

Department of Anthropology, University of Arkansas
Assessment of BA and BS Programs
2021-2022 Academic Year

I. BACKGROUND

The Anthropology Department at the University of Arkansas presently offers two degree programs to undergraduate students—the BA (Bachelor of Arts), and the BS (Bachelor of Science). The Department of Anthropology at the University of Arkansas comprises three separate disciplines – Cultural Anthropology, Biological Anthropology, and Archeology. The Department offers introductory courses in each subdiscipline, as well as a capstone course required for all anthropology majors. To bring the Department’s assessment program in line with the College requirements, and in order to standardize assessment as much as possible across courses, the Anthropology Department revised its Assessment Plan in the Spring of 2020. This stands as the current assessment plan, including revision of student learning outcomes, re-evaluating the tools used for assessment, and instituting a formal plan for Departmental Program Assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes

Because these disciplines represent a broad mixture of approaches spanning the humanities and sciences, the department has identified *Student Learning Outcomes* separately for each subdiscipline.

A. Cultural Anthropology

- An appreciation of cultural diversity on both a local and global scale and how these diversities come into being and are theorized and communicated anthropologically.
- An understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of cultural anthropology, both in a historical context and in current practice, with an aim to articulating its key concepts, principles, and overarching scholarly contributions.
- An understanding of the role of anthropology in building intercultural knowledge and competence.
- An understanding of the breadth of approaches to understanding human cultural diversity, including not only classical ethnography, and its methods but fields such as visual anthropology, the anthropology of religion, the anthropology of identity, and more.
- An understanding of cultural variation and what value it has within anthropology and for neighboring disciplines and professions outside of the academy.
- A respect for cultural differences around the world.

B. Archeology

- An understanding of the scope of archeological investigations on both local (Arkansas) and global scales.
- Knowledge of comparative studies of ancient human groups both across space and over time.
- An understanding of long-term culture change, from simple to complex forms and the reverse
- An understanding of the human impact on the environment and how human societies cope with environmental change
- An understanding of how archeological study informs not only the past, but also integrates with our understanding of the present (e.g., sustainability, political context, social interaction, cultural resource management, and heritage tourism).
- Knowledge of the techniques and skills necessary for modern archeological investigation, including using quantitative methods to make inferences about cultural behaviors.
- An understanding of the integration of archeological study with biological and cultural anthropological studies.

C. Biological Anthropology

- An appreciation for human biological diversity, including physical form, local adaptation, environmental variation, and the origins of this diversity.
- An appreciation of human evolution and the biological origins of modern humans.
- An understanding of the techniques used to study human biology, past and present, including the comparative study of human form and behavior, including the genetic basis for human variation.
- Equip students with an understanding of the methods used to evaluate human remains in a bioarcheological context.
- Equip students with an understanding of the methods and approaches behind forensic anthropology.
- An appreciation of primate diversity, because primates, as our closest living relatives, are often used as models for understanding not only human evolution, but also human adaption and functional morphology.

D. In addition, the Department offers a BS degree geared toward pre dental and premedical students. In addition to the above goals, the BS degree fosters the following learning outcomes

- An understanding of biology, chemistry, physics and basic sciences essential to admission in medical and dental schools.
- An understanding of dental anatomy providing preparation for dental school.

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of student learning outcomes are carried out in the introductory core classes representing the three separate subdisciplines. In addition, a required capstone course (“History of Anthropological Thought”) for Senior Anthropology Majors assesses student learning outcomes in a broader context of anthropology.

A. Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 10203)

- *Course grades*
- *Assignment grades, if not accompanied by a rubric or scoring guide*
- *Score gains between pre and posttests*
- *Writing samples*

B. Archeology (ANTH 10303)

- *Course grades*
- *Assignment grades, if not accompanied by a rubric or scoring guide*
- *Score gains between pre- and post-tests*

C. Biological Anthropology (ANTH 10143)

- *Course grades*
- *Assignment grades, if not accompanied by a rubric or scoring guide*
- *Score gains between pre- and post-tests (published or local)*

D. History of Anthropological Thought (ANTH 40103)

- *Course grades*
- *Ethnography assignment*
- *Midterm and final essay*
- *End of class post-assessments on the relationship between anthropological theory and method.*

II. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Anthropology had 53 BA and 40 BS undergraduate majors in the Spring 2024 semester. Total enrollments in the classes assessed here were as follows:

Fall 2024

Course	Enrollment
ANTH 10143	552
ANTH 10203	449
ANTH 10303	66
ANTH 40103	36

Spring 2025

Course	Enrollment
ANTH 10143	437
ANTH 10203	337
ANTH 10303	37
ANTH 40103	not taught

A. CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY (ANTH 10203)

ANTH 10203 (An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology) is a University Core Class with 8 regular sections taught by Dr. Koziol and 6 honors sections taught by GAs over the course of two semesters. Assessment of student learning outcomes was evaluated through pre- and post-class quizzes, evaluating learning objective for the State Social Science General Learning Objectives. In addition, brief reflection papers were reviewed by the course instructor. These were from the lecture component of the class. These essays were evaluated by the course instructor to see that students gained knowledge in each of the topical areas.

Pre and Post Semester Assessment Results.

ANTH 1023 Pre and Post Semester Quiz Results

Semester	N*	Beginning Average	Ending Average	Difference
FA 2024	186	80.2%	87.8%	7.24%
SP 2025	216	74.4%	90.5%	16.1%

ANTH 1023H Pre and Post Semester Quiz Results

Semester	N*	Beginning Average	Ending Average	Difference
FA 2024	57	92.8%	95.7%	2.9%
SP 2025	43	81.1%	96.2%	15.1%

*Sample sizes differ from enrollment totals because the reported sample size reflects the number of students taking the quiz on-line, rather than the total class enrollment.

B. ARCHEOLOGY (ANTH 10303)

ANTH 10303 (Introduction to Archeology) is a University Core Class, for Humanities credit, with a single section in the Fall and Spring semesters taught by Drs. Klehm and Vining, respectively.

For Fall 2024, pre- and post-course qualitative assessments comprised a 5-question poll that gauged prior knowledge and student learning. The pre- and post-semester assessments asked students to define archaeology; identify their interest(s) in archaeology (two questions); previous exposure to archaeology (and in the post-assessment, what they learned); and how archaeology might contribute to their learning objectives at the UofA and broader career goals.

During the fall semester, 3 tests were given to assess acquired knowledge about the themes discussed during lecture, readings, and the lab. A video assignment was also given to each student where they discussed a key term, method, or site. Finally, a written assignment was given that asked the students to summarize a recent news story about archaeology, accompanied by a visual representation, to communicate archaeology to a broader audience

For Spring 2025, a quantitative assessment comprising a 10-question quiz is administered at the beginning and end of the semester. Four exams were given throughout the semester to assess student learning.

ANTH 10303 Student Performance

Fall 2024 (Klehm)

Pre-Assessment Test: Definitions of Archaeology ranged from good (e.g., "Archaeology is the study of people, animals, and plants in the ancient world. It is a form of study that we use to understand what was going on historically in the world.") to others where an introductory course could help refine (e.g., "It is the study of evolution essentially and shows us where we come from"; "The study of ancient peoples and their culture. It focuses on the stuff they leave behind and takes everything that surrounded them at the time into account"). Previous exposure to archaeology was limited; students identified popular media, Ancient Egypt, and, incorrectly, paleontology/dinosaurs. Many students identified as anthropology majors, or just curious about the topic in general, identifying that it might provide additional perspective to their major (e.g., an architecture major wrote, "...the class will let me explore past civilizations and how they organize their community which would give me more ideas on city planning.").

Post-Assessment Test: The post-assessment showed a marked improvement in student comprehension about the field of archaeology and world prehistory. Students identified a range of past societies (e.g., ancient Mesoamerica) and a variety of techniques and specializations within archaeology (e.g., cultural resource management) that they hadn't known about previously. Summed up by one Anthropology major, "Not only will this provide me with boundless opportunities for conversation at family dinners for the foreseeable future, but this also help me put cultures into a historical lens as well...I think this class has given me an excellent jumping-off point to learn more about archaeology in my free time, as well as helping to inform my own cross-cultural work in all contexts."

Spring 2025 (Vining)

Pre-semester assessment:

- Pre-semester knowledge assessment average: 62.8%

Graded assessments during semester:

- Test one average: 92%
- Test two average: 76%
- Test three average: 85%
- Test four average: 86%

C. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY (ANTH 10143)

ANTH 1013 (An Introduction to Biological Anthropology) is a University Core Class with two sections per semester in the Fall and Spring, taught by Drs. Delezene, Villaseñor, and Terhune. Assessment of student learning outcomes was evaluated through pre-class quizzes, which were compared to overall results from class exams (which presented a broader sample of questions relating to the learning objectives), evaluating learning objective for the State Natural Science General Learning Outcomes (NSLO1a, NSLO2a, NSLO3a, NSLO4a, NSLO5a, and NSLO6a), as well as through performance on tests. Results are reported by instructor. All instructors incorporated a series of questions into their exams that were designed to evaluate student's topical knowledge based on the State Natural Science General Learning Outcomes. Of note, for the first time since fall 2020, in Fall 2024 exams were given in-person during class time rather than online, which was the first fully online covid semester. Students initially struggled with a return to the paper exam format, but improved their study skills; thus, their exam averages, and their improved throughout the semester and their natural science learning outcomes. We returned to online exams for spring 2025.

ANTH 10143 Pre-Semester Quiz Results Compared to Exam Results – DELEZENE

Semester	Pre-Assessment	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3
FA 2024	39.7%	68.9%	76.7%	76.3%
SP 2025	39.9%	79.6%	77.3%	83.7%

ANTH 10143 Pre-Semester Quiz Results Compared to Exam Results – VILLASEÑOR

Semester	Pre-Assessment	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3
FA 2024	43.0%	67.0%	76.0%	77.0%

ANTH 10143 Pre-Semester Quiz Results Compared to Exam Results – TERHUNE

Semester	Pre-Assessment	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3
SP 2025	13.6%	76.7%	74.9%	75.6%

D. HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL THOUGHT (ANTH 4013)

History of Anthropological thought is the capstone course required for all anthropology majors. Students generally take the course in the junior or senior year, bringing together the general education curriculum with what they learned as part of their major. The assessment was conducted holistically through three in class exams over the course of the semester as well as a final anthropological theory paper. These assessments measured students' (a) grasp of the development of anthropological thought across time and various schools; (b) proficiency in complex and critical

methodologies for the study of culture, society, the self and the other; (c) reading and thinking skills through engagement with textual and visual material; (d) analytical writing and presentation skills. In addition, students were asked to answer the following two questions at the end of the class in order to further demonstrate their familiarity with the broad development of anthropological thought as well as anthropology as a discipline:

1. Identify one historical and one philosophical event that are central to the development of anthropological thought.
2. How did this course expand your idea of anthropological thought; provide specific examples if possible.