



# General Education Assessment Report:

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## *American Experience—Political Science*

A study of data gathered from sections of POSC 104, American People and Politics, during the Spring 2016 semester at Seaver College.

*AY 2015-2016*

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# THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

## American People and Politics

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### Learning Outcomes for the American Experience GE:

In the American Experience requirement, students will:

- Acquire a basic knowledge of American history, including its economic, social, and cultural aspects, with particular attention to its political systems and their historical context.
- Develop the capacity to think critically about the American political system and American history by exploring individual and social identity.
- Consider the experiences of a variety of individuals and groups in American history and politics from various classes, religions, regions, and ethnic, gender, and racial groups.
- Develop an understanding of the history and challenges of maintaining democratic governance in a pluralistic, ethnically diverse society

### Overview of Requirement:

The American Experience requirement is made up of two courses: one political science course and one history course. The American Experience engages students in the culture, history, and politics of the United States, expanding upon knowledge of past and present challenges in American society and encouraging students to think critically and consider diverse perspectives.

### Courses fulfilling the American Experience requirement:

#### **POSC 104 American People and Politics (4 units)**

Provides a broad overview of the American political system, focusing on the historical and cultural context of its development. Intended to develop a basic understanding of the Constitutional foundations of the government of the United States, the role played by parties and interest groups throughout American history, the functions of the various branches of government and the evolution of their relations inter se, the methods by which public policy is formulated, and the role that diverse groups play in the policy process. In addition, the course seeks to enhance the ability of students to use historical and cultural understanding as a basis for the formation of independent judgments on current political issues.

#### **HIST 204 History of the American Peoples (4 units)**

This course provides a historical overview of the American peoples from pre-colonial times to the present, exploring the variety of the American experience in the context of political, social, and intellectual developments.

# METHODOLOGY

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## *Data collected*

In the spring of 2016 student data was collected to begin the process of assessing student learning in this requirement. The plan is to collect data over three semesters; this document presents the data collected in the first semester of the project, spring 2016.

The data in this assessment was collected from a multiple choice exam in the course **Political Science 104**, American People and Politics (4 units). Specific questions relevant to the outcomes were selected in order to see how well the student learning outcomes were being met.

## *Student Sample*

65 students participated in this assessment (demographic data could not be found for one student.)

## *Assignment / Rubric:*

Six questions were chosen from an exam. The rubric had two possible scores that were, essentially, “correct” or “incorrect.” The data present the number of students that answered the six questions correctly.

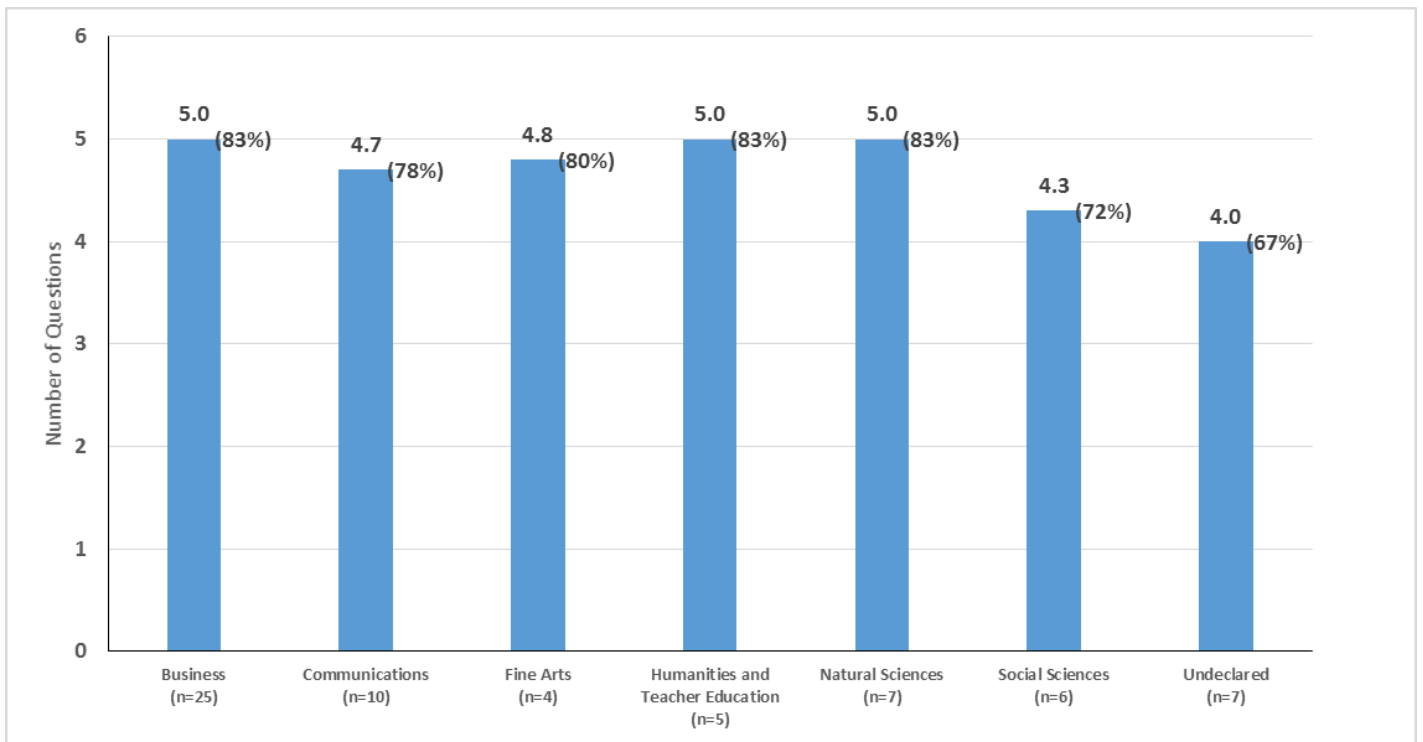
Question	Number Correct	Number Incorrect	Mean
DOI— Secure Citizens Unalienable Rights	52	13	.800
What it means to be an American	64	1	.985
Bill of Rights	60	5	.923
DOI— Life, Liberty and pursuit of happiness	32	33	.492
Political Culture	60	5	.923
Articles of the Confederation	44	20	.688

## Preliminary Data Analysis

The data comes from a selection of 6 questions on an exam that were identified as addressing the learning outcomes for this general education requirement.

- Students scored highest on questions on the following topics: What it means to be an American; Bill of Rights; and Political Culture. Scores were in the 90%.
- Students scored lowest, 50%, for the question that addressed Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.
- Students across all majors answered between 4 and 5 questions out of 6 correctly.
- There were only marginal differences between scores when disaggregated for gender and ethnicity.
- Juniors and Seniors enrolled in the class scored higher than freshman and sophomores but the n for upperclassmen was much lower.

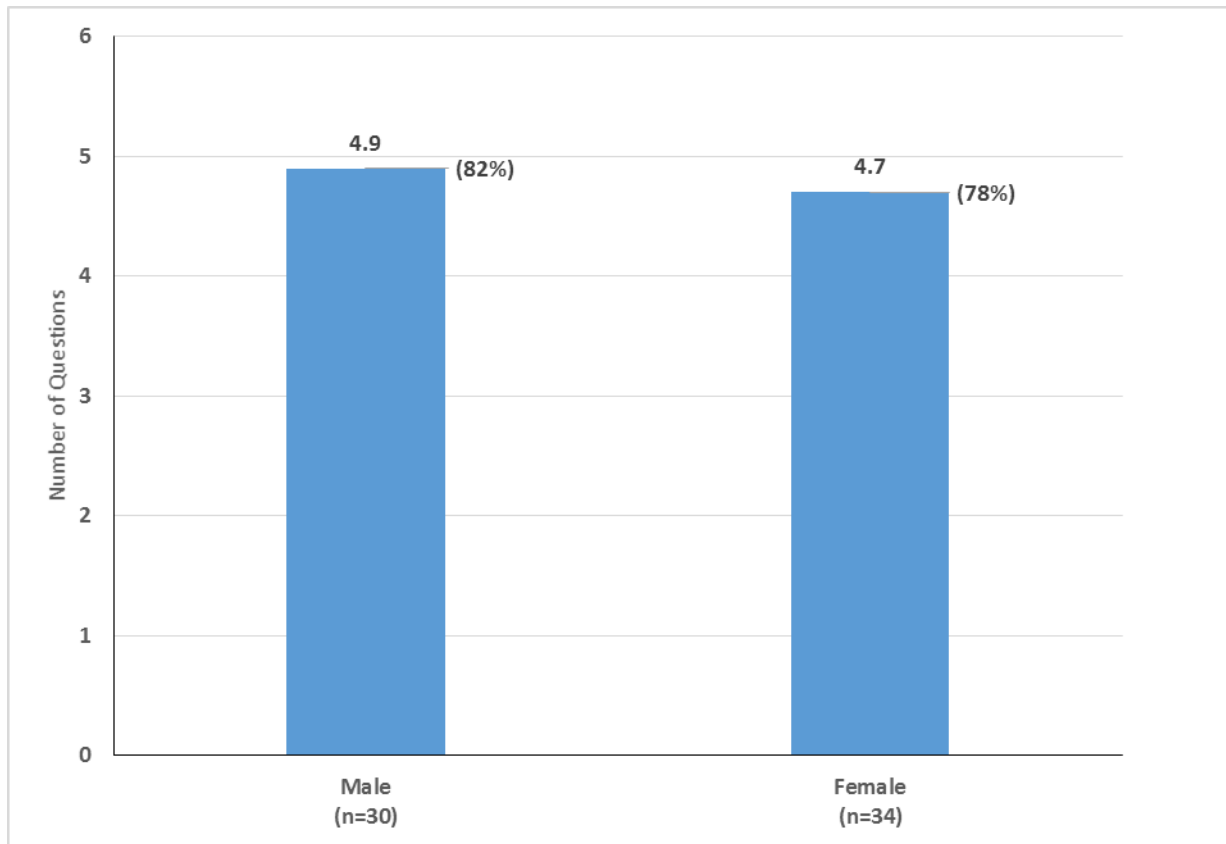
## Average Score by Major Division – POSC 104



Major Division	Number of Students	Average Score out of 6 questions
Business	25	5.0
Communications	10	4.7
Fine Arts	4	4.8
Humanities and Teacher Education	5	5.0
Natural Sciences	7	5.0
Social Sciences	6	4.3
Undeclared	7	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Note: scale indicates 0 (incorrect) and 1 (correct) for a total of 6 questions.

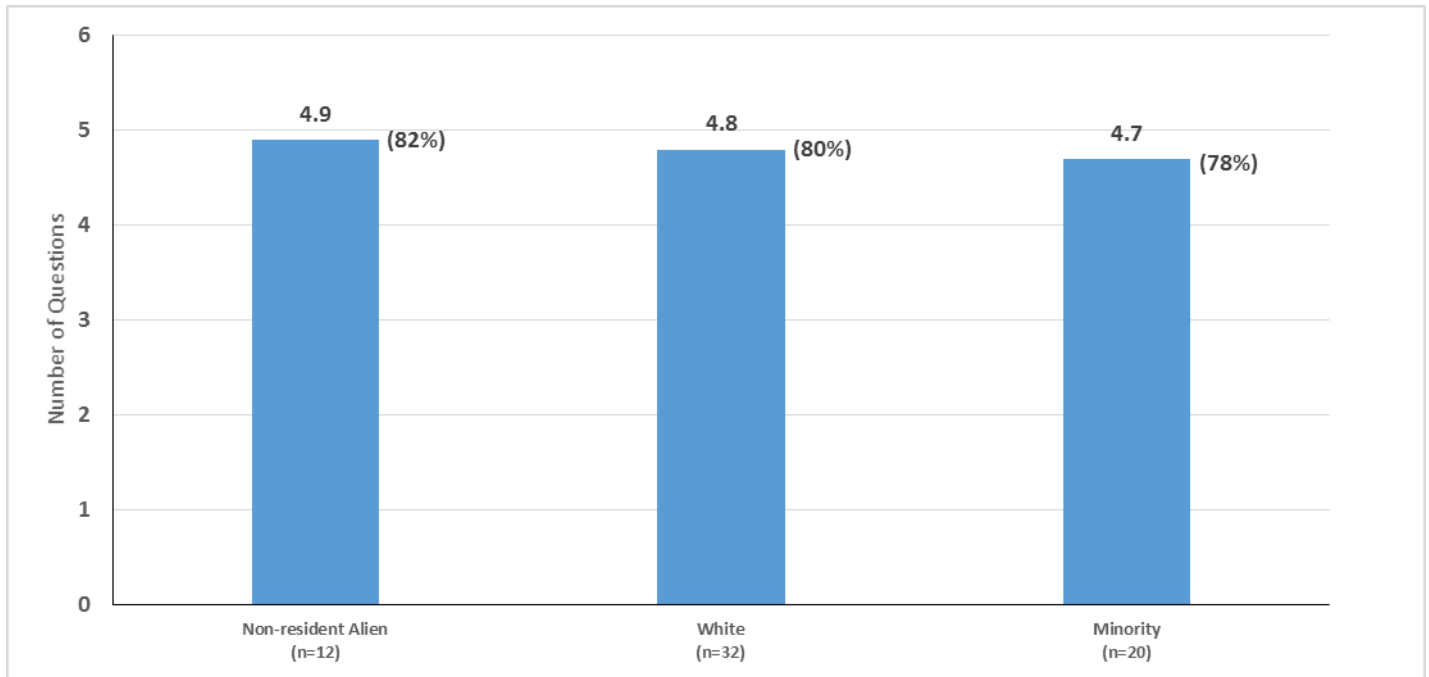
### Average Score by Gender – POSC 104



Gender	Number of Students	Average Score out of 6 questions
Male	30	4.9
Female	34	4.7
Total	64	4.8

Note: scale indicates 0 (incorrect) and 1 (correct) for a total of 6 questions.

## Average Score by Ethnicity – POSC 104

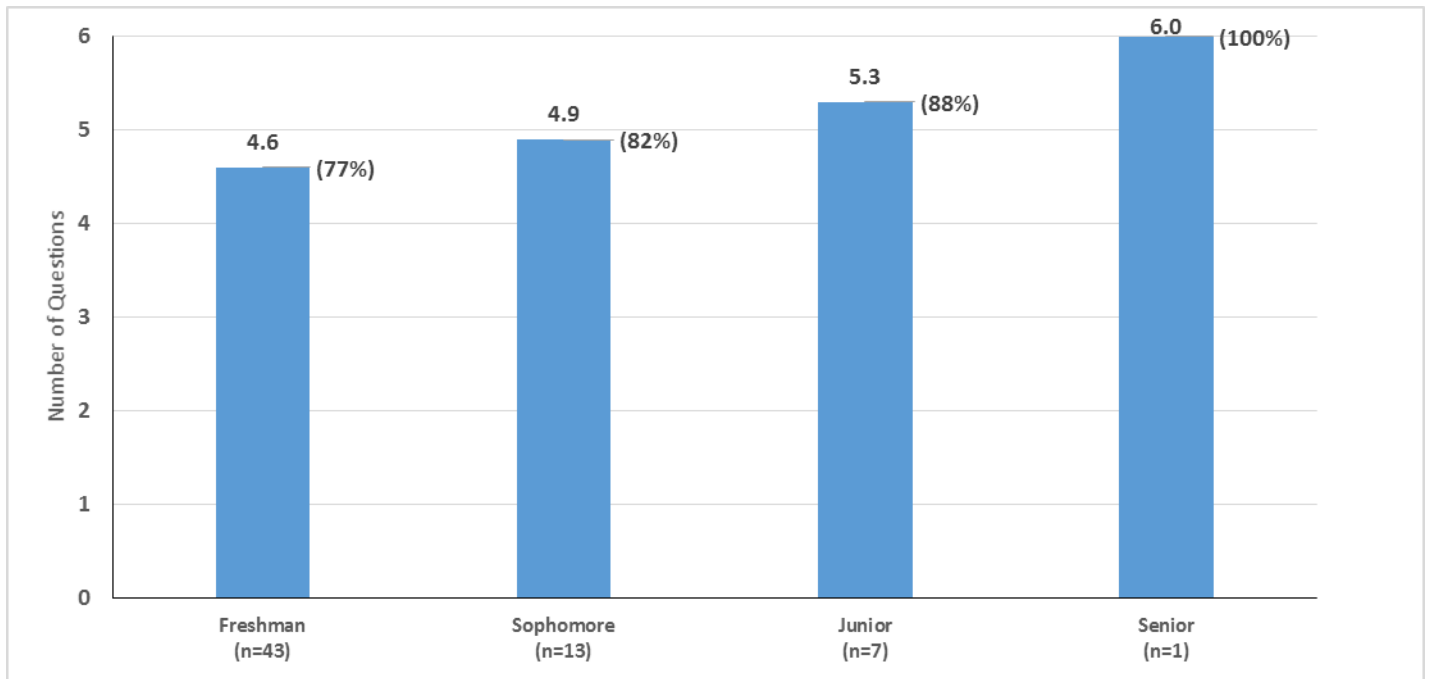


Ethnicity	Number of Students	Average Score out of 6 questions
Non-resident Alien	12	4.9
White	32	4.8
Minority *	20	4.7
Total	64	4.8

\*The following minorities were categorized under the ethnicity “minority” to protect the identities of students from courses with small enrollment: “Hispanic or Latino”, “American Indian or Alaska Native”, “Asian”, “Black or African American”, “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander”, “Two or more Races”, and “Race/ethnicity unknown”.

Note: scale indicates 0 (incorrect) and 1 (correct) for a total of 6 questions.

### Average Score by Class Level – POSC 104



Class Level	Number of Students	Average Score out of 6 questions
Freshman	43	4.6
Sophomore	13	4.9
Junior	7	5.3
Senior	1	6
Total	64	4.8

Note: scale indicates 0 (incorrect) and 1 (correct) for a total of 6 questions.