

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN

May 2006

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### Overview of Program

Anthropology is the comparative study of human diversity and distinctiveness through time and across the world. In terms of the questions it poses and the methods it uses, anthropology spans the humanities, the social sciences, and the biological, cognitive, and evolutionary sciences. In offering a natural history of the human species, it studies all human biological and behavioral variation from the earliest fossil records to the present, and includes the study of non-human primates as well. As a social science, anthropology aims at uncovering the patterns of past and present socio-economic life. As one of the humanities, it seeks to understand the ways cultural meaning and political power have shaped human experience, especially in this era of intense globalization.

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, anthropology consists of several subfields, including: **archaeology**—the investigation and analysis of the remains from past cultures, uncovered through excavation; **biological anthropology**—the study of human evolution and the roots of the biological and genetic diversity found among contemporary peoples; and **sociocultural anthropology**—the comparative study of society, politics, economy, and culture, whether in historical times or in our contemporary moment. UW-Madison also offers some classes in **anthropological linguistics**—the analysis of language and its place in social life. Comparative and empirical work—and fieldwork in particular—are the hallmarks of anthropology on our campus.

To sum up, then, anthropology at UW-Madison is characterized by a comparative point of view, a focus on humans and societies in all their variation and similarity, and an effort to reveal and understand the complex but organized diversity that has shaped the human condition, past and present.

Our program serves nearly 200 undergraduate majors as well as about 100 graduate students. Our undergraduate degree program provides our students with strong comparative perspectives on human diversity and history, and trains them to think critically, conduct research, and to present and communicate anthropological research and knowledge to scholarly and public audiences. It also offers an archaeology certificate. The B.A./B.S. in Anthropology is an ideal stepping-stone to a scholarly career in the social and biological sciences, to professions with a strong international focus, or to careers in law, medicine, and policy. Our Ph.D. program is designed for advanced students who wish to develop research and professional careers in one or more subdisciplines within the field.

## B.A./B.S. in Anthropology: Learning Goals and Objectives

Learning Goals for B.A./B.S. Students. Students will demonstrate that they:

1. Have a basic understanding of the 3 fields of anthropology and the relevance of each to the discipline of anthropology as a whole;
2. Have a basic comparative knowledge of human diversity in the world (contemporary, ancient, biological, cultural);

Ability Goals. Students will demonstrate the ability to:

3. Critically and independently read anthropological and related literature;
4. Clearly communicate ideas or research findings in anthropology through both written documents and oral presentations to public and college audiences.

### Assessment Methods.

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Goals</i>				<i>Use of information</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
Student learning of the subfields and of diversity is assessed through tests/graded assignments in classes required for the major. In annual meeting, the curriculum committee and director of undergraduate studies look at student scores in teaching courses required for the major to assess grading patterns.	X	X			The TA/Curriculum Committee and Director of Undergraduate Studies supports and encourages the instructors, takes any appropriate departmental level actions, and reports meeting outcomes to dean or other body that has resources to address problems, and to those composing reports for accreditation or other external audiences. All data are reviewed as part of program review every ten years.
On-line senior student surveys scheduled at academic mid-year	X	X	X		Data reviewed annually by the TA/Curriculum Committee and Director of Undergraduate Studies. The department takes action as indicated above.
In senior capstone seminar (Anth. 490), students complete an original research	X	X		X	Annually, the 490 instructors share students' paper titles and

<p>project, write it up in a format appropriate to the subdiscipline, and also make an oral report to the class. The instructor(s) use explicit criteria to evaluate student work.</p>				<p>50-100 word abstracts and scores with the TA/Curriculum Committee and Director of Undergraduate Studies. The committee shares the burden of reading the titles and abstracts with the goal of assessing student abilities to communicate, their understanding of the 3 subdisciplines, and their comparative knowledge of human diversity. The department takes action as indicated above.</p>
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On-Line Senior Student Surveys.

Graduating seniors will be asked to respond to the following questionnaire that ranks how they perceive their learning experience in the Department of Anthropology:

1. How well did you achieve each of the following departmental learning goals?

Question	Extremely well	Very well	Adequately well	Not very well	Not at all
<p>Have a basic understanding of the 3 fields of anthropology and the relevance of each to the discipline of anthropology as a whole            Have a basic comparative knowledge of diversity in the world (modern, ancient, primatological)            Critically and independently read anthropological literature            Clearly communicate ideas about anthropology through both written documents and oral presentations in a manner suitable to a professional audience</p>					

2. What aspects of your education in this department helped you with your learning, and why were they helpful?

3. What might the department do differently that would help you learn more effectively, and why would these actions help?

#### Examples of Changes Based on Assessment.

The undergraduate program has not been assessed since May 1998. We have determined that the existing departmental assessment plan is out of date and this document represents a substantial revision of the Undergraduate Assessment Plan for Anthropology. The TA/Curriculum Committee, which includes the Undergraduate and Graduate Coordinators, and Director of Undergraduate Studies will be responsible for oversight of Assessment of the undergraduate program.

#### Recommendations for Improving Assessment Process.

We intend to implement the measures presented above. We will create a calendar for Curriculum Committee meetings that includes dates for action on the Assessment Plan. On an annual basis the Curriculum Committee will be expected to file a one-page report of their Assessment activities with the Department Chair. This report will be summarized and presented at the first departmental faculty meeting in the academic year.

#### Timeline for Assessment.

AY 2006-2007:

- Implement the new Assessment Plan, collect data, and conduct the first review of the program.
- Design and develop the on-line senior survey.

AY 2007-2008

- Collect and review data.
- Modify senior survey if necessary.

## Ph.D. in Anthropology: Learning Goals and Objectives

### Learning Objectives for Ph.D. Students.

1. Successfully carry out original anthropological research and produce publishable works in the field;
2. Ability to obtain employment as a professional anthropologist in academic, government, non-governmental, or private sectors;
3. Follow ethical principles of the discipline for using sources, artifacts, and remains; interacting with human subjects; and working with colleagues;
4. Teach effectively; present and disseminate knowledge in the field to students, professionals, and members of the public;
5. Actively compete for major intramural and extramural research grants.

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Goals</i>					<i>Use of information</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	
Annually, faculty will meet (by subdisciplinary section) to assess each graduate student's progress to degree and the quality of his/her coursework, qualifying exam, preliminary exam/thesis prospectus/research proposal, grant applications; thesis fieldwork, and/or dissertation. At the end of the meeting, faculty will discuss issues that affect graduate students as a group.	X		X		X	Sections inform each student by letter of the results of the assessment process. Sections take further action or make recommendations to the entire faculty as a result of assessments as needed.
Graduate student publications and conference presentations (deposited by student with Graduate Coordinator)	X		X			Reviewed annually by Director of Graduate Studies and presented to faculty for action as needed.
Job placement information (collected by Graduate Coordinator)		X		X		Reviewed annually by Director of Graduate Studies and presented to faculty for action as needed.
A faculty member visits the classroom of every teaching assistant during the semester and prepares a written analysis of the quality of the teaching				X		Reviewed annually by the Director of Graduate Studies and presented to the faculty for action as needed.

Successful grantsmanship (collected by Graduate Coordinator)					X	Reviewed annually by the Director of Graduate Studies and presented to the faculty for action as needed.
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Examples of Changes Based on Assessment.

The graduate program has not been formally assessed since May 1998. We have determined that the existing departmental assessment plan is out of date and this document represents a substantial revision of the Graduate Assessment Plan for Anthropology. It takes advantage of two mechanisms already in place in reviewing teaching assistant performance and the annual reviews of each student. Much of the data for assessment already is routinely collected. In the past several years there have been periodic informal assessments of the graduate program that have led to changes in the graduate curriculum, including major revisions of the cultural section qualifying exams that better meet the learning needs of cultural students in 2006; introduction of a new required course for cultural anthropology graduate students (Anth. 860) in 2006, and introduction of classroom observation of TAs in 2004. The Director of Graduate Studies will be responsible for oversight of Assessment of the graduate program.

Recommedations for Improving Assessment Process.

We intend to implement the measures presented above. On an annual basis the Director of Graduate Studies will be file a one-page report of their Assessment activities with the Department Chair. This report will be summarized and presented at the first departmental faculty meeting in the academic year.

Timeline for Assessment.

AY 2006-2007:

- Implement the new Assessment Plan, collect data, review of the program.
- Modify program as necessary

AY 2007-2008

- Continue active assessment of the graduate program.