

International Studies Department
2019-2020 Assessment Report for the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies Program
December 14, 2020

1. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

(a) Name of Program: Bachelor of Arts in International Studies Program (*hereinafter* BAIS)

(b) Type of Program: Undergraduate Major Program

(c) CAS Division: Social Sciences

(d) Submitters & Points of Contact:

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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 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, 4 functional track electives, and 3 courses for the regional concentration). This makes assessment difficult since faculty of these courses 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 primarily assessing PLOs through the BASIC course sequence in the major but this year we have added an assessment of PLO5 through BAIS 399: BAIS Internship Course (SL).

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.

4. SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR 2018-2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

In the past year, we introduced a new curriculum with a new introductory class that replaced the two courses we evaluated previously (World since 1945 and Introduction to International Politics), with a single Introduction to International Studies course, BAIS 100. We have evaluated PLO1/2 for both semesters of our *Introduction to International Studies*, during the 2019-2020 academic year. In addition, this year we added an evaluation for PLO5 for the BAIS Internship (SL) course, taught in Spring 2020. Last year, the Deans asked us to consider adding indirect assessments of our data by surveying students but, since we were working with new courses and new assignments for our evaluation, we determined to stick with direct assessments this year.

Direct Assessment of PLO1 and PLO2 in Introduction to International Studies

This course was taught by different faculty members housed in the International Studies Department in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. Thus different assignments had to be evaluated and different rubrics were developed. The essay question asked students to synthesize course themes and demonstrate causality based on several different categories that correspond to knowledge of different fields of inquiry, such as Politics, Economics, Sociology, etc.

Direct Assessment of PLO5 in BAIS Internship (SL)

This course is taught only once per year, in the spring semester. Students spend 90+ hours at a work site (a nonprofit or government organization) and, at the end of the semester, the site supervisor fills out an evaluation of their performance. The evaluation asks three questions specific to the PLO5 namely:

In your view, did the intern demonstrate the knowledge necessary to function successfully and ethically in the workplace by the end of the internship?

Did the student demonstrate the skills to function in the workplace by the end of the internship?

Did her/his skills improve as a result of the internship?

How would you describe the student's service ethic?

The assessment combines the responses to the first and second questions that yields quantitative data with the third question, yielding qualitative data.

5. ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

The Bachelor of Arts in International Studies program went through a Program Review during the 2016-2017 academic year. There were many issues raised by the department in its self-study, and a number of these were reflected by the external reviewers in their report. The BAIS program overall was rated 'Very Good' and there was nothing specific said about our PLOs, but there was recognition of some of the difficulties we have with classes since our students take many classes we do not control. As a result of the program review, as well as our

own assessment of our undergraduate program, the department changed its undergraduate curriculum in the 2019-20 academic year.

6. METHODS

As described above in Section 4, we opted for direct assessment of PLO1 and PLO2 through *Introduction to International Studies*. As this course is the introduction to our major, we anticipate that students will acquire an ‘I or ‘Introductory Level’ of understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined in PLO 1 and PLO 2. The assignments collected were reviewed and summarized by Professor John Zarobell and by Professor Quynh Pham.

For the direct assessment of PLO5, students should have achieved a level of mastery for PLO5 which would be indicated on their supervisors’ evaluations. These assessments yielded quantitative confirmation of their abilities as well as qualitative comments that help us to assess the level of mastery perceived by their internship site supervisors. These were compiled by Professor Zarobell.

7. RESULTS

PLO1/PLO2 for Introduction to International Studies

Program Learning Outcome 1/2

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

- 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.
- 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.

Fall 2019 (Professor Pham)

Direct method:

A total of 36 essays were reviewed. The assignment required students to engage closely with course materials from different disciplines to analyze the contemporary conditions of globalization and ecological crisis. Students were asked to use interdisciplinary knowledge and tools to elucidate the connections between political economy, the history of imperialism, environmental catastrophes, and ongoing collective struggles against global inequalities. Each essay was reviewed according to the rubric below.

	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Needs improvement	Below expectations
Interdisciplinary understanding (engaging with multiple disciplines to analyze complex international issues)	10	16	7	3
Information synthesis from multiple domains (drawing connections across the domains of politics, economics, history, culture,	11	14	7	4

and the environment to analyze global politics)				
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These results suggest that the majority of students were able to provide an interdisciplinary understanding of complex international issues and draw connections across multiple domains of politics, economics, history, culture, and the environment. A few students needed improvement in both areas, and a very low number of students performed below expectations. This reflects the complexity of developing an interdisciplinary approach to international studies from early on, especially when most students took this class in their very first semester at USF, freshly transitioning from high school to college. The overall performance will likely be better in higher-level courses in International Studies as students get more used to the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines.

Spring 2020 (Professor Zarobell)

Direct Method:

The final exam question was based on the Paris Climate Change negotiations and students were asked to prepare a position paper for their adopted country and what they would try to achieve. The assignment required students to do individual research on their own countries and connect that with course material on political ecology. But the students were further instructed to synthesize course information from various disciplines:

“This does not need to be a paper but can be written as a brief—in other words, you do not need to string together an overall argument, but you need to prepare and explain your case effectively. You will need to do research but do not collect a lot of information that you cannot use to make your points and make your case. Most importantly, this is a summative assessment, so you need to remember other things that we have learned in this class about geopolitics, economics and globalization in order to demonstrate your knowledge of international dynamics in the context of climate change negotiations.”

The rubric for evaluating the essays was as follows:

- 1: Students were able to use multiple disciplinary approaches with confidence and convincingly develop an interdisciplinary argument on a contemporary transnational issue.
- 2: Students demonstrated an understanding of how to employ multiple disciplinary approaches and used methods from more than one discipline to evaluate a contemporary transnational issue.
- 3: Students demonstrated familiarity with distinct disciplinary approaches in their analysis of a contemporary transnational issue.
- 4: Students did not employ more than one disciplinary perspective to analyze a contemporary transnational issue.

Results:

1: 12
 2: 9
 3: 5
 4: 0
 Total: 26

These direct results suggest the course delivered material that covered multiple disciplinary approaches to complex transnational issues and that students were largely successful in mastering those skills themselves in this course. The top ranking was achieved by more students than any other, with a majority of remaining students falling into the 2nd category. This is primarily a continuation of results from last year, but with a slip in the number of students achieving the top category. As this is a new course, there is room for some improvement and one of the central challenges here is in developing and selecting the assignment to evaluate. In the current term, a new assignment has been developed that is closer to the one employed previously in *The World since 1945* and that will be used in next year's assessment.

PLO5 for Introduction to International Politics

Program Learning Outcome 2:

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

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.

Direct method, Spring 2020:

All students are required to turn in a Site Supervisor evaluation in order to get credit for the course. There were 13 students in this course and all turned in these evaluations. The evaluation asked the site supervisor three questions in order to glean data on PLO5, as follows:

“In your view, did the intern demonstrate the knowledge necessary to function successfully and ethically in the workplace by the end of the internship?

Did the student demonstrate the skills to function in the workplace by the end of the internship? Did her/his skills improve as a result of the internship?

How would you describe the student's service ethic?”

The results for the first and second questions yielded data that can easily be quantified while the third questions allowed the site supervisor to provide some qualitative data points. The results are as follows:

In your view, did the intern demonstrate the knowledge necessary to function successfully and ethically in the workplace by the end of the internship?

Responses: Yes: 12; No: 1

Did the student demonstrate the skills to function in the workplace by the end of the internship? Did her/his skills improve as a result of the internship?

Responses: Yes: 12; No: 1

In your view, did the intern demonstrate the knowledge necessary to function successfully and ethically in the workplace by the end of the internship?

Responses:

“She is very proactive, always looking for the next project to complete. She is not afraid to ask questions or ask for clarity. She is also very intuitive with finding the most effective way to get a task done.”

“XXX’s values were very aligned with Accountability Counsel’s work, and it was a pleasure to see the way her thinking evolved as she learned more about our cases and the international financial institutions that are the focus of our advocacy. I am excited to see where her path goes after graduation.”

“XXX seemed to do the minimum possible. I recognize the challenges for someone who is introverted as he is, but without showing greater interest in the work, it is hard to develop one’s service ethic in social change work.”

“XXX is a concerned and responsible individual and cares for others and thus has a high service ethic.”

“XXX is a serious person and, in my experience, applies that sense of seriousness to all that she does.”

“Although XXX began his internship before the Bay Area's historic shelter-in-place mandate, his service ethic was highlighted when our organization had to pivot to a remote internship experience. He volunteered to complete a data project that supported our organization's transition to a new system which has set us up for success in the weeks and months to come.”

“I have rarely come across someone who had the dedication”

“Outstanding”

“XXX is passionate about our cause, she made sure she was always available to deliver her assigned tasks on time and ready to contribute to the team across the organization.”

“XXX is an amazing intern, truly. He was not only a dedicated, hard-working intern, he was also a great source of positivity to have day-to-day. He’d be a great asset to any team.”

“XXX has a great service ethic, she approaches the situation with great humility - ready to learn and take on the task. She takes account of the context in which we work and uses that to her advantage to ensure that the material that we are sharing with our audience is both appropriate and informative.”

“XXX is able to deliver on deadlines as well as public comment for government hearings. Her work has been precise, and she has demonstrated commitment to our nonprofit’s mission.”

“It is excellent.”

These results are not very numerous, but this sample demonstrates that all but one student was able to achieve a level of mastery in PLO5 and, further, comments about students’ service-ethic were quite positive. Some students received general positive feedback (outstanding, excellent) while others received very positive reviews based on their dedication, commitment, and positive attitude at work. One student, the outlier, received a negative review of their service ethic demonstrating that one student was not able to achieve this goal through this coursework. The other 12 seem to have achieved measurable results during their internship experience, demonstrating a mastery of PLO5 among the vast majority of the students who completed this course.

BAIS Curriculum Map:

	PI01	PI02	PI03	PI04	PI05
Upon completion of the undergraduate program International Studies students will be able to:	be able to analyze complex international issues using the theories and analytical techniques of multiple disciplines in a holistic response to the transnational problems of the 21 st century.	analyze complex global and transnational issues from a global perspective from a historical, cultural, political, economic, social, and environmental perspective and understand the relationship between the global and the local.	analyze global issues within a historical, regional, and political context and understand the global and regional context of the research and the role of the researcher in the global and regional context.	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 of their education successfully and effectively in the workplace or in pursuit of further education after graduation.
BAS194 Courses (available for all regions)					
BAS100: The World Since 1945	I	I			
BAS102: Introduction to International Politics	I	I		I	
BAS103: The Global Economy	I	I	I		
BAS201: Research Methods	C	C	I		I
BAS194 Courses for the International Trade					
<i>Global Societies and Global Anthropology</i>					
ANT-100: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology	D	D	D		D
<i>Environment and Development</i>					
ENV100: Understanding our Environment	C		C		C
BAS300: Global Environment and Politics	C	C	C		C
BVA305: Environmental Policy	C	C	C		C
<i>Global Politics and Social Organizations</i>					
BAS301: Introduction to Law and Organizations	D	D	D		
SOC201: Introduction to Globalization					
<i>International Economics</i>					
ECON101: Principles of Microeconomics					
ECON102: Principles of Macroeconomics					
<i>Research and Analysis</i>					
BAS320: Human Rights and Global Change	C	C	C	C	C
POL303: Politics of War and Peace	C		C		
Additional Requirements					
BAS303: Introduction to Affairs Review			N		N
BAS309: Internship					N
BAS401: Honors Thesis	N	N	N		N
Regional Minor				M	