

Learning outcomes reviewed in Anthropology for 2016-2017:

***(1) Students shall engage in field or laboratory research and carry out preliminary analyses of materials from primary materials and/or collections.***

***(2) Students shall learn to read, understand, and critique anthropological works.***

Two classes were reviewed for the academic year 2016-2017 following the established review procedures. A summary of the review procedures, outcomes, and new strategies follows the review of each class.

**ANTY 454: Lithic Technology**  
**Professor: Michael Neeley**

**Assessment by: Dr. Michael Neeley**

**Learning Outcome: *Students shall engage in field or laboratory research and carry out preliminary analyses of materials from primary materials and/or collections.***

This course provides students with a better understanding of ancient stone technology. The majority of the prehistoric archaeological record is comprised of stone artifacts making it particularly relevant and important to understand the processes of manufacture, analysis, and interpretation associated with stone technology. Over the course of the semester students engaged in a combination of hands-on activities and theoretical discussions regarding the manufacture, use, and discard of lithic implements culminating in the analysis of an archaeological collection. Specific course outcomes for students include defining the mechanics of stone tool manufacture and distinguishing the various characteristics of the manufacturing process, demonstrating a minimal level of proficiency in flintknapping, comprehending how archaeologists use stone artifacts to reconstruct behavior, and applying these outcomes and themes to analyze and interpret a collection of stone artifacts.

The course material was presented through a combination lecture and discussion. The discussions followed topical readings from selected archaeological journals and book chapters. These readings and subsequent discussions gave students an opportunity to explore the archaeological topics that fall within the parameters of the lithic analysis and interpretation.

Assignments for the class included two short assignments involving the analysis and description of lithic materials. These serve as an introduction to the types of analyses performed by lithic analysts in archaeological contexts. Students were also required to assemble an illustration notebook in which the illustrations adhere to standard illustration conventions. There were also six practicums designed to provide students with some basic experience with lithic analysis. These serve as training exercises for the

final project. The final project for the class consisted of a poster presentation on a lithic dataset or collection. Alternatively, this could be an experimental project involving stone artifacts. This project can be carried out individually or jointly with one other student.

To quantify the research outcomes for this course, I used the scores from the final project as a data source and aligned the outcomes with the proposed scoring method. The scoring method as defined in the document that outlines the anthropology learning outcomes is:

Scale:		
Unacceptable	1	For graded assignments = D, D-, or F
Minimally acceptable	2	For graded assignments = D+/C-
Acceptable	3	For graded assignments = C/C+
Exceeds expectation	4	For graded assignments = B's or A-
Exceptional	5	For graded assignments = A/A+

A total of 6 projects were submitted by the 11 students (five of the projects were joint projects and one was an individual one—note one student did not submit a project). All of the projects involved either the analysis of an archaeological collection of stone artifacts or the design of an experiment using stone artifacts. The average score for the submitted projects was 86% (or 4.6 on a 5 point scale). Using the above scale, this suggests that the class **“exceeds expectations”** for the learning outcome of “engaging in field or laboratory research and carrying out preliminary analyses of materials from primary materials and/or collections.” This appears to be solidly in the upper range of the measure and certainly exceeds the acceptable standard. On a student by student basis, all of the 11 students who submitted projects were in the exceeds expectations range.

In assessing the projects, all of them were successful in identifying a question or theme around which the analysis or experiment focused. The projects were a little more variable in establishing a methodology that would enable them to adequately address the question of interest. Perhaps, the greatest shortcoming of the analyses was linking the results to larger, more interesting behavioral aspects of the projects. This involves thinking about the results beyond positive/negative or significant/ non-significant and envisioning the broader implications of the project results to the larger fields of archaeology and anthropology. Students are certainly exposed to this bigger picture thinking in the class readings and discussion, but I think the process by which one applies this to their own work is a gradual, on-going process and not likely to be achieved instantaneously at the undergraduate level.

In sum, I believe the assessment indicates that students who take this class (and put forth an honest effort) are successful in meeting the learning outcomes of engaging in

field or laboratory research and carrying out preliminary analyses of materials from primary materials and/or collections.

**Assessment by: Dr. Jack Fisher**

**Learning Outcome: *Students shall engage in field or laboratory research and carry out preliminary analyses of materials from primary materials and/or collections.***

The syllabus for ANTY 454 (Lithic Technology) states clearly that a final research project is required, and that this project should either analyze a stone artifact collection or dataset, or should take the form of an experimental project using stone artifacts. The final project could be carried out individually or in a team of two students. The project was to be submitted as a poster. A poster is an appropriate format for students to become familiar with, because poster presentations are used widely at archaeological conferences ranging in scope from state-level to international.

For this assessment, I examined all six posters that were submitted. Five of these were done by two students working together, and the sixth was by a single student. Some projects were experiments and others analyzed a lithic artifact collection. All the projects included a hands-on component of working with stone artifacts. This is appropriate to the goals of this course, since the field of lithic technology is very much a hands-on enterprise. The grades for the projects all fell within the **exceeds expectation** category, and ranged from B- through A-. In reading each poster, I found that the posters at the lower end of the grade range exhibited one or more common problems. These included (1) some lack of clarity in defining the question or problem being addressed; (2) some lack of clarity in describing concepts or experimental procedures; and, (3) drawing conclusions that were somewhat narrow in scope. Those posters at the higher end of the grade range generally were conceptually more challenging, and described goals, concepts, and methods clearly. Some of these posters gave thoughtfully discussion to methodological difficulties that were encountered, and presented interesting insights that resulted from the research.

In sum, I believe that the research project served as an excellent means to assess students' abilities to: (a) carry out a well-designed and meaningful research project pertaining to lithic technology; and (b) present their research clearly and effectively in a poster format. The sample of papers from ANTY 454 (Lithic Technology) demonstrates that the course on average "exceeds expectations" with regard to the learning outcome stated above.

**ANTY 327: Medical Anthropology**  
**Professor Laurence M. Carucci**

**Assessment by Dr. Laurence Carucci**

**Learning Outcomes Reviewed: *Students shall learn to read, understand, and critique anthropological works.***

Medical Anthropology provides students with a survey of some critical recent works in the expanding field of Medical Anthropology. This field has come to be positioned on the cutting edge of anthropological enquiry since it sits at the interface of individual human experience – and particularly transformative experiences -- cultural ontology, and various domains of social formulation and control. In addition to reading five monograph-length original works in the field along with a set of supporting articles and writing essays on what they learned from these materials, students had the opportunity to conduct their own field research investigations. Course outcomes for ANTY 327 include enhancing students' abilities to analyze and discuss cultural theories of illness, medical epistemology, and healing among several different cultures and cultural groups; providing students with the ability to explain how human bodies are culturally fashioned, the power relations that differentially shape those bodies, and the experiential realities that are an integral part of inhabiting such distinct bodies; assisting students as they learn how to explain the differences between/among theories of illness and health that rely solely on principles of physical causation and theories grounded in social accord, in balanced relations among beings in an animate view of nature, and in non-corporeal causation; and teaching students how to apply sound ethnographic and interpretative methods in a community-based field research project in medical anthropology.

Course materials were presented through a combination of lecture and discussion including not only the topics covered in readings, but supplemented by guest lectures and topically-complementary films. Discussions allowed students to begin to grapple with ideas that would be of assistance to them as they dealt with the written assignments required for the course.

Assignments included five short essays (5-7 pages each), one for each of the assigned books that each dealt with core theoretical concepts in the field and with the central themes of each book. These assignments serve not only to ensure that the students have read and understood the relevant materials, but also provide a forum for students to display their respective abilities to deconstruct the core concepts covered in each work and to re-frame those materials given the discussion of broader analytic frameworks in anthropology. Combined with participation, which accounts for 20% of the grade in this seminar-style course, the field project (30% of grade) then offers students the opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest within medical anthropology. The selected topics included everything from interactions with dementia residents in a local long-term care facility, to people's feelings about and engagement

with medical marijuana, to anxiety disorders in contemporary America, to the social and cultural positioning of Sweat Lodge practices. As with all hands-on field research projects, each student research project had to be reviewed by the IRB, requiring students to learn not only about their respective research topics and reinforce that field research-grounded knowledge with comparative “library” research, but also to learn about the research process, how to write a proposal, how to follow-through with operationalizing a research agenda, how to analyze the resultant research materials, and how to then synthesize what each student has learned in a cohesive research report or analytic essay.

To quantify research outcomes for the course, the scores from the final project were used as a data source and aligned with the outcomes of the scoring method approved by the members of the Anthropology Program. That scoring method, as outlined in the anthropology learning outcomes is:

<b>Scale:</b>		
Unacceptable	1	For graded assignments = D, D-, or F
Minimally acceptable	2	For graded assignments = D+/C-
Acceptable	3	For graded assignments = C/C+
Exceeds expectation	4	For graded assignments = B's or A-
Exceptional	5	For graded assignments = A/A+

A total of 22 field research projects were submitted by students enrolled in the class. Three pairs of students elected to work on joint research projects, though each member of the team completed their own analysis and submitted their own analytic field research essay. One of the essays involved plagiarism and that student received a “0” for the assignment. Since that project did not involve any gradable original work, I exclude it from the average of all scores. The average score for the remaining 21 completed projects was 85.48%, suggesting that the class **“exceeded expectations”** for the learning outcome requiring them to “read, understand, and critique anthropological works”. In this case, the students generated their own primary sources and used the original research of scholars in the field to contextualize and frame their research outcomes.

In addition to the research projects, I averaged the scores on the five essay exams for the 21 students (not including the one cited for plagiarism) who completed that work. (The student who had plagiarized the project also had submitted plagiarized work on the essay exams.) The average score for the five exams is 84.5%, again suggesting that the class **“exceeded expectations”** for the learning outcome requiring them to “read, understand, and critique anthropological works”. In this case, the students analyzed original works of well-respected scholars in the field of medical anthropology and used theoretical materials that serve as critical analytic tools in social and cultural anthropology more generally to critique those works.

In sum, the assessment indicates that the students enrolled in Anthropology 327, including anthropology majors along with other students pursuing medicine and health-related degrees were successful in meeting the analytic learning outcomes under review by Anthropology for the 2016-2017 academic year. The 5 critical essays and the dedicated field research project provided ample ground to assess the positive student outcomes in each of these domains. As for the single student who plagiarized both venues, essays and project, I have agreed to help mentor that student so that any such future problems may be avoided.

**Assessment by: Dr. Tomomi Yamaguchi**

**Learning Outcomes Reviewed: *Students shall learn to read, understand, and critique anthropological works.***

The class (ANTY 327 Medical Anthropology) requires students to work on a field project that offers them the opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest within medical anthropology. The topics of the sample assignments that I assessed range widely depending on students' interests, from dementia, anti-anxiety drugs, and voodoo, all related to medicine and medical practices. In addition to the field research and writing phases, each student research project had to be reviewed by the IRB, requiring students to learn the research processes and ethics that are essential for research on human subjects. Students also did library research to support their ethnographic research. Conducting research in the field and at the library, analyzing the data and writing into an ethnography are the skills that students of sociocultural anthropology need in their upper-division classes, and this class provides those components. This assignment prepares students for their future careers in Anthropology and other related fields, and exceeded expectations for the above learning outcome.

The grades for the papers I reviewed were: A, B and B-/C+ and C. The C paper reviewed the field research that the student had conducted in a detailed fashion, but was somewhat disorganized and did not use the student's library research to maximum advantage. The B-/C+ paper conducted good library-based research but failed to present any field research data in the paper; therefore, while it was well-written, it did not fulfill the field research component of the assignment, nor did it fully complete the field component for this learning outcome. The rest of the papers reflect the successful achievement of the learning outcome, and the A paper accomplished this end in an exemplary fashion. The average score for the 21 completed projects (except for one plagiarized paper) was 85.48%, which demonstrated that the students successfully met the above learning outcome.

For the second set of assignments, the instructor assigned five short essay exams (5-7 pages each), one for each of the assigned ethnographies that dealt with core theoretical concepts and applied research applications in the field of medical anthropology. These

assignments are important for developing students' skills in learning how to read, understand, and critique anthropological monographs.

The three essay exams that I assessed represented the full range of student scores on one of the five essay assignments. To maintain some equivalence in my comparison of the students' work, each essay I reviewed was based on the same book (Margaret Lock's *Twice Dead*, a monograph on the theme of organ transplants and brain death in Japan and the U.S.). The range of grades on the assignment were A/A-, B and C/C-. The lower grade for the C/C- essay was based predominantly on students' poor writing skills, although the student did demonstrate their understanding of the assigned text (with the writing issue fixed, the paper would be of B quality.) The A essay not only demonstrated the student's understanding and critical analysis of the required text, it was a much more comprehensive essay that utilized external sources to support the argument. The average scores on the five essays for the 21 students (not including the one cited for plagiarism) who completed that work was 84.5%, again successfully demonstrating that the course exceeded expectations for the learning outcome.

### **Learning Outcomes Summary for Fall 2016-Spring 2017 ANTHROPOLOGY FACULTY RESPONSE**

The faculty of the Anthropology Program met to review the assessment plan for the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 terms. The reviews were of two upper division courses. The first of these was Anthropology 454, Lithic Technology, which was assessed to ascertain the success in accomplishing the learning outcome to *"engage in field or laboratory research and carry out preliminary analyses of materials from primary materials and/or collections."* The second course was Anthropology 327, Medical Anthropology, which was assessed to measure the learning outcome that *"students shall learn to read, understand, and critique anthropological works."* The enrollments for these courses were 12 students (Lithic Technology) and 22 students (Medical Anthropology). Our review procedures involve having the instructor use the relevant criteria to review his/her own course and have the second specialist in this sub-discipline (archaeology or cultural anthropology) read a subset of the materials submitted by the students to see if the relevant criteria has been met.

For Lithic Technology, the instructor (Dr. Neeley) determined that the course, on average, exceeded expectations (4 on a scale of 5) in meeting the learning outcome. The second reviewer (Dr. Fisher), reading a sub-set of the student exams and projects, agreed that the course exceeded expectations in providing students with an opportunity to *"engage in field or laboratory research and carry out preliminary analyses of materials from primary materials and/or collections."*

For Medical Anthropology, the professor (Dr. Carucci) found that the course, on average, exceeded expectations (4 on a scale of 5) in meeting both of the assessed

learning outcomes. The second reviewer (Dr. Yamaguchi), reading a sub-set of student research projects and exams agreed that the course exceeded expectations in meeting both learning outcomes. That is, students “*learned to read, understand, and critique anthropological works.*”

While we agree that the courses under review here are successful in meeting the learning outcomes, there are typically a handful of students who are unsuccessful in the course. As part of our assessment, this is an opportunity to reflect upon the methods and strategies used and suggest ways in which the student outcomes can be improved. One concern with student projects is the rush to complete the project at the last minute. These projects generally are under-researched and tend to fail to meet the desired learning outcome. One way to force students to engage in the research process is to require them to submit project ideas, outlines, and drafts at selected times during the semester in order to provide critical feedback for the success of the project. While these benchmarks are often used in lower level anthropology classes with project assignments, implementing them more consistently at the upper level will ensure that students are moving toward their final research goals in a timely manner.