



UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE

**ANTHROPOLOGY BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM**

**Academic Assessment Plan**

**Adopted by  
The Anthropology Faculty: December 7, 2012  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

This document outlines a plan for the assessment of the new student learning outcomes for the revised Anthropology Baccalaureate program to be implemented in Fall 2018. Initial assessment strategies for the BA/BS were developed in 2005 at a department retreat and revisited again in Fall 2011. The assessment plan generated in 2011 was approved by the faculty in December 2012 and implemented in spring 2013. At this time, however, we noted that the Department intended to continue revisions to the baccalaureate programs by streamlining course offerings. The revisions proposed herein meet these aims, improving the clarity, completeness, and relevance of the BA/BS program's structure and tightening its articulation with student learning outcomes.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Anthropology is a discipline that examines the diversity of the human experience from a holistic, cross-cultural perspective. Anthropologists seek to understand how and why cultures change and how people organize their lives and fashion meaning from the world. The discipline is far reaching in scope, covering human societies anywhere, anytime, and ranging from charting the evolution of the human species to comprehending inequalities, transformations, and conflicts in an increasingly globalized society. The practice of anthropology is divided into four interrelated subfields: sociocultural anthropology, archaeology, biological anthropology, and anthropological linguistics. Anthropology is an applied social science in which practitioners employ anthropological techniques, perspectives, and methods to understand and improve the human condition.

The Anthropology Department at UAA offers undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as a minor in anthropology. The undergraduate degree (available as either a BA or BS) provides students with a solid foundation in the contemporary theory and practice in the four subfields of anthropology through lecture courses and instruction that encourage critical thinking and provide opportunities for independent research and fieldwork. In addition to honing critical thinking skills and learning how to research social problems, an undergraduate major in anthropology learns the relevance of anthropology's interconnectedness with disciplines as diverse as the fine arts, business, history, languages, the physical sciences, and medicine. With a focus on Alaska and the Circumpolar North, students in the program also gain appreciation for the perseverance and transformation of Indigenous cultures and lifeways, as well as key contemporary issues they face. The graduate program offers MA degrees in general anthropology and in applied anthropology, which employs anthropological perspectives and research methods to identify, analyze, and aid the resolution of contemporary social issues and problems. Undergraduate and graduate students benefit from stacked courses and collegiate interactions that allow for involved and peer-driven learning.

Anthropology faculty members practice engagement in teaching, research, and service to produce knowledge that is relevant to the concerns of local, national and international communities. Faculty members are committed to collaborative research and work with local,

national, and international organizations—both governmental and nongovernmental –and, in particular Alaska Native communities, in both research and community service.

Anthropology courses and training address key core themes of the UAA campus in understanding one’s own culture, acquiring informed critical awareness and understanding of cultural differences, similarities and ambiguities, and providing the basis for respecting and celebrating diversity in a variety of forms.

## **PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Anthropology is the study of human diversity on a cross-cultural basis, aimed at achieving both scientific and humanistic understandings of the human condition. Anthropology is comprised of four subfields: sociocultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, and anthropological linguistics. The BA/BS degrees provide students with a solid general foundation in the discipline by emphasizing these four subfields in developing understanding of different cultures and peoples, especially those within Alaska and the Circumpolar North, as well as different anthropological methods and theories.

Students graduating with a B.A./B.S. in Anthropology will be able to:

1. Describe current understandings about human behavior and language, cultural processes, the evolution of humans, biocultural diversity, and trajectories of cultural change.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of theoretical approaches in anthropology, their foundations, and the issues they are designed to address.
3. Explain ethical practice in anthropological research and issues encountered in the discipline.
4. Exhibit proficiency in documenting, evaluating, and communicating anthropological information, including perspectives relevant to Alaska and the Circumpolar North.
5. Apply anthropological methods and techniques to research questions and practical problems.

## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

The Anthropology Baccalaureate program introduces, develops, and assesses the anthropological knowledge and skills reflected in the program outcomes over the course of a student’s progression in the program. The course-level tiers provide structure for the development of the expected outcomes as well as critical General Education Requirements learning outcomes as shown in the Table 1. Each level has common course-level student learning outcomes that aim to ensure students acquire the knowledge and skills expected of an anthropology program graduate.

### **200-Level Core Courses**

Course offerings at the 200 level develop four-field knowledge in anthropology. All students majoring in anthropology must complete the four core 200-level courses, each emphasizing one of four primary subfields (A202, A205, A210, and A211). These courses provide students with the core knowledge of the four anthropological subfields. For majors, these courses provide foundational exposure to the anthropological subfields. Each course details themes germane to the subfield, and from which upper-division level courses develop further specialization. Non-majors taking the 200-level courses gain insight into social science theories and methods and an appreciation for the distinctive cross-cultural and holistic approach of anthropology.

Emphasis in the 200-level courses is on imparting understanding of terminology, facts, major topics, theories, principles, methods, ethics, and concepts particular to a given subfield. Exams assess the overall breadth of knowledge gained. Hands-on methodological projects expose students to the different methodologies used in the subfields. Written assignments initiate the foundations of anthropological information literacy by preparing students to conduct independent literature reviews and to use topics learned in class to formulate concise, clear expository and/or reflective essays.

### **300-Level Ethnographic Courses**

In 300-level courses students gain focused and in-depth anthropological knowledge of a particular region or topic (ANTH A390A Arctic and Sub-Arctic Cultures, ANTH A390B World Cultures, and ANTH A390C Comparative Culture Studies). These courses are structured similarly to provide an integrative four-field anthropological view of a specific region or comparative view on a topic. Students gain an understanding of the history of anthropological research, identifying key anthropologists and anthropological works, and highlighting anthropological perspectives on contemporary issues. These courses also provide a framework for students to contextualize scholarship, including how regions and topics shaped disciplinary practice, as well as consistencies and transformations in professional practice.

In terms of coursework, the 300-level courses are distinguished from 200-level courses by more independent reading (i.e., in addition to those assigned on the syllabus) and independent research. Experiential learning activities are extended outside of the classroom into homework assignments, requiring more individual responsibility in project design, and with communication of findings through writing and class presentations. Critical thinking, reflection, and analysis are emphasized through assignments. Students develop research skills by conducting a problem-oriented, independent research project. They build their information literacy through library- and web-based research, and gain experience with proper citation styles. Students also continue to develop written communication and presentation skills through this exercise.

### **400-Level Theory, Topic, and Methods Courses**

The 400-level coursework includes the required core course ANTH A410 Anthropological Theory as well as advanced courses in anthropological topics and methods. A410 serves as a capstone course for anthropology majors, exposing them to the theoretical traditions of the discipline. Students choose among topical and methodological electives for the remainder of

their coursework. These courses apply anthropological perspectives to specific topics and settings and further develop methodological skills.

Coursework at the 400-level prepares students for the types of responsibilities they will face either in the working world or in graduate studies; namely writing, editing, and researching skills. Our 400-level courses emphasize critical thinking, responsible critique, and the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of formats including small group discussions, subordinate-supervisor communication, abstracts and long papers, and presentations. In methods courses, experiential and (in laboratory courses) experimental education approaches provide students with opportunities to develop skills through real practice. In all courses at the 400 level, students further hone information literacy, written communication, and presentation skills through projects and written assignments that ask students to synthesize and critically analyze sources of information.

**Table 1. Program Student Learning Outcomes and Associated General Education Outcome Development by Course Level**

Program Student Learning Outcomes	200 Core Courses	300 Level Courses	400 Topical Courses	400 Method Courses	ANTH A410
1. Describe current understandings about human behavior and language, cultural processes, the evolution of humans, biocultural diversity, and trajectories of cultural change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GER SLO #2 – Analyze quantitative and qualitative data competently</li> <li>• GER SLO #5 – Investigate the complexity of human institutions and behavior</li> <li>• GER SLO #6 – Identify ways science informs understanding of natural processes</li> <li>• GER SLO #8 – Adopt critical perspectives on globalization and diversity</li> </ul>	(I) (B) (F)	(D) (F)	(D) (MA) (F)		(MA) (S)
2. Demonstrate an understanding of theoretical approaches in anthropology, their foundations, and the issues they are designed to address. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GER SLO #3 – Relate knowledge to historical context</li> <li>• GER SLO #5 – Investigate the complexity of human institutions and behavior</li> </ul>	(I) (B) (F)	(D) (F)	(D) (MA) (F)		(D) (MA) (S)
3. Explain ethical practice in anthropological research and issues encountered in the discipline. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GER SLO #9 – Integrate knowledge and employ skills</li> </ul>	(I) (B) (F)	(D) (F)	(D) (F)	(D) (MA) (F)	(D) (S)
4. Exhibit proficiency in documenting, evaluating, and communicating anthropological information, including perspectives relevant to Alaska and the Circumpolar North. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GER SLO #1 – Communicate effectively</li> <li>• GER SLO #7 – Locate and use relevant information</li> <li>• GER SLO #8 – Adopt critical perspectives on globalization and diversity</li> <li>• GER SLO #9 – Integrate knowledge and employ skills</li> </ul>	(I) (F)	(D) (F) *	(D) (MA) (F) *	(D) (MA) (F)	(MA) (S)
5. Apply anthropological methods and techniques to research questions and practical problems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GER SLO #2 – Analyze quantitative and qualitative data competently</li> <li>• GER SLO #5 – Investigate the complexity of human institutions and behavior</li> <li>• GER SLO #6 – Identify ways science informs understanding of natural processes</li> <li>• GER SLO #9 – Integrate knowledge and employ skills</li> </ul>	(I) (B) (F)	(D)		(D) (MA) (F)	(S)
Knowledge/Skills: (I)=Introducing, (D)=Developing, (MA)=Mastering/Applying Outcome Assessment: (B)=Baseline Knowledge, (F)=Formative, (S)=Summative Alaska Native/Circumpolar North Focus: *					

## MEASURES

The program's student learning outcomes measure both knowledge (outcomes 1 through 3) and skills (outcomes 4 and 5). Each outcome has distinct assessment measures:

- (1) Describe current understandings about human behavior and language, cultural processes, the evolution of humans, biocultural diversity, and trajectories of cultural change.

This student learning outcome reflects four-field anthropological knowledge, which we anticipate increases through progression through the program. To measure this anticipated increase, we will use the following measures:

- % of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about knowledge of the four subfields of anthropology
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of the four subfields of anthropology
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of four-field knowledge presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections

- (2) Demonstrate an understanding of theoretical approaches in anthropology, their foundations, and the issues they are designed to address.

This student learning outcome reflects knowledge of anthropological theory, which we also anticipate increases through progression through the program. To measure this anticipated increase, we will use the following measures:

- % of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about anthropological theory
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of anthropological theory
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of anthropological theory knowledge presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections

- (3) Explain ethical practice in anthropological research and issues encountered in the discipline.

This student learning outcome reflects awareness of anthropological ethics, which we also anticipate increases through progression through the program. To measure this anticipated increase, we will use the following measures:

- % of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about anthropological ethics
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of anthropological ethics
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of awareness of anthropological ethics presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections

- (4) Exhibit proficiency in documenting, evaluating, and communicating anthropological information, including perspectives relevant to Alaska and the Circumpolar North.

This student learning outcome represents the information literacy and communication skills we anticipate students building over the course of their program. To assess these skills, we will measure:

- % of anthropology majors who meet GER proficiency standards for communication skills and information literacy skills on select assignments at different levels in the program
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of finding and communicating anthropological evidence
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of information literacy and communication skills presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections

(5) Apply anthropological methods and techniques to research questions and practical problems.

This student learning outcome represents the methodological skills we anticipate students building over the course of their program. To assess these skills, we will measure:

- Average # of anthropological methods/techniques anthropology majors can identify
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of anthropological methods
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of methodological skills and experience presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections

## PROCESS

The program’s structure provides opportunities for both formative and summative assessment. To measure the five program student learning outcomes we are measuring progress toward each outcome (formative) as well as achievement of each outcome (summative). Three of our program outcomes measure anthropological knowledge (1, 2, and 3) while two are more skill-based (4 and 5). Table 2 summarizes the assessment tools that will be used to assess each measure by student learning outcome.

**Table 2. Assessment Tools by Program Student Learning Outcome and Measure**

Student Learning Outcome/Measure	Baseline	Formative	Summative
1. Describe current understandings about human behavior and language, cultural processes, the evolution of humans, biocultural diversity, and trajectories of cultural change.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about knowledge of the four subfields of anthropology</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of the four subfields of anthropology</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey



<b>Student Learning Outcome/Measure</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Formative</b>	<b>Summative</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of four-field knowledge presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections</li> </ul>			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio
2. Demonstrate an understanding of theoretical approaches in anthropology, their foundations, and the issues they are designed to address.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about anthropological theory</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of anthropological theory</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of anthropological theory knowledge presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections</li> </ul>			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio
3. Explain ethical practice in anthropological research and issues encountered in the discipline.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about anthropological ethics</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of anthropological ethics</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of awareness of anthropological ethics presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections</li> </ul>			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio
4. Exhibit proficiency in documenting, evaluating, and communicating anthropological information, including perspectives relevant to Alaska and the Circumpolar North.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of anthropology majors who meet GER proficiency standards for communication skills and information literacy skills on select assignments at different levels in the program</li> </ul>	Communication and Information Literacy Assessment	Communication and Information Literacy Assessment	Communication and Information Literacy Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of finding and communicating anthropological evidence</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey

<b>Student Learning Outcome/Measure</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Formative</b>	<b>Summative</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of information literacy and communication skills presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections</li> </ul>			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio
5. Apply anthropological methods and techniques to research questions and practical problems.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average # of anthropological methods/techniques anthropology majors can identify</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of anthropological methods</li> </ul>	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of methodological skills and experience presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections</li> </ul>			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator will coordinate an annual assessment, collecting data from Anthropology faculty from different courses across the curriculum. Table 3 summarizes the data yearly data collection strategy by assessment tool.

**Table 3. Program Assessment Tools and Administration**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Annual Course Sample</b>	<b>Collection Method</b>	<b>Administered by</b>
Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Surveys implemented at beginning of 200-level core courses that cover key knowledge	All core 200-level courses taught by UAA faculty	Blackboard survey	Core Faculty
Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Surveys implemented at the end of 200-level core courses and of a sample of 300- and 400-level courses	All core 200-level course, two Ethnographic courses, two Topical/Theoretical courses, and two Methodology courses	Blackboard survey	Core Faculty
Anthropology Exit Survey	Survey implemented in A410 that covers key knowledge and experiences in program	ANTH A410	Blackboard survey	ANTH A410 Instructor

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Annual Course Sample</b>	<b>Collection Method</b>	<b>Administered by</b>
Communication and Information Literacy Assessment	Assessment of select written assignments for courses at a various levels	One 200-level, one 300-level, one 400-level theoretical/topical, and A410	Panel assessment with GER assessment matrices for Written Communication and Information Literacy	3-Faculty Panel (Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator and two other faculty)
Anthropology ePortfolio	Reflective summation of student experiences in the program	ANTH A410	Panel assessment of student-developed e-Portfolio	3-Faculty Panel (Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator, A410 instructor, and additional faculty)

### **Baseline Assessment**

All 200-level core courses will implement a standardized Blackboard-based survey in the first week of classes that includes: 1) knowledge questions about the course’s subfield, 2) questions about pertinent anthropological theories to the course, 3) questions related to ethics in the subfield, 4) a question on the number of anthropological methods a student can identify, and 5) questions about the student’s growth in their knowledge about the subfield, anthropological theory, ethics, and methods. This snapshot will capture the knowledge of anthropology majors early in the program and serve as comparison for students who are further along in the program. These surveys will be developed by the faculty at their Fall 2018 retreat prior to the start of classes.

### **Formative Assessment**

Students at the 200-, 300-, and 400- level will develop knowledge and skills pertinent to their anthropological education as they move through the program. To assess progress, formative assessments will be given in select courses at different levels. Students enrolled in all 200-level courses will re-take the standardized 200-level, subfield-specific Blackboard-based knowledge survey in the final week of class. A modified survey of anthropological knowledge of the four-fields, theories, and ethics will be distributed at the end of each 300-level and 400-level topical course. Students enrolled in 400-level methods courses will complete a survey at the end of the course that revisits anthropological methods. A panel of three Anthropology faculty will also assess select assignments from each level assessed for information literacy and communication skills for courses that have adopted the GER assessment rubric for these measures.

### **Formative Analysis**

Each year the assessment coordinator will compile the survey and assessment results for review by the faculty. Overall change in the cohort knowledge and skills will be assessed rather than individual student progress in order to focus on the program’s effectiveness. Befitting of a formative assessment, the faculty will identify any potential areas of weakness in the program that need to be addressed in the program through this review.

### **Summative Assessments**

In the final capstone course (ANTH A410) students will complete an Anthropology ePortfolio in which students will reflect on their accomplishments in each of the five program outcomes. Students will highlight their experiences and articulate their successes in meeting the objectives. A panel of three anthropology faculty (including the Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator and ANTH A410 instructor) will as a panel assess the ePortfolios. Additionally, a final exit survey will also be given in this course that asks about anthropological knowledge and skills, building on the formative assessments for comparison. Each year the assessment coordinator will solicit these data from the instructor of the final capstone course (A410).

### **Summative Analysis**

We anticipate 1) four-field anthropological knowledge, 2) theoretical knowledge in anthropology, 3) ethical awareness, 4), information literacy and communication skills and 5) methodological skills in anthropology to improve through the course of the program. Cross-sectional yearly snapshots from the progressive levels will provide evidence of this expectation, and the faculty will review and report on this progress annually.

### **Continuous Improvement Process**

The Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator will compile the results of the annual assessment into a report for the Office of Academic Affairs. Each fall, during the annual Anthropology faculty retreat, the faculty will review the report and identify areas for improvement both to the program and to the assessment process. At the time, the faculty will also select courses in which to implement the formative assessment tools in the coming year.