



# **CULTURE AND DEVIANCE STUDIES (BA)**

## **Program Learning Assessment**

### **2011-2015 Assessment Planning Cycle Key Findings and Proposed Actions**

**October 1, 2015**

## **Acknowledgments**

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2011-2015 Assessment Planning Cycle  
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*Contents*

Mission.....	1
Learning Goals .....	1
Assessment Philosophy.....	1
Assessment Cycle Review .....	2
Key Findings and Proposed Actions .....	5

## **Culture and Deviance Studies (BA)**

### **Mission**

The Major in Culture and Deviance Studies (CDS) is designed to provide students with a sound interdisciplinary understanding of important social problems and institutional responses to them. This foundation is enhanced by a comprehensive understanding of cultural variation and macro- and micro-social and historical contexts as these apply to human conflict. This major also teaches students the ethnographic and ethnological perspectives and skills used in professional field research, while maintaining strong interdisciplinary content. The CDS major prepares students to be professionally effective in diverse and challenging fields including social services, protective and correctional services, probation, parole, community reintegration and treatment, and program evaluation. The research, writing and interdisciplinary theoretical training provide majors with the background necessary for graduate programs in social work, law, or the social sciences. The core requirements pertain to theory, ethnographic methods, cross-cultural research and analysis, while electives demonstrate applications of both theory and method to particular problems.

### **Learning Goals**

Upon completion of the CDS Major, students should be able to:

1. understand and appreciate culture and diversity in all their dynamic complexity, exploring the subject at the level of the individual and at the level of whole societies;
2. understand social science conceptions of deviance including how the study of deviance has shifted with theoretical and political developments;
3. develop and refine communication skills, including writing, oral presentation, and data presentation in various formats;
4. demonstrate experience in carrying out a research project (fieldwork-based, or library-based) that includes: formulating and justifying a research question, collecting and analyzing data, and articulating conclusions; and
5. be prepared to work in fields that require: a nuanced perception of cultural difference; the ability to analyze and interpret culture; and the ability to integrate multiple threads of inquiry into a comprehensive whole.

### **Assessment Plan Philosophy**

In order to provide more detailed and accurate feedback to faculty about the degree to which our students are actually learning to do research, formulate and test hypotheses, communicate their findings effectively, and use library resources, we will need detailed information about the strengths and weaknesses in our major. When we have a thorough picture of ways in which our

students excel and need improvement, we will be able to make recommendations as to how the curriculum needs to be strengthened.

We decided to begin by assessing the capstone course, Anthropology 450, which is required of all majors, because it taps into all the learning goals articulated in our objectives for the major. We also thought that graduating seniors would be the best representatives of the learning experience provided by the major, and that from this beginning we would be able to target areas of strength and weakness.

On the basis of a consensus of faculty observations about classroom experience, we expected to find weaknesses in writing skills and library documentation skills, and strengths in generating, understanding and evaluating social science concepts and hypotheses.

### **Assessment Cycle Review**

Our previous 5-year plan was aimed at 1) establishing program learning goals for CDS major; 2) identifying learning objectives for capstone, intro and mid-level courses in the CDS major core; 3) assessing intro and senior level courses with the aim to record student performance at the beginning and at the end of the major experience; 4) adding mid-level courses to this assessment effort.

During this period the department learned the following key findings: Students are doing well at learning about and implementing cross-cultural, qualitative research in social science as an academic concept, as a set of methods and as a process of analytical reasoning and critical thinking. This has been demonstrated from outcomes from early on in our assessment efforts. In terms of the alignment of program learning goals, this suggests that our goals are generally aligned well with specific course learning objectives in the areas of social science concepts, ideas about deviance and normality, and theory and methods in the research endeavor.

At the same time, we also learned that students are having difficulty in gaining and improving writing skills. Moreover there has been some inconsistency in introducing and sustaining engagement with a set of informational literacy skills in anthropology and in the social sciences more broadly. Where courses include work that incorporates these resources, student performance is generally higher.

#### Key Challenges of the Previous 5-Year Assessment Process:

The CDS major was revised during the assessment cycle, shifting out ANT 315 Systems of Law from the major's core and moving it to an elective.

Assessment leadership changed during the 5-year process and one curriculum committee member was on sabbatical 2013-2014.

The department was not utilizing the rubric in a most effective manner - 1-5 was changed to 1-4 with 3 being the minimum target for student outcomes.

Sampling of assignments was not random but rather based on a representative sample of A, B, C-grade student work.

### Responses to These Challenges in the Next 5-Year Plan:

We have randomized the selection of student work for courses to be assessed.

Writing Center information will be included on all syllabi.

Program goals should be more clearly articulated and defined.

Course learning objectives are adequate for ANT 101 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology but need to be revised for 450 Major Works in Deviant Behavior and Social Control. Mid-level course objectives are well-defined for some courses such as ANT 230 Culture and Crime, ANT 315 Systems of Law, ANT 210 Sex and Culture, and ANT 208 Urban Anthropology, but could be revised for ANT 330 American Cultural Pluralism and the Law, ANT 340 Anthropology and the Abnormal, and ANT 224 Death, Dying and Society: A Life Crises Management Issue. In terms of syllabi uniformity, all departmental syllabi included learning objectives for 101, 450 and most mid-level courses in the CDS core. All faculty in the department were encouraged to follow the John Jay College model syllabus.

We plan to build on the activities of the previous 5 years but also pursue new initiatives in order to improve the assessment process, clarify the range and variation of the learning objectives the program contains/delivers to students, which can more clearly articulate and reflect the skills that students gain in completing the major, its requirements, cores courses and electives.

### The 2016-2021 Plan:

In summary, the department will set the following goals for the next five years:

- 1) Continue with on-going assessment of CDS major capstone (ANT 450), introductory pre-requisite (ANT 101).
- 2) Add more mid-level courses to our assessment efforts (200- and 300-level core courses).
- 3) Revise and/or refine Program Learning Goals. As written they are somewhat vague and thus are not as effective a tool of program assessment when mapping them onto specific course learning objectives.

The learning goals of the program are:

- I. Understand and appreciate culture and diversity.
- II. Understand social science concepts of deviance.
- III. Develop and refine communication skills including writing, oral presentation and data presentation in various formats.
- IV. Demonstrate experience in carrying out a research project.
- V. Preparation for work in professional fields that require a nuanced perception of cultural difference and the ability to integrate multiple threads of inquiry into a comprehensive whole.

4) Revise and develop course learning objectives for all CDS core courses. Much discussion among faculty and students and CDS alumni has yielded new insights into skills that students

gain from particular courses and also the need to ensure that some basic skills, such as note-taking and observation, are included into our program learning goals (and thus indicated in course learning objectives).

5) Consider adding writing components to all core courses and selected course electives in the major in addition to providing information about the Writing Center.

## Culture and Deviance Studies (BA)

Program Learning Assessment. Key findings and proposed actions  
(2011-2015)

### Program Learning Goals

1. Understand and appreciate culture and diversity in all their dynamic complexity.
2. Understand social sciences conceptions of deviance including how the study of deviance has shifted with theoretical and political developments.
3. Develop and refine communication skills, including writing, oral presentation, and data presentation in various formats.
4. Demonstrate experience in carrying out research project.
5. Be prepared to work in fields that require: a nuanced perception of cultural difference; the ability to analyze and interpret culture; and to integrate threads of inquiry.

### Outcomes Assessment

Program Goal #	% Meet / Exceed <sup>1</sup>	Key Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective? <sup>4</sup> Follow-up assessment	
				Sem. Year	% Meet / Exceed
<b>2011</b>					
<b>Assessment Context<sup>2</sup> : ANT 450, Tool<sup>3</sup> : Research Paper</b>					
1	3.25 of 5	Students' comments and volume of work showed serious engagement with the process and product of research. Students need practice and instruction in writing and communicating the implications and organizing the ideas.	200-300 level courses: a) connect current research and social problems with basic concepts, b) show the process of accurate inference from data. <u>Courses before 450</u> : emphasize the importance of library research. <u>Rubric</u> : Simplify and revise. Represent intellectual engagement with research.	2014	66
3	2.55 of 5			2014	69
4	3.50 of 5			2014	70
5	3.28 of 5			2014	77
<b>2012</b>					
<b>Assessment Context : ANT 101, Tool : Sample of Student Work</b>					
		All of the student work on the assignments met the minimum standards of the learning objectives. The learning objectives that were not met through these assignments were the information literacy skills.	Faculty who teach ANT 101 will be encouraged to develop assignments or opportunities for student work that can demonstrate and engagement with these information literacy skills.		
<b>2013</b>					
<b>Assessment Context : ANT 101, 212, 315, 340, Tool : Paper</b>					
		Although rubrics fully diverse, ratings of student work replicated course grades and it seemed that both the literature review / library research assignment and the final paper assignments showed excellent student work at the A level and less adequate work at the C and D level.	Revise curriculum map, especially the detailed description of learning outcomes and assignments. Faculty participation in development of direct and indirect measures. Build student strength in expository writing, argumentation and support of social science theories.		

(1) Percent represents ratio of students who met or exceeded expectations. Where scores represent mean performance, the mean score and highest scale value are indicated (e.g., 3.3 out of 4). (2) Assessment context may relate to comprehensive program review, specific academic setting (e.g., course #, capstone, internship), class standing (e.g., seniors, transfers, alumni), post-graduation outcomes (e.g., placement, further education, employers ratings of employee skills), or indicators of learning progress. (3) Examples of tools include exams, portfolios, research projects, lab reports, papers, essays, surveys, licensure tests, performances, presentations.

(4) Re-assessment of learning follows the implementation of actions to determine their effectiveness in improving learning outcomes.

**Outcomes Assessment**

Program Learning Goal #	% Meet / Exceed	Key Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective?		
				Follow-up assessment Sem. Year	% Meet / Exceed	
<b>2013 (cont.)</b>						
<b>Assessment Context : All courses, Tool : Review of Syllabi</b>						
		All course syllabi were given explicit detailed written feedback with follow up to make sure that every syllabus conforms to the model syllabus.				
<b>2014</b>						
<b>Assessment Context (Tool) : ANT 101 (Paper, Mid-term/Final Exam Essay), 330 (Paper), 450 (Paper)</b>						
<b>ANT 101</b>						
1	55	Performance predictably failed to meet expectations in the learning goals of Control of Syntax and Mechanics, but unexpectedly in the area of making comparison and observations.	More emphasis on teaching basic writing skills. Explore requiring every syllabus to have some writing in terms of student work. Crafting a best-practices document. Seek active liaison to writing resources on campus (2015).	2015	76	↑
2	60			2015	75	↑
3	53			2015	74	↑
4	65			2015	84	↑
5	70			2015	76	↑
<b>ANT 330</b>						
1	--	Performance needs to be improved in the area of writing skills. Strongest student performance were in Critical Thinking, Context of and Purpose of writing, and Sources of Evidence. Sample size for this course was small.	Devise incentives to ensure faculty support for assessment process. Increase sample size of student assignments (2015).			
2	33					
3	33					
4	55					
5	66					
<b>ANT 450</b>						
1	66	Sample met expectations for developing a hypothesis. Low rating came from the area of writing skills. Assessment from the three courses support the conclusion that each course succeeded well in conveying some of the skills and concepts targeted by the major, but also shows difficulty with some fundamental objectives, particularly in the area of writing	Rubric should be revised from a 5-scale instrument to a 4-scale instrument. Better align learning objectives of courses with the program objectives (2015).	2015	100	↑
2	94			2015	90	↓
3	69			2015	80	↑
4	70			2015	83	↑
5	77			2015	78	↑

## Outcomes Assessment

Program Learning Goal #	% Meet / Exceed	Key Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective?	
				Follow-up assessment Sem. Year	% Meet / Exceed
<b>2015</b>					
<b>Assessment Context (Tool): ANT 101 (Paper, Mid-term/Final Exam Essay), 230 (Paper, Mid-term/Final Exam Essay), 450 (Paper)</b>					
<b>ANT 101</b>					
1	76	1. Overall, program goals are being met through specific course objectives for each course assessed.  2. Writing skills appear to have improved from previous assessments, as more writing (low and high stakes) assignments have been incorporated into courses.	1. Continue to emphasize the teaching of writing skills. Dept required that every syllabus have some student writing and instructors have urged students to visit the Writing Center.  2. Faculty support for assessment still in need of strengthening. Slightly more assignments submitted for 2015, but it would help to have a larger data pool in future years.		
2	75				
3	74				
4	84				
5	76				
<b>ANT 230</b>					
1	70	3. In general, course objectives are being met in over 70 to 80 percent of students sample, however, there continues to be disparity within several areas of course objectives throughout all course levels.	3. Course objectives still in need of further revision. More systematic revision for mid-level courses planned, with focus on the core courses in the CDS major, such as 208, 230, 340.		
2	70				
3	60				
4	68				
5	80				
<b>ANT 450</b>					
1	100	4. There are a lot of components to many of the course objectives for each course.  5. Information literacy is strong in introductory and in casptone courses, but could use more improvements in mid-level courses.	4. While overall program goals for the CDS major appear to be met through course objectives in assessed courses, these goals are somewhat vague and would benefit from further revision in terms of clarification and perhaps expansion.  5. Assessment issues and suggestions will be considered during the self-study for the CDS major in Spring 2016.		
2	90				
3	80				
4	83				
5	78				