

Assessment Report

International Criminal Justice BA (Coordinator: Klaus von Lampe)

2014-2015 Academic Year

Assessment occurred in the following courses:

Course	Semester and Year
<u>Introduction to International Criminal Justice (ICJ 101)</u>	<u>Fall 2014/Spring 2015</u>
<u>Foundations of Scholarship in International Criminal Justice (ICJ 310)</u>	<u>Fall 2014/Spring 2015</u>
<u>Capstone Seminar in International Criminal Justice (ICJ 401)</u>	<u>Fall 2014/Spring 2015</u>

Direct Assessment of Learning Goals

Learning Goal(s) Assessed	Course Number	Sample Size	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
<u>Descriptive Knowledge</u>	<u>ICJ 101</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>26.1%</u>	<u>36.0%</u>	<u>35.4%</u>	<u>2.5%</u>
<u>Descriptive Knowledge</u>	<u>ICJ 401</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>10.7%</u>	<u>39.3%</u>	<u>46.4%</u>	<u>3.6%</u>
<u>Research Skills</u>	<u>ICJ 310¹</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>n.a.</u>	<u>n.a.</u>	<u>n.a.</u>	<u>n.a.</u>
<u>Communication Skills</u>	<u>ICJ 401</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>7.1%</u>	<u>69.1%</u>	<u>14.3%</u>	<u>9.5%</u>

¹ At the time of writing the report, no data were available for the majority of sections.

Assessment Process

1. Assessment of Descriptive Knowledge in ICJ 101 and the ICJ BA Program overall (ICJ 401)

In order to assess the descriptive knowledge of students early and towards the end of the program, the same 20-item multiple-choice test was administered to ICJ 101 students (n=161) and ICJ 401 students (n=56) in the last weeks of the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semesters. In the Fall 2014 semester the same test was also given to a control group (n=29) of CJBS 250 (n=15) and CJBS 415 (n=14) students. The test thematically covers the full range of topics addressed in ICJ 101 and in the entire ICJ BA program. These include comparative criminals justice, transnational crime, international law enforcement cooperation, international legal assistance, human rights, international criminal law and the institutions of international criminal justice such as the International Criminal Court. Each item in the test has four answer options. The questions and answer options are designed to minimize the possibility that someone without pertinent knowledge is able to draw inferences on the correct answer. Results better than random responses (>25% correct) are taken to imply that students have acquired descriptive knowledge specific to the field of International Criminal Justice. Differences in the outcome between ICJ 101 and ICJ 401 students indicate to what extent knowledge is accumulated or lost in the course of the program.

2. Assessment of Research Skills in ICJ 310

In order to assess the research skills that ICJ students are supposed to acquire in ICJ 310 two instruments were developed in accordance with the ICJ BA Outcome Assessment Plan in the academic year 2013-2014: a 20-item multiple-choice test and a rubric for the assessment of final papers. However, because not in all sections, depending on the teaching approach, students have to produce a final paper, only the multiple-choice test has been used to assess learning outcomes across sections of ICJ 310. The test has been thoroughly revised during the 2014-2015 academic year.

3. Assessment of Communication Skills in ICJ 401

In response to the external program evaluation (completed March 2012) and ongoing internal discussions about the mini-thesis requirement (a 7,000-8,500 word research paper) in the ICJ 401 capstone seminar, data were collected in the 2014-2015 Academic Year in the same way as in the previous Academic Year on the percentage of students who submitted a final paper and on the word-counts of the papers (using the word-count function of MS Word) in sections of ICJ 401 in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015. Both measures were taken as rough indicators of the ability of students to produce a full-length research paper.

Conclusions What did you discover about student learning in your program?

1. Descriptive Knowledge among ICJ 101 and ICJ 401 Students

The outcome assessment during the 2013-2014 academic year had shown that overall, ICJ 101 students acquire some ICJ-specific knowledge and that this knowledge is expanded over the course of the ICJ BA program while only few students were able to demonstrate a profound and comprehensive knowledge across all the thematic areas covered by the ICJ BA program. The data collected during the 2014-2015 academic year show a substantial improvement but at the same time also a much more complex and partly contradictory picture.

In 2013-2014, the average share of correct responses from ICJ students was 10.4 out of 20 questions, with beginning students (ICJ 101) scoring lower (9.9) than advanced students (ICJ 401) who on average had 11.8 correct answers.

In 2014-2015, the overall performance of ICJ students was better with an average share of 12.3 correct responses (median=12.0). Interestingly, however, this year the ICJ 101 students did better with on average 12.7 correct answers than the ICJ 401 students with only 11.1 correct answers. 97.2% of ICJ students had at least six correct answers (ICJ 101 students: 97.5%; ICJ 401 students: 96.4%), meaning a result that is better than random distribution. However, most (89.7%) of the CJBS students in the control group also passed this threshold.

59% of ICJ students surpassed the threshold of 12 or more (60+%) correct answers. This is a sharp increase over the previous academic year when only 34.2% of ICJ students managed to answer 12 or more questions correctly. Likewise, no CJBS student in the control group achieved such a high score.

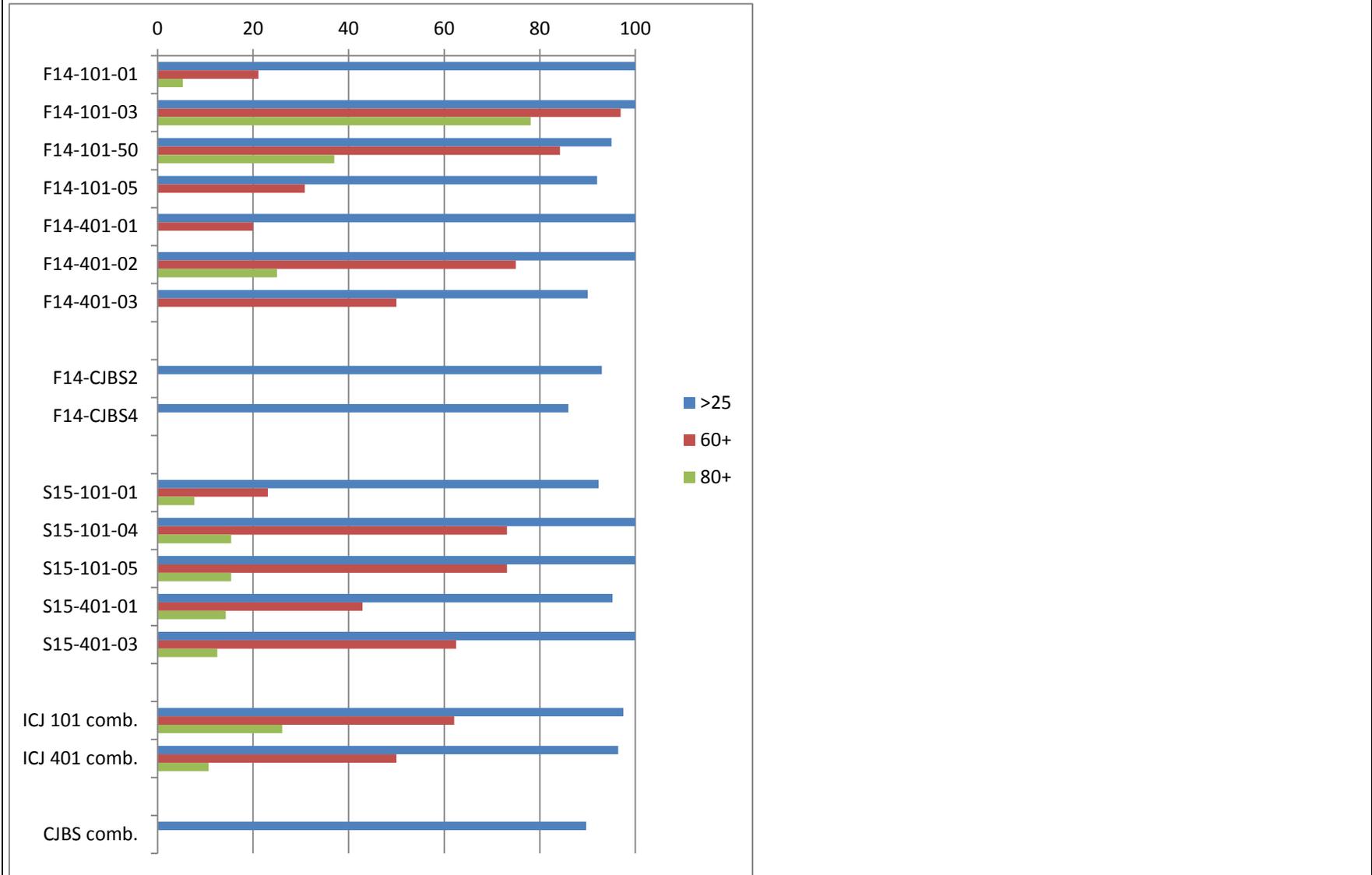
22.1% of ICJ students in the 2014-2015 academic year achieved a score of 16 or more (80+%) correct answers. Again, this is a sharp increase over the previous academic year when only 7.0% of ICJ students had at least four out of five answers correct.

The positive trend in the 2014-2015 academic year rests largely on specific sections which means that there are substantial differences in student performance not only between beginning and advanced students but also between sections. While some sections of ICJ 101 and ICJ 401 show a picture similar to that of the previous academic year, with few students exceeding the thresholds of 12 respectively 16 correct answers, there are seven out of the twelve sections assessed in the 2014-2015 academic year with a majority of students giving 12 or more correct answers (see Fig. 1).

There were also interesting variations with respect to the questions that students found difficult or easy to answer. In the academic year 2013-2014, the two questions with the largest share of correct answers were about the distinction between the concepts of “international crime” and “transnational crime” and about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In the 2014-2015 academic year, the highest share of correct answers was in response to a question about the nature of Interpol and again about the UDHR. The two questions with the lowest shares of correct answers in the academic year 2013-2014 pertained to the geographical location of Europol, Interpol, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to the post-World War II tribunals in Nuremberg and Tokyo. In the 2014-2015 academic year, most students likewise did not know that Interpol is not located in The Hague but they struggled most of all with a question relating to legal traditions in Latin America.

Compared to the control group of CJBS students, ICJ students demonstrated privileged knowledge relating to transitional justice and the ICC where the greatest deficits in ICJ-related knowledge among CJBS students became apparent. 68% of ICJ students showed an understanding of truth commissions compared to only 14% of CJBS students, and 50% of ICJ students knew that the judges of the ICC are elected by the Assembly of States Parties compared to only 6.9% of CJBS students. The CJBS students, not surprisingly, did best on a question about self-report and victimization surveys since this is also a core criminal justice topic. However, the two other questions with the highest shares of correct answers from CJBS students pertained to core ICJ topics. 66% of CJBS students (ICJ students: 85%) had a basic understanding of the UDHR and 66% of CJBS students (ICJ students: 72%) also knew that the ICC is the first permanent international criminal tribunal.

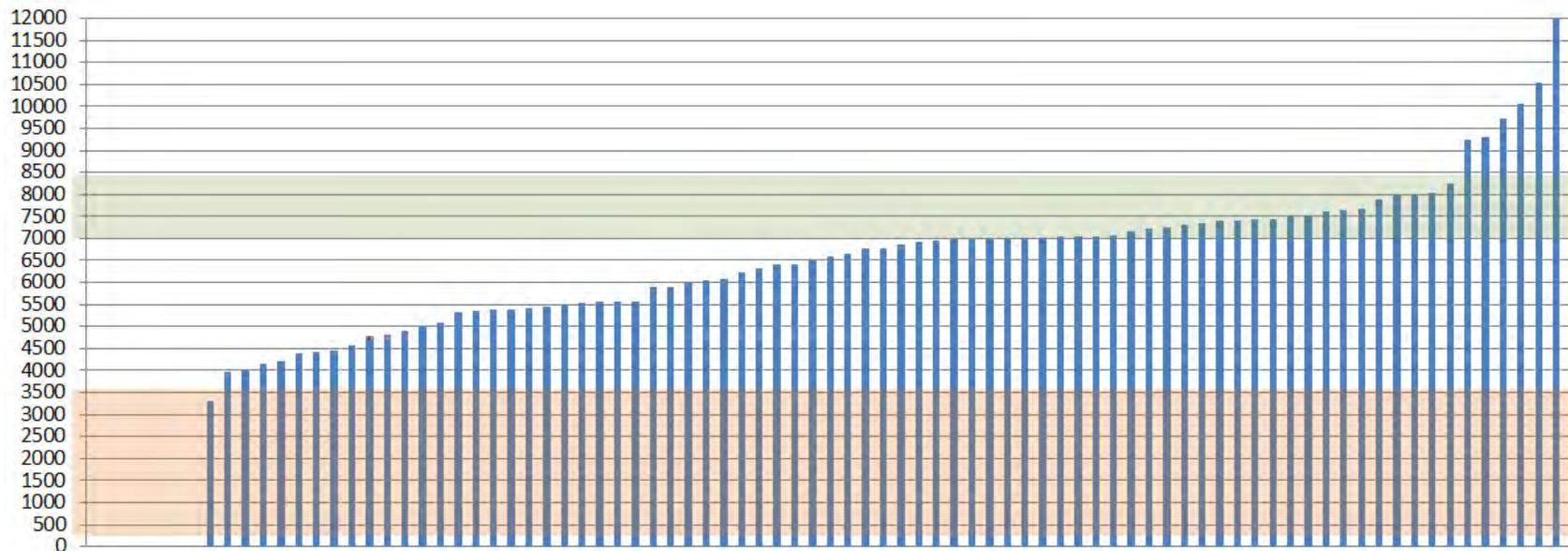
Figure 1: Percentages of students surpassing threshold levels of correct answers in descriptive knowledge multiple-choice test



2. Research Skills Among ICJ 310 Students

A revised instrument was used in Fall 2014 and a further revised instrument in Spring 2015 with 20 multiple-choice questions to assess the learning outcomes of the ICJ 310 research methods course. However, at the time of writing this report, only small data sets for two sections of ICJ 310 in Fall 2014 (n=13) and one section in Spring 2015 (n=15) were available. Therefore, no results of the outcome assessment of ICJ 310 can be meaningfully presented here beyond a brief statement that the results were broadly similar to those of the ICJ 101 assessment. Almost all students for which data were reported had at least six out of 20 correct answers (Fall 2014: 100%; Spring 2015: 93.3%) and some students had four out of five answers correct (Fall 2014: 23.1%; Spring 2015: 6.7%).

Figure 2: Word count of mini-theses (n=84) of four out of six sections of ICJ 401 in the 2014-2015 Academic Year



3. Communication Skills among ICJ 401 Students

In the 2014-2015 academic year, one focus of the outcome assessment remained on the mini-thesis requirement of the ICJ 401 capstone seminar. A recurring theme in discussions about the ICJ BA program has been the question, whether it is appropriate and feasible to have students write a 7,000 - 8,500 page research paper. In the 2013-2014 outcome assessment it was a positive surprise to see that a large share of ICJ 401 students was able to deliver a full-length research paper: 84.8% submitted a paper of more than 5,000 words and 60.2% a paper that reached or surpassed the set minimum word limit of 7,000. A paper of more than 5,000 but less than 7,000 words was already seen as satisfactory as this is already the length of a normal peer-reviewed journal article. In the 2014-2015 academic year, the outcome of the capstone seminar in terms of the production of a full-length research paper was roughly similar to the previous year (see Fig. 2). However, faculty reported data only on a smaller sample, four out of six sections of ICJ 401. According to these data, 76.2% of students delivered

a research paper of more than 5,000 words but only 38.1% submitted a paper that conformed to the minimum word count of 7,000. This low percentage of students passing the threshold of 7,000 words was largely due to one section where only two students managed to submit a paper of over 7,000 words. Once again there seems to be considerable variation between sections in the level of achievement of students.

Actions Taken

What action decisions did you make based on your data and conclusions? (Plan actions to take effect in the following semester or sooner if practical.)

Actions To Be Taken and By Whom	Timeframe for implementation and intermediate steps
Repeat data collection on descriptive knowledge in ICJ 101 and ICJ 401. Include control group of CJ majors.	2015-2016 Academic Year
Repeat data collection on ICJ 401 mini-thesis.	2015-2016 Academic Year
Discussion among ICJ faculty on how to make knowledge transfer more consistent and comprehensive within ICJ 101 and across the program with a view to 'closing the loop' and making curricular changes in 2015-2016 in accordance with the ICJ Major Assessment Plan.	2015-2016 Academic Year
Discussion among ICJ 401 faculty on how to strengthen writing skills prior to and within capstone seminar with a view to 'closing the loop' and making curricular changes in 2015-2016 in accordance with the ICJ Major Assessment Plan.	2015-2016 Academic Year

Were last year's actions implemented as planned? Please explain.

The outcome assessment for the Academic Year 2013-2014 called for a revision of the assessment tool for ICJ 310 to make it more generally applicable, independent from the use of a particular textbook. The tool was revised accordingly. However, too few data were reported to allow a meaningful assessment of learning outcomes. Further, the assessment tool that has been developed for assessing the final paper assignment in ICJ 310 was not implemented because too few of the sections of ICJ 310 used the final paper assignment.

The previous outcome assessment also called for continuity in the collection of assessment data. This was implemented in the 2014-2015 Academic Year.

In addition, a substantial change to the ICJ BA curriculum that had only been anticipated for the Academic Year 2015-2016 was made

in Spring 2015, taking effect in Fall 2015, in the direction of a clearer structuring of the curriculum and the scaffolding of core courses. Particularly in an effort to improve student performance in the ICJ 401 capstone seminar with respect to the final paper assignment, both required 300-level courses, ICJ 310 and SOC 341, were made prerequisites of ICJ 401, and as a result there is now a clear sequence of core courses that students have to take. This applies to all students who have declared ICJ their major in Fall 2015 or later. It will be an important task for future outcome assessments, especially in the Academic Year 2016-2017 and onwards, to determine to what extent this curriculum revision has had the intended effect.