



UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE

# ANTHROPOLOGY BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

## Academic Assessment Plan

Version 3 Adopted by

The Anthropology Faculty: November 10, 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

This document outlines a plan for the assessment of revised student learning outcomes for the Anthropology Baccalaureate program to be implemented in Fall 2021. 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. The Department redesigned the baccalaureate programs from 2014-2017 by streamlining course offerings and updating the student learning outcomes for clarity. The subsequent revised assessment plan was adopted by the faculty in fall 2017 and approved through the governance process in the spring of 2018 with changes implemented in fall 2019. Program assessment over the next two years revealed some issues at the program level for learning and assessment. Specifically, the way in which two of the learning outcomes were worded did not discretely coordinate with the intended outcomes and one of our intended outcomes did not have scaffolded program requirements. In response, the Department revised the student learning outcomes to ensure each was distinct without overlap and made minor changes to the baccalaureate programs to ensure adequate program requirements for each learning outcome. This new assessment plan provides the strategy to assess the modified programs with the revised learning outcomes.

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Department of Anthropology offers both a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology. The program learning outcomes are identical, but the BS requires more science-based support courses (including our 200-level laboratory courses) and statistics while the BA requires more humanities-based support courses. We advise students based on their interests and intent after graduation which program they should pursue. The curriculum is taught by full-time and adjunct faculty members at the main campus and at the community campuses, and coordination across campuses helps ensure quality program implementation and assessment.

### 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, practice, and application of the discipline and an understanding of global human diversity with a special emphasis on the cultures, lifeways, and contemporary social issues of Alaska and the Circumpolar North. The program prepares students in intercultural fluency, critical thinking, and research skills through coursework, applied research experiences, 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.

### Summary of Revisions

In the latest program revisions, all the intended core goals of our programs remained, but we modified the language and content of the stated learning outcomes to ensure they were being measured better. The previous iteration of our baccalaureate programs implemented in Fall 2019 aimed for five student learning outcomes for students graduating with a degree in anthropology:

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.

These outcomes constitute the core goals of our programs to produce graduates with: 1) four-field anthropological knowledge; 2) anthropological knowledge of Alaska and the Circumpolar North 3) awareness of ethical practice in anthropology; 4) anthropological information literacy and communication competency; and 5) methodological skills in anthropology. However, during our regular program assessment, three issues arose: 1) assessment of theoretical knowledge in anthropology (SLO2) was hard to treat separately from key disciplinary concepts and ideas (SLO1); 2) there was not enough developmental coursework required on our program's emphasis on Alaska and the Circumpolar North; and 3) SLO4 was really double-barreled including both communicating anthropological information and familiarity with the anthropology of Alaska and the Circumpolar North as underlined above. The changes we made 1) merge theoretical knowledge into our first learning outcome; 2) make explicit that A200 is required as a developmental course for engagement in 300-level ethnography courses; and 3) create a

distinct learning outcome specific to Alaska and the Circumpolar North. We also cleaned up the other learning outcomes to make them even more straightforward and easy to communicate to students.

## REVISED PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Anthropology, the holistic, comparative study of human diversity, consists of four subfields: archaeology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. The BA/BS degrees develop student knowledge of these four subfields, their theories, methods, applications, and relevance to understanding global human diversity with an emphasis on the cultures, people, and social issues of Alaska and the Circumpolar North.

Students graduating with a baccalaureate degree in anthropology should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a familiarity with the development of anthropological thought and the contemporary concepts, theories, and application of the four subfields.
2. Use anthropological perspectives to describe the past and present cultural diversity of Alaska and analyze contemporary social topics in the Circumpolar North.
3. Identify ethical principles that guide anthropological practice and ethical issues encountered in anthropological research.
4. Exhibit proficiency in documenting, evaluating, and communicating anthropological information.
5. Explain how to apply anthropological methods and techniques to research questions and practical social problems.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Anthropology Baccalaureate programs introduce, develop, and assess the anthropological knowledge and skills reflected in the program outcomes over the course of a student's progression in the programs. The course-level tiers provide structure for the development of the expected outcomes as well as critical university-wide Core Competencies and 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 Courses

Course offerings at the 200 level develop four-field knowledge in anthropology and a familiarity with the Indigenous cultures of Alaska. 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) as well as A200 Alaska Native Cultures. These courses provide students with the core knowledge of the four anthropological subfields and of the Indigenous peoples of Alaska. 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.

The 200-level courses are offered at UAA's main Anchorage campus as well as at the community campuses by full-time and adjunct faculty. The Department regularly reaches out to the all full-time faculty, campus directors and course coordinators, and adjunct faculty to include them in assessment efforts.

### **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). A390A, which is required for all students, develops the SLO2 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 courses ANTH A458 Applied Ethics in Anthropology and ANTH A410 Anthropological Theory as well as advanced courses in anthropological topics and methods. A458 gives students an advanced exploration of anthropological ethics to ensure mastery of the SLO3 Awareness of Anthropological Ethics. 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 Core Competencies and General Education Outcomes Development by Course Level**

Program Student Learning Outcomes with Associated Core Competencies and General Education Student Learning Outcomes Annotated	200 Core Courses	300 Level Courses	400 Topical Courses	400 Method Courses	ANTH A458	ANTH A410
1. Demonstrate a familiarity with the development of anthropological thought and the contemporary concepts, theories, and application of the four subfields. ③③⑤⑥⑧	(I) (B, F)	(D) (F)	(D, MA) (F)	(D) (F)	(D) (F)	(MA) (S)
2. Use anthropological perspectives to describe the past and present cultural diversity of Alaska and analyze contemporary social topics in the Circumpolar North. ③④⑤⑧	(I) (B, F)	(D) (F)	(D, MA) (F)			(MA) (S)
3. Identify ethical principles that guide anthropological practice and ethical issues encountered in anthropological research. ②④⑨	(I) (B, F)	(D) (F)	(D) (F)	(D) (F)	(D, MA) (F)	(MA) (S)
4. Exhibit proficiency in documenting, evaluating, and communicating anthropological information. ①②④①⑦⑨	(I) (B)	(D) (F)	(D, MA) (F)	(D, MA) (F)	(D, MA) (F)	(MA) (S)
5. Explain how to apply anthropological methods and techniques to research questions and practical social problems. ②④②⑤⑥⑨	(I) (B, F)	(D)		(D, MA) (F)		(S)
<p><b>Knowledge/Skills:</b> (I)=Introducing, (D)=Developing, (MA)=Mastering/Applying</p> <p><b>Outcome Assessment:</b> (B)=Baseline Knowledge, (F)=Formative, (S)=Summative</p> <p><b>UAA Core Competencies:</b> ① Effective Communication; ② Creative and Critical Thinking; ③ Intercultural Fluency; and ④ Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility</p> <p><b>UAA General Education Student Learning Outcomes:</b> ① Effective Communication; ② Analytic Reasoning; ③ Historical Context Understanding; ⑤ Social Context Understanding; ⑥ Scientific Thinking; ⑦ Information Literacy; ⑧ Global and Diverse Perspectives; and ⑨ Integrative and Critical Thinking</p>						

## ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

### 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) Demonstrate a familiarity with the development of anthropological thought and the contemporary concepts, theories, and application of the four subfields.

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) Use anthropological perspectives to describe the past and present cultural diversity of Alaska and analyze contemporary social topics in the Circumpolar North.

This student learning outcome reflects anthropological knowledge of Alaska and the Circumpolar North, 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 knowledge of Alaska and the Circumpolar North
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in anthropological knowledge of Alaska and the Circumpolar North
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of familiarity with the anthropology of Alaska and Circumpolar North by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections

- (3) Identify ethical principles that guide anthropological practice and ethical issues encountered in anthropological research.

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.

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) Explain how to apply anthropological methods and techniques to research questions and practical social 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) Demonstrate a familiarity with the development of anthropological thought and the contemporary concepts, theories, and application of the four subfields.			
- % of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about knowledge of the four subfields of anthropology	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of the four subfields of anthropology	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of four-field knowledge presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio



<b>Student Learning Outcome/Measure</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Formative</b>	<b>Summative</b>
<b>(2) Use anthropological perspectives to describe the past and present cultural diversity of Alaska and analyze contemporary social topics in the Circumpolar North.</b>			
- % of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about anthropological knowledge of Alaska and the Circumpolar North	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in anthropological knowledge of Alaska and the Circumpolar North	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of familiarity with the anthropology of Alaska and Circumpolar North by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio
<b>(3) Identify ethical principles that guide anthropological practice and ethical issues encountered in anthropological research.</b>			
- % of anthropology majors correctly answering questions about anthropological ethics	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of anthropological ethics	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of awareness of anthropological ethics presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio
<b>(4) Exhibit proficiency in documenting, evaluating, and communicating anthropological information.</b>			
- % of anthropology majors who meet GER proficiency standards for communication skills and information literacy skills on select assignments at different levels in the program	Communication and Information Literacy Assessment	Communication and Information Literacy Assessment	Communication and Information Literacy Assessment
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of finding and communicating anthropological evidence	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of information literacy and communication skills presented by			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio

<b>Student Learning Outcome/Measure</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Formative</b>	<b>Summative</b>
graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections			
(5) Explain how to apply anthropological methods and techniques to research questions and practical social problems.			
- Average # of anthropological methods/techniques anthropology majors can identify	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- % of anthropology majors reporting growth in knowledge of anthropological methods	Baseline Knowledge Surveys	Follow-Up Knowledge Surveys	Anthropology Graduate Exit Survey
- Evidence (i.e., artifacts) of methodological skills and experience presented by graduating anthropology majors in ePortfolio reflections			Anthropology Graduate ePortfolio

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator will coordinate an annual assessment, collecting data from faculty teaching ANTH courses across the curriculum and organizing a panel assessment. Every semester, the Coordinator will share the link to the online survey with anthropology faculty teaching courses at the main and community campuses with instructions on when to implement the survey with students. 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	Online survey	Core Faculty

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Annual Course Sample</b>	<b>Collection Method</b>	<b>Administered by</b>
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	Online survey	Core Faculty
Anthropology Exit Survey	Survey implemented in A410 that covers key knowledge and experiences in program	ANTH A410	Online survey	ANTH A410 Instructor
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 Northern specific anthropology related to the subfield, 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.

### 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) anthropological knowledge of Alaska and the Circumpolar North, 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. In addition to main campus faculty, the Department invites full-time faculty from community campuses to participate in the annual retreat to ensure coordination across the curriculum and include perspectives from across the system.