

Program Assessment Plan
 American University
 Academic Program: CAS: Public Anthropology - MA

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Unit's Primary Department: Anthropology

Learning Outcome: Theory

To situate current discussions in public anthropology within the major arguments shaping the classic and contemporary debates in anthropological theory.

Outcome Year: 2009-2010
 2010-2011
 2011-2012

Start Date: 04/01/2009

Outcome Status: Active Learning Outcome

| Assessment Plan | | | |
|--|--|--|------------|
| Assessment Measure | Target | Schedule/Cycle | Active |
| <p>Evaluation of MAPA comprehensive examination essays. MAPA students write this comp during the last, or second to last semester in residence. In most cases, this is a watershed moment in their MA career: they have completed course work and are just beginning their non-thesis option papers or thesis research. This positioning makes the comprehensive exam essays especially appropriate resource for purposes of program evaluation.</p> <p>The comp asks the student to write two ten-page essays. One essay addresses a general topic related to public anthropology as a whole; the second essay explores an area of public anthropology with which the student has particular interest and expertise.</p> <p>Measure Type: Written Assignment</p> | <p>Since this is the first year we have implemented this measure, we need to see the overall profile of the student scores for each learning outcome, before making further statements about implications of outcome. At minimum, we expect that a review of these aggregate scores will allow the faculty to set criteria defining effective levels of performance on each learning outcome, e.g.:</p> <p>How many students satisfied the expectation of each learning outcome with an aggregate score of 3.0 or better?</p> <p>Was the mean aggregate score for the student cohort higher or lower than the idealized (3.0) mean?</p> <p>An individual student's performance can then be tabulated, in comparison to the other students, and the student cohort as a whole, in terms of such measures.</p> <p>Additionally, constructing these aggregate values allows us to propose improvements in the academic component of the MAPA program. If, for example, the aggregate scores for one of the learning outcomes is far lower than the aggregate score for the other learning outcomes, we may infer that students are not as familiar with the academic content associated with the learning outcome. (There may be other reasons for the lower scores, of course, and those reasons need to be explored.)</p> <p>We need to review the courses in</p> | <p>Students take the MAPA comp in January and in May of each academic year. Initially, we propose to conduct the assessment task only for those students who take the comp in May. This is usually a larger group than that taking the comp in January. And usually it is a group with more varied composition (age, racial/ethnic background, prior training in anthropology, and extent of practical experience prior to entering graduate school.)</p> <p>The reader will be the student's advisor and one other member of the faculty who is familiar with the student's indicated subject areas. After the student's performance is reviewed for degree-completion purposes, each student's essay will be read in terms of the indicated learning outcomes. Each reader will assign the portfolio a 1-5 score (1-minimal evidence that outcome has been met; 5-ample evidence that outcome has been met) for each learning outcome. Reader scores will be averaged to obtain an aggregate scoring for each outcome.</p> | <p>Yes</p> |

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| Assessment Measure | Target | Schedule/Cycle | Active |
| | the MAPA curriculum where the outcome-related academic content is addressed and, as appropriate, propose changes in the syllabus/lesson plans in those. | | |
| Open meeting between MAPA students and members of the department's Graduate Studies Committee to discuss the extent to which learning outcomes have been met. Measure Type: Other | No target identified. | Student concerns provide focus for course selection and other curricular modifications, and suggest areas of unmet instructional need to be addressed through adjunct appointments or new faculty hiring. Of particular concern in 2008-09 discussion were questions about the administration of the MAPA comp--particularly, how much latitude students should have in choosing their references for comp preparation vs. how closely faculty should identify "key sources": essential for effective comp preparation. Frequency: Each semester. | Yes |

Learning Outcome: Inquiry

To use key ideas from current discussion and related debates to construct public anthropology-centered research projects.

Outcome Year: 2009-2010

2010-2011

2011-2012

Start Date: 04/01/2009

Outcome Status: Active Learning Outcome

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| | <p>mean?</p> <p>An individual student's performance can then be tabulated, in comparison to the other students, and the student cohort as a whole, in terms of such measures.</p> <p>Additionally, constructing these aggregate values allows us to propose improvements in the academic component of the MAPA program. If, for example, the aggregate scores for one of the learning outcomes is far lower than the aggregate score for the other learning outcomes, we may infer that students are not as familiar with the academic content associated with the learning outcome. (There may be other reasons for the lower scores, of course, and those reasons need to be explored.)</p> <p>We need to review the courses in the MAPA curriculum where the outcome-related academic content is addressed and, as appropriate, propose changes in the syllabus/lesson plans in those.</p> | <p>reviewed for degree-completion purposes, each student's essay will be read in terms of the indicated learning outcomes. Each reader will assign the portfolio a 1-5 score (1-minimal evidence that outcome has been met; 5-ample evidence that outcome has been met) for each learning outcome. Reader scores will be averaged to obtain an aggregate scoring for each outcome.</p> | |
| <p>Open meeting between MAPA students and members of the department's Graduate Studies Committee to discuss the extent to which learning outcomes have been met.</p> <p>Measure Type: Other</p> | No target identified. | <p>Student concerns provide focus for course selection and other curricular modifications, and suggest areas of unmet instructional need to be addressed through adjunct appointments or new faculty hiring.</p> <p>Of particular concern in 2008-09 discussion were questions about the administration of the MAPA comp--particularly, how much latitude students should have in choosing their references for comp preparation vs. how closely faculty should identify "key sources": essential for effective comp preparation.</p> <p>Frequency: Each semester.</p> | Yes |

Learning Outcome: Communication

To mobilize written, oral, and visual media in order to communicate research findings to anthropologists, policy-makers and members of affected communities, and open those findings to public critique.

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2010-2011
2011-2012

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| <p>Open meeting between MAPA students and members of the department's Graduate Studies Committee to discuss the extent to which learning outcomes have been met.</p> <p>Measure Type: Other</p> | No target identified. | <p>Student concerns provide focus for course selection and other curricular modifications, and suggest areas of unmet instructional need to be addressed through adjunct appointments or new faculty hiring.</p> <p>Of particular concern in 2008-09</p> | Yes |

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Learning Outcome: Application

To design (and implement) programs of critical intervention and change that take into account relevant research findings, attendant policy constraints, and experiences of local communities.

Outcome Year: 2009-2010
2010-2011
2011-2012

Start Date: 04/01/2009

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