

Assessing an Undergraduate Curriculum: The Evolving Roles of Subfields, Methods, Ethics, and Writing for Government Majors

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Appendix – Current Student and Alumni Survey Questions and Responses

An asterisk before a question number indicates that the question was required of all respondents. Individual responses to open-ended questions are not listed here; we report only the number of responses to such questions.

*1.

Are you a current student or a previous graduate? (For students who attended GU as an undergraduate and are currently enrolled in a GU post-graduate program, please select "previous graduate".)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Current Student	72.1%	150
Previous Graduate	27.9%	58
	<i>answered question</i>	208
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

*2.

In what year will you (or did you) graduate?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
2010	0.5%	1
2011	3.4%	7
2012	10.1%	21
2013	6.3%	13
2014	3.4%	7
2015	4.3%	9
2016	25.5%	53
2017	33.2%	69
2018	13.0%	27
2019	0.5%	1
2020	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*3.

Did you start your undergraduate career as a government major?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	49.0%	102
No	47.6%	99
Not sure/Don't know	3.4%	7
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

4. [Open-ended Response]

What initially drew you to the government major?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	170
<i>answered question</i>	170
<i>skipped question</i>	38

*5.

Did you choose to double major?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	42.3%	88
No	55.3%	115
Not sure/Don't know	2.4%	5
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

6. [Open-ended Response]

If you chose to double major, why did you do so?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	89
<i>answered question</i>	89
<i>skipped question</i>	119

7.

For alumni, what are you doing now?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Law School	18.6%	13
Business School	0.0%	0
Medical School	0.0%	0
Ph.D. Program (in political science/government)	2.9%	2
Ph.D. Program (in another field)	0.0%	0
Other post-graduate program	1.4%	1
Working in state/local government	5.7%	4
Working in the federal government	10.0%	7
Working for a non-profit	5.7%	4
Working for a think tank	1.4%	1
Working elsewhere in the private sector	27.1%	19
Other (please specify)	27.1%	19
	<i>answered question</i>	70
	<i>skipped question</i>	138

Note: Although only 58 respondents identified as previous graduates in Question 1, 70 respondents answered this question.

*8.

To what extent do you agree that the Department of Government improved your writing skills?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	22.6%	47
Somewhat Agree	54.3%	113
Neutral	10.6%	22
Somewhat Disagree	9.6%	20
Strongly Disagree	1.9%	4
Not sure/Don't know	1.0%	2
	<i>answered question</i>	208
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

*9.

Did you take any government courses that did not include a paper as a graded assignment?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, 1 course.	22.1%	46
Yes, 2 courses.	13.0%	27
Yes, 3+ courses.	3.4%	7
No.	54.8%	114
Not sure/Don't know	6.7%	14
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*10.

What kind of writing did you do in the major? (select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A research paper	92.3%	192
A comparative, analytic paper	86.5%	180
A thesis paper (25+ pages)	17.8%	37
Exegesis/textual analysis	46.6%	97
A policy paper/memo	60.6%	126
Other (please specify)	6.3%	13
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*11.

What was the average length of papers you wrote in your first two years?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-5	26.4%	55
6-10	60.6%	126
11-15	11.1%	23
16-20	1.0%	2
20+	0.0%	0
Not sure/Don't know	1.0%	2
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*12.

What was the average length of papers you wrote in your last two years?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-5	6.7%	14
6-10	42.8%	89
11-15	32.2%	67
16-20	11.1%	23
20+	3.4%	7
Not sure/Don't know	1.9%	4
N/A (still a freshman or sophomore)	1.9%	4
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*13.

To what extent do you agree that the Department of Government improved your oral communication skills?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	9.1%	19
Somewhat agree	46.2%	96
Neutral	25.5%	53
Somewhat disagree	13.9%	29
Strongly disagree	4.3%	9
Not sure/Don't know	1.0%	2
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*14.

If you feel that the major helped improve your oral communication skills, how did it do so? (select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
In-class (lecture) discussion	38.5%	80
Discussion/recitation sections	46.2%	96
Group projects	10.6%	22
In-class presentations	23.6%	49
N/A	31.7%	66
Other (please specify)	2.4%	5
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*15.

Were you exposed to quantitative methods in the major? If so, how? (select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I took Analysis of Political Data I and/or II (GOVT 201/202).	17.3%	36
Yes, I conducted research for a term paper or honors thesis that involved the use of quantitative methods.	17.3%	36
Yes, but my primary exposure to quantitative methods came in another department.	28.8%	60
Yes, but I only encountered quantitative methods in readings, not in problem sets or applied research.	28.4%	59
No, I was not exposed to quantitative methods.	25.5%	53
Other (please specify)	5.3%	11
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*16.

Were you exposed to any other methods in the major? (select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Qualitative/Comparative	67.3%	140
Game theory/Formal modeling	48.1%	100
Textual analysis/Exegesis/Hermeneutics	43.8%	91
Ethnography	8.7%	18
Other field methods (interviewing, archival research, etc.)	24.0%	50
No, I was not exposed to any other methods.	11.1%	23
Other (please specify)	0.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*17.

To what extent do you agree that ethics (either research ethics or the ethical dimension of any course subject) was a prominent part of the government major?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	10.6%	22
Somewhat Agree	31.3%	65
Neutral	23.1%	48
Somewhat Disagree	23.6%	49
Strongly Disagree	7.2%	15
Not sure/Don't know	4.3%	9
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

*18.

To what extent do you agree that the government major has shaped your approach to public affairs and civic engagement?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	34.6%	72
Somewhat Agree	43.8%	91
Neutral	14.4%	30
Somewhat Disagree	4.3%	9
Strongly Disagree	1.0%	2
Not sure/Don't know	1.9%	4
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

19. [Open-ended Response]

If the government major shaped your approach to public affairs and civic engagement (positively or negatively), please elaborate on how it did so.	
Answer Options	Response Count
	90
<i>answered question</i>	90
<i>skipped question</i>	118

*20.

In which classes, if any, did ethics figure most prominently? (select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
American Government	17.8%	37
International Relations	35.1%	73
Comparative Government	19.7%	41
Political Theory	69.7%	145
Political Economy	1.0%	2
None	3.4%	7
Not sure/Don't know	5.8%	12
	<i>answered question</i>	208
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

21.

For alumni, how well did the major prepare you to deal with professional ethical issues and challenges?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very well	13.2%	10
Somewhat well	34.2%	26
Neutral	36.8%	28
Somewhat poorly	5.3%	4
Very poorly	1.3%	1
Not sure/Don't know	9.2%	7
<i>answered question</i>		76
<i>skipped question</i>		132

Note: Although only 58 respondents identified as previous graduates in Question 1, 76 respondents answered this question for alumni.

22.

For alumni, how well did the major prepare you for what you do now?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very well	16.4%	11
Somewhat well	49.3%	33
Neutral	17.9%	12
Somewhat poorly	7.5%	5
Very poorly	0.0%	0
Not sure/Don't know	9.0%	6
<i>answered question</i>		67
<i>skipped question</i>		141

Note: Although only 58 respondents identified as previous graduates in Question 1, 67 respondents answered this question for alumni.

23.

For alumni, what skills that you developed in the major do you find yourself using most in your current schooling or profession? (select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Academic writing (research papers, literature reviews, etc.)	43.3%	29
Policy-oriented writing	34.3%	23
Presentation/Oral communication skills	49.3%	33
Quantitative methods	17.9%	12
Qualitative/comparative methods	28.4%	19
Textual analysis/Exegesis	17.9%	12
Inferential logic/Argumentation	49.3%	33
N/A (current student)	9.0%	6
Other (please specify)	1.5%	1
	<i>answered question</i>	67
	<i>skipped question</i>	141

Note: Although only 58 respondents identified as previous graduates in Question 1, 67 respondents answered this question for alumni, including six who identified as current students.

24. [Open-ended Response]

Are there skills that you wish you had learned in the department or methods that you wish you had been exposed to? (open to both alumni and current students)	
Answer Options	Response Count
	86
	<i>answered question</i> 86
	<i>skipped question</i> 122

25. [Open-ended Response]

What did you like/dislike about introductory courses? These include U.S. Political Systems, Comparative Political Systems, Introduction to International Relations, and Elements of Political Theory.	
Answer Options	Response Count
	124
<i>answered question</i>	124
<i>skipped question</i>	84

26. [Open-ended response]

What did you like/dislike about upper-level classes in the major?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	111
<i>answered question</i>	111
<i>skipped question</i>	97

*27.

How satisfied were you in general with the teaching in the department?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very satisfied	47.6%	99
Somewhat satisfied	38.5%	80
Neutral	7.2%	15
Somewhat dissatisfied	5.3%	11
Very dissatisfied	1.4%	3
Not sure/Don't know	0.0%	0
	<i>answered question</i>	208
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

28. [Open-ended Response]

Please provide any additional comments you would like to add about teaching in the department.	
Answer Options	Response Count
	64
<i>answered question</i>	64
<i>skipped question</i>	144

*29.

How helpful were discussion sections in the introductory courses?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very helpful	12.5%	26
Somewhat helpful	43.8%	91
Neutral	16.8%	35
Somewhat unhelpful	15.4%	32
Very unhelpful	10.1%	21
Not sure/Don't know	1.4%	3
	<i>answered question</i>	208
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

30. [Open-ended Response]

Please provide any additional comments you would like to add about discussion sections.	
Answer Options	Response Count
	82
<i>answered question</i>	82
<i>skipped question</i>	126

31. [Open-ended Response]

What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the government major?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	104
<i>answered question</i>	104
<i>skipped question</i>	104

32.

For alumni, did you have the opportunity to engage in some kind of integrative experience for your major during your final year? If so, which?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Senior thesis	45.5%	15
Other capstone project/presentation	24.2%	8
Portfolio	0.0%	0
Film or multimedia project	6.1%	2
Other (please specify)	24.2%	8
	<i>answered question</i>	33
	<i>skipped question</i>	175

33.

For alumni, would you have liked to have had some sort of integrative experience? If so, what kind would you have preferred?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Senior thesis	53.7%	22
Other capstone project/presentation	19.5%	8
Portfolio	4.9%	2
Film or multimedia project	12.2%	5
Other (please specify)	9.8%	4
	<i>answered question</i>	41
	<i>skipped question</i>	167

*34.

One possible way to change the undergraduate curriculum would be to shift from subfields like American Politics and Comparative Government to a model recently implemented by some other prominent schools. These curricula include broader subfields such as "Political Behavior and Identities," "Political Institutions," and "Justice and Law," among other fields. Would you favor such a change?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	26.0%	54
No	20.2%	42
Not sure/Need more information	46.2%	96
It would make no difference	3.8%	8
Other (please specify)	3.8%	8
<i>answered question</i>		208
<i>skipped question</i>		0

35.

Please elaborate on your response to the last question.

Answer Options	Response Count
	113
<i>answered question</i>	113
<i>skipped question</i>	95