



DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Department Writing Plan

Version 2.0

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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 Minnesota¹ 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 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.

¹ 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 pedagogy² 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.

² “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

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)

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 | |

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| | | 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 |

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| | | 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 |

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| | | 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 | |

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| | | 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 |

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| | | | 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 |

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| | | 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 précisés 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. |

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| 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. |

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| | | 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 canon 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 | 88% (35% / 53%) 15 (6/9) | 12% (12% / 0%) 2 (2/0) |
| 2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class) | 81% (29% / 52%) 17 (6 / 11) | 19% (14% / 5%) 4 (3 / 1) |

Criterion 4: Audience and Task Awareness

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

Criterion 5: Citation/Polish (grammar, mechanics)

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

Criterion 6: Use of Terminology

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

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

Holistic

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

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2016-2017 n = 21 (27 students in the class) | 81% (19% / 62%) 17 (4 / 13) | 19% (14% / 5%) 4 (3 / 1) |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

Criterion 1: Clearly States and Argues Thesis

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

Criterion 2: Summary/Analysis, Summary/Synthesis

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

Criterion 7: Application of Concepts

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

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

None

Discussion of Assessment Results with Recommendations, 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

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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.