

ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR IN ANTHROPOLOGY

REVISED: DECEMBER 2002

Department of Anthropology University of Georgia

The Department of Anthropology has revised its assessment program in accordance with feedback from the Program Review and Assessment Committee of the OVPI. This revision incorporates minor changes to the existing Learning Outcomes, in conjunction with a major restructuring and expansion of the assessment methods. A proposed revision was developed by the department's Undergraduate Committee and submitted to the faculty for discussion and approval in December 2002. This document represents the outcome of this process and the revised assessment program will be instituted in 2003.

I. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The discipline of anthropology is characterized by its breadth and the diversity of its subfield specializations. Students who major in anthropology should gain basic knowledge in the three subfields represented by our faculty (cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, and archaeology) and the ability to think holistically and comparatively about humans and their evolutionary relatives. These broad goals are encompassed within the following Learning Outcomes.

At the time of graduation, students majoring in anthropology should be able to:

1. Articulate knowledge of the breadth of anthropology, including its main subfields, and its ties to other sciences and the humanities.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the range of past and present human biocultural systems, including ecological relationships, subsistence, social organization, and belief systems.
3. Explain and appropriately apply evolutionary theory to human and nonhuman primate biological phenomena; this should include ability to summarize the basic time-line and processes of general primate and specific hominid biological evolution.
4. Formulate a critical, scientific understanding of the basis for contemporary human variation, both ethnic/cultural and biological, including appreciation of related ethical concerns.
5. Express ability to think holistically and comparatively in describing human ways of life, including the use of non-ethnocentric methods.
6. Demonstrate anthropological skills applicable to solutions to present-day concerns, both in the United States and in other societies.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODS

The procedure for assessing achievement of our learning outcomes will utilize five methods – three direct and two indirect. These are:

- **Exit Exam.** All senior majors will take a comprehensive exam at the beginning of their required capstone course (see below). This exam will contribute to assessment of the more "substantive" or content-related learning outcomes, most specifically Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4. The exams will be graded and students given feedback as to their performance. They will also be given the opportunity to read from a

recommended literature in their areas of weakness and retake the exam at the conclusion of the capstone course.

- **Portfolio.** All majors will be required to assemble a portfolio composed of materials from their "core" course work. These portfolios will be submitted during the capstone course in their senior year (see below). As a minimum, each student must submit written materials from their three "core" courses: one in cultural anthropology, one in biological anthropology, and one in archaeology. These materials will be appropriate to each of the courses and may include term papers, papers produced at the completion of a research project, annotated bibliographies, essays, etc. Faculty teaching the courses which students designate as their "core" course in a subfield will work with the students to insure that these written materials incorporate the potential to demonstrate their achievement of the Learning Outcomes appropriate to the course.
- **Capstone Course.** All anthropology majors will be required to take this course during their senior year. The course will function in several ways to provide a mechanism for assessing the degree program. It will also provide a unique experience for the senior majors and present them with a series of activities designed to enhance their knowledge and appreciation of anthropology and prepare them for entry into a graduate program or a career.

During this course, students will:

- Take the **Exit Exam** and receive feedback (as described above).
 - Assemble, submit, and critically examine their accumulated **Portfolio**.
 - Interact with faculty in discussions/debates centered on current issues in anthropology, cutting-edge research in anthropology, ethical dilemmas in contemporary anthropology, application of anthropology to present-day concerns, etc. Following on these, the students will produce a series of **reflective essays** designed to demonstrate their proficiency in a number of the Learning Outcomes (most specifically Learning Outcomes 1, 4, 5, and 6). These essays become part of the student's **Portfolio**.
 - Participate in the "focus discussions" about their experiences during their degree program (see below).
 - Receive guidance with regard to graduate education and careers in anthropology. This will include instruction in basic professional skills such as preparation of a resume.
- **Focus Group Discussions.** Students will complete a **questionnaire** (anonymously) and participate in structured discussions about the anthropology degree program during the capstone course. The course instructor will produce a written summary of the discussions.
 - **Alumni Survey.** Anthropology alumni are currently being asked to complete a questionnaire which assesses whether they have entered a graduate program or a career; if employed, whether their education as an anthropology major is of value in their current position and how; whether the major has contributed in significant ways to their current endeavors; etc. This method will be expanded and alumni will be asked to complete these questionnaires at one year, three years, and five years post graduation.

III. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The department's Undergraduate Committee (rotating faculty membership) will be charged with evaluation of a representative sample of the data accumulated from the methods described above.

- This committee will review the results of the Exit Exam, including evaluation of subcategories of the results specific to particular Learning Outcomes. Their evaluation will include an overall assessment (based on an average of the overall performance of all students taking the exam), as well as identification of any specific weaknesses related to particular Learning Outcomes.

- Student portfolios will be examined and evaluated with respect to the Learning Outcomes designated by faculty teaching the "core" courses represented in the student's accumulated work for those courses (including the capstone course). For each portfolio, a score on a 5-point scale (1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good, and 5=Excellent) will be recorded for each of the particular Learning Outcomes assessable through that student's portfolio contents. After evaluation of all portfolios in the sample, an average score will be given for each represented Learning Outcome.
- The committee will review the questionnaires (submitted by seniors and alumni) and the summarized focus group discussion results to assess the overall program in terms of perceived strengths, weaknesses, and contributions to future endeavors. The Undergraduate Advisor (chair of the committee) will produce a summary of the findings of the committee and their suggestions as to how perceived weaknesses could be addressed.

After review of data from the five assessment methods, the committee will determine to what degree each of our Learning Outcomes are being achieved by our majors. The direct methods (Exit Exam, Portfolio, Capstone Course) will provide specific measures of the Learning Outcomes. The indirect methods (Focus Group Discussions and Questionnaires) will permit assessment of student and alumni perceptions of the program, and the degree to which the program prepares majors for pursuit of graduate degrees or careers. The report to the faculty by the committee will specifically assess each of the Learning Outcomes; if the accumulated data indicate good to excellent performance for a Learning Outcome, this will indicate that the Learning Outcome is being successfully achieved by our majors. If the data do not indicated an acceptable level of attainment of a Learning Outcome, the materials will be examined in depth to attempt to assess whether this result is a function of our methods of assessment, or a legitimate deficiency. There will also be a general evaluation of our methods of assessment and suggestions for changes or refinements will be formulated.

The report of the committee will be presented to the faculty and discussed at an annual meeting explicitly focused on evaluation of the results. Faculty will then be charged with developing modifications to the program, where the data clearly indicate failure in meeting the Learning Outcomes. The faculty will also consider committee input on the effectiveness of our assessment procedures and develop improvements in these procedures where warranted.

Respectfully submitted,

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