

General Education Assessment

Anthropology

Goals and Objectives

Anthropology is the science of mankind, concerned with every aspect of life as it pertains to humans, from biology to language, as well as cultural products. In the Introduction to Anthropology course (ANTH100), we are introducing the tools and terms used in Anthropology in general and in each of the four subfields. By the end of the courses students should have gained an understanding of what anthropology studies, what the four subfields are and how they are related, how anthropology is studied, and the types of questions the discipline addresses and how each subfield contributes.

Measures and Criterion

We assess the class through weekly quizzes, each one containing a short essay (designed to review the week's topics comprehensively) and multiple choice questions (designed to test more specific aspects of the class). For the fulfillment of the Assessment Plan for General Education in Social and Behavioral Sciences, we have selected some of the essay questions as they best demonstrate student knowledge and allow for a range of outcomes, as opposed to an all or nothing right answer.

All goals and objectives were assessed during this cycle. The rubric below was utilized to assess the students. Success was measured by the percentage of students that were proficient or advanced in their responses. The course is meeting its goal when at least 70% of students are proficient or higher. On the rubric (see below) "Advanced" corresponds to grades A and above, "Proficient" corresponds to grades C to A-, "Moderate" corresponds to grades D+ to C-, and "Minimal" corresponds to grades D and below.

Findings

Overall, approximately 69% of students scored as proficient or higher when looking at all objectives. However, not all objectives scored as highly.

Evaluate data, evidence and arguments using discipline specific theory and methods. (SB1)

- Why did the possibility of genetic adaptation by natural selection have such a great impact on anthropological research?

In Week 3, we explore the concept of genetic adaptation by natural selection, as pioneered by Charles Darwin. Although it is often misconstrued for political reasons, the introduction of "evolution" to the realm of scientific research precipitated many methodological and philosophical changes for all scientists. Anthropology more especially was founded upon a reviewing of orthogenetic evolutionary theories, and this question elicits a nuanced answer, recognizing both Darwin's contribution and the dangers of its deterministic applications.

- Average grade: 86% (36 Participants) Standard Deviation 18.76%
- 70% of students were proficient or higher

This objective is being met as 70% of students are proficient, in addition students demonstrate the knowledge for this category well as the average grade is a B and the standard deviation is low (compared to the other categories). However, 70% is the minimum for success.

Identify theories in the discipline relevant to understanding human behavior and society (SB2)

- Please provide an example of a demographic model for the development of agriculture, and its author(s).

In Week 6, we examine the turning point most commonly known as the “Neolithic Revolution,” corresponding to a period when humans start to congregate in agricultural compounds. This time period is tremendously important for archaeology, as it requires a very different approach from more ancient research sites, in what would later become the foundation for cities and states. There are several competing theories as to the reasons for this move toward more sedentary lifestyles, and this question seeks to identify more specifically those that are not rooted in environmental reasons.

- Average grade: 85.5% (33 participants) Standard Deviation 27.59%
- 76% of students were proficient or higher

This objective is being met as 76% of students are proficient, in addition students demonstrate the knowledge for this category well as the average grade is a B, however, the standard deviation is a little wider, indicating greater variability in learning outcomes.

Distinguish the forces shaping human behavior and society (SB3)

- Why are both individual and group history important in understanding cultural behavior?

In Week 9, we move on to the chapter of cultural anthropology, with specific focus on American culture, which is both the most accessible and the most sensitive topic to students. There is a corresponding book assignment, an ethnography conducted in and around Athens, GA, following the relationship of a slave and her owner as it is told in the local museum, by contrast to the story that the local communities knows and the history her descendants retain. Here, we seek to reconcile the very high variation in human behavior with culturally-approved behaviors. Although attitudes may change gradually, a critical mass of individuals must adopt the new ideas in order for them to effect change.

- Average grade: 80.4% (36 participants) Standard average 38.64%
- 56% of students were proficient or higher

This objective is not met as only 56% of students are proficient. The average grade is a B- and the standard deviation is wide, indicating variability in student success for this objective.

Describe relations among individuals, groups, and society utilizing discipline specific terminology. (SB4)

- What is the importance of kinship in establishing our social values?

Week 11 covers the topic of kin, i.e. family relationships as they are understood throughout the world. Students are often surprised to learn that every culture thinks of “family” differently, from the possibility of having several mothers and fathers, to the cultural responsibilities one has toward very

distant relatives. Of course, these early social encounters provide a template to all social encounters later in life, and it establishes the pattern for cultural transmission.

- Average grade: 81% (34 participants) Standard Deviation: 22.15%
- 60% of students were proficient or higher

This objective is not met as only 60% of students are proficient. The average grade is a B-, indicating that fewer students are able to articulate this learning outcome.

Recognize the significance of individual, cultural and societal diversity (SB5)

- What can we learn from the Klamath and Woiworrung foundation stories and what is their relevance today?

In Week 8, during a transition between archaeology and cultural anthropology, we cover the numerous cultures who do not have writing systems, and for who the delineation between pre-history and history is not as clear as it is in Western culture. In these examples, indigenous traditional stories account for environmental changes that occurred thousands of years ago, for phenomena that modern science was only recently able to date somewhat accurately. Both the existence and the conservation of such records is invaluable to our understanding of human history, as it pertains to our common heritage and emphasizes alternative methods of recording.

- Average grade: 78.3% (35 participants) Standard deviation: 26.21%
- 80% of students were proficient or higher.

This objective is being met as 80% of students are proficient, however, given that the average grade is a C it appears that there is some variability in learning outcomes.

Improvement Narrative

Overall, students in this course are demonstrating proficiency, however, there is some variability when examining the specific objectives. Students are demonstrating proficiency in SB1, SB2, and SB5. The results for SB3 and SB4 indicate that although some students are doing well, we need to increase our efforts in teaching/demonstrating the material related to these objectives. At this time we do not feel that there need to be any adjustments to the measures or criterion.

Rubric and Outcomes

	Minimal	Moderate	Proficient	Advanced
Evaluate data, evidence and arguments using discipline specific theory and methods. (SB1)	3	8	17	8
Identify theories in the discipline relevant to understanding human behavior and society (SB2)	3	5	20	5
Distinguish the forces shaping human behavior and society (SB3)	8	6	8	12
Describe relations among individuals, groups, and society utilizing discipline specific terminology. (SB4)	4	10	13	8
Recognize the significance of individual, cultural and societal diversity (SB5)	1	6	13	15