

Student Learning in IN350 U.S. Studies Academic Year 2008-09 Assessment

Millikin University

IN350 Coordinator

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Executive Summary

The 2008-2009 academic year was a time of transition. The last IN 350 coordinator left campus without completing an assessment report for 2007-2008, but a new coordinator was appointed during the fall semester of 2008, so the assessment rubric used previously was continued for fall semester 2008 (see Appendix A). However in spring 2009, in anticipation of the assessment for the new course, and on the advice of the Dean of Teaching and Learning, we collected artifacts from 100% of the IN 350 courses and evaluated them according to a new rubric (see Appendix B). Further all syllabi were audited. The assessment data reveal that the 80% of the sections are fulfilling the goals for the course.

The IN 350 coordinator and faculty began planning to implement the redesigned IN 350 in the fall of 2010, when the students under the new curriculum reach their junior year. Information about the upcoming changes has been shared with the faculty who are currently teaching IN350 so that they may begin to reevaluate and redesign their courses to meet the new learning goals for 2010. Some courses are already meeting those goals.

Goals

The learning outcome goals for students taking IN350 in its current iteration are that students will be able to:

1. compare cultural and social structures beyond those found in the United States,
2. reflect on how the diversity of the world affects their everyday lives, and
3. explore culturally diverse points of view through substantive research, including examination of primary sources.

Snapshot

During the 2008-09 academic year, 31 sections of IN 350 were offered by 13 faculty members (see Appendix A):

- 16 sections by five History faculty – three full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty; two adjunct faculty
- 6 sections by two Political Science faculty – two full-time tenure-track
- 5 sections by four English faculty – three full-time tenure-track, one adjunct
- 2 sections by two Sociology faculty – one full-time tenured, one adjunct
- 2 sections by Spanish faculty – both adjuncts

Five of the sections of IN 350 listed above were offered as an immersion course in the January term. All but four of the sections were cross-listed with disciplinary courses. The syllabus audit, surveys and artifacts reveal that there is no discrepancy in quality between those cross-listed and those taught solely as IN 350 courses. However, there were some concerns raised by the data for courses taught by adjuncts.

The Learning Story

In all sections of IN350, students learn about the experiences and perspectives of some of the diverse cultures and people living outside the United States. From war to comparative religions, from Japan to the Islamic world, all the sections broaden students understanding of the world beyond our own borders. In all sections, students use discipline-specific primary sources in their writing, which ranges from the formal essay to informal discussion threads in Blackboard. Competencies that promote professional success and understanding of others are emphasized (as per MPSL prepares 1 and 2), but the primary goal is to develop the mission of preparing students to become democratic citizens in a global environment (MPSL prepare 3).

Faculty members interested in teaching IN350 submit a proposed Global Studies course description and syllabus, with approval of their Department Chair, to the Dean of Teaching and Learning. The Dean of Teaching and Learning reviews course proposals and determines IN 350 designation based on course development guidelines (Appendix C). The guidelines require faculty to demonstrate how each course will fulfill five areas, related directly to the Learning Goals:

- a) There is a substantial dimension of cultural and social structural comparison in the course.
- b) Students will gain substantive understanding of how the diversity of the world affects their everyday lives.

- c) There should be a significant component to the course that reaches beyond the United States.
- d) Students are exposed to primary sources (texts, music, artifacts) representing multiple cultures.
- e) There is a significant research component, which pushes students to explore culturally diverse points of view.

Assessment Methods and Data

Because of the transitional nature of this academic year for IN 350, a variety of assessment methods were used. During both semesters and January immersion, a syllabus audit was conducted. In the fall of 2008, a survey was administered by IN 350 faculty members at the end of the course. In the spring of 2009, artifacts were collected from all sections of the course.

A. Syllabus Audit Data

Assessment begins with an audit of the syllabus required for designation as an IN 350 course. For 2008-2009, all syllabi were collected. Each syllabus was audited to see if it contained specific items relevant to the delivery and assessment of IN 350. The following data provides information regarding the percentage of syllabi containing the relevant items as specified on the audit form. The audit form was not created until the summer 2009 semester, i.e., *after* the 2008-2009 sections of IN 350 had been delivered. The audit form, therefore, could not serve as a guide for faculty in the construction of their syllabi.

IN 350 University Seminar Syllabus Audit Form

	Syllabus is acceptable on item	Syllabus has item included but not in acceptable form	Syllabus does not have item
Course description: Standard description (see below) plus faculty written course description/overview			100%
Standard course	97%		3%

learning goals (see below)			
Specification of a written assignment that will serve as ethical reasoning artifact for assessment purposes	***See note below	77%	23%

***Note: Regarding the audit in relation to artifact identification, the data provided above were calculated based on a review of the syllabus only. If the syllabus under review clearly identified an assignment relevant to the academic learning goal in question that could easily serve as an artifact for assessment purposes, then a mark went into the “syllabus has item included” column. If the syllabus did not clearly identify an assignment that could be so used, a mark went into the “syllabus does not have item” column. Faculty may well have provided additional assignments or elaborated on existing ones such that those assignments could have been used for these purposes. For purposes of this audit, however, marks were made as a function of clear identification on the syllabus itself.

B. Survey Results

Assessment of whether or not a course meets the objectives was assessed in two ways: survey of students at the end of a course and collection of artifacts.

In the fall of 2008 the IN350 Coordinator collected surveys completed in the IN 350 courses. The survey that had been administered from spring 2005 to spring 2008 was administered in five of the thirteen sections (compared to 5:17 in fall of 2005, 5:11 in spring of 2006, and 2:15 in spring 2007). As shown below, the averages for fall 2008 were higher than the average in every category except collaboration.

The overall results for the surveys completed in spring 2005, fall 2005, spring 2007 and fall 2008 are shown in the following chart:

Median scores on a scale from 1 (disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Performance indicators:	F08	S07	S05	F05	Average
1. Diversity	4.58	4.43	4.50	4.0	4.38
2. Affect life	4.28	4.39	4.22	3.7	4.15
3. Beyond USA	4.92	4.67	4.85	4.4	4.71
4. Diverse primary sources	4.71	4.45	4.58	4.0	4.44
5. Research	4.36	4.00	4.04	3.7	4.03

6. Theory	4.75	4.63	4.50	3.9	4.45
7. Perspectives different than mine	4.75	4.71	4.74	4.4	4.65
8. Collaboration	3.70	3.98	4.01	4.0	3.92
9. Sensitivity	4.51	4.37	4.42	3.9	4.30
10. Engagement	4.31	4.55	4.45	3.9	4.32

C. Artifact Results

During spring 2009, between 3 and 5 artifacts including term papers, essay exams, and other major assignments were collected from every IN 350 course. The 100% compliance with this request demonstrates the cooperativeness and support of the IN 350 faculty.

The coordinator of IN 350 used a single rubric (see Appendix B) to assess all artifacts on a 1-3 scale (1 indicating Nominal, 2 indicating Adequate, 3 indicating Excellent) on each of the three goals. The percentage of the total artifacts in each category is listed in the following charts:

Compare cultural and social structures

Green	Excellent	44.8%
Yellow	Adequate	30.5%
Red	Nominal	23.7%

Understand how the diversity of the world affects their everyday lives

Green	Excellent	40.6%
Yellow	Adequate	42.4%
Red	Nominal	16.9%

Well-developed research using primary sources to explore a culturally diverse point of view

Green	Excellent	59.3%
Yellow	Adequate	20.3%
Red	Nominal	20.3%

When combined the average score for each category is:

Green	Excellent	48%
Yellow	Adequate	31%
Red	Nominal	21%

Analysis of Assessment Results

A. Syllabus analysis

All but one faculty member included the learning objectives and about three-fourths designed assignments that would demonstrate that students are engaged in significant research that compares cultural or societal structures. No one has yet including the IN 350 course description as found in the bulletin, although each has included a course description that exemplifies the general principles found in that IN 350 description. In order to make it easier for assessment teams from outside the university, the IN coordinator will urge faculty to include the standard IN 350 description in every syllabus beginning next year.

Faculty members need to focus on making the assignments consciously so that the assessment of the three learning goals are identified in an artifact that can be assessed at the end of the course. About 24% of the courses do not appear to have a significant research component included in the syllabi and roughly the same number had artifacts that did not meet the expectations for significant research. It is unclear whether the artifacts selected were not representative of these learning goals, or whether adequate research is simply not required in these courses. By tagging the assignment that will be used for an artifact, the faculty member will be more conscious of this requirement and the artifact collected will be more representative of the course as a whole.

In general, the cross-listed syllabi and those taught solely as IN 350 demonstrated no difference in meeting the learning goals. On the other hand, there was a difference between adjuncts and tenured/tenure track faculty. There were some adjuncts who did an excellent job with requiring significant comparative research that involved primary sources, and all tenured/tenure track included an adequate or excellent research requirement. However, some adjuncts did not appear to require such work in the syllabus, and the artifacts collected confirm that this goal of IN 350 is not being met by some adjuncts.

B. Student Surveys

1. Scores from all semesters show consistently high scores in four areas: 1) diversity of the world, 3) reaching beyond the U.S., 4) exposure to diverse primary sources, and 7) exposure to perspectives different than students' own.
2. The lowest overall mean score was for collaboration. The 2007 assessment report noted that question 8 on collaboration might not relate to any

- course requirement. Collaboration is not an objective of the course and is therefore not a required part of the course. It is actually encouraging to see that students are aware that it was not a significant part of all sections (although it might have been part of learning strategies in some sections because of other learning objectives), thus indicating that students' responses to the other questions is objective and significant.
3. Lower than average mean scores were given for 2) how the diversity of the world affects my life, 5) significant research component, and 10) engagement

This brief analysis shows that student perceptions of the Global Studies courses taken during these two semesters were strongest in the areas of exposing students to perspectives and ideas different from their own, particularly in areas outside the U.S. The weakest component, when the overall mean scores are analyzed, is that of the research component and understanding of how global diversity affect one's own life. The survey results mirror those of the artifacts, as we will see below.

C. Artifact Analysis

Of the 59 individual artifacts collected, only about 20% fell in the Nominal category, while nearly half fell in the Excellent category. These scores indicate that students are indeed meeting the learning goals developed by the faculty.

The 20% of scores that were judged nominal all occurred in courses taught by adjuncts, although some of the highest scores were also from courses taught by adjuncts.

Improvement Plans

Next year will be the last year for the current version of IN 350. The IN 350 coordinator will continue to do syllabi audits and collect and analyze artifacts for each course, including the immersion classes taught during the summer of 2009 and January 2010. Working with faculty, especially adjuncts, to consciously include an assignment that will serve as a comparison of cultures based on significant research using primary sources should reduce the number of nominal scores in the first and last learning objectives. Sending out the syllabus audit form to every faculty member might help in the creation or modification of syllabi. Examples of excellent assignments from a variety of sections will also be distributed as models for how to design appropriate requirements.

If possible, immersion courses need to supply a syllabus prior to being accepted for inclusion in the schedule. Currently proposals need only include a course

description. However, to assure that all the learning goals are included, a full syllabus should be required.

Analyzing this data also leads to a question about how well we are meeting the goal of understanding how the diversity of the world affects students' lives. This goal seems more difficult to assess and we need to continue to work to find a better mechanism for determining whether or not students are gaining this understanding.

Perhaps the most important goal for next year is to lead a series of workshops to help the current IN 350 faculty to invent or alter current courses to meet the new IN 350 objectives that will begin with the junior class in 2010-2011. Since the new course must be writing intensive, the research component will become even more central. Understanding the assessment of the current IN 350 will help point out potential pitfall in the design of the new courses. A syllabus audit for the new course should be developed early in the fall to help guide the development of syllabi.

The IN 350 faculty are a dedicated group of faculty who are willing to help with assessment (as witnessed by the 100% compliance in artifact collection and 97% inclusion of IN 350 learning goals.) We all need to work together to make the new IN 350 the crown of the MPSTL program.

Appendix A
IN350 Courses, AY 2008-09

Date	Course Title	Cross-listed Department & Course number	FT Tenured Or t-track, W/terminal Degree	FT Contract Faculty w/ Terminal Degree	FT Contract Faculty w/o Terminal Degree	Adjunct Faculty
Fall 2008	Global Issues (3 sections)	PO	•			
	International Literature	EN 335	•			
	Literature of the Holocaust					•
	Sociology of Globalization	SO 360	•			
	Modern Japan	HI 340	•			
	Vietnam & American War	HI 340	•			
	Islamic World	HI 360	•			
	Genocide in Film	HI 360	•			
	Jesus of History/Christ of Faith (2 sections)	HI 360				•
	Comparative Religions	HI 360				•
Jan. 2009	Vietnam War	HI 340	•			
	Latin American Film and History	HI 360				•
	Genocide and Film in the World	HI 360	•			
	History and Civilization of Hispanic Caribbean	SP 350				•
	Culture and Literature of Chile	SP 350			•	
Spring 2008	Global Haiku	EN 340	•			
	Children's Lit on	EN 220				•

	Third Reich					
	Global Women's Writing	EN 366	•			
	Comparative World Religions	HI 310				•
	Jesus of History/Christ of Faith	HI 360				•
	Introduction to Modern Africa (2 sections)	HI 340	•			
	Hiroshima in History and Film	HI 360	•			
	Modern China	HI 360	•			
	European Politics	PO 322	•			
	Transitions to Adulthood/Global Perspectives					•
	Global Conflict: Iraq & Vietnam (2 sections)		•			

Appendix B
IN 350 Assessment Rubric

Millikin University
IN 350 Global Studies

By the end of IN 350/Global Studies, students will be able to

1. compare cultural and social structures beyond those found in the United States,
2. reflect on how the diversity of the world affects their everyday lives, and
3. explore culturally diverse points of view through substantive research, including examination of primary sources.

Item Evaluated: Variable – may be an essay, exam, or response paper

Evaluation by: IN 350 coordinator

	Excellent (5 points)	Adequate (3 points)	Nominal (1 point)
Compare cultural and social structures	An excellent response demonstrates ability to compare cultural and social structures with subtlety and consistency	An adequate response demonstrates an ability to compare cultural and social structures with lack of subtlety and/or consistency	A nominal response lacks an ability to compare cultural and social structures.
Understand how the diversity of world affects their everyday lives	An excellent response demonstrates a deep understanding of how the diversity of the world affects their everyday lives	An adequate response demonstrates an average ability to understand how the diversity of the world affects their everyday lives	A nominal response demonstrates no attempt to understand how the diversity of the world affects their everyday lives.
Well-developed research using primary sources to explore a culturally diverse point of view	An excellent analysis demonstrates the student's consistent ability to use discipline-appropriate primary sources. The student interprets, rather than summarizes, relevant evidence. Student can	An adequate analysis demonstrates the student's inconsistent attempt to use discipline-appropriate primary sources. The student may make errors in documentation and/or grammar and	A nominal analysis demonstrates no attempt to edit or document. There are many errors in documentation and/or grammar and mechanics. The research is

	formulate a well-positioned and well-supported argument or opinion by critically synthesizing multiple perspectives.	mechanics. Student may summarize in large part rather than synthesize diverse points of view.	inadequate and/or fails to take a culturally diverse point of view.
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Appendix C Faculty Guidelines for Global Studies Course Proposals

Global studies courses explore the fundamental diversity and interconnectedness of the world.

Faculty developing a global studies course should submit a syllabus that demonstrates how the course will address the following guidelines:

- a) There is a substantial dimension of cultural and social structural comparison in the course.
- b) Students will gain substantive understanding of how the diversity of the world affects their everyday lives.
- c) There should be a significant component to the course that reaches beyond the United States.
- d) Students are exposed to primary sources (texts, music, and artifacts) from multiple cultures.
- e) There is a significant research component, which pushes students to explore culturally diverse points of view

Each discipline is expected to approach this course with its own perspective on the unit of analysis: individual, group, culture, world or specific issue. For this reason, wide variation among offerings is to be expected.

Suggested elements of a Global Studies course:

Knowledge Goals

1. The subject matter of the course should extend the exploration of the fundamental diversity questions to living in our global contemporary world.

2. The Course should be interdisciplinary, comparative, and theoretical.

Skills Goals

The course should intentionally further students' abilities in:

1. Writing and research, appropriate to a junior-level course.
2. Critical thinking, especially in developing perspectives beyond the ethnocentric paradigm of the dominant culture and developing strong advocacy skills in defense of diverse positions using well-developed and well-supported argument.
3. Moral and ethical reasoning, with an emphasis on greater complexity and sophistication, appropriate to the content and goals of the course.
4. Working collaboratively, taking initiative and demonstrating leadership, and understanding the motivations, intentions, reasoning, perspectives, and emotions of themselves and others.

Values Goals

The course should intentionally instill greater sensitivity to diversity in the global society. both conflictual and cooperative.

Core Questions

All three core questions should be addressed, with specific emphasis upon one varying according to the nature and topic of the course.

Core Means

The course should:

1. incorporate the use of primary texts
2. include a significant library and research component consistent with a 300-level course
3. include pedagogies that emphasize active engagement with the course content on the part of the student.