

International Studies Department
2018-2019 Assessment Report for the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies Program
November 1, 2019

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, 2 functional track electives, and 4 or 5 courses for the regional minor). 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.

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

We have evaluated PLO1 for both semesters of our BASIC class *The World since 1945* and PLO 2 for two semesters of our BASIC class *Introduction to International Politics* – during the 2017-2018 academic year.

Direct Assessment of PLO1 in *The World since 1945*

This course was taught in both Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 by the same faculty member housed in the International Studies Department. The assignment was the same for both semesters, an essay question on the final exam. However, in Fall 18, students took this exam as a timed take-home exam while in Spring 19, students took the exam in the classroom. (This was due to disruptions in the course schedule due to the fires that fall.) The difference between these two semesters should be minimal however because, in both semesters, students had the essay question in advance and had the opportunity to prepare the question and bring in notes to the exam. 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 PLO2 in *Introduction to International Politics*

Introduction to International Politics was taught once in the Fall 2018 semester and once in the Spring 2019 semester. Each section offered in the 2018-2019 academic year was taught by the same faculty member who is housed in International Studies. The assignment was the same in both semesters and it required students to engage closely with a book on the global history of neoliberalism in order to develop a critical understanding of political economy. More specifically, students were asked to analyze the relations among politics, the economy, and violence, and provide relevant examples from the book that were historically and culturally specific.

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. While we did not change the PLOs, next year we will have to analyze new courses because the two courses we analyzed were consolidated into a new one, Introduction to International Studies. To this we will add an assessment of our BAIS Internship Course, taught by department faculty, and its ability to fulfill PLO 5.

6. METHODS

As described above in Section 4, we opted for direct assessment of PLO1 through *The World since 1945* and PLO2 through *Introduction to International Politics*. As 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 PLO 1 and PLO 2.

The assignments collected were reviewed and summarized by Professor John Zarobell for the World since 1945 and by Professor Quynh Pham for *Introduction to International Politics*.

7. RESULTS

PLO 1 for The World since 1945

Program Learning Outcome 1

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.

To evaluate this program learning outcome, we focus on the final exam 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 teaching this class in the past had worked together to ensure a similar final exam 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”. In the 2018-19 academic year, the course was offered twice and in both semesters it was taught by Professor Zarobell.

The final exam question was:

In lectures and during the last workshop assignment, you have worked to prepare an analysis of which causes from the other social processes so far discussed (Geopolitics, Neoliberalism, Modernization, Globalization and Nationalism) have led to migration. This essay for the final asks you to develop this analysis further and to make an argument for how all of these processes lead, directly or indirectly, to some form of displacement, whether it be migration, exile, asylum seeking, or transnational identity. You can approach this essay in a variety of ways but the goal is for you to connect the course material to the theme of migration and make an argument for what root historical causes lead to contemporary developments. You need to determine what are the most important causes that lead to migration and you should speculate about what the results of migration are upon contemporary politics and society. I expect you to cite at least three texts (one of which must be from the Migration section). The successful essay will be clear and well-reasoned, but will take on a breadth of material and make it clear how these issues are related and what the implications are.

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.

Fall 2018 results:

1: 15
2: 12
3: 5
4: 1
Total: 33

Spring 2019 results:

1: 18
2: 10
3: 5
4: 1
Total: 34

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 and, in each case, with only one student who really did not employ multidisciplinary perspectives. This is primarily a continuation of results from last year, but with a larger number of students achieving the top category, suggesting that course adjustments provided opportunity for greater success for this learning outcome.

PLO 2 for Introduction to International Politics

Program Learning Outcome 2:

Upon completion of the undergraduate major in International Studies, 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.

Direct method, Fall 2018:

A total of 37 essays were reviewed. The assignment required students to engage closely with a book on the global history of neoliberalism in order to develop a critical understanding of political economy. More specifically, students were asked to analyze the relations among politics, the economy, and violence, and provide relevant examples from the book that were historically and culturally specific. Each essay was reviewed according to the rubric below.

	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Needs improvement	Below expectations
Theoretical understanding (articulating key concepts with effective argumentation)	8	17	10	2
Global framing (situating issues within a global historical and political context)	12	18	4	3
Information synthesis from multiple domains (drawing connections across the domains of politics, economics, history, and culture to analyze international politics)	10	22	2	3

These results suggest that most students were able to draw connections across multiple domains to analyze issues of international politics and situate these issues within a global historical and political context. The majority of students were able to articulate key concepts with effective argumentation. Yet more students need improvement in this area. This is likely because BAIS 102 is an introductory level class and most students took it in their very first semester at USF. Freshly transitioning from high school to college, they were accustomed to absorbing information rather than thinking in conceptual terms. This gap will be bridged as students take more college classes dealing with theories and concepts.

Direct Method, Spring 2019:

A total of 38 essays were reviewed. The assignment required students to engage closely with a book on the global history of neoliberalism in order to develop a critical understanding of political economy. More specifically, students were asked to analyze the relations among politics, the economy, and violence, and provide relevant examples from the book that were historically and culturally specific. Each essay was reviewed according to the rubric below.

	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Needs improvement	Below expectations
Theoretical understanding (articulating key concepts with effective argumentation)	15	18	1	4
Global framing (situating issues within a global historical and political context)	20	14	2	2
Information synthesis from multiple domains (drawing connections across the domains of politics,	18	16	1	3

economics, history, and culture to analyze international politics)				
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These results suggest that most students were able to 1. draw connections across multiple domains to analyze issues of international politics, 2. situate these issues within a global historical and political context, and 3. articulate arguments and key concepts in a satisfactory manner. Based on this rubric, students who took this class in Spring 2019 performed better than those in Fall 2018. The change is particularly significant with regard to students' theoretical understanding. This confirms an earlier anticipation that students would get more accustomed to conceptual thinking as they take more college classes dealing with theories and concepts. Furthermore, the overall improved performance is likely correlated with changes made to the second iteration of the course (regarding syllabus, lectures/discussions, and assignments) with the goal of better conveying concepts, issues, and expectations to students.

BAIS Curriculum Map:

	PI01	PI02	PI03	PI04	PI05
Upon completion of five undergraduate programs in International Studies, students will be able to:	be able to analyze complex international issues using the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines as well as better respond to transnational problems of the 21st century.	Gain conceptual understanding of the historical formation of the Chinese economy, history, culture, and the environment, understand actual development trends and international relations in the contemporary world.	Be able to assess global issues when conducting research on the political, economic, and cultural aspects of the global world and be able to relate this knowledge to the broader global context.	Demonstrate an understanding of the language, history, dynamics, and political state of 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 civic ability to function successfully and ethically in the workplace or in pursuit of further education after graduation.
BAIS98 Courses (as listed in majors)					
BAIS100: The World Since 1945	I	I			
BAIS102: Introduction to International Politics	I	I		I	
BAIS103: The Global Economy	I	I	I		
BAIS201: Research Methods	C	C	I		I
BAIS Required Courses for the International Trade					
<i>Global Societies and Culture</i>					
ANT-001: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology	D	D	D		D
<i>Environment and Development</i>					
ENV100: Understanding Our Environment	C		C		
BAIS300: Global Environmental Politics	C	C	C		C
ENV4386: Environmental Policy	C	C	C		C
<i>Global Politics and Society</i>					
BAIS301: Introduction to Law and Organizations	D	D	D		
SC0228: Introduction to Globalization					
<i>International Economics</i>					
ECON101: Principles of Microeconomics					
ECON102: Principles of Macroeconomics					
<i>Research and Critical Studies</i>					
BAIS301: Human Rights and Global Change	C	C	C	C	C
POIS388: Politics of War and Peace	C		C		
Additional BAIS Studies					
BAIS385: Introduction to Asian Studies			N		N
BAIS389: Internship			N		N
BAIS489: Honors Thesis	N	N	N		N
Required Major				M	