

## Delaware Technical and Community College Wilmington, Delaware

**INSTRUCTOR** Professor Sandra C. Brisiel

**COURSES** POL 111 Politics (American Government)

**LEVEL** Introductory

**TEXTS** Living Democracy Brief National Edition, 2/e, by Shea, et al. with MyPoliSciLab

**TERMS COVERED** Summer and Fall 2010

**CONTRIBUTION OF MYPOLISCI LAB TO FINAL GRADE** 80%

**TYPES OF DATA REPORTED** Improvement in final course grades; improvement in retention

**COURSE STRUCTURE** Online and traditional

STUDENTS ENTERING PROFESSOR SANDRA BRISIEL'S POLITICS COURSE are a diverse group. Some arrive directly from high school while others have significant workforce experience and are launching a new career or augmenting professional credentials. The majority of Brisiel's students, however, have in common a sense of being intimidated by politics because they don't understand American history and politics.

With enrollments at Delaware Technical and Community College increasing and demand growing for more online courses, Professor Brisiel sought a curriculum platform that would:

- Engage students, dispel students' anxiety, and motivate them to discover the relevance of the material
- Offer an equally robust learning experience for online ('click') courses and traditional ('brick') courses
- Address a wide array of student learning abilities and function levels
- Improve overall retention rates and final course grades

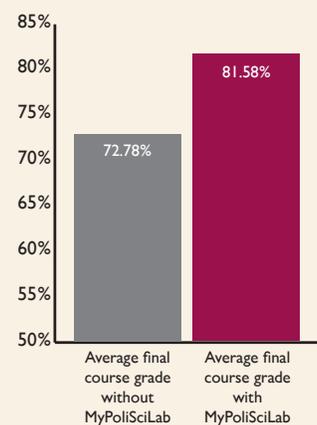
Professor Brisiel selected MyPoliSciLab and introduced it to students first as an additional resource. Based on positive student evaluations and her own observations of students' engagement with MyPoliSciLab, Brisiel made MyPoliSciLab the core curriculum plat-

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—Professor Sandra C. Brisiel

form for all sections, both online and traditional, of POL 111. Students are required to complete the "Citizenship Test" as a pre- and post-test. All of the course assignments are delivered and completed through the "News and Videos" section that links media resources to course content; activities target and develop students' critical thinking abilities. Weekly online class discussions allow Brisiel to monitor students' progress and offer one-on-one assistance to students who need additional help. Assignment and exam scores are automatically recorded and tracked in MyPoliSciLab.

### Improved final course grades with MyPoliSciLab



### ANALYSIS

Students with MyPoliSciLab achieved significantly higher final course scores, the equivalent of a full letter grade higher than students without MyPoliSciLab.

### Improved retention with MyPoliSciLab

	Without MyPoliSciLab	With MyPoliSciLab
# Students	25	24
# Withdrawals	5	3
Retention Rate	80%	88%

### ANALYSIS

Retention rates with MyPoliSciLab were significantly improved compared to retention rates without MyPoliSciLab.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

“I have learned a lot this semester. I have **registered to vote** for the upcoming election in November. I received a **92%** on my ‘Citizenship Test’ in MyPoliSciLab—a lot **better grade** than when I took it at the start of the term!”

## LEARNING WITH MYPOLISCI LAB

According to Professor Brisiel, students find the course content challenging but accessible and user-friendly with MyPoliSciLab. She says, “Because MyPoliSciLab breaks the material down and gives students multiple access pathways, students absorb and retain the key concepts. MyPoliSciLab excels at providing effective resources that address a variety of learning abilities, freeing me to focus on the students. I track student activities through MyPoliSciLab and observe students using flash cards to test their vocabulary, viewing videos to review how concepts are applied, etc. MyPoliSciLab really serves my students well.”

She continues, “The qualitative material I have gathered regarding gains in student self-confidence with MyPoliSciLab is impressive. Students who complained about the course in the first week are online encouraging their peers and assisting them in finding material mid-semester. Students are able to track their own progress and focus their study time on areas they need to master for success on exams. This keeps students engaged and fosters student accountability.”

## TEACHING WITH MYPOLISCI LAB

“The extensive and compelling media resources in MyPoliSciLab allow me to integrate ‘real time’ examples to the material in the book and build on lessons so that students understand the relationship between history, policy, and politics’ impact on them as an individual,” says Brisiel. “The immediacy of the source material in MyPoliSciLab enables me to make on the spot connections, helping students connect to why documents like the Constitution, written 300 years ago, are vitally important to their lives today.”

She continues, “MyPoliSciLab has made me step up my game in terms of what and how I present material to students. As a result of MyPoliSciLab, students will now watch the evening news and post questions/comments to the class blog relating the news coverage to topics covered that week in class. Students’ awareness and ability to think critically about course topics is dramatically enhanced through MyPoliSciLab.”

## ENCOURAGING CLASS—AND POLITICAL—PARTICIPATION

“Social engagement is a key theme in our course,” says Professor Brisiel, “and MyPoliSciLab is extremely effective at building students’ competence and confidence to engage in social and political discourse. With MyPoliSciLab, students not only absorb the central concepts of American government, they can communicate and debate those ideas well. Students engage confidently in our end-of-term online debate thanks to the preparation they receive from MyPoliSciLab.”

## RESULTS

Brisiel asserts, “When I saw withdrawals drop from 5 students per term to 2 or 3, I was completely on board with MyPoliSciLab. This course is required for several majors so the improved retention means the world to those students who might have failed but did not because they had MyPoliSciLab.”

## CONCLUSION

Professor Brisiel reports that her experience with MyPoliSciLab has been so unequivocally positive that she has structured all of her online courses in Political Science around MyPoliSciLab.

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