

# **Student Outcomes Assessment Plan**

## **Department of Anthropology**

### **California State University, Fresno**

## **Introduction**

The overall goal of this Assessment Plan is to enable the department to best fulfill the promise of its mission as outlined below.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Department of Anthropology is to provide students with an understanding of the nature and adaptive role of cultural diversity in the modern world and throughout the history of human development. We maintain that this mission is best fulfilled by a three-field approach, in which the nature of human culture is approached from the complementary perspectives of archaeology, physical anthropology, and cultural anthropology. A corollary of this mission is helping our students see the relevance of anthropological methods and knowledge in different contexts and stages of their lives as individuals, members of families, and citizens of local communities, nations, and the world. We strive to provide our students with the intellectual tools that can help them think critically about social issues, while impressing them with the vital role that their opinions and decisions play in a democratic society. We pursue this mission in the multicultural context characteristic of the Central Valley, working together with students of diverse backgrounds and career goals, as well as businesspeople, service providers, and other constituencies in the local community.

This mission is addressed to anthropology majors as well as non-majors taking courses in the department. Non-majors can choose from among lower and upper division courses (some in the GE program) that introduce basic concepts in archaeology, physical anthropology, and cultural anthropology, and suggest connections between the sub-fields and current social issues.

Anthropology majors acquire a systematic exposure to the three fields through requirements that they both concentrate on one sub-field *and* maintain breadth across all of the sub-fields. Students who successfully complete the Department's program will be able to understand and apply basic anthropological concepts (such as culture, social organization and social structure, and adaptation), and formulate reasonable arguments and opinions on the questions addressed by the discipline at large – such as the past, present and future of human cultural diversity, the nature of human social and biological evolution, and the evolutionary basis of human behavior. Consistent with our mission, we stress the application of knowledge in each of these areas. Finally, because many of these topics are the subject of ongoing anthropological investigation and debate, we intend for our majors to have the intellectual ability to continue their own pursuit of anthropological knowledge after they graduate and assume roles in their communities.

**Note on Use of Data:** The data gathered in the course of the assessment process will remain confidential and under the control of the department.

# Goals and Objectives

## Summary of Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1:** Provide students with background in the concepts and bodies of knowledge used and produced by anthropologists.

**Objective 1:** Students will be able to discuss the basic core concepts of anthropology and cite factual evidence to support their arguments on major topics under debate in the discipline. Relevant courses: Anth 2, 3, 100, 104, 195.

**Objective 2:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of history and contemporary trends in anthropological theory, and ability to apply theoretical approaches to concrete problems. Relevant courses: Anth 100, 104, 195.<sup>1</sup>

**Objective 3:** Students will demonstrate the ability to think and write critically about anthropological topics. Students can identify key terms, concepts, and forms of argumentation used in anthropological discourse and evaluate their validity. Relevant courses: Anth 100, 104, 195.

**Goal 2:** Provide students with training on the application of anthropological theory and method to problems in archaeology, physical anthropology, and cultural anthropology.

**Objective 1:** Students will become familiar with basic methods used on archaeological/ethnographic research, and demonstrate the ability to apply those methods to solve given problems. Relevant courses: 101A, 101B, 111A, 111B, 111C.

**Objective 2:** Students will achieve competence in technologies used by anthropologists in collecting, managing, and analyzing data. Relevant courses: Anth 100, 101A, 101B, 111A, 111B, 111C.

**Goal 3:** Prepare students to apply anthropological concepts to real world problems and effectively communicate results.

**Objective 1:** Students demonstrate the ability to apply anthropological concepts and knowledge to solving practical problems. Relevant courses: Practical problem solving components of core and elective courses, and Anth 105W, 193, 195.

**Objective 2:** Students demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their informed judgment of applied problems in anthropological perspective. Relevant

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<sup>1</sup> Electives in the major will be chosen as appropriate to each student's particular interests and future plans and in consultation with the faculty. Depending on the sub-field of specialization, students will demonstrate advanced competence and ability to apply concepts in each subfield: ability to evaluate ethnographic accounts in different theoretical perspectives (Anth 115), advanced knowledge of method and theory in archeology (Anth 140), ability to identify major problems in the study of human evolution (Anth 161).

courses: 100, 104, 105W, 116W, 195.

### **Detailed Statement of Goals, Objectives, and Plan for Assessment**

**Goal 1:** Provide students with background in the concepts and bodies of knowledge used and produced by anthropologists.

**Objective 1:** Students will be able to discuss the basic core concepts of anthropology and cite factual evidence to support their arguments on major topics under debate in the discipline. Relevant courses: Anth 2, 3, 100, 104, 195.

#### **Assessment Methods:**

1. Administer pre-test and post-test to a sample of students taking core courses, to evaluate knowledge of major anthropological concepts.
2. Use a scoring rubric to evaluate writing assignments that cite factual evidence in support of arguments debated in the discipline.

**Type of Feedback:** Tabulate results of pre-test and post-test and compare to a standard for improvement from one to the next. Faculty members discuss the outcome of writing assignments with the Assessment Committee.

**How Will the Data Be Used to Improve the Program:** The assessment committee will evaluate the above material to determine the program's success in meeting the objective. The committee will identify courses or parts of courses that do not achieve desired goals and suggest improvements.

**Objective 2:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of history and contemporary trends in anthropological theory, and ability to apply theoretical approaches to concrete problems. Relevant courses: Anth 100, 104, 195.

#### **Assessment Methods:**

1. In class measures: For a sample of students:
  - a. Questions embedded in exams in each course.
  - b. Use a scoring rubric to evaluate writing assignments that include the use of advanced concepts.
2. Other measures:
  - a. Senior survey will be designed to measure students' self-evaluations of advanced knowledge and of the program's success in this area.

#### **Type of Feedback:**

1. Tabulate cohort group's performance on the embedded questions and compare to a standard of performance set by the department.
2. Results of writing assignments will be discussed with the Assessment Committee.
3. Assessment Committee will evaluate the tabulated results of senior survey.

**How Will the Data Be Used to Improve the Program:** The assessment committee will evaluate the above material to determine the program's success in meeting the objective.

**Objective 3:** Students will demonstrate the ability to think and write critically about anthropological topics. Students can identify key terms, concepts, and forms of argumentation used in anthropological discourse and evaluate their validity. Relevant courses: Anth 100, 104, 195.

**Assessment Method:** For a sample of students:

1. Questions embedded in course exams and exercises.
2. Evaluation of writing assignments for critical writing skills using scoring rubric.

**Type of Feedback:** The instructor and the assessment committee will review and discuss student performance on embedded questions and writing assignments to be compared to standards set by the department.

**How Will the Data Be Used to Improve the Program:** Based on student performance, the assessment committee will make recommendations for revising the methods courses.

**Goal 2:** Provide students with training on the application of anthropological theory and method to problems in archaeology, physical anthropology, and cultural anthropology.

**Objective 1:** Students will become familiar with basic methods used on archaeological/ethnographic research, and demonstrate the ability to apply those methods to solve given problems. Relevant courses: 101A, 101B, 111A, 111B, 111C.

1. Archaeology
  - a. Standardized Tasks
    - (1) Fill out site forms
    - (2) Use compass and map
  - b. Field Tasks
    - (1) Keep and manage field records
    - (2) Identify cultural materials
    - (3) Excavate and record levels and units
    - (4) Excavate and record features
2. Cultural Anthropology
  - a. Participant Observation
    - (1) Identify ethical issues in conducting fieldwork
    - (2) Map a field site
    - (3) Observe and record a cultural event
    - (4) Keep and manage field records
  - b. Interviewing
    - (1) Design interview schedules
    - (2) Conduct and record interviews
  - c. Analysis: Make a taxonomic analysis

**Assessment Method:** For a sample of students: Instructor's evaluation of standardized exercises and field records produced during the methods courses using a scoring rubric.

**Type of Feedback:** Instructors and the assessment committee will review and discuss student performance in the methods courses and on field reports, and survey results. Their conclusions will be compared to standards set by the department.

How Will the Data Be Used to Improve the Program: Based on student performance, the assessment committee will make recommendations for revising the methods courses.

**Objective 2:** Students will achieve competence in technologies used by anthropologists in collecting, managing, and analyzing data. Relevant courses: Anth 100, 101A, 101B, 111A, 111B, 111C.

1. Students will be competent in the use of various media for recording field data:
  - a. Archaeology: Word processing software, photography, survey transit
  - b. Cultural: Word processing software, tape recorders, photography
2. Students will be competent in using technology to manage and analyze data:
  - a. Use of word processing, spread sheets, and relational databases in data analysis
3. Students will be capable of using the Internet as a source of information, including the ability to critically evaluate web-based data for its meaning and credibility.

Assessment Method: For a sample of students: Instructors' evaluations of standardized exercises, field records, and other assignments in the methods courses and Anth 100, using a scoring rubric.

Type of Feedback: The assessment committee will review and discuss student performance in the methods courses and on field reports. Their conclusions will be compared to standards set by the department.

How Will the Data Be Used to Improve the Program: Based on student performance, the assessment committee will make recommendations for revising the methods courses.

**Goal 3:** Prepare students to apply anthropological concepts to real world problems and effectively communicate results.

**Objective 1:** Students demonstrate the ability to apply anthropological concepts and knowledge to solving practical problems. Relevant courses: Practical problem solving components of core and elective courses, and 105W, 193, 195.

Assessment Method: For a sample of students:

1. Instructor's evaluation of relevant class exercises and assignments (in various classes) using a scoring rubric, and/or successful completion of Anth 105W.
2. For students enrolled in Anth 193 (Internship in Anthropology), the faculty supervisor will review the evaluation report submitted by the student's internship supervisor.
3. Alumni survey to measure the relationship between students' training and their abilities in post-graduation pursuits.

Type of Feedback: Instructors and assessment committee will review student performance and internship supervisor reports against standards set by the department.

How Will the Data Be Used to Improve the Program: Based on student performance, the Assessment Committee will make recommendations for course revision.

**Objective 2:** Students demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their informed judgment of applied problems in anthropological perspective. Relevant courses: 100, 104, 105W, 116W, 195.

Assessment Method: For sample of students: Instructors' evaluation of written work using scoring rubric. (Evaluation of communication skills occurs primarily in Anth 105W, 116W, and 195, but also in other upper division courses.)

Type of Feedback: Instructors and assessment committee will review student performance against standards set by the department.

How Will the Data Be Used to Improve the Program: Based on student performance, the assessment committee will make recommendations for course revision.