



## DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

# Department Writing Plan

### Version 3

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**Version 1: Completed May 2017**  
**Version 1.2: Baseline assessment results added, July 2017**  
**Version 2.0 Biennial assessment added October 2019**  
**Version 2.1 updated October 2023**  
**Version 3.0 Biennial assessment added December 2023**

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## Summary

In July 2015, the Department of Anthropology (ANTH) expressed interest in standardizing the delivery of writing instruction for students in its major programs. Then Chair, Phil Neusius, and Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, Bryna Siegel Finer, met to discuss implementing a writing-enriched curriculum by developing a Department Writing Plan (DWP).

In creating their writing-enriched curriculum, two ANTH faculty, Dr. Amanda Poole and current Chair Dr. Ben Ford, served as liaisons between WAC and ANTH. They used a template borrowed from the University of Minnesota<sup>1</sup> and adapted by Siegel Finer to thoroughly investigate where and how writing was already being taught in the ANTH curriculum, and where and how writing could be added to the curriculum, in order to draft the DWP for department instructors.

Over one academic year, Poole and Ford developed the DWP by interviewing department faculty, reading department syllabi, reviewing department curriculum, and meeting with Siegel Finer monthly or bi-monthly. They developed an assessment rubric to measure specific writing outcomes by looking at samples from seniors in the department capstone course; they also ran the rubric through a small batch pilot to evaluate its efficacy. The first full pilot assessment was administered in spring 2017 to determine baseline measures of student writing abilities before the DWP was launched in Fall 2017. Together, department faculty reviewed the assessment results (included as Appendix B) to determine target areas for improvement. They also developed a statement of “Department Commitment to Writing” (page 6) to include on all syllabi for courses that will be part of the writing-enriched curriculum.

At a meeting on 24 January 2020, the ANTH faculty discussed the Department Writing Plan as described below in addition to the WAC Director’s recommendations for full roll-out and sustained program facilitation on pages 7 and 20-21 of this document. The plan with recommendations were approved in a vote over email and returned to the WAC Director on 29 January 2020.

Note regarding Department exemption to ENGL 202 added October 2023.

Anthropology faculty discussed revised assessment results and recommendations, and unanimously voted to reaffirm DWP on February 2, 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Minnesota Writing Enriched Curriculum. 2013. <http://wec.umn.edu/Writingplans.html>

**ANTHROPOLOGY**  
**Department Writing Plan**  
**Rollout FALL 2017**

**Professional and Academic Genres in Anthropology**

As a discipline that combines scientific and humanistic approaches to research and writing, Anthropology requires expertise in writing across a range of genres, including: science writing, technical writing, and ethnographic writing. These genres cross-cut the four subfields in Anthropology (archaeological, biological, cultural, and linguistic anthropology), although each subfield does have particular writing conventions. In each subfield, research writing includes developing a thesis-driven argument based on data collected from reading and primary research; proposal writing; literature reviews; annotated bibliographies; abstracts; research plans; and academic posters. Research with human subjects involves IRB applications, field notes, and transcriptions. In addition to research writing, each subfield includes professional writing genres like cover letters, resumes, and Curriculum Vitae.

**Student Writing Skills and Abilities**

Archaeological Anthropology often deploys technical writing that is clear and concise to communicate findings to others in applied fields (e.g. engineers, developers, planners, and civil servants). Archaeologists also use other forms of writing, ranging from fiction to journalistic to academic, in order to communicate their methods and findings. Ethnographic writing, typical of cultural anthropology, involves communicating emic and etic meanings through cultural analysis, and working with and applying social and cultural theory. Ethnographic writing includes thick description, the use of direct quotations, and often, creative form and syntax. The strength of ethnographic writing often lies in communicating and translating meaning across cultures in a humanizing way. Both ethnographic and archaeological research also needs to be communicated in writing styles that are appropriate to various publics, which may include academic, non-academic, administrative, or policy spheres. To each of these publics, anthropological writing must ethically and accurately portray a diversity of perspectives and experiences.

Graduates from this program should be able to write skillfully in the primary genres of anthropological writing detailed above, to the extent that they are able to communicate the content and the value of their work to varied publics. This overall goal involves a number of abilities, including: identifying writing situations that call for different approaches; demonstrating a command of disciplinary concepts and material; producing discipline-specific texts; integrating visual media as appropriate; recognizing and self-editing errors; and articulating an anthropological identity.

The IUP Department of Anthropology is committed to introducing, emphasizing, and reinforcing these skills and abilities throughout the curriculum, and does so through the purposeful mapping of writing assignments and activities that follows at the end of this document.

## Integration of Writing into Undergraduate Curriculum

Department faculty have participated in professional development training in writing-to-learn pedagogy<sup>2</sup> through writing workshops with the WAC director, participation in the two-day Liberal Studies writing workshop, and in full department faculty meetings that the WAC director has visited.

Writing instruction in the Department of Anthropology is integrated in two ways: writing-to-communicate (WTC) and writing-to-learn (WTL).

Writing-to-communicate involves direct communication of course content to demonstrate proficiency with anthropological knowledge and with genres of anthropological writing. In anthropology courses, students practice writing-to-communicate in order to:

- Employ and synthesize anthropological concepts
- Demonstrate critical thinking and knowledge of the course material
- Answer questions and express ideas in a clear, thoughtful, and organized manner
- Gain mastery of basic editing and proof-reading, such as identifying paragraph and sentence construction, word choice, and citation format
- Identify and write to varied audiences (e.g., academic, public, policy)
- Develop proficiency in anthropological genres, including: ethnographic, technical, and academic writing
- Develop proficiency with writing at all stages of research, including IRB and proposal writing, field notes, data analysis, and reporting in both technical and creative formats
- Ethically and accurately represent diverse perspectives and experiences

Writing-to-learn activities allow students to build skillsets and gain proficiency with anthropological knowledge through the writing process. In anthropology classes, students participate in writing-to-learn activities in order to:

- Employ anthropological ideas and knowledge
- Think through and express complicated concepts
- Practice self-expression and express individual opinions utilizing scholarly information
- Demonstrate critical thinking
- Respond to reading content, analyze published sources, and make connections between texts
- Develop note taking skills
- Pose discussion questions relevant to a theme
- Develop writing skills related to all phases of ethnographic research

## Communicating Writing Expectations to Students

Writing is a primary focal point of the Anthropology curriculum. Writing is part of the process of participating in the discipline and is central to how students record, process, and analyze anthropological information. Students learn that they need to write clearly and take good notes in the context of varied professional research activities.

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<sup>2</sup> “What is Writing to Learn?” *Writing Across the Curriculum Clearinghouse*. Colorado State University. 2015. <http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/pop2d.cfm>

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Archaeological projects often end with the backfilling of excavations, leaving no surface trace of the work that took place there; the archaeologists' notes are the only data that remain from the site and therefore must be precise, accurate, and informative. Similarly, when students conduct cultural research, field notes are the key record of events and observations.

The importance of writing skills to anthropology is communicated both in and out of the classroom. Extensive writing activities and assignments are described on syllabi for classes in each track. Instructors use rubrics tailored for specific assignments and discuss their expectations about good writing with students. In addition to WTL activities in class, instructors devote class time to peer review and to class discussion of writing projects and the writing process. Instructors provide individual feedback to students on their writing assignments and often require revised drafts of major writing activities. Instructors frequently refer students to the Writing Center.

Outside of class, numerous departmental activities (Anthropology Club Meetings, Internship and Career Night, Alumni Talks, Anthropology in Action Speaker Series) focus on the importance of writing as central to the professional skillset that students develop as anthropology majors. As a discipline that straddles the social sciences and humanities, an Anthropology degree is valuable to students in part because it helps them to develop core professional skills that involve critical thinking, cultural and structural competency, and oral and written communication skills.

Overall, students are provided with opportunities to develop writing skills as a central component to their education in Anthropology. We consider all students to be capable of cogent writing, and all writing to have room for improvement. Students enter the program with widely varying levels of writing proficiency. However, our goal is to ensure that all students are challenged and encouraged to develop excellent writing skills, to learn and think anthropologically through the process of writing, and to articulate their passions and skills through cogent writing that will allow them to excel professionally and academically.

### **Syllabus Statement**

*The Department of Anthropology is committed to developing student writing throughout the curriculum. In this class you will complete writing assignments and activities designed to improve your communication skills in the profession.*

### **Implementation and Assessment of Department Writing Plan**

Writing is heavily emphasized by nearly every instructor in the department. Most courses assign several low-stakes WTL activities throughout a semester. Other common writing activities include essay questions in exams and major assignments. Major assignments include various types of analytical and persuasive essays, research papers, technical reports, presentations with slides, and ethnographies. These assignments often involve a revision process.

Currently, there are four main approaches toward the assessment of writing within the curriculum:

(1) During students' junior year review within the anthropology program, they are evaluated by the entire faculty. Writing is a primary point of evaluation, and students are informed if this is an area in need of improvement.

(2) During curriculum revision meetings, faculty discuss thresholds related to writing skill sets (genres of writing, composition, and research writing) and how students are going to acquire the skills they need to

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progress through the curriculum. These discussions help ensure that writing assignments build through the student's career and that necessary genres are being taught.

(3) An assessment tool has been developed that asks students to respond in writing to four essay questions. This assessment is given when they come into the major and again when they leave as seniors to provide perspective on how their ideas about anthropology have grown and how they articulate those ideas.

(4) The WAC Director recommends the following action items for continuing program facilitation, and the department agrees to:

- Elect at least one faculty member to continue to be the WAC/ANTH liaison
- Provide all newly hired faculty a copy of the DWP, and recommend attendance at WAC workshops or the two-day writing workshop for Liberal Studies faculty
- Add "Department Commitment to Writing" statement to department syllabi as appropriate
- Administer assessment of senior writing samples every two years and share results with the WAC Director as part of the 5-year program review process
- Maintain rubric criteria results of senior level writing assignment assessment above 75% through faculty development seminars with WAC director, workshop attendance, or writing-enriched curriculum
- Add areas for the teaching and assessment of writing as goals on department and faculty five-year review documents
- Continue to update the Writing Outcomes Curriculum Map as courses are added, removed, and revised in the ANTH curriculum (and communicate these changes to the WAC Director)

(5) Students majoring in Anthropology will not be required to take ENGL 202 Composition II. Instead, students will meet the objectives of ENGL 202 through their written assignments in ANTH 211, 244, 356, 357, 415, 425 and 480.

## Writing Outcomes Curriculum Map

**The Writing Outcomes Curriculum Map demonstrates:**

- Conscious effort on the part of department faculty at placing core disciplinary genres at appropriate levels of the curriculum, scaffolding and reinforcing the writing skills necessary for students to succeed in writing those genres (For example, in ANTH 211 students practice ethnographic writing based on ethnographic interviews and participant observation. In ANTH 456 students design an ethnographic research project by thinking through how these methods can answer particular questions informed by anthropological theory).
- Thoughtful integration of writing-to-learn activities in most courses in the curriculum (For example: ANTH 320, 325, 425, and 460 all require students to maintain a research journal to help them think through and express complicated concepts. This practice also develops good professional habits).
- Balanced measures for assessing writing as process and product, that is, writing is graded for demonstrating mastery of course content as well as improvement of writing skills over time (For the genres of anthropological writing are introduced in 200 level courses, reinforced in 300 level courses, and emphasized in 400 level courses).
- **31 courses offered; 26 identified as using WTL = 84% of courses are writing-enriched**

Course	Title	Expected Writing Skills	Writing Activities (Write to Learn [WTL] and Writing to Communicate [WTC])	Introduced, Reinforced, or Emphasized	Genres Modeled Through Reading
110	Contemporary Anthropology		Writing assignments include some selection of:		Scholarly articles, popular articles, textbook, ethnographies, websites
		Employ and synthesize anthropological ideas in writing	Short answer questions on exams (WTC); anthropological description of a cultural ritual or event (WTC); short quizzes (WTC); ethnographic project (WTC); research project prospectus (WTC); pamphlet project (WTC)	Introduced	
		Practice expressing themselves with writing. Using writing as a tool to think critically	Short writing assignments (WTL); homework assignments (WTL); online chats (WTL); video responses (WTL); free-writing assignments (WTL)	Introduced	
		Ability to answer questions in a clear manner	Short answers on quizzes and exams (WTC)	Introduced	

		Thoughtful, organized essays, expressing moderately complex ideas in writing	Essay, often with rewrite option (WTC); ethnographic project (WTC)	Introduced	
		Respond to questions addressing reading content	Short answers on quizzes and exams (WTC); in-class and/or homework writing assignments (WTL)	Introduced	
		Basic editing, such as identifying paragraph and sentence construction, and word choice.	Essay, often with rewrite option (WTC)	Introduced	
211	Cultural Anthropology	Clear and thoughtful written responses to readings	Frequent writing prompts in class (WTL)	Reinforced	Scholarly articles and ethnography
		Practice expressing themselves with writing. Using writing as a tool to think critically	Weekly short homework writing activities responding to, answering questions, and posing questions about readings (WTL)	Reinforced	
		Ethnographic writing	Ethnographic writing projects (3 essays) (WTC)	Introduced	
		Ability to synthesize materials and apply class concepts in essay format	Two essay exams synthesizing class materials and applying concepts from an ethnography (WTC)	Reinforced	
213	World Archaeology	Clear, concise, edited text. Well organized short essays.	Short writing assignments (WTL); exams with short answer essays (WTC)	Reinforced	Scholarly articles. Technical reports
		Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Exams with short answer essays (WTC)	Reinforced	
		Express individual opinions utilizing scholarly information.	Short writing assignments (WTL)	Reinforced	
222	Biological Anthropology	Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Essay answers on the mid-term and final exams (WTC); essays (WTC)	Reinforced	Popular articles
233	Language and Culture	Academic analysis with thesis statement, supporting data, and connections to course readings. Proper citation and clear introduction and conclusion.	Essay exams (WTC); field site description (WTC); transcription of audio data (WTC); research paper using transcript (WTC)	Reinforced	Scholarly articles, academic book

		Demonstrate critical thinking in writing format.	Discussion posts (WTL)	Reinforced	
244	Basic Archaeology	Clear, concise, well-edited texts, well-organized essays. Importance of citations.	Article critique (WTC); critical essays (include edit and rewrite) (WTC); visit the Writing Center (WTC)	Emphasized	Scholarly articles, chapters, and books. Technical reports. Popular sources with a focus on websites, blogs, and podcasts.
		Employ anthropological ideas in writing. Express complicated ideas in writing.	Short writing assignments (WTL); Glossary (WTL); exams and quizzes (short answer and essay) (WTC)	Emphasized	
250	Human Origins	Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Essay answers on the mid-term and final exams (WTC); essays (WTC)	Reinforced	Scholarly articles, popular articles, textbook, ethnographies, websites
271	Cultural Area Studies: Africa	Clear and thoughtful written responses to readings	Weekly short homework writing activities responding to, answering questions, and posing questions about readings (WTL)	Emphasized	Scholarly articles and ethnography
		Using freewriting to think through ideas	Writing prompts in class (WTL)	Emphasized	
		Ability to synthesize materials and apply class concepts in essay format; analytical essay that synthesizes materials and speaks to a scholarly audience	Analytical essays applying concepts from class to new material from specific African locations/case studies (WTC); essay exams synthesizing and applying concepts from class materials (WTC).	Reinforced	
272	Culture Area: China	Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Essay answers on the mid-term and final exams (WTC); essays (WTC)	Reinforced	Scholarly articles and chapters and popular articles
274	Cultural Area Studies: Latin America	Clear, problem centered, and well-organized essays around a social issue in Latin America synthesizing readings.	Term paper (includes revise and resubmit) (WTC); reaction papers addressing a video that also incorporates the readings (WTC); essays (WTC) exams (WTC).	Emphasized	Ethnographies and selected scholarly articles

		Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Short writing assignments (WTL)	Emphasized	
310	Voyages of Discovery	Critical analysis of published sources.	Informal writing assignments (WTL); Online discussion (WTL); Essay questions on exam (WTC)	Introduced	Primary and secondary histories. Academic articles and chapters
		PowerPoint slides	PowerPoint presentation (WTC)	Introduced	
		Essay writing, including logical construction, proof-reading, and citations	Research paper with revision (WTC)	Reinforced	
314	Contemporary Native Americans	Demonstrate knowledge of the course material and critical thinking	Essay questions on exams (WTC)	Emphasized	Textbook and scholarly articles
		Clear and logical construction of an essay as well as critical thinking	Essay (WTC)	Emphasized	
		Research skills are demonstrated by the Tribal Abstract Presentation as well as concise presentation of ideas and information	PowerPoint presentation (WTC)	Reinforced	
		Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Class and homework assignments that require synthesis of reading content and critical thinking (WTL)	Emphasized	
315	North American Archaeology	Demonstrate knowledge of the course material and critical thinking	Tests consisting of short paragraph responses and one longer and more involved essay as well as objective questions (WTC); longer papers that are a video review and a book critique (WTC)	Emphasized	Textbook, popular articles, and scholarly journal articles
		Clear and logical construction of essays	Tests consisting of short paragraph responses and one longer and more involved essay as well as objective questions (WTC); longer papers that are a video review and a book critique (WTC)	Emphasized	

		Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Short reaction papers (WTL); minute responses (WTL)	Emphasized	
318	Museum Methods	Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Medium length written assignments (WTC). Regular short written pieces on group projects (WTC)	Emphasized	Scholarly articles and chapters and popular articles
		Note taking	Weekly one-page notes on assigned readings (WTL)	Introduced	
320	Archaeological Field School	Note taking	Continuously updating field notebooks and field forms to reflect ongoing excavations and artifact cataloging (WTL and WTC)	Introduced, Reinforced and Emphasized	
325	Archaeological Lab Methods	Analytic writing	Analysis paper based on artifact assemblage (WTC)	Introduced	
		Note taking	Research journal (WTL)	Emphasized	
333	The Archaeology of Early China	Utilize anthropological knowledge in writing	Short and long essay answers on the mid-term and final exams, as well as medium-length written assignments (WTC).	Emphasized	Textbook, articles from both scholarly and popular publications
350	Anthropology of Gender	Ability to summarize readings and make connections between texts	Weekly reading summaries (WTL)	Reinforced	Scholarly Articles, academic book, ethnographies
		Academic analysis with thesis statement, supporting data, and connections to course readings. Proper citation and clear introduction and conclusion. Demonstrate critical thinking in writing format.	Small written homework assignment with analysis (WTC); Ethnographic research paper with revision (WTC)	Emphasized	
		Write discussion questions relevant to a theme	Weekly written discussion questions (WTL)	Reinforced	
352	The Anthropology of Human Rights	Ability to formulate an essay	Medium-length critical essays (WTC); research project prospectus (3-5 pages); culminating ethnographic project (15 pages). Annotated bibliography. All graded with	Emphasized	Scholarly articles, Human Rights Reports, Ethnographies

			opportunity for revision.		
		Respond to questions addressing reading content	Short writing assignments (WTL)	Emphasized	
		Synthesize anthropological concepts into a final ethnographic paper	Research project prospectus (3-5 pages); culminating ethnographic project (15 pages). Annotated bibliography. All with opportunity for revision (WTC).	Emphasized	
360	Applied Anthropology	Clear and thoughtful written responses to readings	Weekly short homework writing activities (WTL)	Emphasized	IRB applications, proposals, biographies, abstracts, cover letters, ethnography, executive summaries
		Targeted writing in genres central to applied anthropology	Completion of all stages of an applied research project, including proposal stage, IRB application, lit review, interview questions, research design, analysis, and final reporting (WTC);	Emphasized	
370	Latinos and Diasporas	Clear, problem centered, and well organized narratives around a social issue pertaining to Latinos or Latin American diasporas, which draw on works from Latino and non-Latino anthropologists and Latino study scholars.	Term paper (WTC), low stakes reaction papers (WTL); take-home essay exams (WTC). All writing assignments are discussed with the student (WTL).	Emphasized	Ethnographies and scholarly articles
415	Cultural Resource Management	Clear, concise, well-edited texts, including technical writing. Employ appropriate cultural resource management jargon	"Quests" (short answer and essay; WTL); medium writing assignments including technical proposal w/ budget, and archaeological survey report, including rewrite (WTC)	Emphasized	Technical reports and summaries, scopes of work and proposals, federal regulations, National Park Service bulletins

		Well-organized essays. Express complicated ideas in writing.	short writing assignments (WTL); in-class writing (WTL)	Emphasized	
420	Cultural Ecology	Clear and thoughtful written responses to readings	Weekly short writing assignments in class to develop ideas (WTL); Analytical essays that synthesize class concepts and readings (WTC)	Emphasized	Academic articles and ethnographic monographs
		Term project that involves conducting, analyzing, and reporting on research relevant to environmental anthropology	Final research paper (WTC)	Emphasized	
425	Archaeological Theory and Research Design	Personal expression through writing	Journals submitted and graded weekly (WTL); take home essay mid-term exam (WTC)	Emphasized	Scholarly articles and technical reports
		Technical writing well edited and organized.	Research report submitted in 4 stages (WTC)	Emphasized	
444	Medical Anthropology	Ability to formulate an essay	Critical essays (WTC)	Emphasized	Scholarly articles, Ethnographies
		Respond to questions addressing reading content	Short writing assignments (WTL)	Emphasized	
		Synthesize anthropological concepts into a final ethnographic paper	Research project prospectus (WTC); culminating ethnographic project (WTC); annotated bibliography (WTC). All with opportunity for revision.	Emphasized	
456	Ethnographic Research Methods	Clear, problem centered, and well organized narratives around ethnographic field methods and human subject issues which draw on the assigned readings.	A research proposal (WTC); drafts of the proposal (WTL); a human subjects protocol (WTC); seven writing assignments, each addressing a field method or sampling technique (WTC); two précis to prepare for proposal (WTL). All writing assignments are discussed in a classroom setting (WTL).	Emphasized	Ethnographic research text book, reader on human subjects issues, and scholarly articles.

460	Ethnographic Field School	Develop writing skills related to all phases of ethnographic research	Recording data in research journals and maintaining field diaries (WTL)	Emphasized	
		Engage in qualitative research in which writing, research, and analysis is an iterative process	Research reports involving technical writing to describe the scope, nature, and significance of research (WTC)	Reinforced	
		Communicate the results and significance of ethnographic research in both technical and creative formats	Ethnographic writing to apply cultural analysis to original research (WTC)	Emphasized	
		Ethically and accurately represent diverse perspectives and experiences	Organizing and analyzing data through writing (categorizing, coding, and developing theory) (WTL)	Reinforced	
480	Anthropology Seminar	Analytical essays that deploy critical thinking, writing, and reading to respond to theoretical articles	Analytical essays drawing from weekly readings (WTL); Weekly short writing assignments in class to develop ideas (WTL)	Emphasized	Classic and contemporary writings in social theory
		Arguing a thesis	Position paper arguing a theoretical stance (WTC)	Emphasized	
		Synthesis and application of anthropological theory	Mock graduate school admission essay (WTC)	Emphasized	
486	Historic Artifact Analysis	Technical writing with concise communication, professional voice. Reinforce editing, word choice, punctuation	Collection report (WTC)	Emphasized	Technical reports, artifact catalogs, and academic journals and chapters.
		Demonstrate knowledge of historic period artifacts.	Weekly assignments thinking through archeological processes (WTL)	Emphasized	
487	Geoarchaeology	Demonstrate knowledge of the course material and think critically	Exam with short (paragraph length) and long essays (WTC)	Emphasized	Scholarly articles. Technical reports.

		Employ appropriate archaeological and geological ideas in writing. Express complicated and interdisciplinary ideas in writing.	Article critique (WTC); written paper with revise and resubmit (WTL); PowerPoint Presentation (WTC)	Emphasized	Laboratory Reports
		Demonstrate knowledge and learn to identify sediments and topographic map features	Lab exercises (WTL)	Emphasized	
491	Zooarchaeology	Demonstrate knowledge of the course material and think critically	Exam with short (paragraph length) and long essays (WTC)	Emphasized	Scholarly book. Technical writing about anatomy and osteology
		Think critically and reflect on their experiences for the Skeletal project essay.	Reflective papers on skeletal preparation project (WTL)	Emphasized	
		Demonstrate knowledge and learn to identify bones and their features	Lab exercises (WTL)	Emphasized	

## Appendix A – Assessment Protocol and Rubric

For transparency, students in ANTH 480 are notified that their work is evaluated for programmatic assessment. A statement is included on the syllabus each time the course is taught indicating that students' writing might be randomly selected for anonymous programmatic assessment that will not affect their course grade in any way.

Because the graduating class of seniors is under 30, to obtain the highest confidence level that samples are representative of the graduating class of 2017 (N=27), a convenience sample of all student papers is obtained when possible.

The course professor gives the papers to the department secretary who removes all identifying information from the writing and adds a three-digit code to each paper as an identifier. The secretary keeps a list of student names and corresponding identifiers.

Each piece of writing is read and rated twice using the attached rubric by two faculty members (not the instructor of ANTH 480). The WAC Liaison will serve as a rater or, if they are the instructor of the course, will facilitate the process. The WAC Director will help organize and supervise the process, perform data entry, assist with norming and with data analysis.

The rated samples are a course embedded assessment given in ANTH 480 Anthropology Seminar, a capstone course taught to graduating seniors. The assessment is a position paper. Students have two weeks to complete this assignment, and then two weeks to revise the final draft based on feedback from the instructor. This assignment follows a previous task that requires students to research a school of thought or specialization in anthropology, and identify a graduate program with expertise in that area.

### *Graduate School Mock Admission Essay*

This position paper assignment connects with our course goals, giving you a chance to synthesize some of the theories that we have covered this semester, putting them into productive conversation with each other around the debate about the role of science in anthropology. Part 1 asked you to identify a school of thought or subdiscipline that may be of interest to you for graduate study. The goal of part 2 is to deepen your familiarity with your chosen theoretical area or subdiscipline by developing your abilities to write persuasively using its terminology and perspectives. Part 2 takes the form of a mock graduate school admission essay. The application for admission into your chosen graduate program in anthropology asks you to compose an admission essay answering the following question:

**In the wake of the decision by the AAA's long range planning committee to remove 'science' from a statement of its plan, the anthropological community was once more plunged into a long-standing debate about the nature of our discipline. First, briefly detail the history of this debate- where does it originate, what is at stake, and can you summarize the key points made by theorists on either side? Be sure to select one or more key moments in the history of anthropological theory to detail in this section. Then, explain your attraction to a particular school of thought or subdiscipline in anthropology and what you would like to do with it (the questions, methods, or ideas you might explore). Finally, writing from the vantage point of this school of thought, argue your own stance on this debate, and develop an argument about what the future of anthropology should or could look like.**

To complete this assignment, please submit an essay of 3 – 5 double spaced pages, free of grammatical and spelling errors, in 12 point Times New Roman font. The first draft will be due by midnight on Friday April 8, uploaded to Moodle. The final revised draft will be due at our last class, also uploaded to Moodle. In order to address this topic, you can draw from your first position paper, but your essay should go into greater detail and be structured as a persuasive position paper – **clearly stating and arguing a thesis**. Be sure to *draw from our readings*, and cite sources using AAA style guidelines: <http://www.aaanet.org/publications/guidelines.cfm>.

*Please note that this is a hypothetical assignment, giving us a structure to practice writing from a particular disciplinary vantage point. You wouldn't send off such a statement as an admission essay without working with your advisor!*

Samples are rated biennially with that year’s class roster as the sample population. The rating committee is composed of a minimum of three ANTH faculty; the WAC Director may be a fourth faculty evaluator. An initial subset of at least five assignments is rated by all evaluators as a norming sample. The remaining assignments are rated by three evaluators. The results of the evaluations are tabulated in Appendix B.

Samples are rated on a four-level scale holistically and also on seven individual criteria:

	Exceeds Expectations = 4	Meets Expectations = 3	Emerging = 2	Below Expectations = 1
Clearly states and argues thesis	Goes beyond restating the assignment prompt; demonstrates connection between theoretical perspective and its relation to the debate	States simple thesis, follows throughout in logical order, may state a point of view but doesn’t elaborate on why it’s a preference, or may state a theoretical perspective but not demonstrate connection to the debate	Thesis is clear but evidence is not related to the thesis	Thesis is difficult to find or unclear; No thesis
Details debate and key points (summary and analysis); Describes current theory in a subfield (summary and synthesis)	Utilizes primary documents and analyzes the trajectory/relevance of the debate	Accurate discussion of the debate; sources may be limited to other summaries rather than primary documents	Refers to debate in cursory way; acknowledges other sources but doesn’t expand or connect the details of them	Little or no discussion of the debate or reference to outside material or sources
Relates attraction to particular school of thought (reflection); Details how the chosen subfield contributes to the cannon of anthropological theory (synthesis and analysis)	Discussed within full scope of a subfield, refers to scholarship or specific examples in that field	Expresses opinion, describes subfield but may support with vague language or generalities	Opinion is supported only by personal anecdotes	Does not identify a subfield (refers to anthropology at large); no opinion
Understanding of audience and task (admission to graduate school or essay addressed to editors)	Formal language, free of colloquialisms, mindful of stakes	Approaches task seriously, but may contain only a few minor lapses in formality	Approaches task seriously but contains enough lapses in formality that they are distracting	Inappropriate tone or language (e.g. contractions, stream of consciousness, lack of organization, self-referential)
Citation/ Polish (grammar, mechanics)	Consistent citation format; polished grammar and mechanics	Minor errors that do not impede meaning or sentence clarity; a few citation lapses	Sentences are readable but there are enough errors that they are distracting; attempts citation but with multiple errors.	Grammatical issues detract from readability; inconsistent citation or lack of citation
Uses terminology appropriately	Fluency with terminology of the discipline	Uses most terms appropriately; may miss a few key terms that could be helpful for clearer expression	An even mix of accurate and inaccurately used terminology	Most terms used inaccurately or haphazardly; or does not use any terminology from the discipline
Concepts applied appropriately	Demonstrates clear understanding of concepts and can apply to a thesis; chooses the right concept for the thesis	Demonstrates understanding of concepts; concepts are appropriate to thesis; may attempt application to thesis and get close	Might mention a concept but is somewhat inaccurate about its application; or, may not attempt application at all	Does not use any concepts from the field

Holistic Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B - Results of Senior Writing Assessment, 2016-2019**

The 2016-17 results are considered baseline scores from the first assessment of student writing samples to pilot the rubric and rating protocol. Assessment occurs biennially. Spring 2019 assessment results are included as an independent measure for pedagogical consideration and for comparison to prior assessment.

**Areas in which student writing is ABOVE expectations: 77+**

**Criterion 3: Reflection, Synthesis/Analysis**

year(s)	outstanding/well-developed	emerging/weak
2018-2019 n=17	<b>88%</b> (35% / 53%) 15 (6/9)	<b>12%</b> (12% / 0%) 2 (2/0)
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>81%</b> (29% / 52%) 17 (6 / 11)	<b>19%</b> (14% / 5%) 4 (3 / 1)

**Criterion 4: Audience and Task Awareness**

year(s)	outstanding/well-developed	emerging/weak
2018-2019 n=17	<b>83%</b> (24% / 59%) 14 (4/10)	<b>18%</b> (18% / 0%) 3 (3/0)
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>90%</b> (38% / 52%) 19 (8 / 11)	<b>10%</b> (5% / 5%) 2 (1 / 1)

**Criterion 5: Citation/Polish (grammar, mechanics)**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2018-2019 n=17	<b>82%</b> (29% / 53%) 14 (5/9)	<b>18%</b> (12% / 6%) 3 (2/1)
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>91%</b> (29% / 62%) 19 (6 / 13)	<b>10%</b> (10% / 0%) 2 (2 / 0)

**Criterion 6: Use of Terminology**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2018-2019 n=17	<b>94%</b> (41% / 53%) 16 (7/9)	<b>6%</b> (0 / 6%) 1 (0/1)
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>90%</b> (33% / 57%) 19 (7 / 12)	<b>10%</b> (10% / 0%) 2 (2 / 0)

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**Areas in which student writing is MEETING expectations: 68-77**

**Holistic**

year	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2018-2019 n=17	<b>76%</b> (29% / 47%) 13 (5 / 8)	<b>23%</b> (17% / %.05) 4 (3 / 1)

2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>81%</b> (19% / 62%) 17 (4 / 13)	<b>19%</b> (14% / 5%) 4 (3 / 1)
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**Criterion 1: Clearly States and Argues Thesis**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2018-2019 n=17	<b>70%</b> (29% / 41%) 12 (5/7)	<b>29%</b> (29% / 0%) 5 (5/0)
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>81%</b> (14% / 57%) 15 (3 / 12)	<b>19%</b> (19% / 10%) 6 (4 / 2)

**Criterion 2: Summary/Analysis, Summary/Synthesis**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2018-2019 n=17	<b>70%</b> (35% / 35%) 12 (6/6)	<b>29%</b> (29% / 0%) 5 (5/0)
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>72%</b> (29% / 43%) 15 (6 / 9)	<b>29%</b> (29% / 0%) 6 (6 / 0)

**Criterion 7: Application of Concepts**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2018-2019 n=17	<b>76%</b> (29% / 47%) 13 (5/8)	<b>24%</b> (24% / 0%) 4 (4/0)
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>86%</b> (43% / 43%) 18 (9 / 9)	<b>14%</b> (14% / 0%) 3 ( / 0)

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**Areas in which student writing is BELOW expectations below 67 and below**

None

**Discussion of Assessment Results with Recommendations through 2019, by the WAC Director**

Anthropology students continue to demonstrate strong writing skills, most likely due to the amount of writing that students are expected to do throughout any program track in this major, as evidenced in curriculum map shown above. Holistic scores continue to align with ratings for individual criteria, indicating strong validity for this protocol.

Recalling that the 2016-17 scoring session was the first time this rubric was used, those scores are considered “pilot” and therefore not statistically comparable to the 2018-2019 scores. Also, trends cannot be identified based on two data points. Faculty are advised to track data over time with each assessment, in order to identify trends that may emerge when more data is collected. Faculty should particularly pay attention to three criteria that remain at the threshold between *Exceeding Expectations* at *Meeting Expectations*: Holistic, Clearly States and Argues Thesis, and Application of Concepts. In most areas, students are close to the department standard (hovering at or near 20% in most categories). Also, fewer

students were ranked 'below' in these categories, with increases in all areas except 'holistic,' which remained constant (1 student was ranked 'below'). This suggests that overall writing pedagogy has been effective in meeting the needs of the students who struggle the most with writing. Future work could pay close attention to the students who are 'Emerging.' If the 20% of students in those criteria receive additional support to improve to 'meeting expectations,' then in nearly all criterion, almost 100% of students would be meeting or exceeding the department's standards for good writing.

In this second assessment, I would also repeat my recommendation that department faculty take note of rated results of **criterion one (clearly states and argues thesis)**, as this is, in most disciplines and in most writing situations, one of the most important writing tasks students should solidify and carry with them from college. In my last set of recommendations, I wrote, "While 70% of students exceeded or met the target, this criterion is so important that it is worth the department giving some consideration to whether they want to adapt some of their pedagogy or curriculum now to attempt to improve these results now, or wait until the next assessment and see how the scores compare." While 10% of students were ranked 'below' in 2016-2017, no students were 'below' in 2018-2019. There was one fewer student in the 'emerging' category as well in the 2018-2019 assessment. Given the importance of thesis writing, special attention should be paid so that students continue to improve in this area. The WAC director is of course happy to assist with this.

The 2016-17 results are considered baseline scores from the first assessment of student writing samples to pilot the rubric and rating protocol. Assessment occurs biennially. Spring 2019 assessment results are included as an independent measure for pedagogical consideration and for comparison to prior assessment.

### Appendix C - Results of Senior Writing Assessment, 2022-2023

The senior writing assessment was conducted in ANTH 480 Spring 2023, with a population of 19 students. One student was not a major or a minor and was excluded from the assessment. Of the remaining 18, 5 students did not complete the class, and consequently, did not complete the assessment.

**Areas in which student writing is ABOVE expectations: 77+**

#### Criterion 1: Clearly States and Argues Thesis

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>81%</b> (14% / 57%) 15 (3 / 12)	<b>19%</b> (19% / 10%) 6 (4 / 2)
2018-2019 n=17	<b>70%</b> (29% / 41%) 12 (5/7)	<b>29%</b> (29% / 0%) 5 (5/0)
2022-2023 n = 13 (18 students in the class)	<b>85%</b> (23% / 62%) 11 (3 / 8)	<b>15%</b> (8% / 8%) 2 (1 / 1)

#### Criterion 3: Reflection, Synthesis/Analysis

year(s)	outstanding/well-developed	emerging/weak
2016-2017 n = 21	<b>81%</b> (29% / 52%) 17 (6 / 11)	<b>19%</b> (14% / 5%) 4 (3 / 1)

(27 students in the class)		
2018-2019 n=17	<b>88%</b> (35% / 53%) 15 (6/9)	<b>12%</b> (12% / 0%) 2 (2/0)
2022-2023 n = 13 (18 students in the class)	<b>100%</b> (38% / 62%) 13 (5 / 8)	<b>0%</b>

**Criterion 4: Audience and Task Awareness**

year(s)	outstanding/well-developed	emerging/weak
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>90%</b> (38% / 52%) 19 (8 / 11)	<b>10%</b> (5% / 5%) 2 (1 / 1)
2018-2019 n=17	<b>83%</b> (24% / 59%) 14 (4/10)	<b>18%</b> (18% / 0%) 3 (3/0)
2022-2023 n = 13 (18 students in the class)	<b>92%</b> (69% / 23%) 12 (9 / 3)	<b>8%</b> (8% / 0%) 1 (1 / 0)

**Criterion 5: Citation/Polish (grammar, mechanics)**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>91%</b> (29% / 62%) 19 (6 / 13)	<b>10%</b> (10% / 0%) 2 (2 / 0)
2018-2019 n=17	<b>82%</b> (29% / 53%) 14 (5/9)	<b>18%</b> (12% / 6%) 3 (2/1)
2022-2023 n = 13 (18 students in the class)	<b>85%</b> (54% / 31%) 11 (7 / 4)	<b>15%</b> (15% / 0%) 2 (2 / 0)

**Criterion 6: Use of Terminology**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>90%</b> (33% / 57%) 19 (7 / 12)	<b>10%</b> (10% / 0%) 2 (2 / 0)
2018-2019 n=17	<b>94%</b> (41% / 53%) 16 (7/9)	<b>6%</b> (0 / 6%) 1 (0/1)
2022-2023 n = 13 (18 students in the class)	<b>92%</b> (54% / 38%) 12 (7 / 5)	<b>8%</b> (8% / 0%) 1 (1 / 0)

**Criterion 7: Application of Concepts**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>86%</b> (43% / 43%) 18 (9 / 9)	<b>14%</b> (14% / 0%) 3 ( / 0)
2018-2019 n=17	<b>76%</b> (29% / 47%) 13 (5/8)	<b>24%</b> (24% / 0%) 4 (4/0)
2022-2023 n = 13 (18 students in the class)	<b>85%</b> (54% / 31%) 11 (7 / 4)	<b>15%</b> (15% / 0%) 2 (2 / 0)

**Holistic**

year	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>81%</b> (19% / 62%) 17 (4 / 13)	<b>19%</b> (14% / 5%) 4 (3 / 1)

2018-2019 n=17	<b>76%</b> (29% / 47%) 13 (5 / 8)	<b>23%</b> (17% / %.05) 4 (3 / 1)
2022-2023 n = 13 (18 students in the class)	<b>92%</b> (23% / 69%) 12 (3 / 9)	<b>8%</b> (8% / 0%) 1 (1 / 0)

**Areas in which student writing is MEETING expectations: 68-77**

**Criterion 2: Summary/Analysis, Summary/Synthesis**

year(s)	exceeds/meets	emerging/below
2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class)	<b>72%</b> (29% / 43%) 15 (6 / 9)	<b>29%</b> (29% / 0%) 6 (6 / 0)
2018-2019 n=17	<b>70%</b> (35% / 35%) 12 (6/6)	<b>29%</b> (29% / 0%) 5 (5/0)
2022-2023 n = 13 (18 students in the class)	<b>77%</b> (46% / 31%) 10 (6 / 4)	<b>23%</b> (15% / 8%) 3 (2 / 1)

**Areas in which student writing is BELOW expectations below 67 and below**

None

**Discussion of Assessment Results with Recommendations, by the WAC Director**

Students in Anthropology are far exceeding writing expectations by nearly all of their criteria and have improved significantly since the last assessment. Holistic scores align well with individual criteria, demonstrating validity of the scoring rubric. Students are not exceeding yet are still meeting expectations in Summary, Analysis, and Synthesis. There has been growth in this area over the past 7-8 years, and scores are not so low that this is an urgent concern. Still, in an effort to bring assessment results into pedagogy, it would be worth a full-faculty conversation to discuss how this criterion could be emphasized more across courses. The WAC director is willing to support this conversation, and the Writing Center can support students as they work on this in their individual work.