International Studies Department 2017-2018
Assessment Report for the Master of Arts in International Studies (MAIS)

October 26, 2018

1. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

a) <u>Name of Program</u>: Master of Arts in International Studies Program (hereinafter MAIS)
b) <u>Type of Program</u>: Graduate Program
c) <u>CAS Division</u>: Social Sciences
d) <u>Submitter & Point of Contact</u>: Brian Dowd-Uribe, Assistant Professor & MAIS Academic Director, bdowduribe@usfca.edu

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 graduate 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, international development, international business, international media and communication, social advocacy, and the law

3. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLOs)

The MAIS PLOs were drafted and adopted by the Faculty Advisory Board in the Spring 2015 semester

1. Understand the major structural, cultural, and relational shifts that have emerged in response to globalization from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, with a special emphasis on non-state actors.
2. Identify key organizations, institutions, and global and regional norms and how they interact with sub-state forces to shape policy, advocacy, and social movements.
3. Develop an understanding of the diverse aspects of global civil society and the political, economic, legal, environmental, social and cultural forces that are shaping contemporary global issues through the local-global connection.
4. Demonstrate an ability to critically engage categories of cultural difference and diversity and evaluate their influence on contemporary phenomenon.
5. Utilize mixed research methodologies, an interdisciplinary perspective, and community engagement skills to analyze key issues in international studies.

4. CURRICULUM MAP*

TABLE 1. MAIS Curricular Map 2017-2018

MAIS Course	Program Learning Outcomes				
	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO3	PLO 4	PLO 5
Themes and Theories	D	D	D	D	
History and Politics of Global Issues	I	I	I	I	
Human Rights and International Law		D	D	D	
Research Methods and Thesis Writing				D	D
Capstone Project					M

* Key: D = Developing; I = Intermediate; M = Mastery

5. SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR 2017-2018 ACADEMIC YEAR

As in years past, we assessed only PLO 5. We selected this PLO because this PLO has not changes with the creation of our new 2-year curriculum, which is currently being implemented this academic year (2018-2019). Selecting both a class and a PLO that does not change will allow us to collect longitudinal data. Program Learning Outcome 5 states: "Students will be able to…Utilize mixed research methodologies, an interdisciplinary perspective, and community engagement to analyze key issues in international studies.

All students in the MAIS program take the Research Methods and Thesis Writing class in the spring semester. We assessed their acquisition of methodological skills in two different ways.

For direct assessment, we collected the final research proposal assignment to assess student understanding of the different components of PLO 5. The guidelines for the final assignment are attached in Appendix I.

For indirect assessment, students in one section of Research Methods were given a survey by the professor for the course. They were asked to respond to a series of questions to assess their familiarity with mixed research methodologies, community engagement, research ethics, and the use of an interdisciplinary approach to research. The survey is available in Appendix II. Unfortunately this survey was only given to one section and not all three sections of Research Methods. This was an oversight, which will be corrected in future years.

6. METHODS

As indicated in our Curricular Map, we anticipate that MAIS students will have achieve a 'Developing' level of competence with the following skills upon completion of the Research Methods and Thesis Writing course:

- Identify a broad range of methods and accompanying theoretical paradigms in the social sciences;
- Know how to formulate a research question, operationalize the concepts that have been developed, conduct library research, evaluate secondary research sources, draft an annotated bibliography, write a literature review and ultimately craft a strong thesis;
- Understand the ethical and political dimensions of research, and demonstrate how to conduct community-engaged research.

As this is a graduate program, we believe that mastery of these skills will come through the completion of the master's thesis or applied project that the student conducts during her or his final semester in the program (and was not a part of assessment this year).

Direct Assessment

Direct assessment was comprised of a review of the final research proposal submissions of the students. Professors Cantero, Dowd-Uribe and Paller, who were the three professors for the three sections of this course, jointly created the assignment.

At the end of the semester students were asked to upload their final assignments to Canvas for review. Sample assignments were reviewed by Professor Dowd-Uribe to measure the following:

- Does the proposal identify a topic pertinent to International Studies?
- Does the proposal draw on literature and ideas from at least two different fields thereby meeting the interdisciplinary requirement?
- Does the proposal either utilize or provide a justification for not utilizing mixed research methods?
- Does the proposal include a plan for community-engage research, and, if so, does it adequately identify ethical issues that might come in to play?

Indirect Assessment

Indirect assessment was comprised of a survey handed out to the student in one section (Professor Cantero) of Research Methods and Thesis Writing at the end of the semester. The results of the survey were compiled by Professor Dowd-Uribe and are including in the results section below.

7. RESULTS

Based on these metrics outlined above and reviewed below, we believe that MAIS students in the 2017-2018 cohort achieved a 'Developing' level of competence for PLO 5.

Direct Assessment Results

Professor Dowd-Uribe reviewed a total of six sample final proposal assignments. In the future, we will use a more robust sampling method, as we transition to our new curriculum.

In line from the assessment methods of previous years, we adopted a yes/no evaluation metric when reviewing each proposal. The results are as follows:

TABLE 2. Direct assessment results from a review of research proposal from MAIS 613, Research Methods and Thesis Writing, 2017-2018.

	Yes	No	Unclear
1) Does the proposal identify a topic pertinent to International Studies?	6 (100%)		
2) Does the proposal draw on literature and ideas from at least two different fields thereby meeting the 'interdisciplinary' requirement?	5 (83%)		1 (17%)
3) Does the proposal either utilize or provide a justification for not utilizing mixed research methods?	5 (83%)		1 (17%)
4) Does the proposal include a plan for community-engaged research, and, if so, does it adequately identify the ethical issues that might come in to play?	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	

This assessment is still qualitative in nature. Here I describe in greater detail how I operationalized the terms in each evaluative question.

Question 1: A topic pertinent to International Studies is defined as one of global important, that affects a geographically dispersed set of regions and/or global actors, and which has clear global implications.

Question 2: Different fields of research were identified via terms that signaled drawing from a different field (e.g. Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, etc…) or a different sub-field (e.g. Science and Technology Studies, Political Ecology, etc…). In some cases different fields of research were identified via the disciplinary training of the authors which were drawn from to develop the literature review or conceptual framework for the proposal.

Question 3: Mixed Methods here is defined as drawing from at least two or more known research methodologies. These could be different qualitative or quantitative methods. These were principally identified in the research design section.

Question 4: Community-engaged research was defined as containing one of two qualities: a) a field-based research component, and/or b) a plan to engage with the broader community to disseminate the results of their work.

Indirect Assessment Results

Students rated comprehension of the different components of PLO 5 very highly, which meets the 'Developing' goal for the Research Methods and Thesis Writing class.

Below are the results for each question:

1) After this course, I feel adequately prepared to use multiple research methods of data collection for interdisciplinary research on key issues in International Studies
- Strong Agree   2 (15%)
- Agree   6 (46%)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree   4 (31%)
- Disagree   1 (8%)
- Strongly Disagree   0

2) After this course, I feel adequately prepared to understand the role of community engagement in interdisciplinary research on key issues in International Studies
- Strong Agree   5 (38%)
- Agree   8 (62%)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree   0
- Disagree   0
- Strongly Disagree   0

3) After this course, I feel adequately competent to assess the ethical conditions of my research
- Strong Agree   3 (23%)
- Agree   10 (77%)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree   0
- Disagree   0
- Strongly Disagree   0

4) After this course, I feel adequately competent to assess the ethical conditions of my research
- Strong Agree   7 (54%)
- Agree   5 (38%)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree   0
- Disagree   1 (8%)
- Strongly Disagree   0

5) After this course, I feel adequately prepared to understand the politics around how research is produced on key issues in International Studies
- Strong Agree   4 (31%)

- Agree	9 (69%)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
- Disagree	0
- Strongly Disagree	0

In the future this indirect assessment tool can be further refined to better match PLO 5, and distributed to all sections of Research Methods.

8. CLOSING THE LOOP

Next year's assessment with be for a different curriculum (and different curricular map). The MA Faculty Board will discuss in early Spring '19 how to improve assessment tools, so as to continue to collect longitudinal data, but also to expand and strengthen our assessment efforts.

Appendix I

MAIS 613: Research Methods and Thesis Writing
Final Proposal Assignment

Introduction and Background to Topic/ Problem (~1-2 pages)
This overview should discuss the problem and research question, giving your reader insight to the general trajectory of your research. This should start broad and then focus more directly on the topic/problem. It should clearly state the research question. If using a hypothesis, this should be included here (See Booth Chapter "Introductions and Conclusions" for tips (Chpt. 14 or 16).

Contribution to the state and knowledge of the field (~5-7 pages)
This section should include an overview of your literature review. It should discuss which literatures you will contribute to, and how. Outline the major debates on the topic from both a practical and theoretical standpoint. This section should demonstrate (1) a command of similar research relevant to your topic / question and (2) identify a gap / problem in the literature that will be filled by your research.

Argument and/or Theoretical Framework (~3-4 pages)
This section should discuss what your working hypotheses are—what you expect to find. This should also be an opportunity to discuss the major concepts of your research and the conceptual starting points for your inquiry.

Research Design, Methodology and Case Selection (~4-6 pages)
This section details the design of the research project and the particular methods used to collect data. It should go in to great detail of how data will be collected and stored, and analyzed to answer your specific research question. Discuss how particular concepts are opearationalized and measured. Discuss your case selection: why do you select the cases that you do?

Project Feasibility, Institutional Support, and Qualifications (~1-2 pages)
Outline a research and writing schedule, and explain what plans you have in place to conduct the research. Explain your study sites, organizations with which you will partner, and any funding opportunities. Also discuss what makes you qualified to conduct this research, and how you prepared / are preparing for the project.

Limitations, Broader Impact and Significance (~1 page)
Here you will address the wider significance and importance of your study along with limitation of your scope and research. What is the 'value-added.' What will you not be able to answer given the constraints of your methods / time / other factors?

Details
  • **15-20 pages**

- **12pt. Times New Roman**
- **Double Spaced**
- **Consistent citation style**

Appendix II

MAIS 613: Research Methods and Thesis Writing
Indirect Assessment Survey

1) After this course, I feel adequately prepared to use multiple research methods of data collection for interdisciplinary research on key issues in International Studies
- Strong Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

2) After this course, I feel adequately prepared to understand the role of community engagement in interdisciplinary research on key issues in International Studies
- Strong Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

3) After this course, I feel adequately competent to assess the ethical conditions of my research
- Strong Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

4) After this course, I feel adequately competent to assess the ethical conditions of my research
- Strong Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5) After this course, I feel adequately prepared to understand the politics around how research is produced on key issues in International Studies
- Strong Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree