

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs
School of Political Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
Cycle: 2022-2023

Date: 14 December 2023

I. Programs

- Honours BSocSc in International Studies and Modern Languages

II. Evaluation Process (Outline of the visit)

- This Final Assessment Report on the above programs was prepared from the following documents: 1) the self-study report produced by the academic unit; 2) the report of the external evaluation following the virtual visit; 3) the responses prepared by program leadership, André Laliberté and Frédéric Vairel, and a response by Vicky Barham, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences.
- The site visit took place on 29 June 2023, and was conducted by the following two external evaluators: 1) Yves Tiberghien, University of British Columbia and 2) Trygve Ugland, Bishop's University.
- During the site visit, the external evaluators met with the Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs, Alain St-Amant, the Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, André Beauchemin, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Vicky Barham, the Vice-Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Hélène Pellerin, the Director of the Program, André Laliberté, the chair of the academic unit, Frédéric Vairel, members of the support staff, regular professors and graduate students.

III. Summary of Reports on the Quality of Programs

Strengths

- A good match between the objectives of the program and the current demand of government and society in terms of training and preparation for future professionals who can work in our complex and more interdependent world, while being aware of the crucial importance of culture differences and misperceptions.
- A good match between the objectives pursued and the general design of the curriculum. The curriculum is rich, rigorous, diverse, and very creative.
- A unique and powerful positioning as the only tri-lingual program in international studies in Canada, which represents a considerable competitive advantage.
- A good and rare combination of languages, exposure to humanities, and social science (especially Political Science)
- A high quality of courses, as assessed by evaluations and confirmed by the feedback we received from students. Student satisfaction with the curriculum and courses seems high.
- Good rapport and relationship between student representatives and the Director, staff, and faculty of the program. We were struck by the congruence of the narratives and descriptions received from students, from the administrative staff, and faculty and management. This indicates good mutual understanding and constructive relationships.

- The quality of the MUN and internship program, which appear to involve about 6 students from EILM in total per year (15-20% of the cohort). These are great assets.
- Multidisciplinary programs are often marked by coordination challenges, but it seems like a sound and appropriate governance structure has been established after the previous program review recommendations.
- The EILM program seems to attract strong students and there is a good balance between anglophone and francophone students.

Challenges

- The need for more flexibility regarding classes in Religion (given that critical required courses are often either not available or full and can block future options for students).
- The need for more offerings and more flexibility with respect to language courses.
- The great demand for Japanese, as well as Mandarin Chinese and Korean is unfulfilled. Language course requirements also function as a bottleneck that prevent the program from growing further. They also limit the mobility of students in exchange programs.
- The need to offer non-Western political thought and more Indigenous knowledge content to match student demand and interests.
- The need to provide more relevant and applied courses in Economics for students who wish to have this component in their portfolio.
- The need to add more optional courses from the International Development and Globalization (DVM) and Conflict Studies and Human Rights (ECH) programs.
- The need to build more cohort identity, either through a EILM seminar in third year, or through a couple dedicated events per semester that bring the cohort together around high level speakers and possibly some food and chances for socialization.
- The need to support meaningful international experiences for a larger portion of the cohort, given the *raison d'être* of this program, including more opportunities to spend a semester abroad in countries that match the third language requirements chosen by students.

IV. Program Improvement

The external evaluators' recommendations are contained in the Unit's Response and Action Plan, in the appendix.

V. Summary and Assessment of the Proposed Action Plan ¹

The External Reviewer's recommendations were addressed by program leadership via an action plan that was considered by the Senate Committee on the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs (SCEUP) at its meeting of December 14, 2023.

The program leadership agreed with all recommendations of the external evaluation. The actions to be taken and the timetable are clearly defined and have been endorsed by the Dean's Office. The SCEUP is satisfied with the program leadership's response.

¹ See the Appendix for the Unit Response and Action plan.

VI. Conclusion

The review exercise confirmed the strength and stability of the programs offered and identified recommendations for their ongoing improvement. The members of the Committee would like to thank the external evaluators for their detailed assessment, as well as all the stakeholders involved in this cyclical program review process.

VII. Schedule and Timelines

A progress report that outlines the completed actions and subsequent results will be submitted to the evaluation committee by December 15, 2026.

The next cyclical review will take place in no more than eight years, in 2029-2030. The self-study brief must be submitted no later than June 15, 2029.

Unit Response and Action Plan

Faculty:

- Faculty of Social Sciences

Department:

- School of Political Studies

Programs evaluated:

- Honours BSocSc in International Studies and Modern Languages

Cyclical review period:

- 2022-2023

Date:

- September 11, 2023

General comments:

On June 29, 2023, the Honours BSocSc in International Studies and Modern Languages (EIL) program committee read the evaluation produced by the external reviewers for the cyclical program evaluation. We are very pleased with the positive evaluation of our undergraduate and multi-disciplinary program and commend the reviewers for their recommendations. Given that the EIL undergraduate program has committed to providing an outstanding training and research experience, we were gratified to see that the external reviewers found that our program “was designed in a very ambitious and visionary way”, that “it matches well with the demands of the job market in the government, in international business, in NGOs, and in society in the context of the new Indo-Pacific strategy launched by Canada.” and that “they found unanimous enthusiasm about the program and the training it provided to students”. The report makes five recommendations, all of which we consider high priority. We agree fully with the substance of all the recommendations and feel strongly that by proactively addressing them, our graduate program will be in better position to meet the expectations of the students. We outline below our responses to the recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Increase the proportion of the cohort with meaningful international exposure, including exchange programs abroad in the country of their third language (with removal of obstacles in terms of language requirements and more incentives and financial support)
Unit response: Agree
Decanal response: Strongly support this vision, and will encourage EIL to make this option a ‘stream’ to which students can apply directly, and with pre-identified partners so that the problems of equivalencies, etc. are already sorted out and students have a plug-and-play option. I would note that the International Office has a VERY significant sum of money available to support BIPOC and First Gen students participating in this sort of initiative, which they cannot at present find enough students to access (the requirement is that they also participate in uOGlobal). I would really like to see this up and out the door as soon as possible.
Priority Level*: ADVISED
Actions to be undertaken: Action 1 Increasing the proportion of students with meaningful experience has three dimension, each requiring different tasks performed by different units. The first action implies a change in curriculum, which recommends that students take one or two semesters abroad. We cannot make that mandatory, because of issues of accessibility and equity for the students who cannot afford mobility. We should nevertheless think of alternative for students who cannot travel abroad, for example replacing the travel abroad by a coop internship in an embassy.
Assigned to: Person(s) in charge of action 1 would be the EIL Program Director, in coordination with the other members of the committee
Timeline: Timeline for action 1 could be effective in the Fall of 2024, with changes approved by the relevant academic committees, according to the following schedule: SPS assembly, September 14; submission to FSS Vice-Dean, September 21 st ; FSS Undergraduate studies committee, October 2 nd ; FSS Faculty Council, October 13 th ; Undergraduate studies council, November 16 th ; and Senate, December 5 th .
Curriculum change? no
Priority Level: Although we consider this issue as very important, it depends on factors over which the Program Committee, the School of Political Studies, and even the two Faculties (Social Sciences and Arts), have little say.
Actions to be undertaken: Action 2. In relation to the above comments, the Bureau for International Partnerships Development should make all the information available on studying abroad and related financial assistance in a listserv that include all the students registered in the EIL program.
Assigned to: Person(s) in charge of action 2 would be the EIL Program Director, in coordination with members of the Bureau for International Partnerships Development.

* PRIORITY LEVEL: 1. URGENT-IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED 2. IMPORTANT-ACTION REQUIRED WITHIN 18 MONTHS (MAXIMUM) 3. ADVISED: DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY-ACTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND MUST BE IN PLACE BY MID-CYCLE (WITHIN 4 YEARS)

<p>Timeline: Timeline for action 2 will depend on the availability of information provided by the Bureau for International Partnerships Development and other sources of financial assistance for students.</p>
<p>Curriculum change? no</p>
<p>Priority Level: ADVISED</p>
<p>Actions to be undertaken: Action 3. In relation to action 1 and 2, ways should be found to make financial assistance available to students who want to take a semester or two abroad. Such an initiative could come from the Bureau for International Partnerships Development’s contact with embassies in addition to other units within the University.</p>
<p>Assigned to: Person(s) in charge of action 3 would be the EIL Program Director in coordination with the members of the Bureau for International Partnerships Development.</p>
<p>Timeline: Timeline for action 3 will depend on the availability of information provided by the Bureau for International Partnerships Development and other sources of financial assistance for students.</p>
<p>Curriculum change? no</p>

Recommendation 2: Increase access to East Asian languages (Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, and eventually, Korean)

Unit response: Agree

Decanal response: The hiring of language professors is something that is managed through the Faculty of Arts. Hiring a professor of Japanese was, in fact, prioritized by the Faculty of Arts in the most recent round of position requests, but the position was not funded. The current financial challenges of uOttawa make me pessimistic about the position request being accepted in the very short term, but I wonder whether it might not be possible to pursue an alternative strategy, such as a faculty exchange, and to send a uOttawa faculty member to a Japanese university for one (or two) year, in exchange for them sending us a language professor? We have established a close relationship with Waseda University, and I strongly suspect that they would have real appetite for such an arrangement. In particular, they teach a certain number of courses in English, so the possibility of finding a 'match' might be quite high. A similar strategy might be used for Mandarin.

Priority Level*: URGENT In light of our University's mission of encouraging international mobility among students; its location in the federal capital and the high demand of government for students who have international experience and knowledge of a third ASIAN language, and in the context of the multi-partisan agreement of the federal government to develop a comprehensive Indo-Pacific strategy that include the training of social scientists with an exposure to all aspects of Asian societies, including languages and cultures, we enter into a new context that requires a broader engagement in positioning our university as a center of excellence in Asian languages and culture.

Actions to be undertaken: Action 1: It is an absolute necessity that we hire a colleague who can function as a coordinator for East Asian studies, in order to meet the goals of offering more courses in East Asian languages and cultures, and to avail ourselves of the support of the respective embassies for the three languages indicated in recommendation 2. Our two priorities are Mandarin and Japanese, which are both in high demand. Because these two languages are very popular and in high demand among students, the addition of further course sections in Mandarin and Japanese would require additional resources to hire part-time instructors.

Assigned to: The person(s) in charge of action 1 would be the director of the Modern Languages Department, with the full support of the whole EIL committee.

Timeline: Timeline for action 1 should be within the academic year 2024-25, with preferably a position of professor advertised in the Fall of 2024, for a possible entry into function in July 1st. That new professor should be ready to act as coordinator for East Asian Studies. We are ready to explore the possibility of cooperating with the education attaches of the Embassy of Japan or the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office to explore the possibility of financial support for the eventual hiring of a language instructor. Such a possibility could liberate funding for the hiring of a second professor in the other language.

* PRIORITY LEVEL: 1. URGENT-IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED 2. IMPORTANT-ACTION REQUIRED WITHIN 18 MONTHS (MAXIMUM) 3. ADVISED: DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY-ACTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND MUST BE IN PLACE BY MID-CYCLE (WITHIN 4 YEARS)

Curriculum change? No curriculum change is needed because the bank of courses is already available.
Priority Level: IMPORTANT I refer to the comments made above for action 1
Actions to be undertaken: Action 2: We believe that we should hire an instructor for the other language, either Japanese or Mandarin, among the two languages that we have prioritized above. Preferably, that position of instructor should be converted into that of a tenured-track professor.
Assigned to: The Person(s) in charge of action 2 would remain the Director of the Modern Languages Department.
Timeline: Timeline for action 2 could coincide with the timeline for action 1 for the hiring of a sessional lecturer. In an optimum scenario, we could have a second position opened in 2024-25.
Curriculum change? no
Priority Level: IMPORTANT see comments for action 1 and 2
Actions to be undertaken: Action 3: The addition of a full sequence of Korean courses, and the hiring of a sessional lecturer, with the possibility of a third hiring for a full-time professor.
Assigned to: same as above for actions 1 and 2
Timeline: action 3 should be in place in mid-cycle.
Curriculum change? no

Recommendation 3: Increase flexibility in the management of RELIG, GEOG, and Language requirements of the program.
Unit response: Agree
Decanal response: Strongly supportive of moving quickly in implementing this recommendation.
Priority Level*: URGENT This recommendation addresses an issue that has become increasingly problematic in recent years, as many of the professors teaching the courses RELIG and GEOG have retired, or their unit has not programmed the course often enough. The program director must spend an unusual amount of time granting exceptions to students who cannot meet the requirement of taking the courses RELIG because of a lack of availability.
Actions to be undertaken: Action 1 consists in changing requirements for the courses RELIG and GEOG, which should be waived so that these courses become electives or optional courses.
Assigned to: Person(s) in charge of action 1 will be the EIL Program Director, who will seek agreement of, and cooperation with, the directors of the units that administer the RELIG and GEOG courses at the undergraduate level. The EIL director will seek approval for changes from the School of Political Studies, and then propose the changes at the Faculty of Social Sciences undergraduate committee.
Timeline: Timeline for action 1 could be effective in the Fall of 2024, with changes approved by the relevant academic committees, according to the following schedule: SPS assembly, September 14; submission to FSS Vice-Dean, September 21st; FSS Undergraduate studies committee, October 2nd; FSS Faculty Council, October 13th.
Curriculum change? This change represents a minor modification to the program
Priority Level: URGENT The recommendation about the language requirements is relevant: It is to ensure that students who are bilingual in Canada's both official languages can take a test to confirm their fluency and thereby obtain a waiver that gives them more choice for other courses. The issue is to advertise more clearly that this flexibility exists already.
Actions to be undertaken: Action 2 is a matter of giving greater visibility to the possibility of waiving a language course and moving to a higher level upon demonstration of the required competence.
Assigned to: Person(s) in charge of action 2 are the Directors of Undergraduate Studies in the Modern Language Department and ILOB, who know how to administer the relevant language tests, as well as personnel in charge of communications to make sure students are informed about their options.
Timeline: Timeline for action 2 could be implemented in the Fall at the same time as action 1.
Curriculum change? No

* PRIORITY LEVEL: 1. URGENT-IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED 2. IMPORTANT-ACTION REQUIRED WITHIN 18 MONTHS (MAXIMUM) 3. ADVISED: DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY-ACTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND MUST BE IN PLACE BY MID-CYCLE (WITHIN 4 YEARS)

Recommendation 4: Increase EILM identity among students through an occasional seminar series with high profile speakers
Unit response: Agree
Decanal response: I am also highly enthusiastic about this approach. I would encourage EILM to work with the student association to develop the speaker series. If the student association took the lead, then this could become an experiential learning activity that generated academic credit as well as creating EILM identity. I strongly discourage making this something that is faculty-member led – the students (with support) have tremendous capacity to bring this project to fruition.
Priority Level*: ADVISED
Actions to be undertaken: Action 1 should be undertaken on a monthly basis, with the organisation of a seminar series with high profile speakers, who could be faculty members, guest speakers from government, embassies, or the private sector. Presence at such kind of activities should be strongly encouraged by language professors, who are likely to have higher proportion of EIL students in their classes than POL professors and those in other disciplines. Making attendance to seminar series mandatory could increase a sense of identity among EIL students, although the incentive will need to be found: if attendance is mandatory and limited to EIL students, we would need to have a list serve with the email addresses of EIL students, the same that could be use by the Bureau for International Partnerships Development. Making attendance optional may lead to a problem of low attendance at events, a problem that could be addressed by making the event open to all, but in that case we risk not meeting the initial objective of generating a sense of EIL identity.
Assigned to: Person(s) in charge of action 1 will be the Director of the EIL Program, in coordination with the other members of the committee.
Timeline: Timeline for action 1 would be flexible, depending on the availability of speakers on any given month. Ideally, as suggested above, it should be monthly.
Curriculum change? no

* PRIORITY LEVEL: 1. URGENT-IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED 2. IMPORTANT-ACTION REQUIRED WITHIN 18 MONTHS (MAXIMUM)
3. ADVISED: DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY-ACTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND MUST BE IN PLACE BY MID-CYCLE (WITHIN 4 YEARS)

Recommendation 5: Offer courses in non-Western political thought and comparative Indigenous politics
Unit response: Agree
Decanal response: Strongly support this approach.
Priority Level*: IMPORTANT the EIL committee agrees wholeheartedly with this recommendation because it also meets our objectives of decolonizing the curriculum. The course 3102 will also meet the broader objectives announced above for recommendation 2
Actions to be undertaken: Action 1: We will change the requirement for POL 3102 Modern Political Thought/ POL 3502 Pensée politique moderne II into a requirement of choosing that course or POL 3110 Non-Western Political Thought/POL 3510 Pensée politique non occidentale or POL 3182 Indigenous Political Thought/POL 3582 Pensée politique autochtone.
Assigned to: Person(s) in charge of action 1 will be the EIL Program Director, who will seek the approval from the School of Political Studies, and then propose the changes at the Faculty of Social Sciences undergraduate committee and other relevant units.
Timeline: Timeline for action 1 could be effective in the Fall of 2024, with changes approved by the relevant academic committees, according to the following schedule: SPS assembly, September 14; submission to FSS Vice-Dean, September 21st; FSS Undergraduate studies committee, October 2nd; FSS Faculty Council, October 13th.
Curriculum change? This change represents a minor modification to the program
Priority Level: IMPORTANT See remarks above for Action 1
Actions to be undertaken: Action 2: We will add an option to take POL 3181 International and Comparative Politics of Indigenous Peoples/POL 3581 Politique internationale et comparée des peuples autochtones and we hope to hire a colleague who can teach that course on a regular basis so we can turn the option to take that course into a requirement in the programme.
Assigned to: Person(s) in charge of action 2 will be the same as person for action 1
Timeline: Timeline for action 2 will be the same as the one for action 1
Curriculum change? This change represents a minor modification to the program
Priority Level: IMPORTANT see comments for action 1

* PRIORITY LEVEL: 1. URGENT-IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED 2. IMPORTANT-ACTION REQUIRED WITHIN 18 MONTHS (MAXIMUM) 3. ADVISED: DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY-ACTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND MUST BE IN PLACE BY MID-CYCLE (WITHIN 4 YEARS)