

EMORY UNIVERSITY 2021-2023 Assessment Report for Educational Programs
Assessment Period Covered: September 1, 2021 – May 31, 2023

Program: Anthropology	Date Submitted: June 1, 2023
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I. PROGRAM MISSION

Anthropologists study the full spectrum of what it means to be human. Investigating the pressing issues facing nations, communities, and scientific inquiry today, anthropology is vital to many of the compelling intellectual conversations occurring at Emory and beyond.

As anthropologists, we address questions that impact all areas of human life:

- Human origins and evolution
- Behavioral biology
- Human ecology and adaptations
- Gender and sexuality
- Human cognition and emotion
- Health and illness
- Social justice and inequality
- Social behavior and human diversity
- Media and communication

Anthropologists explore the intersections of biological, environmental, political, economic, and religious life. Our diverse theoretical and methodological toolkit permits anthropologists to forge creative approaches to established and emerging societal problems as well as to explore and expand the boundaries of human knowledge.

We are committed to integrative and empirically grounded approaches to the human experience. Using ethnographic, computational, digital, archaeological, historical, biological, comparative, and experimental research methods, anthropologists explore a broad range of human conditions, past and present.

Our teaching prepares students to “think outside the box,” to approach intellectual questions with curiosity and passion, using scientific knowledge from peoples and cultures around the world. We help students develop the analytical and communicative skills to address contemporary dilemmas from cultural, historical, and evolutionary perspectives.

II. PROGRAM CONTEXT (Please provide a brief overview of your program with any relevant information that will help the reader to understand the data presented (annual number of graduates, length of time, professional preparation, interdisciplinarity, etc.).)

The Department of Anthropology offers three majors with distinct learning outcomes: A BA in Anthropology, a BS in Anthropology and Human Biology, and a joint major in Anthropology and Religion. We also offer a minor in Anthropology.

In 2023, we graduated 51 majors and 13 minors with the following breakdown for majors:

BA: 8

BS: 43

RELANTH: 1

In 2022, we graduated 52 majors and 22 minors with the following breakdown for majors:

BA: 10

BS: 42

RELANTH: 3

Emory Anthropology alumni have gone on to careers in international development, public health, education, diplomacy, law, social justice activism, business, entrepreneurship, and medicine as well as careers in academia. As a scholarly community, we train future researchers, academics, and civic leaders to succeed in and make a strong impact on our increasingly complex and interconnected world.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Our departmental practice with the assessment reports has been to focus on our BA and BS majors. We identify our learning outcomes as follows:

At the time of graduation, students receiving the **B.A. degree in Anthropology** should be able to:

- Recognize the theoretical bases and methodological approaches that characterize cultural anthropology, as well as one other sub-discipline of anthropology (i.e. biological, linguistic, or archaeological)
- Understand how and why culture, societies, and economies change over time and/or general trends in human evolution and evolutionary theory
- Understand and be able to apply a critical, comparative, cross-cultural framework in explaining human variation and the diversity of human societies and groups

- Demonstrate an understanding of cultural theory and ethnographic research, with a more sophisticated understanding of the research in at least one sub-field of cultural anthropology, including medical anthropology and global health, linguistics, political economy and development, sustainability, gender and sexuality, globalization, or psychological anthropology
- Demonstrate an awareness of the ethical and social implications of anthropological research

At the time of graduation, students receiving the **B.S. degree in Anthropology and Human Biology** should be able to:

- Recognize the theoretical bases and methodological approaches that characterize the four major subfields of Anthropology (cultural, biological, linguistic, and archaeological)
- Explain and apply a critical understanding of evolutionary theory, human biological variation, including specifically hominid evolution, and non-human primate behavior
- Understand the cultural diversity that characterizes human societies through engagement with ethnography and be able to apply a comparative framework (cross-culturally or cross-species) to understand human behavior
- Demonstrate an understanding of statistical methods and an ability to interpret numerical and graphical data
- Demonstrate an awareness of the ethical and social implications of research on both humans and animals

The Department uses two methods to measure the achievement of the learning outcomes: (1) the direct assessment of learning outcomes for selected classes, and (2) the indirect assessment of a Senior Exit Survey administered to all graduating Anthropology majors. The direct measures are assessed for a subset of classes. Our 2021 assessment evaluated a selection of 200-level courses, and our 2018 assessment evaluated a selection of 300-level courses. Both assessments have distinguished between courses in biological anthropology versus cultural anthropology and the respective learning outcomes for each program.

For this year's assessment, we have elected to adopt a new approach, focusing on two courses offered over the past two academics years that were co-taught by biological and cultural faculty. These courses intentionally and explicitly bridged approaches to anthropology and aimed to meet the learning goals of each program. Furthermore, these were both among the largest courses taught in our department over the past two years, each filling at full capacity during registration, with the former securing 180 students, and the latter securing 125 students (the latter was a new course taught for the first time during the Spring 2023 semester). Thus, we can compare an established course with a new course.

The two courses featured in this assessment report are:

Anthropology 101: Introduction to Anthropology – taught by Dr. Justin Hosbey and Dr. John Lindo during the Fall 2021 semester.

Course Description: How did Homo sapiens evolve? What is culture? How have human societies changed and developed over time? Why do gender norms and forms of gender expression vary from society to society? How did poverty emerge as an enduring social phenomenon? What is race, and why is racism so persistent in our world?” This course introduces students to the four subfields of American Anthropology (Archaeology, Biological Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, and Linguistic Anthropology) in order to answer these and other important questions about who we (humans) are and why we do what we do.

Anthropology can be defined as the holistic study of what it means to be human. This class will show students how anthropology’s commitment to holistic inquiry makes it a powerful tool for understanding human biology, culture, language, and social organization. Our essential goals in this course will be to understand how humans emerged as a species, came to understand themselves, and how we got to where we are today.

Anthropology 285: Nature, Nurture, Sexualities – taught by Dr. Sa’ed Atshan and Dr. Marcela Benitez during the Spring 2023 semester.

Course Description: This course will provide a critical and rigorous examination of sex, gender, and sexuality by delving into the biological underpinnings and evolutionary roots of primate sexual behavior, and the historical and contemporary approaches to understanding the nuance of human sexuality. Co-taught by a biological and cultural anthropologist, this unique approach combines expertise on evolution, animal behavior, genetics, queer history, American society, and global social movements to provide a comprehensive understanding of the roles of nature, nurture, and culture in shaping human sexuality. How has heterosexuality become normative and hegemonic? Are homosexual behavior widespread in animals? How has homosexuality evolved? How has biology been misconstrued to perpetuate homophobia and societal gender roles? How has cultural bias shaped our understanding of the complexity of sexual behavior across primates? Why is an intersectional approach to understanding sexuality essential, particularly as it relates to colonialism, race, religion, class, and ability? How can a better understanding of both the biological and cultural underpinnings of sexuality inform health, pleasure, joy, equality, identity, and social justice?

Our assessment examined these two courses in relation to the three learning outcomes that are shared by both our BA and BS programs:

Learning Outcome 1: Interdisciplinarity

- BA: Recognize the theoretical bases and methodological approaches that characterize cultural anthropology, as well as one other sub-discipline of anthropology (i.e. biological, linguistic, or archaeological)
- BS: Recognize the theoretical bases and methodological approaches that characterize the four major subfields of Anthropology (cultural, biological, linguistic, and archaeological)

Learning Outcome 2: Diversity

- BA: Understand and be able to apply a critical, comparative, cross-cultural framework in explaining human variation and the diversity of human societies and groups
- BS: Understand the cultural diversity that characterizes human societies through engagement with ethnography and be able to apply a comparative framework (cross-culturally or cross-species) to understand human behavior

Learning Outcome 3: Ethics

- BA: Demonstrate an awareness of the ethical and social implications of anthropological research
- BS: Demonstrate an awareness of the ethical and social implications of research on both humans and animals

IV. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #1:

Method of Assessment:

Our direct assessment for the learning outcome on interdisciplinarity analyzed assignments in ANT 101 and ANT 285.

The requirements for ANT 101 included four exams: a biological anthropology exam on September 21, 2021; an archeology exam on October 19, 2021; a linguistic anthropology exam on November 11, 2021; and a cultural anthropology exam on December 7, 2021.

The requirements for ANT 285 included two exams: a biological anthropology exam on February 7, 2023 and a cultural anthropology exam on March 14, 2023.

Achievement Target:

To help determine whether we are meeting the learning outcome target of student recognition of theoretical approaches to more than one subfield of anthropology, we assessed the evidence of whether students clearly grasped the material on their exams as compared to the exams for the other subfields. Our hope was that more than half of students responded to 80% or more of questions correctly on each exam, thereby demonstrating a solid command of concepts across subfields. We aimed to see consistency in students' grasping across disciplinary lines within the vast field of anthropology.

Summary of Assessment Results:

In ANT 101, the mean scores were as follows:

Exam 1: 86.75%
Exam 2: 90.40%
Exam 3: 91.96%
Exam 4: 88.45%

In ANT 285, the mean scores were as follows:

Exam 1: 81.00%
Exam 2: 68.00%

Thus, we met our targets in ANT 101 but not ANT 285. In the former, students overwhelmingly grasped concepts across biological anthropology, archeology, linguistic anthropology, and cultural anthropology, consistently exceeding our hope that more than half of students would answer at least 80% of exam questions correctly. We can confidently conclude that those students generally are now able to recognize the theoretical bases of major subfields of anthropology.

Yet in ANT 285, students achieved at the target threshold in the biological anthropology exam, but not the cultural anthropology exam. The average student responded incorrectly to around one-third of questions on concepts related to one subfield, after demonstrating a significantly stronger command of the theoretical bases of the other subfield.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

In diving deeper into this data through surveying the students, it emerged that more than half of the students in ANT 285 had not yet taken a foundational course in cultural anthropology. This reveals that the biocultural synthesis approach of ANT 285 was considered more advanced by many students – and that future biocultural courses in

anthropology may need to institute a foundational course in cultural anthropology as a prerequisite.

SECOND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #1:

Method of Assessment:

Our indirect assessment for the learning outcome on interdisciplinarity analyzed results from the 2022 Senior Exit Survey administered to all graduating Anthropology majors.

Achievement Target:

To help determine whether we are meeting the learning outcome target of student recognition of theoretical approaches to more than one subfield of anthropology, we assessed the evidence in the senior responses to this question on the survey. Our hope was that at least 90% of respondents affirmed that their education in our department enabled them to grasp concepts across subfields.

Summary of Assessment Results:

Both BA and BS students were asked about the learning goal: "I recognize the theoretical bases and methodological approaches that characterize the four major subfields of Anthropology (cultural, biological, linguistic, and archaeological)."

Among the 12 BA respondents, 92% responded with "agree" or "strongly agree."

Among the 34 BS respondents, 97% responded with "agree" or "strongly agree."

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

Given that we are reaching our target of more than 90% of alums affirming that their education achieved this learning goal, it is an indication that our program requirements of ensuring that students in both the BA and BS programs take courses in more than one subfield has been a useful and successful approach and that it should be continued.

FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #2:

Method of Assessment:

Our direct assessment for the learning outcome on diversity analyzed the data we collected on student engagement with each other during class and/or online outside of class for both ANT 101 and ANT 285.

In ANT 101, the two instructors, and the two TAs, kept notes on student interventions, making it clear that in-class engagement was a required component of the course, and that it would amount to 20% of overall grades.

The same approach existed in ANT 285, where the two instructors, and their two TAs, kept notes on student interventions, making it clear that in-class engagement was a required component of the course, and that it would amount to 20% of overall grades.

ANT 285 included regular online discussion forums on Canvas which were moderated by the TAs and in which individual student contributions were recorded and tallied by the instructors throughout the semester.

Achievement Target:

In both courses, faculty and teaching assistants were particularly attuned to the cultural sensitivity that students exhibited and the demonstrated respect for cultural diversity. This is essential in both courses where the classes are very large, the students are incredibly heterogenous in terms of backgrounds, the issues discussed are often contentious, and with the potential for conflict to emerge among students. Furthermore, tensions can arise between more STEM-oriented students, and more social science and humanities-oriented students, who think about the relationship between diversity and questions of biology, culture, race, gender, sexuality, and other domains differently.

Instructors for both courses aimed to see that despite the large size of the classes, more than 90% of students would consistently attend class, that more than half of students would speak at least once in front of their peers during discussions, and that civility and mutual respect would be always maintained.

Summary of Assessment Results:

In both ANT 101 and ANT 285, these targets were met. More than 90% of students in both courses earned at least an A- in their participation scores, demonstrating an astounding level of student dedication to these courses. Furthermore, the instructor records indicate that 50% of students in ANT 101 and 60% of students in ANT 285 spoke at least once in class.

Additionally, the discussion forum on Canvas was consistently utilized by 119 out of 125 students in ANT 285. Both courses proceeded without any strife or disrespectful behaviors from students. Students consistently engaged questions of human cultural diversity with openness and tolerance, allowing nuanced dialogue to emerge on even the most contentious of issues (such as biological racism, trans athletes, etc).

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

These courses were successful in furthering students' abilities to grasp the cultural diversity that characterizes human societies through engagement with ethnography and application of a comparative framework (cross-culturally or cross-species) to understand human behavior. Students demonstrated an ability to apply a critical, comparative, cross-cultural framework in explaining human variation and the diversity of human societies and groups. To continue to meet such learning goals, we can:

- Train teaching assistants in best practices for supporting these learning outcomes on diversity.
- Establish clear parameters on mutual respect early on: including with the syllabus, opening lectures, online forums, during office hours, and reminding students of these expectations throughout the semester.
- Intentionally integrate a diverse array of viewpoints, representations, ethnographies, and course material that reflect the diversity among our students in the classroom.

SECOND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #2:

Method of Assessment:

Our indirect assessment for the learning outcome on diversity analyzed results from the 2022 Senior Exit Survey administered to all graduating Anthropology majors.

Achievement Target:

To help determine whether we are meeting the learning outcome target of student ability to understand human diversity, we assessed the evidence in the senior responses to this question on the survey. Our hope was that at least 90% of respondents affirmed that their education in our department enabled them to better appreciate cross-cultural approaches to pursuing knowledge.

Summary of Assessment Results:

We asked the BA students about this learning goal: “I understand and am able to apply a critical, comparative, and cross-cultural framework in explaining human variation and the diversity of human societies and groups.”

The BS students were asked about, “I can understand the cultural diversity that characterizes human societies through engagement with ethnography and am able to apply a comparative framework (cross-culturally or cross-species) to understand human behavior.”

Among the 12 BA respondents, 100% responded with “agree” or “strongly agree.”

Among the 34 BS respondents, 100% responded with “agree” or “strongly agree.”

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

Considering the evidence that we are exceeding our targets for the learning goal on diversity, and that students are almost universally integrating this value in their anthropological education, it is imperative that our department codify diversity as a central value in our collective pedagogical approaches.

FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #3:**Method of Assessment:**

Our direct assessment for the learning outcome on ethics analyzed in-class engagements and/or assignments in ANT 101 and ANT 285.

ANT 101 integrated an online tool (Top Hat Pro) throughout the semester. This tool allowed the instructors to pose weekly questions in class that synthesized course material. This was clearly delineated on the course syllabus and students were required to participate, though anonymously. Students were expected to engage with this tool ethically – and the questions posed often addressed ethical questions related to anthropological research and knowledge production.

ANT 285 required a 5-page paper at the end of the semester, aimed as a biocultural synthesis and culminating exercise. Students were instructed to select a recent article from a media outlet addressing issues around gender and sexuality that includes biological and cultural references. Each paper had to synthesize the argument and approach of the article, critique

its content from both biological anthropology and cultural anthropology vantage points, and evaluate whether the article engaged these issues ethically.

Achievement Target:

ANT 101 instructors aimed for at least 90% of students to consistently engage the Top Hat Pro tool in an ethical manner and to take ethical stakes seriously in their responses to the questions.

ANT 285 instructors aimed for at least 90% of students to both master a biocultural synthesis in their media critique papers and address the ethical issues that undergird the articles they selected.

Summary of Assessment Results:

ANT 101 instructors reported that there was not a single instance of a student engaging the tool in an unethical manner. As a result, they were able to identify the top three students in terms of scores in a fair and meritocratic fashion. Additionally, all students demonstrated engagement on the ethics-related questions using the tool with seriousness and sensitivity. It appears that this was the case for nearly 100% of students.

ANT 285 instructors reported that 92% of students earned at least an A- on their media critique papers, demonstrating excellent command of biocultural syntheses and attention to the central role of ethics in these debates.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

Even as we laud our students for their commitment to ethics, it does not mean that we can become complacent, and instilling this value in our departmental ethos and pedagogy must continue to be further nurtured across the faculty.

It would be useful in a future faculty meeting for instructors to share how different modalities of pedagogy, such as use of Top Hat, or use of different media (journalism, social media, etc) is exciting for this generation of students, in addition to further exploring both the harms and opportunities that technology provides as we consider the ethics of anthropology.

SECOND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #3:

Method of Assessment:

Our indirect assessment for the learning outcome on ethics analyzed results from the 2022 Senior Exit Survey administered to all graduating Anthropology majors.

Achievement Target:

To help determine whether we are meeting the learning outcome target of student ability to recognize the ethical implications of anthropology, we assessed the evidence in the senior responses to this question on the survey. Our hope was that at least 90% of respondents affirmed that their academic training in our department enabled them to better identify the ethical stakes of anthropology and our education.

Summary of Assessment Results:

We asked the BA students about this learning goal: "I can demonstrate an awareness of the ethical and social implications of anthropological research."

The BS students were asked about, "I can demonstrate an awareness of the ethical and social implications of research on both humans and animals."

Among the 12 BA respondents, 100% responded with "agree" or "strongly agree."

Among the 34 BS respondents, 100% responded with "agree" or "strongly agree."

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

The strength of this data in revealing our students' ethical sensitivity and cognizance could be nurtured further by clearly communicating ethical expectations on syllabi and during course lectures and discussions and bolstering the department's commitment to IRB processes for all our student researchers in labs and with thesis research and other projects. We can also better highlight this on our departmental website.

V. FACULTY INVOLVEMENT: Describe how your faculty members were involved in this year's assessment procedures.

The delineation of our learning outcomes was the result of a department-wide faculty-led discernment process. This assessment then relied upon in-depth interviews and data

collection with four faculty members (two biological anthropologists and two cultural anthropologists). The current Director of Undergraduate Studies shepherded the assessment process, coordinating with the department's previous DUS and our Curriculum Committee. The Chair of the department has supported the co-teaching model and has encouraged the emphasis on discourse across subfields, the importance of diversity, and ethical engagement as a cornerstone of our department. While our department has faced formidable challenges over the past few years on a number of levels, the evidence is resounding that we are meeting our targets for learning outcomes for our undergraduates. Our BA and BS students are clearly embracing a first-rate, rigorous, and critical education in anthropology.

VI. REVIEW PROCESS

Please forward your 2021-2023 assessment report to the chair of your department for review and signature. This review will ensure that the information included in this report is accurate and that your program is engaged in a systematic process of continuous improvement.

Anna Grimshaw

Department Chair

June 1 2023

Date

VII. SUBMISSION OF REPORTS

Please submit reports to Andrea Barra, Associate Director of Assessment via Microsoft Form link <https://forms.office.com/r/8u47ydiy06> by June 1, 2023.