

International Studies Department
2020-2021 Assessment Report for the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies Program
April 28, 2022

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 PAST ASSESSMENTS

Past Assessments: International Studies (BAIS)					
YEAR	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4	PLO5
	Be able to analyze complex international issues using the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines.	Gain the conceptual and analytical tools to synthesize information from the domains of politics, economics, history, culture, and the environment to elucidate global interactions and international relations in the contemporary world.	Be able to assess contemporary global issues through a research practice that establishes causality and promotes deeper understanding through clear research questions, reviews of academic literature, and delineation of effective methods of inquiry.	Demonstrate an understanding of the major issues and problems facing one region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, or the Middle East) and be able to relate this knowledge to the broader global context.	Gain the knowledge, skills, and service ethic to enable them to function successfully and ethically in the workplace after graduation.
2016/2017	BAIS 101, BAIS 102, Direct Assessment	BAIS 101, BAIS 102, Direct Assessment			
2017/2018	BAIS 101, BAIS 102, Direct and Indirect Assessment	BAIS 101, BAIS 102, Direct and Indirect Assessment			
2018/2019	BAIS 101, BAIS 102, Direct Assessment	BAIS 101, BAIS 102, Direct Assessment			
2019/2020	BAIS 100, Direct Assessment	BAIS 100, Direct Assessment			BAIS 399, Direct Assessment
2020/2021			BAIS 201, Direct Assessment		

Over the past four academic years (15/16-19/20) BAIS assessments have focused on the first two program learning outcomes (PLO1 and PLO2) via a direct assessment of our introductory courses. From 2015/16-2018/19 these assessments were of the two introductory courses operated by the BA in International Studies program (BAIS 101 and BAIS 102). Both of these courses are no longer offered, and have been combined into our new introductory course (BAIS 100), which was directly assessed in its first year 2019/2020. Last year, in an attempt to widen our selection of courses and PLOs, we also directly assessed PLO5 via a direct assessment of BAIS 397 - our internship course. This year we seek to continue to widen the selection of PLOs and courses by directly assessing PLO3 via an examination of final paper from BAIS 201, Research Methods.

Below is a summary of the 2019/2020 assessment:

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.

PLO1 and PLO2 Fall 2019 BAIS 100 (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, and the environment to analyze global politics)	11	14	7	4

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.

PLO1 and PLO2, BAIS 100, 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.

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.

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.

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 a direct assessment of PLO3 through *B AIS 201 Research Methods*. We anticipate that students will acquire an ‘I or ‘Intermediate’ level of understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined in PLO 3. For the Research Methods class we chose to review the final assignment. For the Fall 2020 course (Cantero), the final assignment was a research paper. Each individual student wrote a culminating research paper. For the Spring 2021 course (Dowd-Uribe), the final assignment was a journal article. These journal articles were the culmination of a group project where each group conceived, conducted, and wrote up the findings of an original research project. The IS Assessment Committee composed of Professors Nora Fisher Onar, Ilaria Giglioli and Brian Dowd-Uribe conceived of a rubric to guide the direct assessment based on the PLO (see below). The assignments collected were reviewed and summarized by the IS Assessment Committee.

Program Learning Outcome 3

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

- Be able to assess contemporary global issues through a research practice that establishes causality and promotes deeper understanding through clear research questions, reviews of academic literature, and delineation of effective methods of inquiry

Assessment Rubric

	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Needs improvement	Below expectations
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>clear research question</u> (makes sense, is easy to understand, appropriate for social scientific inquiry)				
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>review of academic literature</u> (variety of sources, synthetic review, clear articulation of literature, embedding current research in the literature)				
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>delineation of effective methods of inquiry</u> (knowledge of chosen method, engagement with literature on method, implementation of method to answer research question)				

7. RESULTS

Fall 2020 (Professor Cantero)

Direct method:

A total of 27 final papers were reviewed. The assignment required students to write a classic "research" paper based on the methods introduced in the course curriculum.

Assessment Rubric

	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Needs improvement	Below expectations
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>clear research question</u> (makes sense, is easy to understand, appropriate for social scientific inquiry)	6	11	10	
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>review of academic literature</u> (variety of sources, synthetic review, clear articulation of literature, embedding current research in the literature)	5	19	3	
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>delineation of effective methods of inquiry</u> (knowledge of chosen method, engagement with literature on method, implementation of method to answer research question)	1	10	16	

These results suggest that the majority of students were able to gain an intermediate level of understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined in PLO 3, with differential results across the three main criteria. Sixty-three percent of students either met or exceeded expectations regarding formulating an appropriate research question. Eighty-nine percent of students either met or exceed expectation regarding reviewing relevant academic literature. However, only 41% of students met or exceeded expectations in their ability to effectively delineate a method of inquiry. The assessment committee viewed the reason for this discrepancy principally due to the type of assignment that was reviewed. The assignment - a classic research paper - often doesn't make an explicit statement about methodological inquiry. While some students did so, many did not. Under a different assignment, student may have done much better on this particular criterion.

Spring 2021 (Professor Dowd-Uribe)

A total of 7 final papers were reviewed. The assignment required students to author a journal article as part of a group. These journal articles were the culmination of a group project where each group conceived, conducted, and wrote up the findings of an original research project.

Assessment Rubric

	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Needs improvement	Below expectations
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>clear research question</u> (makes sense, is easy to understand, appropriate for social scientific inquiry)	3	4		
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>review of academic literature</u> (variety of sources, synthetic review, clear articulation of literature, embedding current research in the literature)	4	3		
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via <u>delineation of effective methods of inquiry</u> (knowledge of chosen method, engagement with literature on method, implementation of method to answer research question)	5	2		

These results suggest that the majority of students were able to gain an intermediate level of understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined in PLO 3. All groups of students in all three evaluative criteria either exceeded or met expectations.

Taken together, the results show that students in BAIS 201 are achieving an intermediate level of understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined in PLO 3

BAIS Curriculum Map:

Curricular Map: International Studies					
Program Outcomes	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4	PLO5
Upon Completion of the BA in International Studies, Students will be able to...	Be able to analyze complex international issues using the theories and methodologies of multiple disciplines.	Gain the conceptual and analytical tools to synthesize information from the domains of politics, economics, history, culture, and the environment to elucidate global interactions and international relations in the contemporary world.	Be able to assess contemporary global issues through a research practice that establishes causality and promotes deeper understanding through clear research questions, reviews of academic literature, and delineation of effective methods of inquiry.	Demonstrate an understanding of the major issues and problems facing one region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, or the Middle East) and be able to relate this knowledge to the broader global context.	Gain the knowledge, skills, and service ethic to enable them to function successfully and ethically in the workplace after graduation.
Courses:					
BAIS 100: Intro Int'l Studies	I	I		I	
BAIS 103: Global Economy		I	I, D		I
BAIS 201: Research Methods	D	D	I	D	D
Track Requirement		D			
Track Electives	D		D		
Regional Focus				M	
BAIS 397: Capstone	M	M	M		M
BAIS 399: Internship (SL)					M
BAIS 499: Honors Thesis	M	M	M		M