

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): International Studies

Department: Political Science

Degree or Certificate Level: B.A.

College/School: Arts and Science

Date (Month/Year): September 2022

Assessment Contact: Dr. Nori Katagiri

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? Academic year 2021-2022

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2018

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization? No

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

Outcome 1: Graduates will be able to analyze cultural, economic, political and social aspects of contemporary international issues.

Outcome 2: Graduates will be able to describe how culture and national identity affect a person's perspectives.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail and identify the course(s) in which they were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

For outcome 1, artifacts were collected in 5 sections of POLS 1600, 1 section in Madrid and 4 in St. Louis. POLS 1600 is a required course in the International Studies major. Instructors relied on essay questions, exam questions, a research paper, and an oral and visual presentation in class.

For outcome 2, artifacts were collected in ISTD 4961 (the International Studies capstone) and 2 sections of ANTH 2200, 1 section in Madrid and 1 in St. Louis. Both ISTD 496x and ANTH 2200 are required courses in the International Studies major. Instructors relied on essay questions, exam questions, a research design, a research paper, class discussions, and ethnographic fieldwork.

None of these courses was offered online or at any other off-campus location.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

Instructors filled in rubrics for each student, based on the assignments they selected. Results were summarized through a Qualtrics survey. Rubrics are appended to the end of this report.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Summary results for outcome 1: Graduates will be able to analyze cultural, economic, political and social aspects of contemporary international issues.

Student is able to:	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations	Outcome is not relevant to this class
Describe ways that cultural differences contribute to misunderstandings among groups of people or nations	4	8	10	0
Identify economic interests related to a particular issue	4	9	9	0
Examine how power imbalances impact particular situations	4	10	8	0
Contrast the roles of various actors (e.g., individuals, governments, businesses, or organizations of all types) in addressing contemporary international issues	4	8	10	0
Devise strategies to address contemporary international issues	4	6	5	7 (no answer)
Evaluate policies to address contemporary international issues	2	3	3	14 (no answer)

What students could do well:

- Lead discussions on contemporary issues and how to ensure justice and human dignity
- Identify the ways cultural diversity contributes to divergent interests

Where students struggled:

- Less able to address issues from various perspectives
- Most students struggled to understand the concept of “strategic” interactions, and the idea that the best action for one actor might depend on another actor’s response
- Overcoming ethnocentrism

What helped students make progress:

- Group discussion
- Social media to share information on contemporary international issues
- Simulations of current events (China-Taiwan relations, COP26 and global warming, Libya and human rights)
- Discussion of the *New York Times* in each session
- Stories to explain various value systems
- Asking students to apply concepts from international relations to their daily lives, for instance how a bargaining failure created conflict in their personal lives.

The Madrid section of POLS 1600 had only one student. She exceeded expectations on all criteria. However, this is too small a sample from which to draw any conclusions.

Summary results outcome 2: Graduates will be able to describe how culture and national identity affect a person's perspectives.

Student is able to:	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations	Outcome is not relevant to this class
Identify how culture shapes a person's outlook	5	5 (3 of these from Madrid)	11 (1)	0
Contrast dominant values in various cultures	4	6 (2)	11 (2)	0
Compare experiences of people in various countries	3	4	14 (4)	0
Analyze how a person's outlook is shaped by experiences and surroundings	4	5 (1)	13 (3)	0

What students could do well:

- Appreciate the values of other cultures
- Understand how culture shapes identity

Where students struggled:

- Some students failed to move beyond previously held opinions
- The 3 International Studies students in the class failed to submit work on time and had poor attendance.

What helped students make progress:

- Class discussions where concepts were debated and different perspectives were contrasted
- Ethnographic fieldwork gave students the opportunity to engage face-to-face with another culture
- Comprehensive discussion following films

The numbers in parentheses are from the one Madrid class. These numbers are also included in the totals. Results on learning outcomes in Madrid seem broadly similar to those in St. Louis.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

We start by acknowledging the risk of assessing and drawing conclusions from a fairly large number of students (22 in outcome 1 and 21 in outcome 2) at the time of the pandemic when some of them were affected by Covid-related disruptions to the classroom and their lives, including class attendance and timely submission of assignments.

In outcome 1, students seemed to have done generally well in discussing some of the most important global issues we face while aware of the need to pay attention to the importance of contributing to the creation of a just and peaceful society. Students also succeeded in keeping their minds open to various cultural features of the international community, in appreciation of the presence of divergent and competing interests across the globe, a point that resonates in outcome 2 below. On the other hand, students seemed to have struggled in understanding interactive (“strategic”) aspects of international studies and overcoming ethnocentrism, although instructors keenly, if not appropriately, note that their approaches to group discussion, social media, classroom simulations, and other forms of educational creativity had a positive effect of mitigating these challenges. At the same time, we recognize that there is a challenge of using results in these introductory level courses (and 2,000-level courses in outcome 2) alone as a means of assessing student learning in International Studies. At this level, low student ratio to enrollment makes it hard for us to put results to use effectively for the assessment purpose.

Outcome 2 indicates that, while many students did well in meeting instructor expectations about the importance of learning various cultures, some of them struggled to accept the presence of new ideas and opinions and keeping up with the class. Some of these challenges were effectively addressed by instructors who adopted such pedagogical tactics as class discussions and ethnographic works to help students obtain a broader grasp of the fields covered in the courses. Yet in these courses, it was fairly clear that students were exposed to issues associated to cultural anthropology, which is one of the requirements of the broader field of international studies. Certainly, this problem of limited exposure to topics of international studies was partially mitigated in the capstone course by the combination of student engagement with interdisciplinary reading assignments and independent research. The reading assignments presented students with opportunities to learn about economic, social, and ethical aspects of global health issues, regional comparison, and other “cross-cutting” topics of medical healthcare. In the independent research assignment, students received instruction about how to choose a topic related to global health issues, conduct literature review to set the scope of research paper, carry out research itself, and present findings.

What this indicates for the purpose of this assessment is that it is not easy to assess results from two relatively separate levels of courses at the same time. We recognize that there is a notable gap in assessment methods between a 2,000-level course (ANTH2200) and a 4,000-level capstone (ISTD4961) in part because the former is generally designed for students at developmental stage before they reach the latter stage of upper-level academic training. This in fact reinforces the need for our proposal to focus on 4,000-level courses in the next assessment cycle.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Program faculty met on August 17, 2022 on zoom to discuss these results and findings. In particular, the faculty discussed:

- Methods for assessing student performance, rubric outcomes, and focus areas
- Whether current requirements adequately offer courses at upper levels and courses that are in regional studies
- Courses subject to future assessments
- Options for student and social events, collaboration with career services and other departments, and career panels.
- The merit of changing the capstone into a seminar to better reflect the nature of the multidisciplinary course and the program itself.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

Because this version of the International Studies major is new and only recently started to graduate students, previous assessment results were necessarily focused on the introductory classes that are required of all students. Those results produced some suggestions for approaches in individual classes, which were shared with faculty who teach those classes. Going forward, we will focus our assessment efforts on advanced classes, especially the required International Studies seminar (capstone) but also selected upper-level International Studies classes. As a result of our first assessment efforts in the seminar last year (then crosslisted with a Political Science class), we decided the class should not be crosslisted. That means it is a singular place in our interdisciplinary major: a class where all the students are International Studies majors. This is good for the students because it provides space for more direct engagement with the multi-disciplinary nature of International Studies and gives majors a greater chance to interact with each other. It is also good for assessment, since we have all the most advanced students in one place.

Shortly, we will submit a revised assessment plan to reflect that change.

Nori Katagiri, the director of the International Studies program, held a zoom meeting with his counterpart in Madrid in the summer of 2022 to discuss the capstone and ensure that the International Studies program remains viable in both St Louis and Madrid. He has also discussed collaboration opportunities with faculty members of the Languages, Literatures, and Cultures department and opportunities to hold a joint social event and career panel for students, since foreign language study is an important part of the International Studies major, and the major may be a way to increase students in foreign language classes.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

n/a

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

As reported in this space last year, we made a change not to cross-list the International Studies seminar/capstone with Political Science, in a departure from past practice. We managed to enroll seven students in the course – a good number that is not too large for a seminar and not too small to maintain a comfortable discussion setting. In the 2022-2023 cycle, we expect to have a slightly larger number of students to enroll in the seminar.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

The change had a positive effect of allowing more International Studies students than otherwise to enroll in the seminar/capstone to receive an advanced level training to appreciate the multidisciplinary nature of the field. It also allowed more students than before to conduct research in a more focused setting on a topic of their choosing within the curricular expectations.

Indeed, the focus on the upper level seminar for assessment works for our desire to more accurately assess student educational objectives while giving them opportunities to learn some of the most important topics of international studies. Since 2020 when instructors began to teach the capstone seminar, we have kept the central focus of the project unchanged – interdisciplinary across courses that included anthropology, foreign languages, international economics, international politics, and world regions and political, economic, social, and cultural topics. Program faculty believe that we will be able to maintain the focus this academic year and that the use of 4,000-level courses, including the seminar, will allow us to better reflect the overall purpose of the program and assess program success more concretely.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

This year, we assessed outcomes in 1000-level courses and realized that to do so raised several problems. First, many ISTD students take these courses in their first few semesters, so their work in the courses is hardly a good measure of the program. Some of these courses are taught by adjuncts who don't have a lot of experience with assessment and should not be required to do the extra work. Second, the proportion of International Studies students in these courses is low. At the August 2022 meeting, program faculty agreed that assessing fewer courses at higher levels would be a better strategy. Assessments will be made more accurately if we evaluated 4,000-level courses and the ISTD seminar where we have a larger body of students dedicated to the major.

Moving forward, we propose that we focus on collecting information in the seminar/capstone and any upper-level courses that we can identify as having sufficient International Studies students. Program faculty agreed that we would do better putting results to use (which is the present concern of the University) if we had a cleaner and smaller set of results that focus on International Studies students.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

We plan to use this reflection of thoughts to inform us of the way we teach the seminar (capstone) and other 4,000-level courses. We will also ask instructors to submit a summary of their findings from the rubrics. We will revise the rubrics as needed.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

International Studies BA assessment

Outcome 1: Graduates will be able to analyze cultural, economic, political and social aspects of contemporary international issues.

Directions: Please fill in at least one rubric for each student in your class. You may use one or multiple assignments. Expectations should reflect the level of the course. For purposes of program assessment, you will be asked to report the number of students who do not meet, meet, or exceed expectations for each of the qualities listed below. You will also have a chance to report other comments.

You will be asked to summarize results for International Studies majors in your class and to compare majors to non-majors. We will provide a list of the students in your class who are International Studies majors.

<i>Student is able to:</i>	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations	Outcome is not relevant to this class
Describe ways that cultural differences contribute to misunderstandings among groups of people or nations				
Identify economic interests related to a particular issue				
Examine how power imbalances impact particular situations				
Contrast the roles of various actors (e.g., individuals, governments, businesses, or organizations of all types) in addressing contemporary international issues				
Devise strategies to address contemporary international issues				
Evaluate policies to address contemporary international issues				

International Studies BA assessment

Outcome 2: Graduates will be able to describe how culture and national identity affect a person’s perspectives.

Directions: Please fill in at least one rubric for each student in your class. You may use one or multiple assignments. Expectations should reflect the level of the course. For purposes of program assessment, you will be asked to report the number of students who do not meet, meet, or exceed expectations for each of the qualities listed below. You will also have a chance to report other comments.

You will be asked to summarize results for International Studies majors in your class and to compare majors to non-majors. We will provide a list of the students in your class who are International Studies majors.

Student is able to:	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations	Outcome is not relevant to this class
Identify how culture shapes a person’s outlook				
Contrast dominant values in various cultures				
Compare experiences of people in various countries				
Analyze how a person’s outlook is shaped by experiences and surroundings				