletics, student activities, and other things you do. When you prepare the assessment portfolio at the end of your studies, you will select representative examples of your work. You do not have to include only the best work, rather, you should select a variety of types of work to include.

The following should be included in a complete Professional Portfolio:

Title Page
In addition to the title, this page should indicate the name of the student, the degree program and degree sought, and the dates of attendance at DSU.
Table of Contents

Résumé
   If you do not have a résumé, you will learn how to prepare one in SSC 499.

Biographical Essay
   You will prepare a biographical essay in SSC 101. In a brief (1–2 page) essay, tell about your background.

Statement of Purpose
   You will complete the Statement of Purpose in SSC 101. In a brief (1-2 page) narrative, explain what you hope to accomplish in your studies at DSU.

Statement of Values
   You will also complete a Statement of Values in SSC 101. In a brief (1-2 page) essay, state what you believe you value, what you think is important, what going to college means to you and the role that your values will play in your education.

Preferred Learning Style
   You will prepare an essay on your preferred learning style in SSC 101. In a brief (1-2 page) narrative, explain how you prefer to learn, what conditions are most conducive to your learning, and what types of information you are most likely to remember.

Coursework
   Your portfolio should include representative examples of the work you complete in your courses at DSU. You should keep copies of all of your work, and definitely have copies of the work you do in Social Sciences courses. Examples of work you should keep include argumentative papers, reflective papers, analytical research papers, informal/in-class writing, quizzes and exams, book reviews, research proposals and practical projects.

Awards and Honors
   Keep evidence of any awards and honors you receive during your time at DSU, including academic recognition, dean’s list, honor societies, community recognition, and awards for extra-curricular activities such as sports or music.

Scholarships/Fellowships
   Keep information on any scholarships or fellowships you receive, particularly those that are given for academic achievement.

Professional Experience
   Keep evidence of professional experiences you have during your time at Delta State, including internships, teaching experience, and other work experience carried out in conjunction with your studies, including promotions and other benefits stemming from your education.

Extra Curricular Activities
Maintain evidence of participation in outside activities that pertain to your professional development, such as participation in academic conferences, participation and leadership in student organizations, athletics, musical groups, student government and the like.

**Evaluations**

Keep evidence of any evaluations you receive from your instructors, your advisor, or other supervisors. It is a good idea to solicit evaluations periodically to document your progress. You may also want to sit down and write a self-evaluation periodically; keep these, and note the date that you prepare this document.
INTRODUCTION

In a continuing effort to improve education in the Social Sciences at Delta State University (DSU), in the Spring semester 2007 the Division of Social Sciences (DSS) initiated two new courses, SSC 101: Engaging the Social Sciences and SSC 499: Integrative Seminar in the Social Sciences. The general goal of these courses is to increase student engagement, which implies that students in the DSS will be engaged in their courses, in their program of studies, in the DSS, and in their communities. The courses have two primary foci and specific purposes. First is to integrate the various undergraduate degree programs in the DSS by providing all students with shared professional experiences, which prepare students for college study and a professional career; which assist students in meeting the expectations and requirements in the DSS; and which link student life to the broader community. The objective is to encourage students to take a professional approach to their studies and their career, and to instruct students in professional norms and expectations. Second is to provide opportunities for assessment activities and evaluation of the DSS. The objective is to gather information that provides feedback so the DSS can maintain high quality programs that are responsive to student needs.

Each of these courses lasts eight weeks and meets for two hours one time per week. Students receive one course credit for attending the classes. During their first semester as a major in the Division of Social Sciences, all students must take SSC 101. They take SSC 499 during their final semester before graduation.

Because the courses bookend the student experience in the DSS, they provide an opportunity for assessment of student growth and learning during their studies. Currently, assessment activities include a pre-test/post-test of basic knowledge in the Social Sciences and a student portfolio. We give the pre-test in SSC 101 and the post-test in SSC 499, and using this tool we have a measure of how much students learn from their first to their last semester. We initiate the portfolio in SSC 101 by providing students with parameters for compiling the portfolio, and complete the project in SSC 499, as students prepare and submit a professional portfolio that represents their work in the DSS. Other assessment activities include exit surveys and interviews, administered in SSC 499.

SSC 499, Spring 2008

Spring semester, 2008 was the third time SSC 499: Integrative Seminar in Social Sciences was offered. The course was listed in the 2007–08 DSU Undergraduate Bulletin, but not in previous course catalogues, so it was only required for students who were using 2007–08 course requirements. Since most of the students using this catalog were freshmen, SSC 499 was not a required course for most graduating seniors. Nevertheless, all graduating seniors were advised to
take this course. The course is valuable to students, as it assists seniors in completing their portfolios, which are required by the DSS and the College of Arts and Sciences for graduation. The course also provides students with assistance in thinking about the transition from school to work. Finally, the course is beneficial to the DSS as it provides an opportunity to administer a variety of assessment tools, including an exit survey and interview and a test that measures learning on topics in the social sciences.

**Enrollment**

Twelve students enrolled in SSC 499 during Spring semester 2008, and nine of them completed the course. One of those who dropped completed half the course, but dropped because she was having a baby, and decided to postpone her graduation until the Fall. Four of the students had taken SSC 101, two during Fall semester 2007, and two during Spring semester 2007. Seven of the students completed the concentration in Criminal Justice, and two completed the general Social Science concentration. The student who dropped halfway through was a Sociology major.

The nine students who completed SSC 499 during Spring Semester, 2008 were: Nanicia Alexander, Kimberly Brown, Rita Harper, Michael Maloney, Carla Mathews, Jon Nail, Philip Pearson, David Tanner and Broderick Thomas. Kendra Johnson completed half of the course.

**Activities**

Students participated in two types of activities during the semester. Some activities were concerned with assessment and evaluation, while others aimed to prepare students for graduation and preparation for their careers.

**Assessment**

The primary assignment for the semester was to complete a portfolio of work done at DSU. The four students who had taken SSC 101 had already started their portfolios. The other five students began their portfolios during this semester and had to create them by compiling material from previous semesters. The instructor encouraged students to search for as much of their work as they could find to include in their portfolios.¹

In addition, students prepared essays on various topics, which will be included in the portfolio. The essays provide a student perspective on various topics that we discussed during the semester.

**Evaluation**

We also completed an evaluation of the Division of Social Sciences, which consisted of a questionnaire with both closed- and open-ended questions, followed by a focus-group style interview in which the students were encouraged to speak freely about their opinions of the program. The

¹ All students in the College of Arts and Sciences must submit a portfolio for graduation, but historically students have lacked guidelines on how to prepare a portfolio, and many are unaware of the requirement until just before graduation.
students were able to reflect on their experiences and make a number of valuable suggestions about the program on this questionnaire and during this interview.

Students in SSC 499 also completed a questionnaire that evaluated their experience at Delta State University, including their experiences with various campus resources.

**Professionalization**

The students had an opportunity to develop professional skills in the course as well. They prepared a résumé, and learned about interviewing for jobs and the transition from college to work. We also visited the DSU Alumni Foundation and heard from the director about maintaining ties with Delta State University and with classmates into the future. Finally, students discussed how to use their portfolios over the course of their professional careers.

**Class Sessions**

**January 9, 2008**

On the first day of class we discussed the purpose of the course, and the goals and activities over the semester. We then read a short article on assessment in education, called “What is an Educated Person?” by J.G. Gaff. The article came from the Fall 2004 edition of *Peer Review*. This article presented a good overview of the general goals of assessment-based education, and led to a discussion of the purpose of assessment and how some of the activities we would undertake this semester fit into a broader approach to education. Finally, we introduced the portfolio assignment, and students were advised to download and read the portfolio components for the following week.

**January 16, 2008**

At the second class meeting, we reviewed the expectations for the portfolios. We distinguished professional portfolios from the assessment portfolios that students would be preparing in this course and submitting to the DSS as an evaluation tool. We then discussed the various components that comprised a complete assessment portfolio. Four of the students in SSC 499 had previously taken SSC 101, so they already had several of the papers and other things necessary to complete the portfolio. The instructor advised those who had not taken SSC 101 to do the best they could to collect representative samples of their previous coursework, and recommended that during this semester they should prepare essays such as the Statement of Values, that others wrote for SSC 101. The instructor emphasized that a complete assessment portfolio should include representative samples of student work, not just the best work that the student has done. This distinguishes the assessment portfolio from a professional portfolio; a portfolio submitted for a job interview or similar purpose should demonstrate outstanding work.

The instructor also brought and showed two sample portfolios, which had been submitted last semester, to give the students an idea of what the expectations are. The students had several questions on the portfolios, and once these were answered, we discussed the writing assignments for
January 23, 2008

At the third class meeting, we started by reviewing the requirements for graduation. I wanted to be sure everyone knew what the requirements were, and made the point that it is their responsibility to be sure they have completed all of the requirements. We then discussed strategies for using their professional portfolios. We talked about different instances when their portfolio would be useful, and how to use the portfolio at these times. We also talked about keeping their professional portfolios updated and analyzing the contents of the portfolio to help in narrowing down a job search. The students read an article called “The School Counselor Portfolio: Professional Development and Accountability,” by Martha C. Rhyne-Winkler and H. Ray Wooten, from School Counselor, November 1996. This article helped them think about how to use their professional portfolios in their job search.

January 30, 2008

At the fourth meeting, we started by filling out the questionnaire evaluating the Division of Social Sciences. Following this, we had a spirited discussion among the students in the class about the DSS. Although I had prepared several evaluation questions, I only asked one question: What are the characteristics of a good academic department? A discussion ensued, which included some follow-up questions, but our time was up before I could ask another question on the list. Summaries of both the questionnaire findings and the points discussed by the students are presented below.

February 6, 2008

At the fifth meeting, we met at the Hugh Ellis Walker Alumni-Foundation House. Vicki Fioranelli, Alumni Director, and Jeffrey Farris, Assistant Alumni Director, met with the class and discussed the purposes of the Alumni Association and staying in touch with DSU after graduation. They discussed alumni events, charitable giving to DSU, the different alumni organizations on campus, and then took the class to the gallery of photographs in the lobby of the Alumni Foundation House and talked about the history of DSU and some of DSU's notable alumni. The students were interested in learning more about DSU's history, and this session also allowed them to think about how to stay in touch with classmates and with the university into the future.

February 13, 2008

At the sixth class meeting, Christy Montesi from the Office of Career Services visited the class and gave two presentations. The first was called “Backpack to Briefcase,” and covered issues in the transition from college to professional life. Some of the topics she discussed with the class included housing options, finding a job, adjusting to a new job, professional attire and norms, relationships with co-workers, and changes in social habits. During the second presentation, Ms. Montesi gave a seminar on preparing a professional résumé and cover letter. She discussed many common errors people make on résumés and cover letters, gave examples of different formats, and provided advice on what to include and what to leave out on a résumé. Students brought their résumés to class and
after the lesson, they had a chance to review and comment on the presentation and organization of others’ résumés.

February 20, 2008

At the seventh class meeting, students first completed a questionnaire that evaluated their overall experience at Delta State University. Questions asked students to describe their most and least valuable experiences at DSU, to compare courses in the DSS to courses in other department and divisions, and to evaluate the value of the library, the Academic Support Lab, and the Writing Center. Students were also asked to describe DSU to a friend. Findings from this questionnaire are presented below.

Next, we discussed the portfolio, and how to compile the assessment portfolio from the materials the students collected for their professional portfolios.

Finally, the students took a quiz that evaluated their competency in the social sciences. This is a post-test, administered each semester, and follows the same format as a pre-test that four of the students had taken in SSC 101. This test has questions on all of the degree programs in the DSS, at five levels of difficulty. Students were advised that the test would not be used to evaluate their abilities nor would it affect their individual progress in any way; rather, the purpose was to help us evaluate our teaching in the DSS.

February 27, 2008

On the last day of class, students brought their completed portfolios to turn in. Dr. Paulette Meikle-Yaw (Sociology), Dr. Amy Owen (Social Science Education) and Ms. Page Logan (Criminal Justice) came to class and reviewed the portfolios with the students. The professors completed a short evaluation form for each portfolio.

Evaluation of the Division of Social Sciences

One of the important activities that students carry out in SSC 499 is an evaluation of the Division of Social Sciences. The evaluation consists of a survey questionnaire, followed by a focus-group style interview in which the students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences in the DSS and express their opinions on their education. Exit interviews of this sort are common assessment tools.

Survey Results

During the fourth class meeting, held on January 30, 2008, students filled out a questionnaire that asked about various aspects of the DSS and their experiences in classes and other activities. The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, and took students about 25–40 minutes to complete. Results of the closed questions were compiled and are tabulated below. Results of the open-ended questions were transcribed and appear verbatim below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Social Science Education</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Social Sciences/Sociology</th>
<th>Criminal Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Married Part of Time at DSU</th>
<th>Not Married Entire Time at DSU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>9 (90%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cared for Children While Studying at DSU</th>
<th>Entire Time</th>
<th>Part of the Time</th>
<th>No Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment While Studying at DSU</th>
<th>Entire Time at DSU</th>
<th>Some of the Time at DSU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence While Studying at DSU</th>
<th>Three or More Years</th>
<th>One or Two Years</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dormitory</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s Home</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House/Apt. Off Campus</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance Commuting To DSU</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>25.1 to 50 Miles</th>
<th>10.1 to 25 Miles</th>
<th>0.1 to 10 Miles</th>
<th>No Commute</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>12.0 mi.</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Year</td>
<td>11.9 mi.</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENTS IN SSC 499, SPRING 2008 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Level First Year at DSU</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to DSU:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spent At Least One Year Working</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Community College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Four-Year College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spent At Least One Year Working</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Community College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Four-Year College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began at DSU:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right After High School</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Advanced Placement Credits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Semester at DSU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2001</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at First Enrollment</td>
<td>18–19</td>
<td>20–21</td>
<td>22–23</td>
<td>24+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Age</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Semester</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2008</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2009</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at Graduation</td>
<td>22–23</td>
<td>24–25</td>
<td>26–27</td>
<td>28+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Age</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the evaluation survey characterize the students in the class, and summarize their opinions of both the introductory courses (i.e. those numbered 100 and 200) and the advanced courses (i.e. those numbered 300 and 400).

Characteristics of the Students

During Spring semester, 2008, there were five males and five females enrolled in SSC 499.² Seven of the students identified themselves as African American and three as white. In terms of age, there was a mix of “traditional” and “non-traditional” students, although most were in their teens and early twenties during their studies at DSU. The mean age at first enrollment at DSU was 21.7 and the

² One of the females dropped after the fourth week. She will take the remainder of the course in Fall, 2008, and so the portions of the course that she completed are compiled for Spring 2008.
average age at graduation was 25.6. Half of the students first enrolled as juniors, four as freshmen and one as a sophomore. The maximum age at first enrollment was 34 and at graduation was 37. Most of the students were employed at some point during their studies, only one was married and two had children. Half lived in the dormitories at some point, six lived in a house or apartment off-campus, and two lived with their parents during their studies. The average distance students commuted to get to campus was 12 miles, both during the first year of studies and during the last year. Six of the students attended a community college before enrolling at DSU, two attended another four-year college, and three began at DSU right after high school, one with advanced placement credits. One student began at DSU in the Fall of 2001, two started in Fall 2003, three first came to DSU in Fall 2004, and four started in Fall 2006. Six will graduate this semester, three in the Fall of 2008, and one is scheduled to graduate in Spring semester, 2009.3

Other Activities

The students in SSC 499 were asked what groups and organizations they are involved in. On-campus groups include the Criminal Justice Association, the DSU soccer team, Kappa Alpha, the Wesleyan Society, the College Republicans, and the Orientation Team. One student noted he works at the GIS Center on campus. Community groups, clubs and organizations include the St. Paul M.B. Church choir and youth groups, Bolivar County Volunteer Fire Department and the Greenwood Fire Department, and the Women of Integrity church organization. One student noted “I have done many volunteer projects as a major requirement for my social work courses.”

Introductory Courses

The survey asked a series of questions about the students’ experiences and opinions of the introductory courses in the Division of Social Sciences. These are the courses offered by the Division numbered 100 and 200, and several of these are required as general education, core or special degree requirement courses. Examples of introductory courses include SOC 101: Principles of Sociology; ANT 101: Introduction to Anthropology; PSC 103 Introduction to Political Science; PSC 201: American National Government; and GEO 201: Introduction to Human Geography.

Results of the questions on introductory courses are summarized in Table 2. Eight of the students had taken introductory courses at Delta State; the two students who did not take any introductory courses are not included in this analysis.

Opinions of introductory courses were generally positive, although not highly positive. At least half of the students thought the introductory courses were very relevant, important and enjoyable, and none of the students said the courses were irrelevant and not enjoyable. Furthermore, seven of the eight students said they learned some or a lot in their introductory courses, and six thought they were somewhat or well-prepared for the advanced courses after completing the introductory courses. One

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3 Students are advised to take SSC 499 during their final semester before graduation; however, some students take the course one or even two semesters before graduation. These are primarily students enrolled in the Social Science Education degree program, who have to do student teaching during their last semester.
TABLE 2: OPINION OF INTRODUCTORY COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Relevant</th>
<th>Somewhat Relevant</th>
<th>Not Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance and Importance</td>
<td>5 (62.5%)</td>
<td>3 (38.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Enjoyable</td>
<td>Somewhat Enjoyable</td>
<td>Not Enjoyable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (50.0%)</td>
<td>4 (50.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too Much</td>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>Not Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
<td>6 (75.0%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit of Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Beneficial</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not Very Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
<td>4 (50.0%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too Much</td>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>Not Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
<td>7 (87.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit of Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Beneficial</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not Very Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (75.0%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too Much</td>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>Not Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
<td>6 (75.0%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit of Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Beneficial</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not Very Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 (100.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Advanced Courses</td>
<td>Well Prepared</td>
<td>Somewhat Prepared</td>
<td>Somewhat Unprepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Learned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Lot</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Very Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
<td>4 (50.0%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (25.0%)</td>
<td>5 (62.5%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Two students did not take any introductory courses at Delta State University.

student, however, said he/she was somewhat unprepared for advanced courses, and another said she/he was not well prepared for the upper-level courses. Seven of the students indicated the overall quality of introductory courses was excellent or good, while one indicated that the introductory courses were average in overall quality.
Three-quarters of the students thought the introductory courses assigned about the right amount of writing, and three thought the writing assignments were beneficial, while four were neutral on the value of the writing assignments. Seven of the eight thought the amount of reading assigned was about right, and three-quarters indicated the readings were beneficial. Six thought the amount of discussion in introductory courses was about right, and all eight students found discussions very beneficial.

In addition, students were asked one open-ended question about the introductory courses: what could be done to improve the introductory courses and prepare you for the advanced courses? Five students provided responses to this question:

R01: I feel that the student and teacher should have more one-on-one engagement if the size of the class permits.

R02: The majority of my introductory courses were taken at a junior college. So once I came to Delta State to take my advanced courses, I was completely lost. My junior college years were much easier. To me, everything here at Delta State has been a struggle. I think that if a student is transferring from a junior college to Delta State, in some way those junior colleges should teach at the same level as the teachers here at Delta State so that the students can be better prepared.

R03: In defense of these courses, I started DSU off and on, so some of the training I am lacking is my fault for the most part. In the beginning I didn’t do much writing or reading. It was mostly notes being given and tests taken. I passed those courses but I think I could have contributed more than I did. Maybe that’s why I feel I’m at a disadvantage than the other students. I am taking steps to improve my situation now. Overall, I don’t think the intro. courses need improvement.

R04: Well, when I took intro class it was back in 2003 and 2004 so the teachers were different and they did a great job. But now they are doing as good as a job as the old teachers.

R05: Only to make a class more discussion based class to where people can express their opinions.

Advanced Courses

The students in SSC 499 were also asked their opinion of advanced courses in the Division of Social Sciences. These are the courses in Sociology, Criminal Justice, Social Science Education, Political Science, and Geography numbered 300 and 400. Majors are required to take at least seven of these courses in their concentration. These courses cover specialized topics in each field. Examples of advanced courses include CRJ 404: Criminal Law; GEO 440: Geography of the American South; PSC 440: The Judicial Process; and SOC 453: Medical Sociology.

The results of students’ opinions of advanced courses are summarized on Table 3. All ten of the students who completed the evaluation provided responses for the questions on advanced courses. The opinions of advanced courses were positive, perhaps slightly more positive than opinions on introductory courses. All of the students rated the advanced courses “good” or “excellent” in overall quality, and nine of the ten said they learned “a lot” in their advanced courses. All ten thought the
### TABLE 3: OPINION OF ADVANCED COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Very Relevant</th>
<th>Somewhat Relevant</th>
<th>Not Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance and Importance</strong></td>
<td>10 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enjoyment</strong></td>
<td>Very Enjoyable</td>
<td>Somewhat Enjoyable</td>
<td>Not Enjoyable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of Writing</strong></td>
<td>Too Much</td>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>Not Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefit of Writing</strong></td>
<td>Very Beneficial</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not Very Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of Reading</strong></td>
<td>Too Much</td>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>Not Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefit of Reading</strong></td>
<td>Very Beneficial</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not Very Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Too Much</td>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>Not Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefit of Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Very Beneficial</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not Very Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 (90%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent with 15+ Page Paper</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1 to 25%</td>
<td>26 to 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefit of Term Papers</strong></td>
<td>Very Beneficial</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not Very Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent with Practical Project</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1 to 25%</td>
<td>26 to 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefit of Practical Project</strong></td>
<td>Very Beneficial</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not Very Beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount Learned</strong></td>
<td>A Lot</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Very Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 (90%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Quality</strong></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
advanced courses were very relevant and important, and half thought the courses were very enjoyable, while the other half said the advanced courses were somewhat enjoyable.

Six of the students thought the amount of writing assigned in advanced courses was about right, while four said there was too much writing in these courses. Seven of the students said that none of their advanced courses assigned a term paper of at least fifteen pages. Some of these indicated that the longest papers they were assigned was ten pages. One student said 1 percent of his/her courses had a 15+ page term paper, one said 25 percent of the courses had a 15+ page term paper, and one said 30 percent of the courses assigned such a paper.

Three students said the amount of reading assigned in advanced courses was about right, while seven said there was too much reading in advanced courses. Seven of the students found the reading very beneficial, however, while three were neutral on the benefits of reading. Eight students thought the amount of class discussion in advanced courses was about right, and two thought there was too much discussion. Nine found the discussions beneficial.

The students indicated that the number of courses with practical projects, such as a service learning project, ranged widely. Three of the students said the majority of their advanced courses had practical projects: for two, such projects were assigned in all of their advanced courses, and one said 75 percent of the courses had practical projects. One said they were assigned practical projects in 20 percent of their courses, one said 15 percent and two said 10 percent, while one said 3 percent and one said 1 percent of the advanced courses had practical projects. One student did not answer this question.

The students also answered one open-ended question on their advanced courses: what could be done to improve the advanced courses, to prepare you for life after graduation? Again, five of the students provided responses:

- R01: I feel advanced courses should be based more on research material and projects rather than material from the course book.
- R02: I don’t have any ideas for improvement. I understand that in order to fully be an asset to my field I must take on projects such as these and understand the outcomes and impact they may have on those being affected.
- R03: Real life projects from beginning to end, Details.
- R04: I enjoyed my advanced courses.
- R05: More hands on and real life experience.

### Methods Courses

The Division of Social Sciences offers two methods courses for undergraduate majors. SSC 469 teaches statistical methods of data analysis, and SSC 470 teaches research design. Students can take Math 300, a statistics class, in lieu of SSC 469. Social Science Education majors may also take
TABLE 4: OPINION OF METHODS COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods Courses Taken</th>
<th>SSC 469</th>
<th>SSC 470</th>
<th>MAT 300</th>
<th>CUR 494</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 (90%)</td>
<td>9 (90%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit of Methods Courses</th>
<th>Very Beneficial</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Not Very Beneficial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (70%)</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Quality of Methods Courses</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Terrible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CUR 494, an educational methods course. Students were asked their opinions of the methods courses taken as a whole, and results are summarized in Table 4.

Nine of the ten students in SSC 499 had taken SSC 469, and nine had also taken SSC 470. One student took CUR 494. Seven of the students thought the methods courses were very beneficial, while three were neutral on the value of the methods courses. Opinions on the quality of the methods courses were positive. Three students rated the courses as “excellent,” six as “good,” and one as “average.”

There was one open-ended question pertaining to the methods courses on the questionnaire: What improvements can be made to the methods courses? Seven students responded:

R01: I feel that the courses are challenging enough, therefore they do not need any improvement.

R02: Offer the courses both semesters of a school term. In both methods courses a lot of information is covered and it is not uncommon for people to have to repeat them. Since the method courses are required for almost all majors, more and more students have to have them in order to obtain their degree.

R03: I only took one methods courses here at Delta State and I really enjoyed it.

R04: No improvements.

R05: I don’t know, no matter what you do or who teaches it – it will be hard!

R06: Not so much material in such a short time.

R07: Slow it down sometimes.
Improving Courses

There were three open-ended questions on the questionnaire that assessed how to improve courses in the Division of Social Sciences. The first question assessed the qualities of good courses, the second question asked about bad courses, and the third question asked what could be done to improve the bad courses.

Identify what you think were the characteristics of the GOOD courses that you took in the Division of Social Sciences:

R01: The good courses that I took in the Division of Social Sciences are SSC101 and SSC499. The characteristics that classified the courses as being good are the instructors explained the material where I could understand it and apply it whenever I needed to.

R02: The instructors’ ability to teach the material well. The ability to be able to follow along with the classes at home via computer. To be able to contact and talk to instructors almost anytime. To have instructors who wanted to teach and were willing to help me better understand the material.

R03: The characteristics of the good courses in the Division of Social Sciences were those classes that involved a lot of discussions, personal experiences, and openness.

R04: Some of the best characteristics of the good course I’ve taken have been the one’s that stayed on course with the syllabus. They didn’t jump from one task to the next without you knowing what to expect. I also liked the courses that offered discussions in class that pertained to the lesson, but on a level that was easily identified.

R05: Research methods of Social Sciences, all geography courses, research statistics, and sociology.

R06: I had good teachers.

R07: 1. Interesting material, 2. lots of class discussion, 3. field trips to prisons and to see S.R.T. teams in action, 4. guest speakers (i.e. MBN, DEA, Secret Service, U.S. Marshall, prison guards. Professor X had a guest speaker from each of these branches; it was interesting and very satisfying to hear real world explanations).

R08: Many of the courses I took had several power point sessions along with have them on blackboard. I really liked having courses where there was a review day for tests and having questions answered throughout class.

R09: Characteristics of GOOD courses include nice and professional professors, objectives that can be completed during a semester, books pertaining to that specific course, class discussions held often that enhance learning by listening to what other students know and think, group projects.

R10: Criminal law, family violence, drug ID, judicial process.

Identify what you think were the characteristics of the BAD courses that you took in the Division of Social Sciences:

R01: There were no bad courses that I took in Social Sciences.
R02: I have not taken any bad classes in the Division of Social Sciences.

R03: To me the characteristics of a bad course at the Division of Social Sciences were those courses that I took and failed them. The reason for me failing was because I think that the teacher made it extremely difficult for me to even pass the course. I know that may sound like garbage, but it’s true.

R04: I can’t say that it was the courses themselves, but some of the reading material wasn’t as interesting as I had hoped, and made it hard to understand because your mind is wandering off the subject.

R05: Too much busy work, not enough work building on each other to make a final project.

R06: The teacher made it bad and dreadful to go to class.

R07: 1. Uninteresting material, 2. pointless research papers, 3. just going over notes on a Powerpoint become boring done too much; I enjoy class interaction.

R08: I did not like lecturing the entire class period. I also did not enjoy only having 3 tests throughout the class without proper review. I would rather have several tests in case I did poorly on one of them.

R09: Objectives not met within a semester, professors who seem not to care about the student body and their learning, limited time for class discussion, no group projects (I think students learn best when surrounded by peers when doing academics).

R10: Philosophy of criminal justice.

*What steps could be taken to improve the bad courses?*

R01: I do not have no comment because I have taken a course that I consider bad.

R02: I think that the bad course could involve more communication from the teacher to the students. In my bad courses I experienced a teacher saying “go through your book and read and whatever you think is going to be on the test, then that’s what you study!” What is that? I mean, I want to become a teacher, but I don’t want to see my students fail. I think have more one-on-one time where the teacher can help tutor her students who are struggling.

R03: First, I would consult with the students about the books that are being chosen. Of course, they shouldn’t be so easy that they are elementary, but on a level that can spark one’s interest and inspire them to want to dig deeper. Instead of being glad it’s finally over.

R04: I would have teachers take a more hands-on approach and try to make the class more interesting.

R05: A different teaching approach by the professors, regular class discussions and group projects.

R06: Make it a 200 level class. But for me that was one class that I hated it was so boring. After the Quaker stage I could not focus.
Overall Evaluation

Finally, students were asked how beneficial the entire program was, and how it could be improved. Also, students were given the opportunity to comment on anything not covered in the other questions. Their responses are recorded below.

How beneficial has your OVERALL PROGRAM in the Division of Social Sciences been in terms of preparing you for your chosen career? How can the program be improved?

R01: I feel the Division of Social Sciences have prepared me with the information I need to be successful in my job placement. But I feel in the near future, the division should have student to more research projects in order to get experience in a specific area.

R02: The CRJ class that I’ve taken here at DSU have really helped me and made me aware of some things about the law that I really didn’t know. The SSC classes I’m really not sure about I think these classes may help me more as I advance in my career. I think the division as a whole is a good division. I would recommend DSU Social Science to anyone.

R03: Everything that I have learned in this program has been a help.

R04: I am more certain of what career path I want to take, since fully immersing myself in the program. I am gaining more insights on my role in my community and how certain things occur. I want to own my own business and become more active in my community. The program shouldn’t make any changes.

R05: I think the social science program has prepared me very well to go out in the work force and succeed. Many of the classes have shown that the work can be fun if you learn how to do it well.

R06: I think it is very beneficial to me in preparing me for the future.

R07: I think it has prepared my very well for my career path. I am very happy with how my classes were accomplished.

R08: The Social Science program is an excellent program. I learned a lot of things that would apply to my career field, especially while performing various group projects with fellow classmates. I plan to take what I have learned and apply it in my career.

R09: It’s great as far as the knowledge you gain. But sometimes there are a lot of students in the class who would probably prefer some real life action. Like show the class how you would conduct a drug bust or something.

Any other comments or thoughts on the Division of Social Sciences?

R01: I am glad I finally found a major that help push me in the right direction of a career path that I feel I can do some good in, as oppose to just earning a paycheck. I feel it has been very rewarding.

R02: I feel that anything I have said will be irrelevant as I am attending film school to earn an MFA in directing for film. So for me to say that anything has been beneficial to me would not be true. I have enjoyed my time here and I have learned a lot. But I simply chose the wrong major for what I realized I really wanted to do. Overall, I think Delta
State has a great program and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested into going into law enforcement.

R03: Social Sciences have been good to me in all my years here at DSU. I really enjoyed each class and believe they will help me in my future endeavors.

**Focus Group Results**

Following the survey questionnaire, we held a focus group-style interview in which the instructor asked the students a series of questions about the Division of Social Sciences and their education at DSU. The object of a focus group is to build a conversation, so that topics are addressed in some depth and interaction among informants can raise issues that might otherwise be overlooked by an outsider. The focus group lasted approximately 50 minutes and was recorded, then transcribed. Topics included the characteristics of a good academic department and a valuable course, changes in the Criminal Justice degree program, and some of the difficulties students have coping with many responsibilities outside of school.

Seven of the ten students who participated in the focus group were students in the Criminal Justice concentration, and not surprisingly much of the discussion focused on this major. In general, students expressed displeasure with the instability they had experienced over the past four years, and they were uneasy about changes in the program. Although at the time of the interview, no official announcements had been made about changing the name and emphasis in the program, some of the students apparently had heard rumors and were unhappy with the proposed changes. Many of these students believed the strength of the Criminal Justice degree program was its emphasis on practice, which they thought would help them in their jobs. From the discussion, it appeared that many of them planned on becoming peace officers of some sort. The name of Dr. Bob Hunt, who formerly taught in the Criminal Justice program, came up several times, and it was evident that the students admired Dr. Hunt.

**Practical Education**

Students clearly valued a practical education. As examples of how the students thought about a practical education, in response to the first question the facilitator asked about characteristics of a high quality academic department, one student said:

I think we could have more hands-on, like when Dr. Hunt was here we got to go to the prison for class.

I asked if the Criminal Justice students agreed, and they expressed general agreement. Another student explained why he thought a practical education was valuable:

Dr Hunt was bringing in a bunch of different people, he brought in MBN, HN, Secret Service, DEA, prison guards and that helps you put what we’re learning in the textbook to real world experience. Like why is this important? I think someone asked him that one time – ‘why do we need to know this?’ – and two weeks later he had an MBN agent come in and say ‘this is why this is important, because I almost got my head blown off.’
Another student added:

I think it also teaches you to adapt to certain situations, maybe – especially – criminal justice, no matter what field you go into. I mean everything isn’t laid out for you on a straight line, you’re going to have to adapt to certain situations, the training you get in the classroom will help you out once you get out there.

One student gave an example to illustrate the value of a practical education:

I remember one class they showed us how they conduct if somebody was being pulled over, they ask whether they can search the vehicle, then they let the dog walk around the vehicle, it’s called ‘free air’ and the guys had probable cause because the dog was scratching up the trunk it was just nicer than reading about it

The preference for a practical education was not limited to Criminal Justice students. Another student applied the discussion to her major:

I think the same thing in criminal justice helps sociology and social science majors because the things happening in communities we can look back and say, okay, I see this in my everyday life as well and this is why certain things are occurring and you can put it into a theoretical perspective.

Another student used an example from a GIS course to illustrate the value of practice in education.

Asked if they thought they had gotten a practical education in the Division of Social Sciences, the students again used Dr. Hunt’s courses as a model. One said:

Dr. Hunt did [provide a practical education]. I had him for almost all my classes, he taught me everything that I knew in criminal justice and he’s a lot of hands-on, too. I remember in our Drug ID class he brought in several different drugs and told us which ones were which. He also brought in Buster Bingham and he told us how they smuggled them in and all sorts of different ways of how they make it. So we got to see what we were studying and reading about in the book. I learned a whole lot.

Another added:

It’s good to have instructors who have been in the field because newer instructors can tell you what’s in the book, they can’t tell you what’s out in the field. But they can read to you all day long and put up a PowerPoint…

Students continued to return to this point throughout the discussion. Another said:

I’ve had professors come in and read just straight word for word from the book. They aren’t around anymore. Stuff like that just really annoys me.

Again, one of the students returned to this issue to point out:

I think experience makes a big difference in your field, they’ve seen it all, done it all, I’m not going into bashing but I feel like in the last year or so that the entire program has gone to all PowerPoints that summarize the chapters you read, and then you take a test on what you’ve highlighted. That’s a really academic way to look at learning. Dr. Hunt and that old school plan is gone. Now we’ve got people who don’t have experience, and that’s fine, but it’s got such an academic look and all we’re getting tested on is theories. Theories is someone sitting in a room and saying ‘I hypothesize that this causes this.’
That’s not real world experience. I’m done in May but I’m saying for future students that hands-on real world experience is better than regurgitation of what you learned the next day. I don’t have any professors that don’t ask for questions, but it’s hard to think of questions because we’re just summarizing the chapter and it’s kind of boring. I’m still learning a lot and I’m not criticizing new professors because I know they work very hard at what they do, I just wish we could get back to a more hands-on class discussion – ‘What do you think about this?’ ‘This is how it really happens,’ that kind of thing.

Although the students claimed they preferred a practical education because they thought it would benefit them more than a theoretical education, it was not clear if they believed this because it is what they had been taught by their instructors. After listening to the students’ opinions on a practical education for awhile, I initiated a discussion on the value and importance of abstract thinking, the characteristic that most markedly distinguishes those with a college education from those who have not gone to college. An important lesson that emerged from this whole discussion was that the faculty can set the tone not just for what students learn in their courses, but also for how they perceive the process of education. If our goal is to help students develop critical and abstract thinking skills, faculty members need to be clear with the students about what we are doing and why we teach the way we do.

Perception of Professors

One of the students built on this line of thinking, and suggested that the perception students get from the way some courses are taught is that professors are aloof from the students. He said:

I don’t think the professors care much about the students, because ‘you’re paying for it, I’m not.’

Asked what professors could do to change this perception, a student replied:

More interaction with students, for the students in the class. Just take time out for students.

The perception that faculty do not have time for the students was shared by others in the class as well. One gave an example:

If you have a problem in the class, he’s never nowhere to be found, and when you do catch him he is so busy, you try to talk to him and he walks out of the office.

It appeared that the perception that professors do not care about students was held by some, although not all, of the students in this group. Nevertheless, it is good for faculty to remind ourselves occasionally that we make a difference in the lives of our students, and if we get too wrapped up in our other responsibilities, this could have an impact on our teaching and advising.

Quality Education

Students said they value high standards, which are the basis of a quality education. In response to a question on the important characteristics of a quality academic department, one student said:
High standards – the professors in the department expect more out of you than what you did in high school, achieve more, be more responsible and stuff like that; do what you need to do to succeed in life.

Another student built on this observation:

Yeah, especially out of the Social Science department because the whole principle of education is to train you to do things you don’t really want to do, but they have to be done. But social sciences is training you to think outside of the box, it’s training you put another perspective on things.

Another student added:

Besides having high standards, the division would have high standards for themselves, stay on top of things, do things.

The students generally agreed that they appreciate high standards in their courses. Again, this may not be something they value when they begin the program, but it is something they learn to value as they take courses with high standards and reflect on the results. The students appeared to believe strongly that high standards are important, and it is the responsibility of faculty to set and maintain high academic standards in the classroom.

Work Overload

Students then talked about some of the outside difficulties they face, which compromise their ability to give full attention to their classes:

I’m sort of overwhelmed with all my classes and a lot of time I think we students get overwhelmed and we have so much to do and how are we going to do it and then on top of that we’re trying to graduate, it scares people, it scares them.

Another talked about the strains imposed by having to commute to campus. We were discussing the value of various services available on campus (e.g. the Writing Center), and one student observed:

We have to think about all of these services that are offered in Cleveland and think about all the students that don’t actually live in Cleveland and have to travel an hour and 45 minutes and people that work and people that have families and that’s my biggest problem because if I’m here all day, when my son gets out of school and he needs help with his homework – I’m crazy by the end of the day. It’s like my career, my family, my job – it’s just not enough. In Greenville they have the GHEC but none of my classes were offered there. It seems like since we do have the extension there I guess because we don’t have instructors to teach classes there we have no criminal justice classes offered there

Another added:

As far as the Academic Support Lab is concerned, I get out of class at 4:00 and have other homework and stuff to do and they close at 5:00 and I had soccer two hours every afternoon.

Another student reiterated that the limited hours at some of the campus services is problematic:
I've learned it very good since my freshman year, but like today I was doing homework for four hours and it’s kind of crazy that they close it that early, and it makes sense in the work sense, but for people who are in class all day...

Another student recommended that the Roberts-LaForge Library offer services for the Academic Support Lab, so the lab won’t have to stay open late:

You have to kind of think about the library, it’s open till about 10:00 and if they could go sit in the library, like get a GA or something to offer services at those hours, that might help.

Another possibility is to open early, for students who can come in early in the morning but cannot stay late, due to other responsibilities:

Something where I can come in at 8:00 or something. I have to pick up my girls, and if I come back to Delta State then I have to bring them with me and that’s time consuming and I have to be at work.

Faculty in the DSS may not be able to do much to help students with these many burdens. Nevertheless, it is important to give students a forum to express these frustrations, and it is also important for us to be aware of the constraints that many of our students face.

Participation in Class Discussions

Some of the discussion focused on participation in class sessions. Students seemed to prefer discussion to lecture, but I raised the question of why students so often do not talk in class when given the opportunity. One student said:

Some students just don’t talk in class. But if you want to help yourself, I think the professors see that but as long as you’re saying something in class everyday, at least ask a question here and there. I don’t think you make a student come to class and talk. I just want to get in here and do what I have to do. I can see when a professor doesn’t give a student the time of day, but there has to be some way of going up after class as to not be embarrassed in front of everyone.

Another said:

A lot of time I don’t want to say anything because I don’t want to be embarrassed because you have teachers that say “you don’t know?” They make you feel like you’re dumb and then other people start wondering the same thing in their mind. It depends how the teacher presents it to the class. So when you’re asking questions, do we need to think about what you say? Then it’s confusing because it’s not what we comprehended from our readings and then you’re lost. Like you’ve been in grad school and got your PhD, you’re supposed to know, you teach this every semester, but to us it’s like Greek and am I supposed to read this and try to understand? It’s like learning how to read all over again. If you haven’t been in school for awhile you have to learn this stuff all over again. And people are like you know this? Duh. You know stuff like that. I had a teacher that said read chapter five and whatever you think is going to be on the test, that’s what you study. Huh? So you read the whole chapter and study and nothing. You pay a hundred and something for a book. And I think that’s intentionally trying to fail a student. But I think that’s true.
The potential for embarrassing oneself appeared to be one reason students are hesitant to speak up in class. Another, however, is that students tend to focus on the course elements that are graded. One said:

Even in situations like that you have to be like I’m here to pass the class to get my degree because there’s not really that much time for learning if I have to get all this information in order to pass the test; you can’t learn stuff like that if you have four other classes and term papers.

Another said:

Jobs out there just want you to have a degree, they don’t care what you took as long as you passed it; that’s all they care about but there are some jobs that just want to know you’re educated.

In other words, if students don’t see a direct connection between class discussion and their course grade and eventual job prospects, then they are not motivated to discuss material in class. We discussed the assertion that employers only care if you have a degree. I made the point that with a degree, you may get a job, but a degree won’t help you hold onto a job – for that you must show that you learned how to think along the way. This led to a broader discussion about the value of abstract thinking. In general, however, the students seem to be asking for more interaction between faculty and students, in ways that bridge the divide that they perceive. As the student notes, the extent to which students are willing to participate in class depends on how students perceive the instructor. Faculty members can influence whether students want to talk in class or not.

Course Preparation

An advantage of a focus group format is that it not only is a good source of data, but also offers an opportunity for conversation between the facilitator and the subjects. Although my primary interest was understanding the students’ perspective, after we had discussed a variety of topics one of the students then asked a provocative question:

Who tells y’all what’s appropriate as far as class goes?

I explained that faculty are assigned the courses they teach, although faculty do have some choice in the 400-level classes they teach. In class, the instructor generally has the freedom to design the course and determine the content. One of the students was curious how much input students had in how faculty teach courses:

So ya’ll have the lee-way to teach the class and when you get evaluations back at the end of the semester, do ya’ll even try to change?

I explained how I incorporate student comments in my courses, and made it clear that each faculty member handles these in their own way. Clearly, however, the students want their input and efforts in these evaluation exercises to have an impact.
Evaluation of Delta State University

On February 20, we carried out an evaluation of Delta State University, encompassing students’ experiences across the board at the university. Students filled out a questionnaire that included both closed- and open-ended questions.

The first set of questions evaluated courses in the Division of Social Sciences relative to courses in other departments and divisions across the university. Results are summarized on Table 5. Students were asked how interesting DSS courses were compared to other courses at DSU. Five students (55.6 percent) said DSS courses were much more interesting than courses in other departments, two students (22.2 percent) said DSS courses were somewhat more interesting, and two students said DSS courses were about as interesting as other departments. Next, students were asked how challenging or difficult DSS courses were compared to other academic units. Two students thought DSS courses were much more challenging, three (33.3 percent) thought courses in the social sciences were somewhat more challenging, and four students (44.4 percent) said DSS courses were about the same as courses in other departments. Finally, students were asked how much they learned in DSS courses. Five students said they typically learned much more in DSS courses compared to courses elsewhere, three students said they learned somewhat more in DSS courses, and one student (11.1 percent) said DSS courses were about the same as courses in other departments in terms of how much they learned.

Another series of questions asked students about their use of campus resources, including the Roberts-LaForge Library, the Academic Support Lab, and the Writing Center. Students learn about these resources in SSC 101, and over time we can measure whether students are using these facilities more, perhaps based on being introduced to their services in SSC 101. Students answered two questions about each resource: first, how often they used the resource, on average, during their time at DSU, and second, how valuable the resource was to their success at DSU. Results are summarized in Table 6.

For the Roberts-LaForge Library, six of the students (66.7%) said they used the library at least once per week, two (22.2 percent) used the library once per month on average, and one (11.1 percent) used the library about once per year. The library was the most commonly used of the three campus resources, and also the most valuable, according to these students. Seven (77.8 percent) rated the library as “very valuable” to their success, one said the library was “somewhat valuable,” and one expressed a neutral opinion in response to this question. One student who found the library very valuable actually crossed out the word “very” and wrote “extremely” on the answer sheet.
TABLE 5: COMPARISON OF COURSES IN THE DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (DSS) WITH COURSES IN OTHER DIVISIONS AND DEPARTMENTS AT DELTA STATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Much More</th>
<th>Somewhat More</th>
<th>About the Same</th>
<th>Somewhat Less</th>
<th>Much Less</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How interesting are DSS courses compared to courses in other departments/divisions?</td>
<td>5 (55.6%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How challenging/difficult are DSS courses compared to courses in other departments/divisions?</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
<td>3 (33.3%)</td>
<td>4 (44.4%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much did you learn in DSS courses compared to courses in other departments/divisions?</td>
<td>5 (55.6%)</td>
<td>3 (33.3%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 6: USE AND VALUE OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Resource</th>
<th>Frequency of Use of Resource</th>
<th>Value of Resource to Success at DSU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least Once/Week</td>
<td>About Once/Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>6 (66.7%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support Lab</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students in SSC 499 used the Academic Support Lab (ASL) much less frequently during their time at DSU. One student used the ASL about once per month, on average, and one student used the ASL once per semester. Three (33.3 percent) of the students said they used the ASL about one time per year, and four (44.4 percent) students never used the Academic Support Lab during their time at DSU. Those who used the ASL found it helpful, however. Four indicated the ASL was “very valuable,” and one found the ASL “somewhat valuable,” while one indicated the ASL was “not very valuable.” Two respondents marked “neutral” on their sheets, and a third (who had not used the ASL) left this question blank.

The Writing Center is another resource on campus, used about once per month by two students, about once per semester by one students, and about once per year by two students. Four students indicated they had never used the Writing Center. Opinions of the Writing Center were positive. Three students found the Writing Center “very valuable,” and three said the services were “somewhat valuable.” Of the four students who had never used the Writing Center, two left the question on the value of the center blank and a third marked neutral.

Students were asked five open-ended questions about their experiences at Delta State as well. Responses are recorded verbatim below. The first two questions asked about their most and least valuable experiences at DSU, the next question asked what they would like to change about DSU, and two questions assessed whether they would recommend DSU to others. The first of these asked whether they would want their children to attend DSU, and the second asked them how they would describe DSU to a friend.

What have been your most valuable experiences at DSU?

R01: My most valuable experiences have been my enrollment in Dr. Hunt and Mr. Payne’s classes. In both of the instructors’ classes I have learned some valuable information. In Dr. Hunt’s class I have done some great hands-on experience.

R02: Getting to work with my classmates on a teamwork basis. The chance to work with them outside of class on assignments has made me a better team player, I think.

R03: My most valuable experience here at DSU has been meeting new people and teachers who can help influence you in many ways.

R04: Taking the GIS classes here at Delta State has given me a real sense of direction. I have really enjoyed these classes and they have given me another weapon in my arsenal.

R05: Learning how to take care of myself and learning how to study, time management, and learning social skills.

R06: Getting to participate in a mock crime scene investigation with Officer Murrah; Learning time management; Witnessing a K-9 unit search a vehicle; Going to visit a prison; Seeing our local SWAT team in action; Hearing speakers from DEA, Secret Service, U.S. Marshalls, MBN, etc.
R07: My friendships I have made throughout my DSU experience has been my greatest benefit. I also enjoyed each of my Criminal Justice classes at DSU.

R08: Interaction among my fellow classmates, research projects, etc. In general, the overall atmosphere at DSU.

R09: I think it would be being able to socialize with people of different races and ethnic groups. Growing up you see people represent their school and telling you you should go there.

*What have been your least valuable experiences at DSU?*

R01: My least valuable experience was the classes I had to attend that instructors only lecture the whole time.

R02: All of my experiences here have been good while here at DSU.

R03: My least valuable experience here at DSU was failing a class. I have never failed a class until I came to DSU.

R04: The pointless PER class.

R05: Dealing with roommates.

R07: My PER classes, however they were fun.

R09: I really don’t like history classes much so I will say CRJ 315.

*If you could change one thing about DSU, what would it be?*

R01: I feel more instructors should have hands-on experience instead of lecture type classes.

R02: Have more trained and qualified instructors teaching courses.

R03: The financial aid program. I would change it because some people are actually here to get an education and not just for the money and if a student is trying then they should continue to get financial aid.

R04: I would change the soccer coach.

R05: Housing.

R06: I was an orientation leader, and I hate the way that Delta State allows unqualified students to be admitted! I understand the importance of enrollment numbers, but Delta State is changing from the way it used to be.

R07: To let people know who are coming in to DSU that there is a portfolio and better advisory throughout the four years.

R09: Research papers

*Would you want your children to attend DSU? Why/why not?*

R01: I would for my child or children to attend DSU because many great things are offered here at DSU.
R02: Yes, because DSU is a great school overall and basically school is what you make of it.

R03: Yes, because DSU presents them with a challenge and it also teaches them to work hard for whatever they want.

R04: Yes, I would like my kids to go to Delta State because it is very friendly and helpful.

R05: Yes, I would like for them to attend here. I've enjoyed it, maybe they would too.

R06: No, the enrollment of white male students has dropped exponentially.

R07: Yes, because it is a very personal college with a lot of one-on-one time with professors. Everyone is very courteous and laid back.

R08: Yes. Delta State is a great college. Relatively smaller class sizes compared to other universities in the state. I feel that there is a bigger possibility for the overall learning in general.

R09: Yes. For one, DSU is a great school. Not only that, but DSU is integrated. In most cases, people that are black grow up in black neighborhoods and people that are white grow up in white neighborhoods. In order to live in this world, I think you need to know the best of both worlds. There is not such thing that you can’t have a certain job because you are black or white. But in order to grow in this society you must get a feel of both, and DSU offers that.

If you wanted to describe your experience at DSU to a friend, what would you say?

R01: Delta State is a university where you will learn many interesting things. It is not a college where you can not be dedicated to your work. If you feel you will not have time to study, then please do not choose to attend DSU. Once you graduate you will be prepared in your area of study.

R02: I would have to say my experience here at DSU has been very rewarding. Everything that I got from DSU I earned. So if learning is important to you and not just going to school, DSU is the place to go.

R04: Very enjoyable, hard work but well worth it. Learned a lot.

R05: My experience here was very rewarding. I learned so much here. DSU has turned me into a well-rounded adult who is ready to take on the world.

R06: Smaller class sizes proved extremely valuable as it allowed for more one-on-one interaction with professors. That is the most important aspect to Delta State.

R07: I would tell them that my experience at DSU was amazing. I enjoyed making new friends and going to school in a new area. I really liked how the school was small and very personal. I enjoyed classes because they were so laid back and the professors were very helpful.

R08: Delta State is a great place. Do not listen to what people say about this university. There are high academic standards, but as long as you study and do your assignments like you are supposed to do, then you will not have a problem. Delta State is a small-
town college campus with people who care about you and your academics. Make DSU your first and only choice.

R09: There is nothing like the Okra.

Assessment Post-Test

On February 20, 2008, the students in SSC 499 took a test on topics in the social sciences. The test consists of forty questions, which test the students’ knowledge of sociology, political science, geography, criminal justice, social science education and research methods. Questions were developed by the faculty in the Division of Social Sciences. For each subject, there are questions at five levels. The most basic level consists of questions that should be answered correctly by a high school graduate, the next level should be answered correctly by those who completed an introductory course in the discipline, the third level should be answered correctly by those who got an “A” in an introductory course in the discipline, the fourth level should be answered correctly by those who completed advanced courses in the discipline, and the highest level should be answered correctly by those who got an “A” in advanced courses in the discipline.

Students take a version of this test in SSC 101, which serves as a pre-test. They then take a similar test in SSC 499, which serves as a post-test. The results of the two tests can then be compared to assess student learning during their time in the Social Sciences program.

During Spring semester, 2008, nine students took the assessment post-test. Table 7 summarizes results. There was at least one question at each level for each discipline, but for some disciplines, there was more than one question at some levels. The denominator in the columns titled “No.” indicates the number of questions at each level. If the denominator is 9, it indicates there was one question for that topic at that level; a denominator of 18 indicates two questions; and if the denominator is 27, there were three questions in that discipline and at that level.

Overall, students answered 45 percent of the questions correctly. Results show that students scored highest on the methods questions, answering 63 percent of the questions correctly. Most students who took this test completed the concentration in Criminal Justice, and this was evident as the class answered 57 percent of the questions on criminal justice correctly. Results for the other disciplines ranged from 37 to 45 percent of the questions answered correctly.

Students answered nearly three-fourths of the questions at the easiest level correctly, slightly less than half of the questions at level 2 correctly, 43 percent of the level 3 questions correctly, one-third of the level 4 questions correctly, and 30 percent of the most difficult questions correctly. Results within each discipline varied.

Table 8 shows the scores on the assessment post-test for each of the students in SSC 499. The scores on the questions in each student’s major are shown as well. Because there were no questions specifically on the general Social Sciences major, no scores for students with this major were possible.
TABLE 7: RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT POST-TEST
Number and Percent of Students Answering Question Correctly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Level of Difficulty</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>13/27</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MET</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>13/18</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2/18</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>13/27</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>12/27</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>6/27</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
<td></td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40/54</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>55/117</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>43/99</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>18/54</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16/54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: No. is the number of students that got the question correct divided by the total number of students; the test included more than one question at some levels for some subjects (e.g. if the denominator is 26, there were two questions at that level).

It should be noted that the highest score on the post-test was 57.5 percent, and two-thirds of the students scored less than fifty percent. Clearly, there is room for improvement, although it is unrealistic to expect students to record scores in the 80 to 100 percent range, since some of the questions are very difficult questions on subject matter that the student might not have studied. Students did do well on the questions in their major. Three students scored over 80 percent on the questions within their own discipline, and all except one scored fifty percent or higher.

Table 9 shows the scores for the four students who had taken SSC 101, comparing their pre-test and post-test scores. Two students had taken SSC 101 in Spring, 2007, and two had taken it in Fall 2007. Two of the students improved their scores between SSC 101 and SSC 499, and two had lower scores in SSC 499 than in SSC 101. However, because this is only the third semester that SSC 499 has been offered, these three students were juniors or seniors when they took SSC 101, and not much time has passed for them to take courses that would teach them material in the Social Sciences.
### TABLE 8: SCORES ON THE ASSESSMENT POST-TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Assessment Post-Test</th>
<th></th>
<th>In Major</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>19/40</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>19/40</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>18/40</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>20/40</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>17/40</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>23/40</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>22/40</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>15/40</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>16/40</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 9: SCORES ON THE ASSESSMENT PRE- AND POST-TESTS FOR STUDENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN SSC 101

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Assessment Pre-Test Taken in SSC 101</th>
<th>Assessment Post-Test Taken in SSC 499</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>FA 2007</td>
<td>16/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>SP 2007</td>
<td>20/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>FA 2007</td>
<td>18/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Name</td>
<td>CRJ</td>
<td>SP 2007</td>
<td>15/40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Overall, the evaluation indicates that students generally had a positive experience at Delta State and in the Division of Social Sciences. The questionnaires on the DSS and on the university showed that students rated various aspects of the division and the university in positive terms, and their comments showed they generally appreciated the courses and the instructors both in the DSS and at DSU. Results from the post-test also showed that many students are leaving DSU with a solid grounding in their own disciplines, and some background in the Social Sciences in general.

Results also suggest that we could do more to encourage our students to take advantage of resources on campus, such as the Writing Center and the Academic Support Lab. Some students expressed that they find the course material very challenging, and that they have other responsibilities in their lives that make it difficult for them to dedicate themselves fully to their studies. The students recognize the importance of high academic standards, so there is agreement that the solution is not to lower the expectations. Rather, students who are struggling need extra assistance, both from professors and from campus resources. Unfortunately, it appears that those students who are struggling are also those who are least able to take advantage of campus resources due to outside constraints. Based on the limited evidence presented here, these students would appreciate a greater effort to make resources available, such as extended hours at the Academic Support Lab and greater access to professors. Certainly, it is challenging to meet this demand; professors cannot spend all of their time in their offices, waiting for students to appear, and in my experience at least, busy students do frequently miss appointments they set up to speak with professors. As for the Academic Support Lab and other campus resources, their policies and procedures are beyond the realm of the DSS. Nevertheless, it is important to know that students have these concerns, and that many are doing the best they can under challenging circumstances.

Finally, perhaps one of the clearest results from this group of students is a strong preference towards classes with a practical orientation. This preference may simply represent the mix of students who took SSC 499 this semester, and their own career goals. However, it may also reflect to some extent the way they were taught, by instructors who emphasized practice over theory. This demonstrates the principle that one student noted, that an instructor sets the tone for the course. The faculty also set the tone for the overall academic program and for how students are given opportunities to learn. While it is important for students to draw practical lessons from their education, it is fundamentally important that students learn critical and abstract thinking while in college; those are the characteristics that distinguish someone with a college education. If we want students to value critical thinking and theory, and we want them to emerge from DSU not just with a degree but with a college education, we need to explain clearly to students why theory is important. Hopefully the students who take SSC 101 will enter the program with this message in mind; however, all faculty members can contribute to the students’ overall education by continually reinforcing to students why critical thinking skills are important. Ultimately, this is the most important thing we can do to help students towards successful professional careers and meaningful lives.
APPENDIX A:
COURSE SYLLABUS

INTEGRATIVE SEMINAR IN
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
SSC 499

COURSE SYLLABUS
SPRING 2008

Course Information:

Meeting Place: 229 Kethley Hall
Meeting Times: Wednesdays, 2:00–4:00 pm (Jan. 9 – Feb. 27, 2008)

CRN: 16266

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Dr. Alan Barton
Telephone: (662) 846-4097
Office: 214 Kethley Hall
E-mail: abarton@deltastate.edu
Webpage: http://ntweb.deltastate.edu/vp_academic/abarton/

Office Hours:

During Spring semester, 2008, the instructor holds regular office hours at the following times:

Tuesday 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Wednesday 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Thursday 9:00 am – 10:45 am; 2:15 pm – 4:30 pm

If you cannot make one of these times, contact the professor to set up an appointment.

Course Webpage:

Additional materials and updated course information can be found on the course webpage:

http://ntweb.deltastate.edu/vp_academic/abarton/SSC499SP08/SSC499Syllabus.htm

Course Overview:

This course is to be taken by all students with a major in the Social Sciences during their last semester before graduation. The purpose of the course is to provide a venue for integrating material learned in the Social Sciences program, to establish a basis for instituting assessment-based education in the Division of Social Sciences at Delta State University, and to serve as a transition between life in the university and life after college.

Course Objectives:

(1) Prepare for graduation from DSU and for life after college.
(2) Complete all assessment requirements for the Division of Social Sciences.
(3) Complete a portfolio highlighting the work you have done at DSU.
(4) Evaluate the Division of Social Sciences.
**Course Materials:**

You will need to purchase one item for this course, a 1" binder that you can use for your portfolio. You can purchase the binder at the university bookstore or at a retail stationery store.

**Responsibilities and Grading:**

Your primary responsibility in this course is to come to class each week, participate and complete all of the assigned work. The most important assignment is a portfolio of your work at DSU. We also will do some in-class informal writing, and prepare items such as a résumé and an evaluation of the Division of Social Sciences. Grading is based on attendance and completion of all course requirements in a timely fashion.

**Course Outline:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Topic/Guests</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1: Course Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Jan. 9</td>
<td>Course Goals and Activities</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment-Based Education</td>
<td>Reading on Assessment in Education “What is an Educated Person?” by J.G. Gaff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Peer Review, Fall 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Portfolio</td>
<td>Discussion Handout: Portfolio Components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2: Creating an Assessment Portfolio</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Jan. 16</td>
<td>Assessment Portfolio</td>
<td>Handout: Guidelines for Creating an Assessment Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portfolio Essays</td>
<td>Discussion Guidelines for Essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3: Preparing for Graduation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Jan. 23</td>
<td>Preparing for Graduation from DSU</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using Your Portfolio in the Job Search</td>
<td>Working on the Student Portfolio; Reading: “The School Counselor Portfolio: Professional Development and Accountability” by M.C. Rhyne-Winkler and H.R. Wooten (School Counselor, Nov. 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4: Evaluating the Division of Social Sciences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Jan. 30</td>
<td>Evaluation of the Division of Social Sciences</td>
<td>Completing Evaluation Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How Has Social Sciences Served You?</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Assignment: Write an Essay on Your Career Goals; Due Feb. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5: Preparing for Life After DSU I</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Day/Date

**Wednesday Feb. 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic/Guests</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life as a DSU Alumnus with Vicki Fioranelli and Reed Abraham, DSU Alumni Foundation</td>
<td>Meet at Alumni Foundation House Hwy. 8 Across for Ewing Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining Contact with the Division of Social Sciences</td>
<td>Creating a Roster of Alumni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Week 6: Preparing for Life After DSU II

**Wednesday Feb. 13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic/Guests</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backpack to Briefcase with Christy Montesi, DSU Office of Career Services</td>
<td>Discussion and Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing a Résumé with Christy Montesi, DSU Office of Career Services</td>
<td>Write a Résumé Bring a current copy of your résumé with you to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Submit: Essay on Career Goals Assignment: Write an Essay Chronicling and Evaluating Your Work at DSU; Due Feb. 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Week 7: Evaluating Your Learning at DSU

**Wednesday Feb. 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic/Guests</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating Delta State University</td>
<td>Completing Evaluation Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Submit: Essay Chronicling and Evaluating Your Work at DSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compiling the Assessment Portfolio</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test on Social Sciences</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Week 8: Portfolio

**Wednesday Feb. 27**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic/Guests</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating Assessment Portfolio</td>
<td>Evaluate Assessment Portfolios with DSU Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Assessment Portfolio</td>
<td>Submit: Assessment Portfolio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Resources:

**Office of Career Services**
H.L. Nowell Union 300, (662) 846-4646
http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/302.asp

**Roberts-LaForge Library**
Reference Desk: (662) 846-4431
http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/177.asp

**Academic Support Lab**
H. L. Nowell Union 311, (662) 846-4654
http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/342.asp

**DSU Alumni Association**
H.E.Walker Alumni Foundation House, (662) 846-4660
http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/814.asp

**Writing Center**
Kethley Hall 211, (662) 846-4088
http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/2777.asp

**Counseling & Testing Center**
O.W. Reily Student Health Center, (662) 846-4690
http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/257.asp
Office of Information Technology
Bailey Hall 114/
OIT Help Desk: (662) 846-4444
http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/179.asp

Technology Learning Center
Ewing Hall 130, (662) 846-4444
http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/1802.asp