

Millikin University
Student Learning in IN350 Global Issues Sequential Requirement (University Studies)
Assessment Report 2015-2016

by Dr. Carmella Braniger, IN350 Global Issues Coordinator

Assessment Team:

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In Brief

Global Issues is the final of six courses in the sequential component of University Studies. Students entering as freshmen typically take the Global Issues course in their junior year. IN350 Global Issues courses explore topics of global importance and build on the skills (writing, reflection, and ethical reasoning) students have developed in previous sequential university studies courses (i.e., IN140, IN150, IN151, IN250, and IN251).

Global Issues course offerings in the academic year 2015-2016 provided a broad range of choices for students. Faculty from a variety of disciplines offered courses as diverse as Global Conspiracy Theories; Global Approaches to Medicine and Health; Global Political Economy; Social Policy in Ireland; and Women in Global Conflict. Many sections were offered on campus, and some offered travel experiences to international destinations such as Italy, China, Ireland, and the Dominican Republic.

The overall assessment of student learning in IN350 for 2015-2016 shows students performing at levels of excellence on all three goals: writing continues to receive green performance indicators, and ethical reasoning and reflection on democratic citizenship show improved scores. The means ratings for both moved from yellow to green.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, Dr. Braniger worked with appropriate deans to increase the number of students served by the same number of sections offered last year, increasing the average class by 2.5 students per section. Particular attention was paid to increasing enrollment in PACE courses.

Monitoring the double-dip rule: Since the double-dip rule was put into effect, several faculty have asked that their majors courses be approved for delivery of IN350 goals. Many of these classes have prerequisites that prevent non-majors from taking the courses. Not only are non-majors excluded from the opportunity to study in a field outside their discipline, but the majors taking the class for IN350 credit are also missing out on the intent and purpose of the University Studies program, which is to provide breadth in student exposure to a variety of inquiry methods. University Studies courses are meant to complement learning in the major, not be replaced by it. The University Studies Coordinators do not support the use of the IN double-dipping rule to inhibit student exposure to ways of knowing outside their chosen field of study. We encourage faculty and administrators to limit the number of University Studies courses students take within their major.

As a part of ongoing university-wide programmatic review, the University Studies program will engage in a self-study process next 2015-2016 academic year, resulting in an external review of the program. This review is timely, as the program continues to receive internal criticism for its size and scope. The self-study and review will provide an opportunity for the University Studies program to seek external validation for its innovative and progressive approach to general education curriculum.

In addition to providing a narrative of the intentional and meaningful nature of the University Studies curriculum, the review will also allow the coordinators to focus on the ways in which the program contributes to the performance learning mission of the university.

As requested by Provost Aper, IN350 Coordinator, Dr. Carmella Braniger, will work with the Center for International Education to improve opportunities for students to take IN350 courses when abroad. Dr. Braniger will also continue working with all interested faculty to approve their courses for IN350 delivery.

In the following report, valuable data from the IN350 learning environment will be analyzed to improve the continued implementation and assessment practices for this University Studies requirement.

Learning Goals

The academic bulletin course description for IN350 courses for 2015-2016 is as follows:

Global Issues courses, taken during the junior year, explore a topic of global importance. Students will continue to develop their understanding of democratic citizenship with an intense focus on a particular issue of global importance and associated ethical and social justice issues. These courses include a significant research component, are writing intensive, and require exploration of primary sources (e.g., texts, music, artifacts, etc.).

IN350 Learning Outcome Goals are as follows:

The student will be able to:

1. Analyze a topic of global importance through the use of discipline-appropriate sources.
2. Use ethical reasoning to make a judgment about some aspect of a global issue.
3. Reflect on her/his responsibilities as a democratic citizen in a global environment.

By heightening students' sense global awareness, achievement of IN350 learning outcomes facilitates advancement of the university mission to prepare students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and a personal life of meaning and value. Learning in IN350 complements learning in the major to achieve the university mission. IN350 is also the capstone for delivering the three learning threads of University Studies: ethical reasoning, writing, and reflection.

Snapshot

Enrollment, Sections, & Average Class Size Data 2015-2016

	Enrollment	Sections	Average Class Size
Summer 2015	39	8	4.9
Fall 2015	266 ¹	17 (+2 crosslisted with PACE)	14
PACE Fall 2015	38	6 (+2 crosslisted with Traditional)	9.5
Combined Fall 2015	343	31	11.1
January Immersion 2016	36	4	9
Spring 2016	224	17 (+1 crosslisted with PACE)	12.4
PACE Spring 2016	59	6 (+1 crosslisted with Traditional)	8.4
Combined Spring 2016	319	29	11
Total 2015-2016	662	60	11

The total number of sections offered in the year 2015-2016 was 60. 662 students were enrolled this year. The number of students enrolled is down this year due to smaller classes matriculating.

¹ Samples' MH316 is not crosslisted on MUOnline for Fall 2015. I had to manually add his numbers to the total for this column.

Comparison enrollment data 2011-2016

Semester	Enrollment
Fall 2015	343
Fall 2014	514
Fall 2013	403
Fall 2012	536
Fall 2011	339
Spring 2016	319
Spring 2015	375
Spring 2014	344
Spring 2013	484
Spring 2012	308

Year	Enrollment	# Sections	Average Class Size
2011-2012²	647	36	18
2012-2013³	1020	57	18
2013-2014	747	55	13.5
2014-2015	889	55	16
2015-2016	662	60	11

The Learning Story

IN350 has been a part of the University Studies curriculum since Millikin's general education reforms in 1995. The focus of Global Issues courses is to guide students in thinking beyond the local and national environment to explore a topic of global importance. The diversity of courses offered throughout the year presents opportunities for students to view the world from a different perspective and consider issues from a different cultural viewpoint. The skills that students learn in the IN350 Global Issues courses and the understanding from a different perspective of important topics affecting our world helps students achieve the university mission.

The most recent and relevant revision to this piece of the MPSL puzzle is The Nyberg Summer Seminar Project 2008. This summer Nyberg report developed three learning threads that were identified in the 2007 Nyberg report for focus in the sequential elements of the University Studies program: reflection, writing, and ethical reasoning. These three threads are evident in the IN350 student learning goals and are integrated in each of the IN350 courses. The courses are designed to be writing intensive, which means students are expected to critically analyze a topic of global importance through substantive research that includes primary sources resulting in a research essay with multiple drafts and guided revision. Students apply ethical reasoning to make a judgment on global issues and reflect on their responsibilities as a democratic citizen in a global environment.

2012-2013 was the first academic year for implementation of the new IN350 Global Issues learning goals that were approved by the Council on Curriculum on 1 February 2012. These new goals refined the language of the threads and integrated that language into the student learning outcome goals for the University Studies sequential requirement. Each new student learning outcome goal works to deliver one of the three learning threads. This year, implementation and assessment of the new learning goals

² Data for this year's report does not include Immersion courses. It does include PACE courses.

³ Data for this year's report does not include Immersion courses. It does include PACE courses.

continues. Several years out, now, from the changes, we can begin to collect and analyze trends in our assessment data.

Assessment Methods

The assessment of learning goals should accurately reflect student learning in IN350 courses in ways that foster innovative, creative teaching-learning strategies that are stimulating and challenging to students and faculty alike. Each annual review of IN350 student artifacts should utilize a goals-focused rubric approved by the IN350 Assessment Team to determine achievement of the IN350 learning goals for each academic year.

All faculty teaching an IN350 designated course are asked to instruct students to submit artifacts and assignments that are to be used to assess achievement of IN350 learning goals. Faculty assist in the assessment process by encouraging submission of student artifacts. Artifacts from traditional, PACE, and Immersion courses are submitted and assessed. All artifacts submitted and reviewed are provided as electronic versions via the established Moodle course management site. Students upload artifacts to Moodle folders set up for each learning goal (Global Issues/Writing; Ethical Reasoning; Democratic Citizenship). Instructions on uploading artifacts are provided to all faculty for distribution to students through the established Moodle course management site.

The IN350 Assessment Team for 2015-2016 was made up of the IN Coordinators Dr. Carmella Braniger and Dr. Dan Monroe. Dr. Monroe assessed artifacts for goal 3, democratic citizenship, and Dr. Braniger assessed artifacts for writing and ethical reasoning.

The 2015-16 IN350 Assessment Team normed three artifacts—one for each goal criteria. The coordinator selected sample artifacts from each section of IN350, for norming, and made these available to team members, along with last year's report. The 2013-2014 IN350 Assessment Rubric was reviewed by the Assessment Team. After discussion, the assessment team members decided to use the same assessment tool as last year for consistency.

Samples were randomly selected from the submitted artifacts, compiled digitally, and divided among the team members for assessment. 10% of artifacts submitted were pulled.

In 2010-2011, the assessment team set benchmarks for a rating of green, yellow, and red, applying the rubric with a maximum score of 5.0. Use of these benchmarks has continued and will continue for consistency and trend analysis.

A mean score of 3.5—5.0 is considered meeting expectations and would be awarded the green designation indicating excellence; a mean score of 2.0—3.4 would be designated yellow or adequate; and a mean score of 1.9 or below would be designated as red or nominal.

Artifacts for each learning thread are randomly selected from across all sections of IN350 taught during the academic year. Artifacts reviewed represent a 10% pool of artifacts for 2014-2015:

31 artifacts were assessed on the writing learning goal: "The student will analyze a topic of global importance through the use of discipline-appropriate sources."

31 artifacts were assessed on the ethical reasoning learning goal: "The student will be able to use ethical reasoning to make a judgment about some aspect of a global issue."

32 artifacts were assessed on the reflection on democratic citizenship goal: "The student will reflect on her/his responsibilities as a democratic citizen in a global environment."

Each artifact for each thread was assessed and assigned a total rubric score of between 1 and 5. On the basis of its total score, each artifact was tagged as falling into one of three categories:

Nominal (Red—Stop)	Adequate(Yellow—Caution)	Excellent (Green—Go)
1.9 and below	2.0-3.4	3.5-5.0

Artifacts were assessed by individual team members and results returned to the coordinator for analysis. The coordinator analyzed assessed artifacts and produced the assessment report. Electronic copies of the artifacts are saved and in the possession of the faculty coordinator of IN350, Dr. Braniger.

Assessment Data

The following table presents the assessment results for the past three academic years and measures the new learning goals approved in 2012.

2012-2016 Assessment Results

IN350 Learning Goal	2012-2013 Mean Rating	2013-2014 Mean Rating	2014-2015 Mean Rating	2015-16 Mean Rating	Three-Year Average Mean Rating 2012-2015
1. Analyze a topic of global Importance (writing)	3.9 Green	3.5 Green	3.7 Green	4.0 Green	3.8 Green
2. Use ethical reasoning to make judgment about global issue	3.7 Green	3.1 Yellow	4.0 Green	3.9 Green	3.7 Green
3. Reflect on your responsibilities as democratic citizen in global environment	3.7 Green	2.4 Yellow	4.2 Green	3.1 Yellow	3.4 Yellow

Ethical Reasoning

The following table identifies the number of ethical reasoning artifacts falling into each of the three major signal-rating categories:

Nominal (Red—Stop)	Adequate(Yellow—Caution)	Excellent (Green—Go)
2 (7%)	6 (19%)	23 (74%)

The data show that over 93% of students demonstrated at least adequate ethical reasoning skills. At the same time, only 7% of students demonstrated only nominal ethical reasoning skills.

Last year, assignment construction was identified as an area for attention in faculty development. Most, if not all, of the artifacts assessed as nominal last year were classified in that way because the writing simply did not engage in ethical reasoning. This was at least partially due to the type of prompt or assignment that was constructed. Being a focus for improvement, this issue was addressed through faculty development and improvements in student outcomes are represented in this year's assessment of ethical reasoning in IN350.

Writing

The following table identifies the number of writing artifacts falling into each of the three major signal-rating categories:

Nominal (Red—Stop)	Adequate (Yellow—Caution)	Excellent (Green—Go)
0 (0%)	6 (19%)	25 (81%)

The data show that over 80% of students demonstrated at excellent writing skills. Only 19% of students demonstrated adequate writing skills. No artifacts were assessed as nominal. Students show improvement in direct citation and in organization and evaluation of ideas and issues, therefore improving students' arguments/positions and support for those arguments/positions.

Reflection on Democratic Citizenship

The following table identifies the number of reflection artifacts falling into each of the three major signal-rating categories:

Nominal (Red—Stop)	Adequate (Yellow—Caution)	Excellent (Green—Go)
9 (28%)	12 (38%)	11 (34%)

The data show that 72% of students sampled demonstrated at least adequate reflection skills for this learning outcome. In the past, reflection artifacts needed work on two areas: **knowledge** of public affairs and **analysis** of news and information. We made improvements last year, due to improved assignment prompts. This year, student performance has dipped again, particularly regarding these two areas under democratic citizenship and reflection. As faculty become more expert at designing effective prompts for such reflection, student performance will continue to improve.

One thing to consider about goal 3 is the abstract nature of the goal we are trying to assess. Measuring engagement with democratic citizenship is difficult. We might consider revising the goal in order to create one that is more assessable and measurable.

In general, the IN350 instructors are making a solid effort to meet the requirements with assignments that specifically task students to address the learning goals. Bringing attention to assignment construction through faculty development and workshops, we can continue to improve the delivery of our university-wide learning goals. We are starting to see consistent student performance across the three threads of the program. We are seeing improvements in writing, ethical reasoning, and while reflection is low this year, it still does not dip below adequate performance, or a yellow indicator. Any improvements we see are a direct result of faculty's deliberate and consistent efforts to make innovations in pedagogy in order to integrate these critical skills into the Millikin general education classroom.

Analysis of Assessment Results

Excellence/Adequate in all learning goals in overall assessment results

In examining the success of meeting IN350 Global Issues learning goals for the entire 2015-2016 academic year, the data indicate consistent performance in writing and ethical reasoning, with a slight dip in performance on reflection. 2015-2016 shows a green indicator for two of the three goals and learning threads, and a yellow indicator for the third goal, indicating that faculty are delivering the learning outcome goals of the program.

Overall, there is consistency in the average scores of assessed artifacts in two areas. Scores for writing artifacts remain consistent not only with the previous year, but with 2012-2013, as well. The skill of writing has seen steady and consistent improvement and performance in the past three years. Ethical reasoning, a relatively new skill for IN350, maintained consistency in means score. We will need to work again on goal three to improve student performance.

Learning Goal#1 shows consistent excellence

Students are performing well in their written analysis of global issues in IN350 courses. In 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, students were adequately meeting expectations in learning goal 1, but not at the level of excellence. In the years 2012-2015, students demonstrated excellence in meeting learning goal #1, showing improvement from the previous years. Continued excellence is demonstrated in this academic year 2015-2016 average means score of 3.7, green.

Student artifacts this year showed improvement on the use of substantive analysis. Student research papers were more fleshed out by analysis and discussion. While written analysis of global issues was the strongest point of the Global Issues artifacts, two of the common issues with this learning goal were as follows:

- a. The writing intensive purpose of IN350 requires some emphasis in some cases.
- b. In some cases, students do not provide references and citations for their claims.

Faculty can be invited to provide additional relevant resources and development activities for IN350 instructors.

Ethical Reasoning: remain consistent

In 2011-2012, an ethical focus was not a learning goal in its own right. Instead, ethical issues were integrated into the written analysis learning goal and appeared in goal #2 to some degree. In 2012-2013, ethical reasoning became learning goal #2 in itself.

Unsurprisingly, the data from previous years has shown additional room for improvement in students' ability to engage in ethical reasoning to make a judgment about a global issue. The overall results for the years leading up to this one have been adequate. However, both 2014-2015, as well as 2015-2016, show marked improvement in student learning for ethical reasoning in IN350. Over 90% of students randomly sampled this year were clearly engaging in ethical reasoning at adequate and advanced levels.

It was noted in previous reports that "students would benefit from further clarity on a) the construction of an argument and counter-arguments, and b) on the need to make a judgment." This area became a focus of faculty development events and additional resources. Faculty coordinators spent time in meetings, one-on-ones, and workshops helping faculty to develop better assignments for guiding student engagement in ethical reasoning. A powerpoint presentation that provides a basic introduction to ethical reasoning has been widely circulated among IN350 instructors and uploaded to the Moodle site for University Studies resources. Faculty are taking this goal seriously, and, indeed, over 90% of students are engaging in ethical reasoning. Continued faculty development for faculty should further improve faculty instruction and student learning.

Democratic Citizenship: shows significant dip

This year, we return to the previous yellow ratings for goal #3. Strategies to improve student achievement of learning goals needed to be explored. Reflection artifacts needed improvement in two areas: **knowledge** of public affairs and **analysis** of news and information. In previous reports, these two aspects of the goal were flagged for not being met. Continued development for faculty should help maintain and further improve faculty instruction and student learning outcome goals.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Continue to **increase enrollment**, especially in PACE sections of IN350: The number of sections offered per semester remains consistent with last year and more students trafficked these sections in 2015-2016. Even so, traditional sections of IN350 averaged three times as many students per section as PACE and Immersion courses. The IN350 Coordinator should continue to work with appropriate deans and faculty to better monitor and incentivize enrollment in PACE, Immersion, and traditional IN350 courses.

2. Since the **double-dip rule** was put into effect, several faculty have asked that their majors courses be approved for delivery of IN350 goals. Many of these classes have pre-requisites that prevent non-majors from taking the courses. Not only are non-majors excluded from the opportunity to study in a field outside their discipline, but the majors taking the class for IN350 credit are also missing out on the intent and purpose of the University Studies program, which is to provide breadth in student exposure to a variety of inquiry methods. University Studies courses are meant to complement learning in the major, not be replaced by it. The University Studies Coordinators do not support the use of the IN double-dipping rule to inhibit student exposure to ways of knowing outside their chosen field of study. We encourage faculty and administrators to limit the number of University Studies courses students take outside their major.

Example: To accommodate student scheduling in the music department, Joe Maston worked to integrate IN350 learning goals into his MH316 Introduction to Ethnomusicology course. This will allow students in the various music majors to receive their IN350 requirement through the double-dip rule. However, it sets a dangerous precedent for other programs that want to offer in house University Studies courses, but are unable or unwilling to accommodate non-majors in their classes. The purpose of University Studies is to broaden students' exposure to various disciplines and ways of knowing. If students are taking their University Studies courses in their home program of study, they miss out on the main purpose for taking these classes: breadth of exposure. To this end, these MH courses are now crosslisted with at least 5 seats on the IN350 side. Future proposals for the double-dip rule should include how many seats will be crosslisted with IN350.

The new double-dip rule should continue to be reviewed by Coordinators to trouble-shoot areas that will need our attention. Courses in the majors meeting the IN350 requirements will be allowed to count toward the IN350 requirement. We should continue to monitor and record trends over the next year and discuss the impact of the implementation of the double-dip rule for meeting learning outcomes for IN350.

3. Continue to improve pedagogical delivery of **reflection** on democratic citizenship: data shows that we have improved student learning for goals #1 & #2 over the past few years. Along with other IN Coordinators, the IN350 Coordinator should continue to host two campus-wide workshops per year on reflection on democratic citizenship and other areas of interest for IN faculty.

4. Continue maximizing use of the Moodle site for **student artifact collection**: The establishment of an electronic site for collection of student artifacts using the Moodle course management system has resulted in an increase of artifacts submitted for assessment. Timely communication with faculty as they are developing courses will encourage them to incorporate assessment practices into their courses, and to guide and require students to upload artifacts to the proper Assessment folders. Faculty should be asked to ensure that students upload one artifact for each learning goal.

5. **Faculty involvement**: For improved achievement of IN350 learning goals, faculty members teaching IN350 courses need to engage in dialogue to share ideas and have input into the assessment process.

Through faculty development events, the University Studies program as a whole has elicited faculty voice: this practice should be continued and strengthened.

6. Performance Learning: As the campus continues to engage in discussions of how we define performance learning, the University Studies program should seek ways to apply the language of performance learning to what we already do best in our classrooms. Coordinators should seek ways to define what and how we assess performance learning in the University Studies program.

To that end, IN350 Coordinator Dr. Carmella Braniger, with the support of other IN Coordinators and Department Chairs, applied for and received a Performance Learning Enhancement Grant to offer a performance-learning based section of IN350 in Summer 2016, Fall 2016, and Spring 2017. The course seeks to work with students to publish critical stories about issues both personal and global. The first course during Summer 2016 yielded three student essays, which are under contract for publication with Sense Publishers.

7. Program Review: Last year, the University Studies team recommended that our program go under review during the 2016-2017 academic year. We sought the opinion of external agents to identify and recommend changes and innovations to our already strong program. That review came a year early. During 2015-2016, the team wrote and submitted to internal and external constituents a report on the state of the program. The IN sequence received a favorable review, with helpful suggestions for improving our already extensive assessment processes. This year, the University Studies team will create a list of recommendations for improvement based on the review from the external team.

As a part of communicating out the results of our assessment to external constituents, the annual IN350 Assessment Report is posted on the Millikin Assessment page and is available to all faculty members. Strategies to facilitate student learning and achievement of the IN350 learning goals will hopefully result in continued improved achievement of goals in the coming years.

Appendix A

Millikin University
University Studies

IN 350 Global Issues Assessment Rubric

IN 350 Global Issues Assessment Rubric 2013

Semester _____

Goal	Excellent (5 points)	Adequate (3 points)	Nominal (1 point)	Score
1. Analyze a topic of global importance through the use of discipline-appropriate sources.	<p>The student analyzes, rather than just summarizes, relevant evidence concerning a topic of global importance.</p> <p>The student demonstrates a consistent ability to use discipline-appropriate sources.</p> <p>The student makes few, if any, errors in documentation and/or grammar and mechanics.</p>	<p>The student has made an attempt to analyze, but in large part, merely summarizes the relevant evidence, concerning a topic of global importance.</p> <p>The student demonstrates an inconsistent ability to use discipline-appropriate sources.</p> <p>The student makes some errors in documentation and/or grammar and mechanics.</p>	<p>The student summarizes only, there is no attempt to analyze relevant evidence concerning a topic of global importance.</p> <p>The student demonstrates no attempt to use discipline-appropriate sources.</p> <p>The student makes many errors in documentation and/or grammar and mechanics.</p>	
2. Use ethical reasoning to make a judgment about some aspect of a global issue.	<p>The student demonstrates an excellent understanding of the ethical problem through a well-positioned argument.</p> <p>The student makes a clear ethical judgment about some aspect of a global issue.</p>	<p>The student demonstrates an adequate understanding of the ethical problem, while attempting to use an argument.</p> <p>The student makes an adequate attempt to make an ethical judgment about some aspect of a global issue.</p>	<p>The student demonstrates a nominal understanding of the ethical problem, with very little attempt to use an argument.</p> <p>The student makes little to no attempt to make an ethical judgement.</p>	

<p>3. Reflect on your responsibilities as a democratic citizen in a global environment.</p>	<p>The student demonstrates an excellent understanding of their responsibilities as democratic citizens in a global environment by reflecting on most of the following:</p> <p>knowledge about public affairs;</p> <p>analysis of news and information;</p> <p>analysis of public policies;</p> <p>evaluation of diverse opinions;</p> <p>understanding of community activism.</p>	<p>The student demonstrates an adequate understanding of their responsibilities as democratic citizens in a global environment by reflecting on some of the following:</p> <p>knowledge about public affairs;</p> <p>analysis of news and information;</p> <p>analysis of public policies;</p> <p>evaluation of diverse opinions;</p> <p>understanding of community activism.</p>	<p>The student demonstrates a nominal understanding of their responsibilities as democratic citizens in a global environment by reflecting on few, if any of the following:</p> <p>knowledge about public affairs;</p> <p>analysis of news and information;</p> <p>analysis of public policies;</p> <p>evaluation of diverse opinions;</p> <p>understanding of community activism.</p>	
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