

International Studies Department
2015-2016 Assessment Report for the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies Program
July 1, 2016

1. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

- (a) **Name of Program: Bachelor of Arts in International Studies Program (*hereinafter* BAIS)**
- (b) **Type of Program: Undergraduate Program**
- (c) **CAS Division: Social Sciences**
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2. MISSION STATEMENT

The International Studies Department is a scholarly community that applies global perspectives to foster a more sustainable, humane, and just world. Our mission is to inspire and prepare engaged citizens to have a critical, interdisciplinary understanding of global dynamics.

The undergraduate program in International Studies provides our students with the skills to not merely examine the world, but also make it better. To achieve this aim, we integrate theory and practice in order to prepare students for further studies and careers in such fields as government, education, human rights, development, technology, international business, international media and communication, social advocacy, and the law.

This statement was written in Fall 2015 after the new International Studies Department was created. The statement was written collaboratively by the interdisciplinary Faculty Advisory Board.

3. PROGRAM GOALS

We do not currently have ‘Program Goals’ in addition to the Mission Statement and the Program Learning Outcomes. Development of ‘Program Goals’ may be something we engage in after completion of our program review in the 2016-2017 academic year.

4. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

The current BAIS PLOs were adopted during the 2015-2016 academic year. These PLOs (below) provide updates to the previous PLOs which were drafted in 2013 to facilitate more accurate assessment of the interdisciplinary BAIS program.

Assessment of an interdisciplinary program like International Studies is difficult. While the number of BAIS “owned” courses has increased, our majors still take at least half of their courses in the major in other departments (usually one required functional track course, 2 functional track electives, and 4 or 5 courses for the regional minor). This makes assessment difficult since faculty of these courses, understandably, conform their courses to their own department’s PLOs, not those of International Studies. This creates particular difficulties for the higher levels of acquisition of the

skills outlined in PLOs. Currently, we are only intending to assess PLOs through the BASIC course sequence in the major and those required courses over which the International Studies Department has control. These difficulties of assessment in interdisciplinary programs have been discussed repeatedly with the administration.

The BAIS PLOs are:

Upon completion of the undergraduate major in International Studies, students will:

1. Be able to analyze complex international issues using the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines so as to better respond to the transnational problems of the 21st century.
2. Gain the conceptual and analytical tools to synthesize information from the domains of politics, economics, history, culture, and the environment to understand and elucidate global interactions and international relations in the contemporary world.
3. Be able to assess global issues with an interdisciplinary research practice that promotes deeper understanding of the global-local connection through robust research design skills, understanding of mixed research methods, and strong written and oral skills across a variety of platforms.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the language, history, dynamics, and problems facing at least one region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, or the Middle East) and be able to relate this knowledge to the broader global context.
5. Gain the knowledge, skills, cultural competence, and service ethic to function successfully and ethically in the workplace or in pursuit of further education after graduation.

5. SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR 2015-2016 ACADEMIC YEAR

In our assessment report submitted on December 2, 2015, we indicated we would evaluate three PLOs during the spring 2016 semester (see assessment plan from December 2015 in Appendix I). Based on feedback from the Dean's office to our report, we scaled back and decided to assess two PLOs in two of our BASIC classes, PLO 1 in *The World Since 1945* and PLO 2 in *Introduction to International Politics*.

Direct Assessment of PLO1 in *The World Since 1945*

The syllabus for Professor Bill Goldman's *The World Since 1945* course was complete before we received feedback on the December 2015 report, and as a result of comments from the Dean's office in their response, the mode of assessment was adjusted. To assess PLO 1, which states that upon completion of the BAIS major students will be able to "analyze complex international issues using the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines so as to better respond to the transnational problems of the 21st century", it was decided to carry out direct assessment through final exam for the course. For the final exam in *The World Since 1945*, students were asked to respond to the following prompt on a take-home final:

Development has been a consistent theme of this course and, as the colonial system came undone in the years following 1945, there were many approaches to improving

the economic fortunes of the Third World/Global South. Write an essay in which you examine political, economic and social dynamics of development both before the advent of neoliberalism and afterwards. In your answer, be sure to use at least three readings to explain how various fields (political science, economics, sociology, or history) have attempted to account for development and its positive or negative effects.

To assess student responses to this question and how they demonstrate acquisition of the skills and knowledge outlined in PLO1, a rubric was created to analyze the student responses. The rubric is available in Appendix II.

At this time, we do not have the data from the rubric to submit as Professor Goldman is traveling. We will update this report upon his return.

Direct Assessment of PLO2 in *Introduction to International Politics*

In my *Introduction to International Politics* class, I decided I would directly assess acquisition of the skills in PLO2 through an end-of-semester essay. PLO2 states that students will “gain the conceptual and analytical tools to synthesize information from the domains of politics, economics, history, culture, and the environment to understand and elucidate global interactions and international relations in the contemporary world”.

I took several of the workshops provided on assessment over the course of the 2015-2016 academic year, and as a result broke PLO2 down into three parts to capture what we are truly looking for. I assessed each student’s ability to frame the problem through different levels of analysis and contextual factors, identify the issues through an interdisciplinary lens, and demonstrate theoretical understanding of the different theories of international relations discussed in class. The rubric used to review the assignments is available in Appendix III.

At the end of the semester, the students were given the following essay prompt:

For this final reflection, write a 4-5 page essay on the zombie simulation. By ‘reflection’, I mean consider how you utilizes the concepts, ideas, and theories we discussed in class during the simulation. In turn, also think about how the simulation enhanced your overall understanding of the international political system, the theories and levels of analysis used to study the system, and the various actors and issues which come up when we consider international politics.

*Please note, **this essay is not to be a discussion of whether or not you liked the simulation.** Regardless of what you thought of the exercise, if you were properly engaged in the activity, you should be able to delineate how what we have covered this semester was brought up in the exercise and how the exercise enhanced your understanding of global politics. Specific topics you can consider include (but are not limited to) identifying the key global political problems present in the simulation, which LOA and theoretical approach you think are most useful and why, and how we use contextual factors (culture and value factors) in handling international political situations.*

The results for this assessment of PLO2 are discussed in the ‘Results’ section below.

6. ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

The Bachelor of Arts in International Studies program went through its first Program Review during the 2009-2010 academic year. Since the first Program Review, the BAIS program has worked to address the challenges resulting from the rapid growth of the program. In response to the Program Review, the BAIS action plan consisted of the following primary actions:

- (a) Improved advising procedures to foster retention and better solidify a BAIS identity
- (b) Curricular revisions and changes, including a re-evaluation of the BAIS Core Course sequence, the creation of a Research Methods course, the revision of the functional tracks to promote more equal distributions, and the development of BAIS-specific courses.
- (c) Increase and development of faculty resources and responsibilities, including hiring BAIS-housed faculty, the development of new leadership models, and the stabilization of the interdisciplinary Faculty Advisory Board.

While not considered in the 2009-2010 Program Review, significant structural changes occurred in 2015 when the BAIS and MAIS (Master of Arts in International Studies) programs merged into a single International Studies Department.

The second Program Review for BAIS, along with the first review for the MAIS program, will take place during the 2016-2017 academic year in conjunction with the International Studies Department Program Review. This is a significant program review for us given it is coming shortly after our merge into a department and we anticipate there will be curricular and learning outcome changes that come out of this review.

7. METHODS

As described above in Section 5, we opted for direct assessment of both PLO1 and PLO2 through *The World Since 1945* and *Introduction to International Politics* respectively. For both courses, this direct assessment comes in the form of a final essay given to the students to capture their acquisition of the PLO.

As both of these courses are part of our BASIC sequence for the major, we anticipate that students will acquire an ‘I or ‘Introductory Level’ of understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined in these two PLOs.

The assessment assignments were both handed out and have been or will be reviewed by the course professors according to the rubrics attached in Appendices II and III.

8. RESULTS

As mentioned above, the essays have been collected for assessment of PLO1 in *The World Since 1945*, but due to the course Professor’s summer schedule, they have not been reviewed in conjunction with the assessment rubric. This data will be provided as soon as possible.

The final essays submitted in *Introduction to International Politics* were reviewed under the parameters of the rubric in Appendix III. The results are as follows:

Overall Results

83% of students met or exceeded expectations for problem framing

90% of students met or exceeded expectations for problem identification

87% of students met or exceeded expectations for theoretical understanding

On average, 87% of students met or exceeded expectations for PLO2 as a whole.

	Exceed Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Problem Framing (assessment of the issues in the scenario through the different levels of analysis and identifies the importance of contextual factors)	3 (10%)	22 (73%)	5 (17%)	0
Problem Identification (identifies and analysis the global problems in the scenario presented and the different fields [interdisciplinary] and issue areas that are relevant)	5 (17%)	22 (73%)	3 (10%)	0
Theoretical Understanding (summary of the different theoretical approaches and explains their choice of one over the others)	5 (17%)	21 (70%)	4 (13%)	0

Generally, these results are about on par with what would be expected for acquisition of the enumerated skills in an introductory-level course. Not all students that take *Introduction to International Politics* are International Studies majors as it is a Core E class so sometimes draws students from other disciplines. Overall, however, a review of the 30 final essays submitted indicated that students did gain introductory knowledge and understanding of those key components of PLO2:

- Understanding how global issues are framed through different levels of analysis (individual, state, global, etc.) and through different contextual lenses (culture, identity, group identity, etc.)

- Identifying global problems and issues and being able to analyze them through the ideas of different fields (e.g. security dilemma from Politics; economic interdependence from Economics; clash of ideologies from Sociology; race to the bottom from Environmental Studies; etc.)
- Recognizing and being able to apply the different theoretical approaches that are dominant in the field of International Relations, and understand how these theories serve as framing tools for global issues (i.e. Neorealism, neo-liberal institutionalism, constructivism, feminist IR, critical theory)

Overall, I was happy with how the assignment and rubric worked for assessing PLO2. The one change I will make for the future is to activate the rubric on Canvas and review assignments that way. I began setting it up in one of the workshops, but then never completed it so review was done via paper this time around.

9. CLOSING THE LOOP

We are in an odd place at the moment in terms of our PLOs, assessment, and what changes we might make. It is possible that both our learning outcomes for the BAIS program, as well as our curriculum, will change as a result of the Program Review we are having during the 2016-2017 academic year. As a result, we will unlikely change anything for next year and we will continue to assess only PLO1 and PLO2 in *The World Since 1945* and *Introduction to International Politics*.

Once the Program Review is complete and we decide on what curricular changes we will be making to the Bachelor's program, we will have to revisit our PLOs accordingly.

APPENDIX I: ORIGINAL SPRING 2016 ASSESSMENT PLAN FROM DECEMBER 2015 ASSESSMENT REPORT

For the International Studies undergraduate program (BAIS), we will be evaluating three program learning outcomes in Spring 2016.

1. Focus on Learning Outcome 1 through a self-evaluation of the final paper assignment for the World Since 1945 (BAIS 101). Each student to enter the undergraduate program in International Studies is required to take the World Since 1945 course and they are advised to take this course in the first year of their studies. Professors Goldman and Zarobell—who teach the sections of BAIS 101—have worked together to ensure a similar final paper project for students in both of their classes and these require students to “be able to analyze complex international issues using the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines within the social sciences, humanities, and sciences so as to better respond to the transnational problems of the 21st century”. All students taking BAIS 101 in 2015-2016 (fall and spring) will be asked to fill out a self-evaluation (appendix A), with quantitative and qualitative components, that would ask them which disciplines were employed and how interdisciplinary approaches allowed them to understand and respond to transnational problems in the 21st century.
2. Focus on Learning Outcome 2 In the two sections of Introduction to International Politics that are being offered in Spring 2016. Students will be asked to write a reflection essay at the end of the semester, which will ask them to write a short essay outlining what conceptual and analytical tools they have gained through the course to help them better understand the subjects mentioned in the learning outcome. Reflection essays will be reviewed for keywords, including: realism, neo-liberal institutionalism, constructivism, critical theory, feminist approach, systems of analysis, top-down, bottom-up, power balance, historical analysis, comparative analysis, textual analysis, statistics, and other terms related to conceptual and analytical tools.
3. Focus on Learning Outcome 3 by surveying the annual BAIS Service-Learning Internship course (spring semester) at the end of the semester. This elective course allows students to get professional experience for credit but also asks them to connect their coursework in International Studies to this professional experience in the nonprofit or public sector. It is usually taken in the last two years of study at USF so the students have had a chance to digest the impact of the curriculum and to address their experience. We have developed a survey (appendix B) to evaluate whether the program has provided a) knowledge, b) skills and c) service ethic to work in the nonprofit sector towards “just societies, human rights, and environmentally sustainable development.”

Such an assessment will fit in well with the reflection dimension of this service learning class since students will have addressed topics such as “service in the international context” and “missions of international nonprofits”. Further, since students will have been acting in the professional sphere for the semester, they will be able to assess whether they learned the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in such an environment. The instrument will be a written survey with quantitative and qualitative dimensions, allowing students to rate their preparedness in these three categories but also to give substantive comments or suggest possible areas of improvement. It will be given annually in the last class of the semester (May) and take approximately ten to fifteen minutes of class time.

APPENDIX II: RUBRIC FOR ASSESSMENT OF PLO1 IN *THE WORLD SINCE 1945*

Students will be given scores on the following criteria:

Use of Multiple Disciplines:

- 1: Student was able to employ tools of multiple disciplines (3) to present sophisticated interpretations of the issue of development.
- 2: Student discussed multiple disciplines (3) and presented some interpretation of development based on their different characteristics.
- 3: Student presented more than one discipline and discussed different approaches but did not develop interpretative frameworks.
- 4: Student did not present views of multiple disciplines.

Analytical framework

- 1: Student developed a cogent and multifaceted analysis of development by applying divergent methods of multiple disciplines
- 2: Student demonstrated a strong understanding of development but was able to explain the political, economic and social dynamics in a limited way.
- 3: Student understood development but was not able to analyze the multiple dynamics at work.
- 4: Student was unable to analyze development and its diverse dynamics.

International Dynamic

- 1: Student was able to present different manifestations of development throughout the world and to discuss them with authority.
- 2: Student discussed more than one instance of development and explained their international character.
- 3: Student explained a single instance of development and signaled that it was the result of international dynamics.
- 4: Student discussed development but failed to explain its international dynamics.

APPENDIX III: RUBRIC FOR ASSESSMENT OF PLO2 IN INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

	Exceed Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
<p>Problem Framing</p> <p>(assessment of the issues in the scenario through the different levels of analysis and identifies the importance of contextual factors)</p>				
<p>Problem Identification</p> <p>(identifies and analysis the global problems in the scenario presented and the different fields [interdisciplinary] and issue areas that are relevant)</p>				
<p>Theoretical Understanding</p> <p>(summary of the different theoretical approaches and explains their choice of one over the others)</p>				

APPENDIX IV: ASSIGNMENT PROMPT FOR ASSESSMENT IN *INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICS*

For this final reflection, write a 4-5 page essay on the zombie simulation. By ‘reflection’, I mean consider how you utilizes the concepts, ideas, and theories we discussed in class during the simulation. In turn, also think about how the simulation enhanced your overall understanding of the international political system, the theories and levels of analysis used to study the system, and the various actors and issues which come up when we consider international politics.

Please note, **this essay is not to be a discussion of whether or not you liked the simulation.** Regardless of what you thought of the exercise, if you were properly engaged in the activity, you should be able to delineate how what we have covered this semester was brought up in the exercise and how the exercise enhanced your understanding of global politics.

Specific topics you can consider include (but are not limited to) identifying the key global political problems present in the simulation, which LOA and theoretical approach you think are most useful and why, and how we use contextual factors (culture and value factors) in handling international political situations.

The essays must be uploaded to Canvas by Monday, May 16 at noon (12 p.m.). **Late reflections will not be accepted.**

	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4	PLO5
Upon completion of the undergraduate program in International Studies, students will be able to:	Be able to analyze complex international issues using the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines so as to better respond to the transnational problems of the 21st century.	Gain the conceptual and analytical tools to synthesize information from the domains of politics, economics, history, culture, and the environment to understand and elucidate global interactions and international relations in the contemporary world.	Be able to assess global issues with an interdisciplinary research practice that promotes deeper understanding of the global-local connection through robust research design skills, understanding of mixed research methods, and strong written and oral skills across a variety of platforms.	Demonstrate an understanding of the language, history, dynamics, and problems facing at least one region of the world and be able to relate this knowledge to the broader global context.	Gain the knowledge, skills, cultural competence, and service ethic to function successfully and ethically in the workplace or in pursuit of further education after graduation.
BAIS BASIC Courses (requires for all majors)					
BAIS 101: The World Since 1945	I	I			
BAIS 102: Introduction to International Politics	I	I		I	
BAIS 103: The Global Economy	I	I	I		
BAIS 201: Research Methods	D	D	I		I
BAIS Required Courses for the Functional Tracks					
<i>Culture, Societies, and Values</i>					
ANTH 200: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology	D	D	D		D
<i>Environment and Development</i>					
ENVS 100: Understanding our Environment	D		D		
BAIS 310: Global Environmental Politics <u>or</u>	D	D	D		D
ENVA 366 : Environmental Policy	D	D	D		D
<i>Global Politics and Societies</i>					
BAIS 350: International Law and Organizations	D	D	D		
SOC 231: Introduction to Globalization					
<i>International Economics</i>					
ECON 111: Principles of Microeconomics					
ECON 112: Principles of Macroeconomics					
<i>Peace and Conflict Studies</i>					
BAIS 320: Human Rights and Global Change	D	D	D	D	D
POLS 353: Politics of War and Peace	D		D		
Additional BAIS Electives					
BAIS 395: International Affairs Review			M		
BAIS 399: Internship					M
BAIS 499: Honors Thesis	M	M	M		M
Regional Minor				M	

	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4	PLO5
Institutional Learning Outcomes X Program Learning Outcomes	Be able to analyze complex international issues using the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines so as to better respond to the transnational problems of the 21st century.	Gain the conceptual and analytical tools to synthesize information from the domains of politics, economics, history, culture, and the environment to understand and elucidate global interactions and international relations in the	Be able to assess global issues with an interdisciplinary research practice that promotes deeper understanding of the global-local connection through robust research design skills, understanding of mixed research methods, and strong written and oral skills across a variety of	Demonstrate an understanding of the language, history, dynamics, and problems facing at least one region of the world and be able to relate this knowledge to the broader global context.	Gain the knowledge, skills, cultural competence, and service ethic to function successfully and ethically in the workplace or in pursuit of further education after graduation.
Institutional Learning Outcomes					
1. Students reflect on and analyze their attitudes, beliefs, values, and assumptions about diverse communities and cultures and contribute to the common good.	X	X		X	
2. Students explain and apply disciplinary concepts, practices, and ethics of their chosen academic discipline in diverse communities.	X	X	X	X	
3. Students construct, interpret, analyze, and evaluate information and ideas derived from a multitude of sources.	X		X		X
4. Students communicate effectively in written and oral forms to interact within their personal and professional communities.			X		X
5. Students use technology to access and communicate information in their personal and professional lives.			X		X
6. Students use multiple methods of inquiry and research processes to answer questions and solve problems.			X		X
7. Students describe, analyze, and evaluate global interconnectedness in social, economic, environmental and political systems that shape diverse groups within the San Francisco Bay Area and the world.	X	X	X	X	X
**This is our very preliminary draft of this curricular map. For each of the ILOs, we do have numerous courses that provide introductory and developing acquisition of these outcomes. These include the four BASIC BAIS courses, as well as the required functional track courses and courses through the regional minor. Currently, we can provide mastery through the BAIS Honors Thesis class and the BAIS Internship class. Further development of this curricular map will come over the 2016-2017 academic year as we go through program review and adjust both our PLOs and curriculum.					