

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

Anthropology, Bachelor of Arts

College of Liberal Arts

2012-2014

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1. Assessment information collected

Per our 2012 SLOA plan:

- All students enrolled in the capstone course (ANTH F411: Senior Seminar) are given a standardized, summative exercise (10 questions) designed to assess facility in four areas:
 1. A basic understanding of particular national traditions of anthropological research, major research paradigms, and the importance of the introduction of particular methods.
 2. An understanding of methods of fieldwork, comparative and social and cultural analytical methods and their limitations and ethical dimensions.
 3. Knowledge of a range of social and cultural configurations and critical perspectives on folk concepts.
 4. Exhibit effective skills in written and oral communication.
- All students enrolled in ANTH 411 will be given an exit survey with emphasis on student's overall assessment of the content and quality of education received in anthropology.
- Alumni survey will be sent to graduates the year after they complete the program with emphasis on success in continuing education and/or employment in a related field.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

- **Summative exercise:**

The standardized, summative exercise was administered to a total of 16 BA students enrolled in ANTH 411 during the Spring Semester in 2013 and 2014. The students were given ten questions and asked to respond to at least five. The resulting essays were scored by the instructor of Senior Seminar (in 2013 and 2014), the BA Coordinator (in 2013 and 2014), the BS

Coordinator (in 2014) and the Outcomes Assessment Coordinator (in 2013) on the following scale: W= substantial wrong information; U= unsatisfactory; UP= unsatisfactory but partial; SP= satisfactory but partial (missing some pertinent information); S= satisfactory; VS= very satisfactory.

In summarizing we ranked as satisfactory all answers scored "VS", "S" and "SP". Similarly we ranked as unsatisfactory those scored as "U", "UP" and "W".

1. A basic understanding of particular national traditions of anthropological research, major research paradigms, and the importance of the introduction of particular methods.

- Three questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective:

Satisfactory (VS+S+SP): 63/114 (55%)

Unsatisfactory (UP+U+W): 51/114 (45%)

A new version of ANTH384 (History of Anthropology) was introduced in 2013-14 to address the weakness in understanding the origins of anthropology indicated by the responses. A stronger emphasis has been put on "Anthropology before Anthropology" (i.e. the precursors of various anthropological traditions), as well as on a variety of national traditions of anthropological research.

2. An understanding of methods of fieldwork, comparative and social and cultural analytical methods, as well as their limitations and ethical dimensions.

- Four questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective:

Satisfactory (VS+S+SP): 122/168 (73%)

Unsatisfactory (UP+U+W): 46/168 (27%)

These results show an improvement in relation to the 2012 SLOA report. We recognized a weakness in understanding various methodologies and a stronger emphasis was placed in undergraduate anthropology courses on the multiple methods of anthropological research, as well as on their ethical dimensions. We still feel, however, that this is an important dimension that needs to be emphasized systematically.

3. Knowledge of a range of social and cultural configurations and critical perspectives on folk concepts.

- Three questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective:

Satisfactory (VS+S+SP): 77/115 (67%)

Unsatisfactory (UP+U+W+NA): 38/115 (33%)

These results are encouraging. We believe that more (folk) concepts (such as 'race,' 'gender,' 'ritual,' 'hierarchy,' etc.) need to be explicitly recognized and discussed in undergraduate anthropology courses.

4. Exhibit effective skills in written and oral communication

- The current format of the summative exercise does not allow it to be an effective means for judging written/ communication skills. A new metric to assess this should be developed. We recommend that the Assessment Review Committee read a writing sample from each student enrolled in the Senior Seminar. We also recommend that the Senior Seminar instructor devise an exercise to assess oral communication.

- **The Exit Survey**

The exit survey was not administered in either 2013 or 2014 due to high faculty turnover and some failures in communication. We are in the process of revising this survey to more appropriately address the learning outcomes/goals, student needs, and post-graduation plans. This new exit survey will be administered in the Spring 2015 offering of Senior Seminar.

- **The Alumni Survey**

We were unable to obtain current email addresses for past majors from the alumni office. Given this, we plan to remove the alumni survey from our SLOA plan, although we still hope to find a way to keep tabs on the employment/academic status of our students post-graduation.

3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above

Many of the changes we recommend have more to do with revising the SLOA Plan than with changes to the curriculum. We are in the process of revising the questions on the summative exercise to address the learning outcomes more directly. We are also drafting the Exit Survey so that it can be administered next academic year. We will consult with other departments with regard to the most effective way to assess written and oral communication skills.

In terms of curricular changes, we recommend that all undergraduate anthropology majors (whether pursuing a BA or a BS degree) should be required to take the 200-level "Fundamentals" courses in all four-subfields (they are currently only required to take 3 of the 4). This will ensure that all undergraduate majors have exposure to all the sub-disciplines of anthropology, something that is part of our mission statement.

4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting

Jamie Clark, BS coordinator

Patrick Plattet, BA coordinator

Brian Hemphill, Senior Seminar Instructor

David Fazzino, OA Coordinator

David Koester, Department Chair