

Anthropology Undergraduate Program Assessment 2016



“If there are connections everywhere, why do we persist in turning dynamic, interconnected phenomena into static, disconnected things?”

Concepts like ‘nation,’ ‘society,’ and ‘culture’ name bits and threaten to turn names into things... the concept of the autonomous, self-regulating and self-justifying society and culture [that] has trapped anthropology inside the bounds of its own definitions.”

— Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*, 1982

Learning Objectives: students who complete the B.A. or B.S. degrees in Anthropology will be able to:

1. Identify core terms and concepts in anthropology and the sub-disciplines of archaeology, biological anthropology, and cultural anthropology
2. Evaluate and critique anthropological issues or theories
3. Apply methods appropriate to each of these sub-disciplines in order to a) add knowledge, test hypotheses and/or solve problems as well as to b) prepare for post-baccalaureate careers in anthropology and/or graduate school

Assessment Plan

Learning objective specific measures:

1. Students obtain a grade of C or better in ANTH 1010, ANTH 1020, ANTH 1030 (foundational courses in cultural, biological, and archaeological anthropology that are required of all majors and minors). Progress is measured by comparing scores on an exam given at the beginning and at the end of the term that ask similar questions about these core terms and concepts.
2. Students write papers in ANTH 4980 (history and theories) and in the Capstone course appropriate to their track that receive a C grade or higher.

- Students obtain a C or better in lab and field experiences in designated methods courses. All students complete a mandatory career development course (ANTH 1099) where they a) become familiar with research opportunities with program faculty, b) become familiar with funding opportunities for conducting and presenting research, c) conduct interest and skills-based self assessments, d) identify internship opportunities, and e) interview working professionals. Average grade for this course is A-. All students complete at least 1 methods course. Students are encouraged to successfully complete field and/or lab based classes to gain methodological expertise. Students are encouraged to complete a Museum Studies Certificate which requires 2 museum internships. Students are encouraged to participate in the Undergraduate Teaching Fellows Program, which gives “hands-on” teaching experience. See the table below for grade point averages of graduating seniors:

Average GPA for Graduating Seniors			
	Archaeology	Biological Anthropology	Cultural Anthropology
2015	3.06	3.2	3.1
2016	3.18	3.21	3.67

In addition to these objective-specific measures, the Anthropology Program uses the following tools to measure progress towards our broad learning objectives.

- Pre- and post-tests: in select courses, students are asked to take a short quiz aimed at assessing prior knowledge about key intellectual areas of disciplinary inquiry. At the end of the term, students are asked to complete a quiz that asks similar questions in order to assess progress on key learning objectives. Courses where pre-test/post-test measures are employed include: 1010, 1030, 1099, 2330, 3160, 3200, 3250, 5310
- Course evaluations: USU employs the *IDEA Center Student Ratings of Instruction* to evaluate all classes at USU. The hallmark of the IDEA system is its focus on student progress on specific learning objectives. The Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology Department Head reviews these course evaluations to assess the effectiveness of faculty in the classroom, with special attention both to the overall quality of each class and to student feedback in relation to program learning objectives.
- Graduating seniors are asked to reflect on their experiences, including self-reported progress on each of these objectives during exit surveys and focus groups.
- Percentage of students participating in undergraduate research opportunities that result in professional presentations and/or publications and/or program development/implementation is tracked. While numbers of participating students fluctuate from year to year, we believe that increasing percentages over time reflect program health and progress on learning objectives described above.
- Post-graduate employment and/or graduate studies of anthropology alumni is gathered to determine a) percent of graduates with careers that use anthropology concepts and methods and b) percent of graduates admitted to graduate programs in anthropology or related fields.

Outcomes Data (please note that data are based on spring 2016 enrollment unless otherwise noted).

1. **Identifying core terms and concepts.** Average difference between pre- and post-test scores in above identified classes is +40% which indicates progress on learning objectives. IDEA evaluation summary scores for lower-division required courses (1010, 1020, 1030) average 5.75 indicating student satisfaction with instruction (even in large enrollment classes).
2. **Evaluating and critiquing anthropological issues or theories.** Writing assignments in upper-division, required courses show improvement. For example, in Anthropology 4980 History and Theories in Anthropology, scores on writing assignments improved over the semester as follows: First Draft 86% and Final Draft 93%. In Anthropology 4990 Contemporary Issues in Anthropology (a capstone course with weekly written assignments), average scores improved by 20% over the course of the term. In the program's upper division required courses (4980 and track-specific capstone courses), IDEA course evaluation summary scores averaged 62, indicating continuing student satisfaction throughout the course of study.
3. **Methods Training** is an important learning objective and prepares students for post-baccalaureate careers in anthropology and/or graduate school. The average grade in method courses by track are: archaeology B+, biological anthropology B-, and cultural anthropology C. Of 23 graduating seniors in 2016, 13% were awarded positions as Undergraduate Teaching Fellows, 40% attended ethnographic or archaeological field schools, 47% worked in anthropological labs analyzing ethnographic, biological, or archaeological data, 33% worked as volunteers or interns in museums, and 27% gave a professional paper or poster presentations at campus-wide, regional, national, or international meetings. Some students gave multiple presentations with more than 15 total posters or papers given.
4. **Post-baccalaureate employment or graduate studies:** In a survey of 65% of our 2016 graduating seniors, 26% are employed in an anthropologically related field (CRM companies, museums, outdoor adventure companies, educational settings, anthropology laboratories, etc.), 53% are attending graduate school (Northern Arizona University, Utah State University, Unspecified Chiropractic School & Unspecified Archaeology & CRM program.) Only 21% are employed in fields not related to their anthropology degree. 5. In exit-interviews/focus groups, students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the Anthropology Undergraduate Program at USU. They did express a desire for more courses over a broader range of topics and an interest in completing ANTH 1099 Resources in Anthropology (required orientation course) online.

Data-Driven Decisions

At the end of each academic year anthropology faculty discuss success at achieving learning objectives and make adjustments in curricula and course content based on these exchanges of experiences and ideas. Changes to fall 2016 curricula, based on assessment plan described above include.

- o Preparing ANTH 1099 (required orientation course) for asynchronous delivery to remove “bottleneck”
- o Offering additional on-line sections of courses to reduce class size
- o Designing new ethnographic field school in Brazil to increase opportunities for training in ethnographic methods
- o Revising green sheet to reflect current state of program offerings in terms of available resources
- o Creating advising hold to ensure more frequent communication between students and their academic advisors.