

International Studies Department
2021-2022 Assessment Report for the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies Program
November 1, 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 ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR 2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR

Direct Assessment of PLO1 and PLO2 in BAIS 100 *Introduction to International Studies*

This course was taught by the same faculty member (John Zarobell) in person in Spring 2021 and online in Summer 2021. The goal of this assessment is not only to check in with previous assessments of these PLOs in the Introductory course, but also to assess whether these PLOs were successfully delivered through the online modality. The essay question that will be evaluated was the same for both courses and 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. Therefore, the same rubric is going to be used to evaluate students' achievement on this essay in both courses. Since we have regularly assessed these PLOs in this course, this will be the last time we evaluate the Introduction this year but it seemed useful to ascertain whether the online version of the Intro (now in its third iteration) has the same efficacy as the in-person version.

Direct Assessment of PLO3 for BAIS 201 Research Methods

This course was taught by the same faculty member in fall 2021 and spring 2022 (Ilaria Giglioli) and thus it presents an opportunity to evaluate outcomes in different semesters using the same assignment and the same rubric. Unlike last year, the students worked in groups on their final project, so the direct assessment method may have limited capacity to demonstrate individual capacity but the group assignments provide students a means to collectively achieve both the goals of the assignment and the PLO, thus they present evidence of general expertise among the students.

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.

For the direct assessment of PLO3, students should have achieved an Introductory level of expertise for PLO3 which would be indicated in their final group projects. These assessments yielded confirmation of their demonstrated abilities in developing research skills as demonstrated in collectively-produced research papers. The assessment of the PLOs was undertaken by John Zarobell by reviewing the final assignments for both semesters of the course in line with the rubric structure.

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.

Spring 2022 (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: 6

3: 7

4: 1

Total: 26

These direct results suggest the course delivered material that covered multiple disciplinary approaches to complex transnational issues and that most students were largely successful in mastering those skills themselves in this course, but almost one-third (31%) of the students performed in bottom half so there is more work to do in terms of preparing students to synthesize information from various fields into one argument. The top ranking was achieved by more students than any other (46%), with 23% of remaining students falling into the 2nd category. This is primarily a continuation from last year, but with a drop in the number of students achieving the second category. There is room for some improvement but it may be more useful to evaluate the Reflection assignment which was used as a final to evaluate students own self-understanding of these learning outcomes. The reflection is the result of an in-class exercise (a simulation of the Paris Climate Accords) which was not available to the summer class so I continued to use this assessment for the sake of consistency.

Summer 2022 (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 same rubric will be used for this assessment

Results:

1: 3

2: 8

3: 4

4: 0

Total: 15

The results for the online summer class were significantly below the in-person version of the course offered over the spring 2022 semester. Only 3 students achieved the top tier (20%) but more than half

(53%) ranked in the second tier. While this means that nearly 75% of student performed in the top half, the online class does not deliver the same level of mastery of the Program Learning Outcome. Overall, the grades for the summer class are somewhat lower and the fact that these students are not majors, but taking the class online, over the summer, for a Core E credit needs to be considered in the evaluation. But faculty need to consider how it is possible to improve PLO mastery through an online course. Without the learning that comes from interactive engagement, other tools are necessary to promote student understanding of the multidisciplinary dimension of International Studies.

PLO3 for Research Methods

Direct Method

As described above in Section 4, I opted for a direct assessment of PLO3 through *B AIS 201 Research Methods*. I anticipate that students will acquire an 'I or 'Introductory' level of understanding of the skills and knowledge outlined in PLO 3. For the Research Methods class I chose to review the final assignment. For the Fall 2021/Spring 2022 course (both taught by Ilaria Giglioli), the final assignment was a group research paper.

The assignment in this case was very detailed and provided multi-level guidelines for student success:

Final report

As your final project, you will write a report that will describe the findings of your research. It should follow the outline of an academic article (see guidelines below), but should be written for a broad audience. This means that it should be clear and easy to understand by someone who has no prior knowledge on the topic. It should be approximately 6,000 words long, plus the bibliography. It should follow these guidelines:

Title

The title should clearly state the topic of your research. It should be easily understandable by a broad audience, and include keywords that reference the main topics of your study

Abstract (about 250 words)

The abstract represents an overview of your project, and it will be most effective if you write it at the end. Imagine that it might be the only part of your work that is actually read. A good abstract should give the reader a quick overview of all parts of your project, and it should include:

- 'Hook' - i.e. introduction to the problem that draws the reader in. Typical ways of doing this include stating the relevance of the topic, or as a question.
- Your research question
- Your methods (i.e. how you will do your study)
- Your major findings.
- A description of why your findings are important.
- Why your research is important

Introduction

The introduction should attract the reader and bring them into your project. More specifically, the introduction should answer the following questions:

- What the research is about:

- A hook (you can use the same one as your abstract)
- Your research question
- What exactly you will be researching (your methods)
- Why your research is important
- How the report will be organized

Literature Review

This section situates your work within the broader research that has already been done on the topic. In this section you need to make sure that:

- You organize this section thematically (not by author)
- Your material is clearly related to your research question. Ask yourself if the reader needs to know this information to understand your research. If not, cut it out.
- You provide a good overview of the topic, citing the major existing work in the area.
- You identify a 'gap' in the literature and clearly explain how your own work fits into this gap
- Your final paragraph represents a bridge to your methods section, explaining how your proposed methods will fill the gap.

Research Design and Methods

This section outlines how you designed and carried out your methods. You need to explain your research design in a clear and detailed manner. In particular, you should follow these points:

- Clearly state your research question and how this research design will help you answer the question.
- For each method, explain what part of the research question it is addressing. If your methods build on each other (i.e. a content analysis that provides the content for your interviews), explain this.
- Include details of the data you analyzed, and how you sampled it.
- Include details on how you analyzed your data.
- Discuss any limitations in your methods (i.e. things that did not work out as planned, possible objections)

Ask yourself the following question: could someone look at your methods section and have enough information to design a similar study? If not, include more information.

Findings and Discussion

This section should do two things.

- Your findings should present a concise and cleaned up version of the data you found through your analysis. This is usually a short section. If appropriate, you can present this in map or table form.
- Your discussion section answers the following question:
 - What do your findings mean? What is their significance?
 - How do they answer the research question?

Conclusion

Your conclusion should:

- Summarize the main findings of the article
- Identify any limitations in the research

- Point to new areas of research
- If relevant, identify any policy recommendations that come out of your research

References (additional words, not counted towards the 6,000 word limit)

- These should be in the APA format
- Make sure that all your in-text citations are included in the references, and vice versa

In addition, your report should also follow these overall criteria:

- Be clearly written for a broad audience
- Be coherent and internally consistent
- Clearly flow from section to section
- Be clearly and concisely written

Criteria	Pts
<p>Title</p> <p>Does the title clearly state the topic of your research? Is it easily understandable by a broad audience? Does it include keywords that reference the main topics of your study?</p>	<p>5 pts</p>
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Does the abstract include the following elements?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Hook' - i.e. introduction to the problem that draws the reader in. - Your research question - Your methods (i.e. how you will do your study) - Your major findings. - A description of why your findings are important. - Why your research is important 	<p>10 pts</p>

<p>Introduction</p> <p>Does the introduction contain the following elements?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What the research is about - A hook (you can use the same one as your abstract) - Your research question - What exactly you will be researching (your methods) - Why your research is important - How the report will be organized 	<p>10 pts</p>
<p>Literature Review</p> <p>Does this section do the following: discuss literature thematically? Clearly relate literature to the research question? Provide a comprehensive overview of the topic, citing the major existing work in the area? Identify a 'gap' in the literature and clearly explain how your own work fits into this gap? Contain a bridge to your methods section, explaining how your proposed methods will fill the gap?</p>	<p>10 pts</p>
<p>Research Design & Methods</p> <p>Does this section do the following: clearly state your research question and how this research design will help you answer the question? For each method, explain what part of the research question it is addressing? Include details of the data you analyzed, and how you sampled it? Include details on how you analyzed your data? Discuss any limitations in your methods (i.e. things that did not work out as planned, possible objections)?</p>	<p>15 pts</p>
<p>Findings and Discussion</p> <p>Do your findings present a concise and cleaned up version of the data you found through your analysis? Does your discussion section answer the following questions: what do your findings mean? What is their significance? How do they answer the research question?</p>	<p>25 pts</p>

<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Does the conclusion do the following:</p> <p>Summarize the main findings of the article?</p> <p>Identify any limitations in the research?</p> <p>Point to new areas of research?</p> <p>If relevant, identify any policy recommendations that come out of your research?</p>	<p>10 pts</p>
<p>Citations and bibliography</p> <p>Is the paper correctly cited in the APA format?</p> <p>Are all in-text citations included in the works cited, and vice versa?</p>	<p>5 pts</p>
<p>Writing quality</p> <p>Internal consistency: are there clear and logical relationships between the different sections of the paper? Is it easy to follow? Is the writing style uniform?</p> <p>Writing: does the paper contain typos or misspelled words? Does it have solid sentence structure? Does it have clearly defined and logically divided paragraphs?</p>	<p>10 pts</p>
<p>Total Points: 100</p>	

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
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Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via clear research question (makes sense, is easy to understand, appropriate for social scientific inquiry)	3	5	3	0
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via review of academic literature (variety of sources, synthetic review, clear articulation of literature, embedding current research in the literature)	4	4	3	0
Deeper understanding of contemporary global issue via delineation of effective methods of inquiry (knowledge of chosen method, engagement with literature on method, implementation of method to answer research question)	4	4	3	0

Results:

The results from these two classes producing a total of 11 group assignments demonstrates that there is, in general a spread across the top three layers. In other words, most of the students (73%) scored in the top half of the graph in all three sections. This data is different from last year's analysis because there were fewer items to analyze but it is important also to consider the group dynamic in terms of analyzing results. One imagines that in a group project the weaknesses on individual members might be balanced out by higher-achieving students to lead to higher overall results. Indeed, the results here are better for the first (63% in the top half) and third (41%) areas than last year, but the results for Literature review were stronger among individual students last year with (89%) in the top half last year. Another interesting result is that, with the group work, one expects consistent achievement across the three areas for each assignment evaluated but this was not the case. Many of the group projects scored very well in some areas but not in others. For example, one of the strongest projects in terms of Literature Review and Methods did not formulate a Research Question at all. The picture is better with the group projects and, by and large, they seem to be a more satisfactory means to achieve Program Learning Outcomes in this course. Nevertheless, they did not guarantee the best outcomes, and learning in the groups was not always consistent in all three areas despite an extensive rubric provided by the faculty member.

BAIS Curriculum Map:

	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	