

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): Anthropology

Department: Sociology and Anthropology

Degree or Certificate Level: BA

College/School: Arts & Sciences

Date (Month/Year): June 2023

Assessment Contact: Dr. Bruce O'Neill

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2022

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2021

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization or subject to state/licensure requirements? No

If yes, please share how this affects the program's assessment process (e.g., number of learning outcomes assessed, mandated exams or other assessment methods, schedule or timing of assessment, etc.):

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please provide the complete list of the program's learning outcome statements and **bold** the SLOs assessed in this cycle.)

We assessed learning outcome #3:

Anthropology majors will demonstrate a broad knowledge base in the subfield of cultural anthropology.

Learning outcomes:

- a) Demonstrate familiarity with the anthropological concept of culture;
- b) Apply comparative, holistic, and culturally relativist perspectives to the study of human societies;
- c) Discuss similarities and differences across and within human cultures/societies, including across time.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail, identify the course(s) in which they were collected, and if they are from program majors/graduates and/or other students. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

We analyzed a randomly selected sample of 5 final research projects from the course, ANTH 2200 Cultural Anthropology. The course occurred in Autumn 2022. These projects were primarily literature reviews that required students to: 1) collect data through a search of the internet, on-line anthropological journals, or edited volumes in the library dealing with a specific indigenous or immigrant American people; 2.) provide an ethnographic and historical overview; 3) and then hone in on a more focused topic to reach your own interpretive understanding of the group's history and identity.

Madrid artifacts were not included. (That campus does not have an Anthropology major at this time; we will share our findings with them and invite dialogue, however.)

We also undertook qualitative interviews that asked our graduating seniors about their understanding and comfort with key terms in cultural anthropology.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

Direct Methods:

1) During June 2023, a committee (Dr. Katherine MacKinnon and Dr. Mary Vermillion) evaluated a sample of final research projects (5 of 26) using a rubric that focused on the three learning objectives.

Indirect Methods:

A second committee (Dr. Joel Jennings and Dr. Scott Harris) also conducted focus groups on (5/09) with graduating seniors to identify specific issues with the program’s delivery of cultural anthropology concepts and methodologies.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

A

3	3	1	1	3	4	5	5	1	4.5
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a) 3.7 / 5

B

2	3	1	2	2	3	5	1	2	4.5
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b) 3.7 / 5

C

2	2	2	2	3	4	4.5	5	1	5
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c) 4 / 5

The committee showed consistent scoring across papers and learning objectives, with a modal score of 4. Reviewers generally felt that students used key terms and concepts correctly and with an adequate level of detail.

Both reviewers also noted concerning citational practices across all papers. Students typically listed only one or two peer-reviewed sources in their bibliographies and none of the papers appeared to have consulted an Anthropology specific journal, book, or resource. Both Professors MacKinnon and Vermillion noted that portions of student papers read like Wikipedia entries in the sense of listing facts without proper citation. Dr. MacKinnon noted that one paper in particular had the feel of a Chat Bot-generated text in that it was clear, had accessible examples, but no citations. Reviewer comments underscore the necessity to foreground good citation practices in the classroom. This entails differentiating between peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources as well as teaching students how to cite a source when making a fact claim, including the page number. Enforcing good citational practices should press students to move beyond Wikipedia and Chat Bots to complete original work.

During focus groups, graduating seniors indicated that coursework gave them a strong foundation surrounding the key concepts of cultural anthropology, especially the courses Introduction to Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology. Students felt that their overall coursework gave them a familiarity with different cultures and of an appreciation for cultural context. Graduating students reported an interest in having more socio-cultural electives offered.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you? Address both a) learning gaps and possible curricular or pedagogical remedies, and b) strengths of curriculum and pedagogy.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that the Anthropology program is doing a good job of meeting its learning objectives for cultural anthropology. Our findings in this assessment suggest that Anthropology students are both competent and comfortable with their ability to speak and to write with nuance about cultural context and difference.

The assessment does flag a need for general instruction in good citational practices. This includes identifying the value and appropriateness of sources (peer-reviewed versus non-peer reviewed; discipline-specific sources versus non-discipline specific sources; how to cite a fact claim, etc).

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss the results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

The full-time faculty for the Anthropology program convened in-person on August 18, 2023, to discuss the results of this assessment. Evaluators discussed the broader context of their evaluations and Dr. O'Neill further contextualized his synthesis. A productive discussion ensued as detailed below.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

We recommend that if instructors have written assignments that involve doing research that they incorporate the following: We encourage anthropology instructors to invite the Department's resource librarian to present on proper citational practice; identifying primary and secondary journal sources; evaluating the scholarly quality and character of a website.

As a matter of practice, at the beginning of each year, the Associate Chair will reach out to the instructors of the course to be assessed to ensure there will be an assessable artifact. We will also remind instructors that their assignment does not need to be reconfigured to speak to each learning goal specifically. We assume the learning outcomes to be assessed will be covered across the entirety of the course. The artifact should provide a window onto the character of the course.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of previous assessment

data?

N/A This is our first year assessing this learning objective.

B. How has the change/have these changes identified in 7A been assessed?

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted/appended into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document. Thank you.