

E. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

1. Discussion of Anthropology Undergraduate Program Learning Goals and Assessment Plan

Baccalaureate Anthropology Program (BAP) Learning Goals

The stated learning goals of Illinois State University's BAP are to:

1. explain how humans are a species whose biological, linguistic, technological and social behavioral attributes have been shaped by our evolutionary and cultural past;
2. explain the advantages of the holistic approach in anthropological studies;
3. explain the importance of cultural relativism in understanding human behavior;
4. explain how the archaeological record forms and its importance in understanding human behavior;
5. explain the relationship between language and human socio-cultural behavior, past and present;
6. distinguish between scientific, humanistic and pseudo-scientific explanations and understandings of human biology and behavior;
7. demonstrate knowledge of research methods in biological anthropology
8. demonstrate knowledge of research methods in linguistic anthropology
9. demonstrate knowledge of research methods in archaeological analysis
10. demonstrate knowledge of research methods in cultural anthropology
11. demonstrate the ability to formulate, design and conduct an individual research project using an appropriate research methodology that culminates in an acceptable Senior Thesis.

In essence, we expect students 1) to gain an understanding of major issues and theories in each of the four sub-fields of anthropology and then to be able 2) to develop and complete a research project in one of these subfields and 3) to present their results in both an oral and written form that meets disciplinary standards.

What is not directly stated in these goals but implied in our curriculum are:

- A. understanding of the ethical standards for research in four subfields of anthropology
- B. ability to locate and appropriately use library and information sources specific to anthropology;
- C. ability to evaluate and critique existing research on substantive, methodological or ethical grounds;
- D. utilize original data
- E. ability to synthesize data from multiple sources
- F. ability to form and defend an argument
- G. ability to write according to disciplinary standards of form and style
- H. ability to give oral presentations of research
- I. develop interpersonal and team skills
- J. self-regulation and self-guided learning

BAP Assessment Plan

The assessment strategy for the BAP comprises three methods: A) an entrance and exit survey, B) embedded assessment in the undergraduate core curriculum that includes an assessment of a 200-level assignment using a rubric that focuses on theory, and C) a detailed assessment of each student’s senior thesis project. In addition, and although not formally a part of the assessment plan, D) the annual Alumni Survey provides program feedback.

A) **The Entrance and Exit Interview.** Each student is asked to complete a survey in introductory anthropology classes and as they complete the senior thesis in anthropology course. This course cannot be taken until all of the core is completed or in progress.

For each item, please indicate your current skill level.	Not at all skilled	Somewhat skilled	Very skilled	I am unsure of my skill level
<p>1. The discipline of anthropology and its role in contributing to our understanding of humans</p> <p><i>Rate your ability to:</i></p> <p>a) describe how anthropology differs from and is similar to other disciplines.</p> <p>b) describe how humans are a species whose biological, linguistic, technological and social behavioral attributes have been shaped by our evolutionary and cultural past</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p>
<p>2. The role of method and theory in anthropology</p> <p><i>Rate your ability to:</i></p> <p>a) to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments and evidence in the field of anthropology</p> <p>b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations.</p> <p>c) distinguish between scientific, humanistic and pseudo-scientific explanations and understandings of human biology and behavior</p> <p>d) understand the ethical standards for research in four subfields of anthropology</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>
<p>3. The use of anthropological research methods</p> <p><i>Rate your ability to:</i></p> <p>a) identify basic methodological approaches.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>

b) compare and contrast basic methodological approaches for gathering data.	1	2	3	4
c) design a research study that culminates in an acceptable Senior Thesis.	1	2	3	4
d) gather, analyze, and interpret data.	1	2	3	4
e) critically assess published research	1	2	3	4

The questions are based on our learning goals. Ryan Gray, our advisor and assistant to the chair, will administer the test to students using one of the available online tools. For our undergraduate programs he will send students the test while they are in introductory courses and at the end of their careers as they complete their Capstone Experience/Senior Thesis.

B. The Core and Embedded Assessment. Each core course is specifically designed to present our students with the information and skills that are reflected in the program goals and to provide the student with an assessment of their mastery of the informational, methodological, theoretical, and applied aspects of doing anthropology. These assessments are provided via the assignments for each class. Majors must earn a “C” grade or better in all required courses.

- a) **Human Origins: An Introduction to Biological Anthropology and Archaeology** (Anthropology 102) introduces students to the study of human biological variability and biological and cultural evolution. It focuses on how humans have adapted to change during our biological history and the evolutionary basis of current variation. This course provides basic understanding of goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 9.
- b) **Human Cultures: An Introduction to Cultural and Linguistic Anthropology** (Anthropology 185). This course introduces students to the basic concepts of cultural and linguistic anthropology, focusing on the complexity and variability of human societies. This course provides basic understanding of goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, and 10.
- c) **Principles of Archaeology** (Anthropology 274). This course requires a C or better in 102. It discusses how archaeology is conducted and how scientific questions are posed and researched about the human past using archaeological data. This course reinforces student mastery of goals 1, 2, 3, 6, and 9. Additionally it enhances mastery of implied goals A, B, C, and J.
- d) **Principles of Language and Culture** (Anthropology 277). Requires a C in Anthropology 185 and provides students with an understanding of how language and culture are interrelated. The class also introduces students to linguistic anthropology

- research methodologies. This class reinforces student mastery of goals 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8 as well as implied goals A, B, and C.
- e) Principles of Ethnology (Anthropology 281). Like 274 and 277, a C is required in 185 to take this class. Ethnology provides a detailed picture of how cultural anthropologists study contemporary human societies and the major social institutions that define those societies. Anthropology 281 reinforces mastery of goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10. It also reinforces mastery of implied goals A, B, C, G, and J.
 - f) Principles of Paleoanthropology (Anthropology 350). This course examines human evolutionary history as reflected in the fossil record and the scientific principles and biological processes that apply to that study. It reinforces mastery of goals 1, 7, and 10 and applied goals B, C, E, F, G, and J.
 - g) Key Concepts in Anthropology History and Theory (Anthropology 380). As the first of the program's two-course capstone, Key Concepts requires a C or better in all of the previous core courses. This class specifically enhances mastery of goals 1, 2, and 3. As a capstone course it also enhances several implied goals, particularly A, B, C, F, G, and J.
 - h) Senior Thesis (Anthropology 382). The second of the program's capstone classes, senior thesis requires each student to define an anthropologically relevant research question, research this question, and present results in both written and oral forms. It requires demonstration of mastery by each individual student of goal 11, as well as other goals relevant to the subject matter of individual student projects. Mastery must also be demonstrated for all of the implied goals.

In addition to these embedded assessments, assignments from a 200 level course will be sampled and evaluated using the following rubric with a focus on theory.

200-Level Assignment Evaluation Rubric

SHORT ESSAY RUBRIC

Embedded assessment of BAP Learning Goals (#1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 10) in Anthropology 281,
Principles of Anthropology PROGRAM ASSESSMENT
SHORT ESSAY RUBRIC

Embedded assessment of BAP Learning Goals (#1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 10) in Anthropology 281,
Principles of Socio-Cultural Anthropology.

Students will be asked to write 2 short essays (one at the beginning and one at the end) of anthropology 281. The essays will both focus on an ethnography/ethnographic case study from the semester. In each, students will be asked to identify a cultural group (or discuss the problems of doing so); discuss historical development of sociocultural attributes; display cultural relativism in their discussion; use key anthropological terms that are used in the work; provide specific theoretical questions addressed in the research on the group; and identify the

contribution of the research to social science. Essay will be evaluated using the guidelines for the assignment and the rubric below by a faculty member or graduate student.

Example Question for a student essay:

Choose on the cultural groups we have read about this semester. Describe the social/cultural group and the particular methods used by anthropologists to conduct their studies. Discuss the theoretical issues addressed by the study (including any key theories, theorists, or concepts). Explain what you learn about this group or what you found valuable about the research, and explain how and why this work makes a contribution to the field of anthropology or the ways it fails to do so. Be sure to write in a concise, well-organized essay that is free of grammatical errors. Be sure to appropriately cite all sources used in your essay.

LEARNING GOAL/ SCORE	0	2	4
Use of Anthropological Concepts (e.g. race, class, tribe, culture, discourse, kinship, gender, ethnicity, etc)	none or only those presented in essay question	a few basic terms used but not defined or discussed (or incorrect usage)	many and varied terms used to show competence applying terms
Understanding of Culture	none or only identifies the group as presented in essay question; inability to discuss group in non-ethnocentric manner	Identifies a group including cultural characteristics; shows some cultural/historical relativism	Discusses multiple aspects of affiliation/cultural belonging; discusses the historical emergence or change in culture and culture groups; shows awareness of the problems of ethnocentrism
Use of Anthropological Theory/Theorists	No discussion of theory	Makes explicit reference to a theory/theorists with some discussion	Discusses the various ways of thinking about the topic/ specific contributions of one theoretical school/ Discusses debates or mentions alternative understandings of issues at hand
Anthropological data collection and analysis	Not addressed/ erroneous statements regarding	Reference to methods but without	Able to discuss the anthropological

	ethnographic or anthropological methods	connection to larger issues or arguments made from that data in the text	methods and the ways that show a link between data collection, data analysis, and conclusions
Contribution	Not addressed/ opinions expressed on text without addressing the authors' arguments argument (ie "I liked it;" "it was interesting.")	Contributions (conclusions) of study for anthropological knowledge are briefly mentioned.	Student able to evaluate authors' contribution to field by specifically linking text to larger issues in anthropology
Essay Grammar and References	Informal/unprofessional; unorganized; poor grammar	Contains a few errors but grammar and mechanics do not interfere with main points	Well-organized essay written in concise and professional academic style
Sources	Sources not cited	Errors in citation methods; or citations lacking; information lacking	Appropriately cites sources in line with disciplinary guidelines

Gina Hunter, July 2016

C. Senior Thesis. The senior thesis course (Anthropology 382) is a true capstone experience for seniors. Under the guidance of an anthropology faculty member, each student develops a research project, designs the implementation of the project, gathers data, analyzes and interprets the data collected, and presents the findings in written and oral forms. In so doing, students employ anthropological theory, specific methodological and analytical approaches. Each student is evaluated by faculty according to a set of rubrics intended to reflect level of mastery of several specific learning goals articulated above.

Senior Thesis Evaluation Rubric

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Exceeds Expectations</u>	<u>Meets Expectations</u>	<u>Below Expectations</u>
Research Question/ Topic	Question is challenging, well thought out; demonstrates thorough understanding of topic area and research needs.	Question is clearly stated and thought out; demonstrates acceptable understanding of topic area and research needs.	Question lacks clarity and focus; lack of understanding of topic area and research needs.

Literature	In-depth, thorough review of pertinent literature; solid synthesis of literature cited; ties literature to their study very well.	Adequate review of pertinent literature; good synthesis of literature; ties literature to their study well.	Inadequate literature review; little or no synthesis of literature; does not tie literature to their study well.
Theory	Excellent demonstration of theoretical knowledge; Ties in theory to study very well.	Good demonstration of theoretical knowledge; Ties in theory to study well.	Inadequate demonstration of theoretical knowledge. Does not tie theory in well.
Methodology	Excellent understanding and appropriate use of methodology; in depth understanding of limitations of methods.	Adequate understanding and appropriate use of methodology; clearly understands limitations of methods.	Methodology inadequate, incomplete or inappropriate; lack of understanding of limitations of methods
Analysis	Excellent analysis of information (data).	Adequate analysis of information (data).	Poor analysis of information (data).
Reporting and Discussion of Results	Strong connection between background information and results. Excellent interpretation and discussion of results.	Adequate connection between background information and results. Adequate interpretation and discussion of results.	Weak connection between background information & results. Weak interpretation and discussion of results.
Quality of Writing	Excellent writing skills and error free.	Adequate writing skills with limited errors.	Writing skills lacking and errors common.
Quality of Presentation	Excellent presentation with well-done visual aids, articulate speech, strong organization, effective handling of questions.	Good presentation with solid visual aids, clear speech, good organization good handling of questions.	Weak presentation with inadequate visual aids, unclear speaking poor organization, inadequate handling of questions.

D) Alumni Survey. Although not a part of the formal plan, the department chair and select others also review the results of the annual Alumni Survey provided by University Assessment Services. Unfortunately, the response rate is low (49 over 6 years) which limits the usefulness of these data. Additionally these data are aggregated for the entire department, not separated between sociology and anthropology graduates.

The collection and use of assessment data

Survey data will be collected each fall in Anth 185 and in the Spring in Anth 382. The 200 level assignment rubric will be completed by the advising GA and the Senior Thesis rubric will be completed by faculty during the public presentations. Each summer the graduate coordinator will analyze these data and prepare a one-page report that will be provided to the chair by the start of the Fall semester. The chair will then share these data with the undergraduate curriculum committee who will make suggestions to the chair.