

Assessment Report for the Minor in Cultural Anthropology

October 2018

1. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

(a) Name of Program: Cultural Anthropology

(b) Type of Program: Minor

(c) CAS Division: Social Sciences

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2. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of USF's anthropology minor is to advance knowledge and skills in the discipline of cultural anthropology, notably in the study of human cultural diversity. The mission of the anthropology minor also includes preparing students for life-long learning and for a background for anthropology-related careers.

Changes: yes, this is a new mission statement.

3. PROGRAM GOALS

1. Develop an anthropological imagination – an understanding of anthropology's holistic and cross-cultural perspective and its application to contemporary social issues and global problems.
- 2) Understand the causes of and breadth of cultural variation and develop a positive appreciation for the diversity of perspectives, practices, and beliefs found within each culture and across cultures.
- 3) Expand hands-on components.
- 4) Enhance inter-disciplinary and international components.

4. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Develop an understanding of core concepts in cultural anthropology including culture, holism, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativity.
2. Learn and use anthropological methods, notably participant observation and interviewing, but also other research strategies and tools to collect ethnographic data.
- 3) Develop an understanding of ethical behavior in social science research.

No changes have been made to the program learning outcomes.

Please note that assessment of a minor like cultural anthropology is difficult because many of the electives that count towards the 5 course minor are offered by faculty in other departments, many of whom are not anthropologists themselves. The faculty teaching these courses fashion their courses to satisfy their own department's PLOs, not those of the Anthropology Minor.

5. Program Learning Outcome Assessed for 2017–2018

For academic year 2017-2018 we chose to do “direct assessment” of PLO #1 -- “Develop an understanding of core concepts in cultural anthropology including culture, holism, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativity.”

6. Methodology

We assessed this learning outcome by asking at the beginning of the semester and then again at the end of the semester five open-ended questions in which students were asked to define or otherwise identify four of the core concepts in cultural anthropology. The sample was made up of 64 students enrolled in two sections of ANTH 210, “Cultures through Film.” The first test of place early in Fall semester 2017; final test on the last day of class in fall semester 2017. The difference in their responses between the beginning and the end of the semester have given us one measure of the degree to which the class mastered the core concepts of cultural anthropology. The assessment questions can be found in Appendix I.

As a measure of the students understandings of some of the key concepts of cultural anthropology the following questions were asked of all students during the 3rd week of the semester and then again at the conclusion of the semester:

1. What is ethnography?
2. What is “culture”?
3. What does holism refer to in the field of anthropology?
4. Identify “culture area”?

7. Results and Takeaways

PLO 1	Meets expectations: (Percentage of students who at the end of the term had fair to excellent understanding of the concept)	Fails to meet expectations: (Percentage of students at the end of the term who had poor understanding of the concept)	
Understanding of the concept of “culture”	92	8	

Understanding of the concept of “holism”.	72	28
Understanding of the concept of “ethnography”	79	21
Understanding of the concept of “culture area”	68	32

The results of our direct measure of PLO1 were not surprising. The students did reasonably well on the important core concepts -- culture and holism – and less well on the secondary concept “culture area,” which got less treatment in the course. The findings suggest that we might spend more class time reviewing those concepts that didn’t score as well. Equally, the findings suggest that we need to be more careful in our selection of which core concepts are important to test for. It should be noted that the vast majority of students taking Cultures through Film have chosen the course to satisfy a requirement. Most will never take another anthropology course, much less choose to minor in the field. We need to keep this in mind when selecting which core concepts to emphasize, as concepts like “culture areas”

While few students in this class will go on to minor in anthropology there are some who do develop an interest in the field and some pursue that interest, mostly by majoring in International Studies with a focus on the cultures and values track. A smaller number will pursue the anthropology minor. (We often recommend the international studies route to students with a serious interest as it usually involves taking more anthropology courses than the minor.) It seems that every year we also have one or two students, usually quite good students who, dissatisfied that USF does not offer a major in anthropology (yes, a surprising omission for a school of our standing), transfer to another institution. Several of those students have gone on to graduate school to pursue Masters or PhDs.

8. Closing the Loop and Assessment Plan for 2018-2019

We think the Cultures through Film course is quite successful as is and does not require any content modifications. Next year we aim to assess program learning outcome 3: “Develop an understanding of ethical behavior in social science research.” We will do this by selecting a randomized sample of 15 term research papers drawn from approximately 70 papers submitted in 2 sections of *Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. The papers will be reviewed independently by two anthropology faculty with scores assigned to each student paper by the different faculty raters.