Department of History, Anthropology, and World Languages  
B.A. in Anthropology  
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report, November 2014  
Report for the Period Spring 2008 to Spring 2014

Assessment Results November 2014  
During this assessment cycle (Spring 2008-Spring 2014), both direct and indirect assessment materials were collected. The direct assessment consisted of Content (multiple-choice) and Concept (short answer) Post-Tests that were administered to our graduating majors during their final semester at EU. Additionally, direct assessment was based on the scoring of research papers written by students in ANTH400 Capstone Seminar in Anthropology. The indirect assessment consisted of course grades from advanced junior/senior level courses offered during this cycle: ANTH 381 Anthropological Theory taught by Dr. Steven Nachman and ANTH400 Capstone Seminar in Anthropology taught by Dr. Lenore Barbian.

A. Direct Assessment:  
Since Spring 2008, anthropology Content and Concept Tests have been administered to graduating seniors at the close of their final semester. The Content Test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions (see Appendix 1) aimed at assessing the student’s mastery of general anthropological knowledge. During the current assessment cycle, 38 Content Tests and 39 Concept Tests were completed. Questions on the Content and Concept Tests are mapped to Student Learning Outcomes Objectives 1-4 (see Part 3). In some cases, questions were mapped to more than one objective. As indicated in our original assessment plan, we considered an objective to be successfully met when students at a “C” or “satisfactory” level or above.

The assessment results for the five Student Learning Outcomes Objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: Develop and demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of key concepts associated with three of the four sub-fields of anthropology (archaeology, physical anthropology, and sociocultural anthropology). The fourth field of anthropology, linguistic anthropology, is not taught at EU.
Scores on both tests for Objective 1-general exceed our minimum expectations. Only 3 Content questions were mapped to this objective, two of which were answered correctly by all of the students. Only 4 out of 38 students missed the third question. On the Concept Test, three of the four questions mapped to this objective were met our expectation of >70% in the satisfactory range or better. Question #2 barely failed to make this standard with 69% of the responses being rated satisfactory or better. A few of the students were confused by the first three questions on this test. In responding to the first question, some students defined anthropology by what anthropologists do or study and then were at a loss to answer the second and third questions. Some students offered definitions of anthropology in answer to the second or third question.

A total score of 82% exceeds the minimum expectations for this Objective. Only two questions received scores under 70%. In one case (#11), a number of students chose the first likely answer, possibly without reading the entire question and possibly doing so because of their haste to finish
the test. Some of the sloppily written answers given on the Concept Test also appear to support this possibility.

A total of 79% correct exceeds the minimum expectations for this Objective. Ten of the 19 questions received over 80% correct answers. Five questions, however, were answered correctly by fewer than 70% of the students. Three of those questions involve the names of prominent anthropologists and another involves the name of a specific tribal society. In reviewing these questions as part of our action plan we must decide what emphasis to give to students’ remembering such names. Perhaps other types of anthropological knowledge should take precedence.

**Objective 2: Demonstrate understanding of the culture concept and of related concepts, including cultural relativism and holism.**

Scores for Objective 2 meet our minimum expectations. Although only five questions on the Content Test were mapped to this objective, they produced a high total score of 88%. The one question with only 63% correct answers involves the name of a prominent anthropologist. On the Concept Test only the question on culture and cultural relativism produced minimum satisfactory or better scores. Fifty-six percent of the students answering question #4 received scores of satisfactory or better and 46% received scores of satisfactory or better for question #7. The results for the question on the holistic approach are disappointing given that “holism” is one of the most important concepts in anthropology and is often discussed in classes. A review of students’ answers to this question suggests that the major problem was probably less the students’ failure to understand this concept and more a failure on their part to explain it in a coherent manner. Eagerness to finish the test may have resulted in a few careless answers. In the case of the question about race (#7) in which only 46% of the responses were satisfactory or better, the reason for the low scores may be due to the question itself. It was too broad for a short answer question. In responding to the question, some students defined race either as a biological or social concept while others discussed the validity of the term or the controversy surrounding it. The resulting answers were often incomplete.

**Objective 3: Develop knowledge of and demonstrate understanding of the scientific method as well as research, analytic, and interpretive methods used in anthropology.**

Scores for Objective 3 also meets our minimum expectations. An overall score of 82% for the Content Test well exceeded our minimum expectation. The only questions (N=3) with scores below 70% again involve the names of anthropologists. Interestingly, the one question all of the students answered correctly also involved the name of an anthropologist—Margaret Mead. Of the three questions from the Concept Test that were mapped to this objective, 71% and 76% of the responses were scored as satisfactory or better. However, for the question on macro and micro evolution, less than half of the students (44%) were able to provide a satisfactory or better answer. It may be that the low scores for this question reflected the inability of the students to communicate their ideas clearly. However, given the scores on the multiple choice test questions related to evolutionary mechanisms (i.e.: Content Test questions 34, 37, and 38), it may also reflect that the students have not mastered a basic level of understanding concerning the concept of evolution. This is particularly problematic given that evolution is a key theoretical concept in entire discipline of anthropology.
**Objective 4:** Demonstrate the ability to make informed and ethical decisions pertaining to matters of human diversity and cultural and biological/genetic property.

This Objective focuses on ethics, an important issue in anthropology. Unfortunately, the objective was underrepresented in the assessment questions and is represented by only two Content Test questions and three Concept Test questions. Responses to the multiple choice questions do meet our minimum expectations with a 95% score for the Content Test. In the short answer question on cultural relativism, 76% responses were judged to be satisfactory or better. However, only 55% of the response to question on the preservation and stewardship of cultural resources were deemed satisfactory or better and 44% of the responses represented satisfactory or better responses for the one question in the Concept Test about race. As discussed under Objective 2, the question on race may simply be too broad for a short answer question. The question on cultural resources may also be problematical given the change in the archaeology faculty. Whatever the explanation for these low scores, it is clear that this objective represents an area in which we need to develop more and better assessment strategies in order to discern the level of student comprehension of major ethical issues in the discipline.

**Learning Objective 5:** “Develop and demonstrate written and oral communication skills.”

Of the 12 student papers, 75% scored satisfactory or above in “Thesis and Argument” and in “Organization.” In these areas we appeared to have achieved our target. It is interesting to note that these areas were particularly stressed in the capstone seminar; for example, the students were required to submit formal thesis statements for approval.

In the remaining rubric areas, we achieved success rates below 70% in “Evidence” and in “Referencing.” Even lower rates of satisfactory or better (<60%) were obtain in the areas regarding “Sources” and “Grammar and Style.” Clearly, there is considerable room for improvement. While the students often had good ideas, they were unable to organize and communicate their thoughts clearly. Statements were made that were not supported by fact or that were intrusive and not relevant to the main argument of the paper. Papers had many problems of continuity involving the sudden shifting of topic. Grammatical and stylistic errors were common. One of the primary goals of the capstone course is to improve the students writing and research skills. However, despite working extensively over the course of the semester on these areas, only one of the papers was judged to demonstrate excellence in a single area. To us this suggests that the students came to the capstone course deficient in most, if not all, aspects of written communication. Improving our student’s performance in this objective would appear to be our most important task.

**B. Indirect Assessment**

Our indirect assessment for Objectives 1-4 is based on grades earned in two advanced junior/senior level courses, ANTH 381 Anthropological Theory and ANTH400 Capstone Seminar in Anthropology. ANTH381 was taught three times during this assessment cycle, and ANTH400 was taught for the first time in Fall 2013. Grade results for ANTH 381 are as follows:

**C. Summary of Assessment Results**
Overall, the results of this assessment cycle suggest that we were largely successful in our achieving our learning objectives for our students. Students do appear to have a good understanding of the basics of each of the subdisciplines of anthropology (Objective 1), most key concepts appear to have been learned (Objective 2), and they seem to grasp methodological approaches used in the discipline (Objective 3). We do have some concern with the student comprehension of the concept of “holism” and with their understanding of the mechanisms of evolutionary change. Strategies to address these issues will be addressed in our action plan. Unfortunately, we failed to collect enough detailed assessment data to fully determine our success in meeting Objective 4 – understanding of ethical principles. The data we did collect suggests that there is room for improvement in this area. Strategies for improved assessment methods will be discussed in the Action Plan. Our final objective was for our students to demonstrate satisfactory communication skills. This is the area where our students clearly did not meet our minimum expectations. A review of their research papers found that students often make statements that are not supported by fact or that were intrusive and not relevant to the main argument of the paper. There are many problems of continuity involving the sudden shifting of topic. Grammatical and stylistic errors are common. We believe these to be significant problems and are concerned that our students are not meeting this objective. We will offer our strategies to hopefully improve our students writing skills, but we cannot address all of these problems alone. We believe that basic problems in writing and grammar must be addressed at the university level as well.

**E. Action Items**
The following action items have been implemented based on the 2013 assessment. The action items are:

1. Pedagogical changes to ANTH381 Anthropological Theory. Changes have been implemented in the teaching of the class, including the giving of quizzes for specific reading assignments as well as the inclusion of questions on tests to develop students’ critical thinking skills. However, as discussed below, some of the test questions that inspired these changes in the class require rethinking on our part.

2. More opportunities for students to communicate their ideas orally and in writing. The new Capstone course has been taught for the first time and provides such opportunities, as do other new but non-required courses such as Ethnographic Methods (to be taught Spring 2015) in which students will be writing field notes, drafting research proposals, and presenting research reports.

Based on the results of this assessment cycle, the following action items will be implemented:

1. **Revise the exit exam administered to the students.**

   **A.** We will no longer utilize the rubric of “Concept” and “Content” tests since we believe these labels to be misleading. In fact, both exams contain questions that probe for both content and concept knowledge. In truth, the only difference between the exams is the type of questions used – multiple choice vs short answer.

   **B.** We will review test questions used to assess student progress in meeting learning objectives to insure that they adequately measure those objectives. One problem
encountered in this assessment was the uneven mapping of test questions to specific learning objectives. Because the mapping was undertaken for the first time in this assessment, it was discovered that some of the objectives were not well represented. In particular, only five questions were mapped to Objective 2 and only two to Objective 4. This uneven mapping will be remedied.

C. We will review test questions to insure that they are clearly written and unambiguously worded. Several of the questions appear to confuse students, such as the sequence “What is anthropology?, “What do anthropologists do?”, “What do anthropologists study?” or the very broad question “What is race?”

D. We will review test questions to insure that they reflect the emphasis in our program and the sorts of knowledge we seek to impart to our students. For example, we will look at a number of archaeology questions that were originally written by Dr. Renata Wolynec, who has since retired. Some of these questions may no longer be appropriate. We will also look at those questions that posed problems for students, including those that were answered correctly/satisfactorily by fewer than 70% of the students. A general category of questions that we need to careful consider are those related the student’s ability to remember names of anthropologists. We need consider if these questions represent the sort of knowledge we want students to take with them from the program or if they do little more than measure the student’s ability to remember names.

2. Review ANTH180 Introduction to Anthropology curriculum.

The less than satisfactory scores on several questions related to the comprehension of the mechanisms of evolution as well as the concept of holism, we find particularly problematical given that these are key concepts within the discipline. Given that students are required to only take one course in physical anthropology and only two in cultural anthropology, it may not be surprising that there are gaps in their comprehension in some aspects of these key concepts. Given that ANTH180 Introduction to Anthropology covers all the subdisciplines, it represents the only other opportunity that we have to explain these important concepts to all of our majors. Therefore, the anthropology faculty will meet and review our curricular goals for each of the subdisciplines to insure that key points of information on being delivered regardless of instructor.

3. Develop more robust methods to assess Objective 4.

A. In order to create a better measure of Objective 4, which deals with the “ability to make informed and ethical decisions pertaining to matters of human diversity,” we intend to adapt an ethnocentrism scale for use in student assessment (see Neuliep and McCroskey 1997, Neuliep 2002). Because the administration of such a measure requires preparation of students and discussion, the process will be undertaken in the ANTH400 Capstone Seminar in Anthropology.

B. We will also incorporate essays and short answer questions in which the students will be asked to respond to hypothetical ethical situations presented to them into the capstone course (ANTH400). A rubric will be developed to score the responses and help us
ascertain the degree to which students understand major ethical principles and dilemmas in anthropology.

4. **Incorporate more opportunities for writing in the anthropology curriculum.**
   
   A. The most serious problem encountered during this assessment was the inability of students to express their ideas clearly and in an organized way. Answers on the Concept (short answer) Tests were often crudely written and, consequently, failed to reflect the students’ understanding of the material. The capstone research papers were poorly structured and full of grammatical and spelling errors. Good ideas often disappeared in rambling and barely readable prose. We are deeply concerned about these issues. Although not all of our students will become professors of anthropology, almost all of them will embark on careers demanding skills in critical thinking and communication. As faculty in a small program dedicated to the teaching of our subject matter, we cannot address all of these problems alone. Basic problems in writing and grammar must be addressed at the university level. What we can contribute to such an effort is a greater emphasis on communication and writing skills in our classes. As a start, we are committed to developing the writing component in all of our upper-level required courses (ANTH371, ANTH372, ANTH381, ANTH385, ANTH400). At least one written assignment of the instructor’s choice will be included in each of these courses. Students will receive intensive feedback on these writing assignments focusing not only on the content of essays or papers but also on issues related to the quality of presentation.

   B. The faculty member who scored the ANTH400 papers indicated that in most cases the students often had good ideas but were unable to organize and communicate their thoughts clearly. We believe that many of the issues could be resolved (or at least improved) if the students received more opportunities to write as well as more intensive and constructive feedback on their written assignments. Therefore the capstone seminar (ANTH400) will be revised to incorporate more opportunities for the students to write and receive feedback in addition to the final research paper. We will include smaller written assignments that will also allow us to collect additional assessment materials regarding Object 4 (see Action Plan 3B). Assignments will be returned to the students, and they will be required to resubmit their assignments after following the feedback provided to them.

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**BA History Assessment Report**  
**Academic Year, 2013-14**

**Objective measured**

During the **2012-2013** academic year the History program measured one objective:

- Ability to understand general historical terminology, identify the general principles of the different schools of historical thought, and apply the professional standards of the historical discipline, and being able to explain these in writing.

**In what capstone experience the assessment was conducted:**

History assessments were measured in our Spring 2014 capstone experience (HIST 400, Methods of Historical Research, which becomes HIST 499, Capstone in History in Spring
2015). No measures were taken regarding the alternative to HIST 400, which is HIST 495, Internship in History.

**What direct measure was applied: Research Papers and Content Assessment**
- We conducted a content assessment: a collection of multiple choice questions.
- We also collected and evaluated written assignments from History majors.

**Senior Exit Survey**
During Spring 2013 we implemented a History Senior exit survey. It was distributed via email to all graduating History majors during the latter part of spring semester. However, the lack of response by at least half of our graduating seniors led to a decision by the chairperson to suspend this program. This issue may be revisited.

**Content Assessment (Multiple Choice) Analysis**
The BA History Content Assessment is an end of semester test that poses 100 questions from four different courses – World Civ. 1, World Civ. 2, U.S. 1 and U.S. 2. The assessment is broken up into these four different courses, each containing twenty-five questions each. Students are asked to only fill in the sections relating to the courses that they have previously completed.

The BA History Content Assessment was given to five history majors in HIST 400 in Spring 2014. All were graduating seniors. The average score was 72%. In the 2012 assessment, the average score was 67% and in 2013, 71%.

Average score for the four components: World Civ. 1: 68%; World Civ. 2: 80%; U.S. 1: 77%; U.S. 2: 69%. Previous assessments reflected similar scores, as well as higher scores for World Civ. 2 and U.S. 1.

**HIST 400: Written Assignments evaluation**
Based upon an examination of the take-home final examination and a historiographic essay focusing on a student-chosen historian and annotated bibliography, submitted by history majors in HIST 400, we come to the following conclusions:

**Thesis and Argument:** One had strong and clear theses and well-formed arguments. Two had good theses, but needed to clarify their arguments. One had theses that met the basic requirements. **Two submitted no assignments.**

Students can always improve their work on thesis development.

**Organization:** One student had superior organization Two had good organization. One had satisfactory essay organization.

**Evidence:** One student made excellent use of available evidence supporting the argument. Three had good use of evidence.

**Primary Sources:** Two students had excellent use of primary sources. Two had good use of such sources.
Students chose their own historians and the department encourages the students to pursue research lines of their own interest and passion. But the EUP library provides less in the way of primary sources, thanks to budget limitations as well as decisions to not subscribe to useful databases, like Dissertation Abstracts. The elimination of many primary sources through the Baron-Forness Library’s ongoing physical space reorganization may have had some impact here.

**Secondary Sources:** Two made excellent use of secondary sources. Two made good use of those resources. There was significant difference in the use of sources here. In part, this disparity hinges on the available sources on our campus and the students’ access to other archive collections.

**Referencing:** Three students used appropriate and complete citations according to Chicago Style and/or Turabian. One met basic satisfactory status. The BA History program has made a concerted effort to make sure students (both in our classes and individual advising) understand the importance of correct citations.

**Grammar and Style:** Two did a good job, but needed improvement. Two met the satisfactory level.

**Proposed action items:**
- Continue collecting/evaluating syllabi for HIST 100, 300, and 400
- Continue collection of Research Papers and Essays through which we measure student performance.
- Consider administering senior exit survey in Spring 2015.
- Continued discussion amongst the faculty about the best method to assess the program
  - Revise/update Content Assessment
  - Discuss assessment of new concentrations in History (Military History and Digital-Documentary History); however, students in each concentration will take the same Methods and Foundations classes.
  - Assessment in HIST 495, Internship in History
  - Possible revisions to basic courses, based on Content Assessment

**Action items implemented from last year's SLOA:**
- Began assessment in HIST 400 in Spring 2014, the first time the course has been offered since becoming a requirement in the program. Once the course is offered on a regular basis it may be that we only conduct assessments in this course.

**Discontinued the following:**
- Analysis of HIST 100 and HIST 300
- Analysis of multiple objectives

**Master of Arts in Social Sciences**

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report**

**Academic year 2014 – 2015**

**Spring 2014 Recommendations:**
- Direct Assessment:
  a. Analysis of thesis/comprehensive defense results
b. Survey of incoming and graduating seniors

Indirect Assessment:
  a. Analysis of research papers (collected in fall 2013)
  b. Analysis of tests and other projects

Assessment of Academic Year 2014-2015

- Current Graduate FTE: 10
- Current Active Graduate Students: 12
- Students with coursework completed completing theses or exam: 4

The Program currently is in a major transition period. The previous Program Director was re-trenched and the current Director is retiring at the end of the Spring 2015 semester. No new Director has yet been selected. Additionally, the Department is losing faculty who will not be replaced, which requires a reassessment of the Program’s Vision, Goals, and Objectives.

Anthropology Concentration

The Department currently has two tenured Anthropologists and an ABD permanent part-time Archeologist. One of the Anthropologists will retire in December 2015 and the part-time Archeologist will certainly enter the full-time job market when she completes her PhD, effectively (worst case) reducing the Anthropology faculty to one person. The Department is currently assessing whether we can continue to retain an Anthropology concentration within the degree and our vision statement (highlighted above). The desire exists within the Department but it is not clear if the ability will remain.

Eliminated Sociology Concentration

The Sociology concentration had been eliminated but last Spring there was some discussion with members of the Sociology Department about adding Sociology courses to the curriculum. The then Dean of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, however, would not allow this discussion to continue; he simple said Sociology would not be able to offer the course under consideration. This requires the elimination of the fourth Program Goal (highlighted above).

Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives

With the exception of the two items mentioned above (and highlighted) the Programs Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives remain valid and reflected in the operations of the program. Reduced faculty may require a reassessment, however, with current discussions revolving around the idea of a less History-specific program.

Major Problem

A problem more serious than faculty reductions is current lack of new applications. In the past semester there has been only one completed application that has reached the Program Director and that student was denied admission because of a lack of background in the Anthropology concentration she wanted to pursue. To deal with this problem the Program has adopted an early admission program whose draft outline is attached below. This program is supported by the Department faculty and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. We have asked for a list of current Junior and Senior Anthropology and History majors and those that the faculty feel are capable of graduate work will be invited to enter the program as Special Students (a Graduate Studies designation).
Analysis of Assessment Measures

In December 2014 and January 2015 three students graduated from the Program. Four students are currently in position to graduate this May (one already having successfully defended his thesis). This is the largest number of Program graduates in some time. Their performance suggests strongly that both our Program and Student goals are being met.

Indirect methods of assessment are problematic in a graduate setting; the recommendation of the previous Program Director to collect research papers and projects is not practical. Analysis, however, of course grades, particularly when taken in conjunction with theses and final exams, suggests that students are achieving their objectives and, more important, are adjusting when they are not performing to standard.

Recommendations

1. As soon as possible identify the new Program Director who needs to do the following:
   A. Facilitate the Departmental discussion about possible restructuring of our Mission and Goals.
   B. Aggressively implement the outcomes of this discussion.
   C. Develop a recruiting program that reaches out to colleges within 100 miles without graduate programs in History or Anthropology.

2. Develop a two or three year course sequence that addresses the problems posed by retirement and sabbaticals.

3. Identify courses appropriate for World Language faculty, an action that will reduce significantly the impact of retirements and sabbaticals.