

Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

Program(s): International Studies

Department: Political Science

College/School: Arts and Sciences

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1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

This year, we assessed two learning outcomes:

- Graduates will be able to analyze cultural, economic, political, and social aspects of contemporary international issues (outcome 1).
- Graduates will be able to describe how culture and national identity affect a person's perspectives (outcome 2).

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

Data were collected in International Studies (ISTD) courses: POLS 1600 Introduction to International Politics and ANTH 2200 Cultural Anthropology. Instructors both in St. Louis and in Madrid were invited to submit information for POLS 1600. ANTH 2200 was not taught in Madrid this academic year. Five instructors submitted information, 3 for POLS 1600 and 2 for ANTH 2200. Outcome 1 was assessed in both classes; outcome 2 was assessed only in ANTH 2200. Both courses are required of all International Studies students, but the majority of students in the courses are not International Studies majors.

Instructors reported that they based their assessment of student learning on essays (3 instructors), exam or test questions (3), a final ethnographic project (1), a simulation inviting students to address nuclear proliferation (1), fieldwork (1), or class discussions (2).

The department collected data through a Qualtrics survey of instructors. Instructors answered the following questions:

1. How did your class contribute to the goal of analyzing cultural, economic, political, and social aspects of contemporary international issues?
2. What instruments did you use to assess student learning for this report?
3. How well could students analyze cultural aspects of contemporary international issues?
4. How well could students analyze economic aspects of contemporary international issues?
5. How well could students analyze political aspects of contemporary international issues?
6. How well could students analyze social aspects of contemporary international issues?
7. What could they do well in this regard? What could they do less well?
8. What percentage of students did not meet expectations (could not analyze cultural, economic, political, and social aspects of contemporary international issues)?
9. What percentage of students met expectations (could analyze cultural, economic, political, and social aspects of contemporary international issues)?
10. What percentage of students exceeded expectations (were exceptionally able to analyze cultural, economic, political, and social aspects of contemporary international issues)?

11. What tactics were effective in enhancing students' ability to analyze cultural, economic, political, and social aspects of contemporary international issues?
12. Do you have suggestions for changing the International Studies curriculum or approaches in individual courses in order to make sure that students will be able to describe how culture and national identity affect a person's perspectives?
13. Is there anything you want to add about your students' learning? Do you have any comments to improve this reporting process?

A similar set of questions were asked of ANTH 2200 instructors regarding outcome 2.

3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?

NOTE: If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.

Program director Nori Katagiri analyzed the data. The data were provided by instructors who taught POLS1600 and ANTH2200, respectively.

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

NOTE: If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.

Generally, the data show a high level of satisfaction with student learning by the instructors, who in turn seem to have taught these courses quite well while paying attention to the need for future improvements. A high percentage of students in both classes either met or exceeded expectations in these matters. Depending on the class, instructors reported that between 5 and 25 percent of students did not meet expectations, between 40 and 60 percent met expectations, and between 15 and 60 percent exceeded expectations. Instructors either agreed or agreed strongly with statements that the student had met the learning objectives.

Instructors reported that students were good at:

- Discerning that people's experiences were colored by their backgrounds
- Self-evaluating their own biases
- Becoming aware of complexity of evaluating biases
- Understanding issues from multiple points of view
- Describing the bigger picture associated with contemporary international issues
- Recognizing cultural conflict
- Analyzing the ways in which culture and national identity shape who we are and how we see the world.

One instructor reported that students were better at describing the bigger picture than they were explaining details of situations. A POLS 1600 instructor said that students did well identifying economic and political aspects but struggled more with cultural and social aspects. An ANTH 2200 instructor reported that students did not show an in-depth understanding of how culture influences people on various scales but felt that what students could do was appropriate for the level of the class. One instructor complained that students did not tend to do the readings.

Instructors described effective classroom tactics as a means of improving student learning. They suggested:

- Small group discussions

- Guided class discussions
- Student reading notes that required prepared discussion questions before class
- Reflection papers
- Class presentations
- Independent research projects
- Case studies
- In-class simulation
- Interactive exercises
- Integrating current events
- Assigning readings that explored issues relevant to the learning objectives
- Reading indepth ethnographies
- Independent fieldwork projects

Instructors suggested possible future program changes:

- Greater coordination of activities across multiple sections of a course
- Selecting appropriate readings
- More class discussions in which students were tasked with identifying the differences among cultural, economic, political, and social aspects
- Students might need more support in their writing skills, at least in regard to the complex task of analyzing culture
- Some students struggle with the historic and geographic scope of the Cultural Anthropology course, though they nonetheless learn a lot about how to conceptualize and analyze cultural differences
- Since political, economic, social and cultural aspects are deeply intertwined, it would be helpful to have a discussion among International Studies faculty about how these aspects are being taught to students in various classes.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you *use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change* in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

This is the first year that the revised International Studies BA had students, so it is the first year that assessment occurred for this revised major. Hence, it is still very early for analysis to inform change. I would advise us to collect assessment data over the next few years before making a set of recommendations for large-scale changes.

The Faculty Advisory Board of the International Studies program will discuss results from this assessment cycle during Fall 2019. Recommendations based on the analysis may include:

- assigning more readings that address multi-dimensional issues of international politics and culture as a means of better preparing students for strong understanding of related issues and careers related to global politics and culture;
- holding more small-group class discussions in which students are tasked with identifying the differences between the four aspects and then applying them through structured debate;
- combining in-class materials and real-world news events to interest students in studying the topic of the day and to set the stage for more complicated subjects;

- assigning essay questions that ask students to analyze one aspect of an international issue.

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? (*For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?*)

Given that this was the first year for assessment in the revised major, it is too soon to close any loops.

Instructor comments indicate that an integral teaching method involving instructors closely in student discussion generates a good educational environment where students will find themselves more motivated to learn new things. We will work with instructors to examine the effectiveness of this method.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.

International Studies BA assessment

Outcome 1: Graduates will be able to analyze cultural, economic, political and social aspects of contemporary international issues.

This rubric is intended to help you think about components of the outcome being assessed. Your course may address some of these components, or you may want to alter the components to make them more applicable to how the outcome is reached in your class. If you choose to use the rubric, you will fill in one rubric for each student for each assignment you are using to measure the outcome. You will only need to report summary results – whether students meet expectations for the outcome as a whole.

<i>Student is able to:</i>	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
Describe ways that cultural differences contribute to misunderstandings among groups of people or nations			
Identify economic interests related to a particular issue			
Examine how power imbalances impact particular situations			
Contrast the roles of various actors (e.g., individuals, governments, businesses, or organizations of all types) in addressing contemporary international issues			
Devise strategies to address contemporary international issues			
Evaluate policies to address contemporary international issues			
SUMMARY SCORE			

International Studies BA assessment

Outcome 2: Graduates will be able to describe how culture and national identity affect a person’s perspectives.

This rubric is intended to help you think about components of the outcome being assessed. Your course may address some of these components, or you may want to alter the components to make them more applicable to how the outcome is reached in your class. If you choose to use the rubric, you will fill in one rubric for each student for each assignment you are using to measure the outcome. You will only need to report summary results – whether students meet expectations for the outcome as a whole.

<i>Student is able to:</i>	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
Identify how culture shapes a person’s outlook			
Contrast dominant values in various cultures			
Compare experiences of people in various countries			
Analyze how a person’s outlook is shaped by experiences and surroundings			
SUMMARY SCORE			