



Academic Assessment Report

Program - Anthropology (BA)

Program General Information

Mission Statement

Anthropology is a holistic discipline broadly divided into related sub-disciplines, including sociocultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, and linguistic anthropology. Applied anthropology is at times recognized as a fifth sub-field in which the research side of the discipline covered in the four foundational fields is used in diverse settings including: government, business, corporations, non-profits, education, healthcare, and law among others. The BA in Anthropology at George Mason, consistent with the discipline itself, spans the academic and epistemological divisions in the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences making it a strong undergraduate major that provides a sound interdisciplinary preparation for a variety of careers, both inside and outside of academia. Students who complete the BA program in anthropology are expected to have developed strong analytical and critical thinking skills, excellence in reading and writing, a sense of the cultural and human diversity that characterizes both the human past and the present, substantive knowledge of particular cultures and societies around the world, knowledge of the key theories and methodologies of anthropology, and the place of anthropology among the social sciences. We are committed to fostering student-faculty collaboration and engagement and to increasing the number of anthropology majors who complete independent anthropological research as part of their coursework or through other venues at George Mason, in the D.C. area, or abroad.

College/School

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department/Division

Sociology and Anthropology

Assessment Contact

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Anthropological Methods

Students will apply anthropological knowledge and critical thinking skills in analyzing cultural interconnectedness, change, difference and diversity

Outcome Status: Active

Anthropological Theory

Students will recognize, identify, and apply methodological and theoretical underpinnings of current anthropological knowledge that may be applied to analysis of cultural interconnectedness, change, difference, and diversity.

Outcome Status: Active

Apply Competing Paradigms

Students will apply anthropological analysis of a significant human issue using one or two different theoretical approaches in anthropology.

Outcome Status: Active

Global Problem Analysis

Students will identify and summarize a global problem or issue through the utilization of anthropological theories, concepts, and resources.

Outcome Status: Active

Assessment Period(s): 2022 - 2023

Does this Student Learning Outcome align with any of the following SCHEV Competencies?: Critical Thinking

Is this Student Learning Outcome tied to an external accreditation standard?: No

Written Communication

Students will effectively communicate anthropological findings and/or arguments in writing, using appropriate conventions of the discipline.

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Outcome Status: Active

Assessment Period(s): 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025

Does this Student Learning Outcome align with any of the following SCHEV Competencies?: Written Communication

Is this Student Learning Outcome tied to an external accreditation standard?: No

Assessment Method	Findings and Improvements
Assessment Measure Name: AY 24-25 SLO 5 Written Assignments	Findings Date: 06/11/2025 Findings: We have attached the completed rubrics/scoresheets for each course that was evaluated, along with another spreadsheet that provides the data for the combined sample. Using the combined sample, for Part 1 (The student demonstrates an ability to effectively synthesize and/or analyze an anthropological issue/argument), 57/61 (93.4%) of the students scored a '3' or higher. For Part 2 (The structure and mechanics of the student's writing are consistent with conventions of the discipline), 54/60 (90%) of the students scored a '3' or higher. On a course by course basis, the number of students scoring '3' or higher on Part 1 of the SLO are as follows: ANTH 370: 10/12 (83.3%); ANTH 386: 21/22 (95.5%); ANTH 394: 5/6 (83.3%) ;ANTH 490: 21/21 (100%). On a course by course basis, the number of students scoring '3' or higher on Part 2 are as follows: ANTH 370: 11/12 (91.7%); ANTH 386: 19/22 (86.4%); ANTH 394: 5/6 (83.3%); ANTH 490: 19/20 (95%). Reporting Period: 2024 - 2025 Conclusion: Target Met Individual(s) Responsible for Assessment: This year, assessment for each course was completed by the instructor of the course. The four faculty involved were Dr. Chris Morris, Dr. Kim Foecke, Dr. Jamie Clark, and Dr. Rashmi Sadana. Jamie Clark facilitated the assessment and analyzed the data/wrote the report. Number of Students Assessed: 61

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Description of Assessment Measure: For our BA assessment for AY 24-25, we are again assessing SLO #5 (written communication). Because most of our upper-division classes are only offered every other year (with the exception of the WI course, ANTH 490, which is offered every spring), a two-year cycle made sense in terms of capturing a full cohort of upper-division students.

Anthropology BA SLO # 5: Students will effectively communicate anthropological findings and/or arguments in writing, using appropriate conventions of the discipline.

For the purposes of assessment, the SLO was broken into two parts:

1. The student writing demonstrates an ability to effectively synthesize and/or analyze an anthropological issue/argument.
2. The structure and mechanics of the student's writing are consistent with conventions of the discipline.

The target of analysis was writing assignments from upper-division courses in anthropology. Two upper-division classes that include major writing assignments were chosen for each semester. Instructors were provided with rubrics for both parts of the SLO (see attached). Instructors had the option to assess both parts of the SLO using a single writing assignment or to use distinct assignments for each part of the SLO. For this year's assessment, assessment was once again completed by the instructor of the course in question. This year, we only collected data for the ANTH majors enrolled in each course (in AY 23-24, we collected data for all students enrolled in each course, but we recognized that as a potential issue for assessment/area for improvement,

Analysis of Results: In the combined sample, our target was met for Part 1 and Part 2 of the SLO. For both parts of the SLO, ANTH 490, our Writing Intensive class, had the highest percentage of students scoring '3' or above-- in fact, all students in 490 were at '3' or above for Part 1, and only a single student in 490 scored below a '3' for Part 2. In fact, 20/21 students in 490 actually scored a '4' (superior) or '5' (exceptional) for Part 1, and 19/20 scored a '4' or a '5' for Part 2 (16 of whom received a 5). This result is both heartening and expected, given that 490, our WI course, is a course in which mastery of these aspects is expected. It also requires students to engage in the revision process, which no doubt results in improvement in the final product (which is what was assessed). This suggests that the trajectory of courses within the university/major is indeed providing our students with the skill set necessary to conduct high level analysis + communicate results effectively.

As was the case last year, the 300-level courses showed slightly lower percentages of students achieving a '3' or above for both parts of the SLO; however, it is notable that in this year's sample, these numbers were always above 83%. It is also worth noting that while ANTH 394 was just under the target of 85% for both parts of the SLO, but only one student scored below a 3 for each measure-- the class simply had a smaller number of ANTH majors so the total sample was small (6 students). Overall, there was a higher percentage of students scoring '3' or above than that evidenced in the 300-level courses last year. This is probably an artifact of our methodology-- this year, we made sure to restrict data collection to ANTH majors, and one would expect that ANTH majors would score more highly on metrics related to the analysis of anthropological issues/ concepts than a sample that included non-majors. The slightly lower scores in the 300 level courses vis a vis ANTH 490 may also reflect the fact that in these courses, their analytical/writing skills are still being reinforced.

Supporting Documents:

[BA SLO 5 Worksheet 2024 2025 ANTH 370 Morris.xlsx](#);
[BA SLO 5 Worksheet 2024 2025 ANTH 386 Foecke.xlsx](#);
[BA SLO 5 Worksheet 2024 2025 ANTH 394 Clark.xlsx](#);
[BA SLO 5 Worksheet 2024 2025 ANTH 490 Sadana.xlsx](#);
[BA SLO 5 Worksheet 2024-25 Combined Data.xlsx](#)

ACTIONS & IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Past Improvements: The department has not made any major changes to the structure of our courses vis a vis this learning outcome. Most ANTH courses (including the introductory ones) incorporate some degree of writing-- and analysis/writing are integral to most of our upper division courses. The continued high performance of students in ANTH 490 (the WI course) suggests that we are helping students achieve mastery in written communication. As discussed above, we did update our assessment process to restrict our analysis to students who are anthropology majors-- and this likely explains the higher % of students in 300 level classes who achieved a '3' or above for both aspects of the SLO.

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Assessment Method	Findings and Improvements
<p>esp. since our 300-level classes often include non-majors).</p> <p>Data were collected for the following courses:</p> <p>Fall 2024:</p> <p>* ANTH 370: Environment and Culture (an elective class within the major) Instructor: Dr. Christopher Morris. Received data for 12 students (one assignment used for both parts of the SLO; the assignment prompt has been uploaded)</p> <p>* ANTH 386: Quantitative Methods (majors are required to take either ANTH 386 or ANTH 450 as part of their methods requirement) Instructor: Dr. Kim Foecke. Received data for 22 students (one assignment used for both parts of the SLO; a document containing the assignment overview + a detailed rubric and SLO mapping has been uploaded)</p> <p>Spring 2025:</p> <p>* ANTH 394: Archaeology and Climate Change (an elective class within the major) Instructor: Dr. Jamie Clark. Received data for 6 students (one assignment used for both parts of the SLO; a document containing the assignment prompt + grade sheet has been uploaded).</p> <p>* ANTH 490: History of Anthropological Theory (WI course for the BA in Anthropology) Instructor: Dr. Rashmi Sadana. Received data for 21 students (each part of the SLO was assessed using a different assignment; both prompts have been uploaded)</p>	<p>Future Improvements: As was the case last year, assessment was completed by the instructors of each course-- we recognize that best practices would include the collection of artifacts and anonymous assessment by a group of faculty. The fact that assessment reporting often happens at the end of the semester and extends into the summer (when most faculty are no longer on contract!) complicates this somewhat, especially given that final class projects/papers are often utilized in the assessment process. Next year, ANTH program faculty will consider how this may best be accomplished. Note, too, that we are in the process of updating our SLOs-- while the current SLO (#5) appears to be working well and assessment has proven straightforward, other SLOs will likely see updates in terms of their wording/structure.</p> <p>Future Improvements Completed By: 06/01/2026</p> <p>Individual(s) Responsible for Improvement Plan: Jamie Clark</p> <p>Resources Needed: n/a</p>

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Assessment Method	Findings and Improvements
<p>Assessment Measure Type: Direct Measure Assessment Measure Status: Active Achievement Target: At least 85% of students will receive a score of 3 (Adequate) or better for each dimension of the SLO. (Note: while our assessment target includes writing from across our upper division classes, as the highest-level university-wide writing requirement, we expect the WI class (ANTH 490: History of Anthropological Theory) to be the best reflection of student achievement of this outcome, as it is one of the courses where we expect students to demonstrate mastery of the SLO.)</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: 2025 BA ANTH Assessment SLO 5 Rubrics and More Detail.pdf; 2025 BA ANTH SLO Assessment Assignment Prompts.pdf</p>	