

Anthropology and Social Change

MA and PhD Assessment Plan Overview (Revised 11.13.15)

General Overview

The Anthropology and Social Change Department (ANTH) is a new residential academic unit (2012) at the University, currently in its third year, offering MA and PhD degree programs. It is comprised of four core faculty members, including one Department Chair, and one non-faculty Program Coordinator. The ANTH core faculty members strive to combine a rigorous academic environment that is also in active service to the local and global community, while at the same time leading change in the discipline of anthropological studies itself. We aim to be a small immersive and innovative social change learning environment that is, at the same time, pedagogically self-reflective and self-critical. To this end we have established our focused program learning outcomes and created assessment plans (MA and PhD) that will inform the core faculty process of active evaluation and continuous improvement in our degree programs. The ANTH faculty members are committed to creating graduate learning environments that are academically effective, substantial, and innovative. Our regular meetings as a department are a primary setting for regular discussion, analysis, revision, and development relative to our program learning outcomes and our assessment plans. In addition, our assessment plans are “living” documents subject to continuous improvement and refinement through faculty engagement. Our particular assessment plans for each ANTH degree path are currently very similar in approach; they are the beginnings of what we hope to revise each academic year going forward. Because our department’s unique immersive learning environments transcend the boundaries of the “classroom” (e.g., events, conferences, guest speakers, student-created learning environments, community activist involvement, professional development, film screenings, non-curricular seminars) we aim to expand the scope of our departmental assessment strategy to include evidence of learning outcome manifestation *both* inside the classroom (e.g., papers, projects) and in those auxiliary learning spaces that we consider to be integral parts of the unique ANTH activist-scholar learning experience. An example of this would be to gather data via student satisfaction surveys, focus groups, and collect focused qualitative data from academic advising sessions.

ANTH MA Program Assessment Overview

The ANTH MA program is a 36-unit degree path organized around the combination of theory, ethnographic research, and applied professional skills (e.g., filmmaking, grant writing, organizing, producing radio). Our program learning outcomes are

organized into four thematic areas: demonstration of activist ethnographic research skills, theoretical competency, professional and scholarly competencies, and manifestation of activist scholarship. Each theme is further subdivided into specific numbered learning objectives that can be evaluated relative to our student's culminating project (ANTH MA portfolio) and written coursework (e.g., research papers). We have identified courses we wish to collect sample student work from to evidence our students' manifestation of these learning outcomes as a result of matriculating through the MA program. This sampling also gives us an opportunity to evaluate where the student learning outcomes are not being manifested well enough (e.g., academically weak, in need of development) and to remediate these areas with a curriculum intervention that the core faculty decides would best address areas of need. The faculty aim to dedicate portions of their regular department meeting to such evaluative analysis and respond accordingly.

ANTH PhD Program Assessment Overview

The ANTH PhD program is a 36-unit degree path, followed by two comprehensive exams, and the successful completion of an original activist ethnographic research contribution (dissertation). The program is organized around the scholarly exploration of alternatives (political, social, counter-hegemonic, and environmental); this is achieved by offering rigorous doctoral level education in a combination of post-capitalist theory and ethnographic research. Our program learning outcomes are organized into four thematic areas: demonstration of activist ethnographic research skills, theoretical competency, professional and scholarly competencies, and manifestation of activist scholarship. Each theme is further subdivided into specific learning objectives that can be evaluated relative to our student's culminating research contribution (ANTH PhD dissertation) and written coursework (e.g., research papers). Similar to the MA program assessment plan, we have identified courses we wish to collect sample student work from to evidence our students' manifestation of these learning outcomes as a result of matriculating through the ANTH PhD program. This sampling also gives us an opportunity to evaluate where the student learning outcomes are not being manifested well enough at the doctoral level (e.g., academically weak, in need of development) and to remediate these areas with a curriculum or advising intervention that the core faculty decides would best address these areas of need. As with the MA plan, the faculty aim to dedicate portions of their department meeting to such evaluative analysis and respond accordingly.