3-Year Academic Assessment Plan Cover Sheet

Assessment plans are due February 16, 2015
Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

Program Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Anthropology Undergraduate Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Anthropology</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Barb Roth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Coordinator</td>
<td>Debra Martin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>March 22, 2015</td>
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Contact Person for This Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Debra Martin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>5-1881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Debra.martin@unlv.edu">Debra.martin@unlv.edu</a></td>
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Please address the following items:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- **Plans must include a curriculum map showing which courses will address which learning outcomes.** Examples can be found here: [http://provost.unlv.edu/Assessment/map.html](http://provost.unlv.edu/Assessment/map.html)
- Which learning outcomes will be assessed in each cycle year (i.e., assessment timeline)?
- How will the learning outcomes be assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.
- What is your plan for sharing the assessment results and acting on them (i.e., closing the loop)?

Please limit the narrative portion of your report to no more than four pages. You may attach appendices with data, tables, charts, or other materials as needed. Please explain the relevant conclusions from any appendices in your narrative. Please contact the Office of Academic Assessment if you have questions or need assistance.
Introduction to 3-Year Assessment Plan for Undergraduates (2015 - 2018)

Given the feedback we received from the Assessment staff last year, we discussed assessment at our annual faculty retreat in the spring and were able to incorporate some new ideas into our longer term planning strategy. We see this 3-plan as a guide for our department to continue fine-tuning the kinds of assessment that we do for undergraduates. While we have been fairly successful with summative metrics and, we are just now beginning to implement more formative activities in order to be able to assess learning as it is happening, and change teaching strategies within the semester to address it. Thus, this projection should be seen as a document that is in progress and dynamic, so that we can add to it as we develop new strategies. We envision our program assessment as an active process wherein the data we collect with our assessment tools provides a feedback loop for us to appreciate what is working and reevaluate and implement change where necessary.

Our assessment plan is designed to evaluate our students at two levels: those first and second year students that may or may not be Anthropology majors or minors and our mid- and upper-level majors and minors. This staged assessment approach will provide data for us in the department but also a broader view of UNLV students who are not majors or minors. Given constraints on time and resources our approach is also designed to get the most out of assessment without overburdening our faculty or staff or the larger assessment system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes for the Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our student learning outcomes are focused on learning objectives for Anthropology as well as recognition of learning objectives that cross-cut all disciplines. We imagine that our students can apply what they learn in Anthropology to other courses and in their lives beyond UNLV to help them be better informed citizens and well-prepared employees and employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Gain global and cultural awareness</td>
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<td>2. Analyze contemporary cultures within the US</td>
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<td>3. Study the models of the social sciences to analyze individual and group behavior</td>
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<td>4. Expand self-awareness to better demonstrate awareness of one’s own place in and effect on the world</td>
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<td>5. Interpret diverse perspectives linked to identity, including “race”, gender, and ethnicity, both in the American and international contexts</td>
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<td>6. Learn skills to better understand how international cultures relate to complex, contemporary world systems</td>
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<td>7. Function effectively in diverse groups</td>
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<td>8. Ability to communicate and write clearly and successfully</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Competency in comprehending and applying scientific method</td>
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</table>

These are common UNLV suggested learning outcome goals. In the light of UNLV General Education Learning Outcomes we have customized our assessment to include these categories and to particularly address the requirements of our discipline. Below we have Anthropology learning outcomes and the corresponding university-wide learning outcomes.
1) Intellectual Breadth and Life-Long Learning Outcome (UNLV criteria #6, 7)
   a) Learn the basic tenets of cultural anthropology (Encyclopedic knowledge)
   b) Study the different models of the social sciences to analyze individual and group behavior (Relativistic/pluralistic stance)
   c) Acquire knowledge about and understanding of the basic components of social and cultural living (Individual/collective reasoning)

2) Global and Multicultural Outcome (UNLV criteria #1, 2, 4, 5)
   a) Acquire basic knowledge of human cultural history and geography (Encyclopedic knowledge)
   b) Understand the variations in human experience across time and space (Relativistic/pluralistic stance)
   c) Develop understanding of societies’ structures and their impact on individual behavior (Individual/collective reasoning)

3) Inquiry and Critical Thinking Outcome (UNLV criteria #3, 8, 9)
   a) Acquisition of the ability to establish relationships between scientific questions, data, and interpretations.
   b) Apply these skills to real-world issues.
   c) Awareness of how anthropological knowledge is generated
   d) Recognition of the limitations of data, claims, and interpretations.

Curricular Maps and Assessment Timeline

Assessment of Anthropology First and Second Year Undergraduates:
Following in that a collective decision of our department, we will be implementing an academic assessment program in Anthropology 101, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology. Note that for the last year we have already been moving toward standardizing students’ Anth101 experience. Faculty members responsible for teaching that course have all adopted the same textbook (a custom edition for UNLV). We are now moving collectively toward standardized and integrated assessment tools to be used in sections of ANTH 101 every semester for the next 5 years. (Several sessions of ANTH 101 are offered each semester given the great student demand.) In ANTH 101, we will systematically assess 2 of the typical student learning outcomes as our department has translated them in specific objectives for our students in Anthropology

1) Intellectual Breadth and Life-Long Learning Outcome
   a) Learn the basic tenets of cultural anthropology (Encyclopedic knowledge)
   b) Study the different models of the social sciences to analyze individual and group behavior (Relativistic/pluralistic stance)
   c) Acquire knowledge about and understanding of the basic components of social and cultural living (Individual/collective reasoning)

2) Global and Multicultural Outcome
   a) Acquire basic knowledge of human cultural history and geography (Encyclopedic knowledge)
b) Understand the variations in human experience across time and space
   *(Relativistic/pluralistic stance)*

c) Develop understanding of societies’ structures and their impact on individual behavior
   *(Individual/collective reasoning)*

ANTH 101 being an introductory course is exceptionally well suited for assessing if those basic learning outcomes are achieved. The fact that ANTH 101 is being taught by many of the department’s faculty members makes it also a great platform for rationalizing and developing our assessment tools collectively.

We have agreed on using a specific tool, 18 specific questions (3 per identified goal to be achieved) will be asked at the beginning/middle/end of each semester in the ANTH 101 sections that have been selected for assessment. Each faculty member in charge of administering the assessment tool will decide if she or he wants to use clickers, scantrons or written responses.

Examples of a question for two of the above-mentioned goals:
1) An interpretive stance in anthropology means that the researcher
   a) Defends the idea that in order to understand a culture we need to listen to what people claim about their own culture
   b) Focuses only on quantitative data to study a culture
   c) Adopts a strictly etic perspective on people’s models of their own culture
   d) Rejects the idea that what people claim about their own culture can help us to understand that culture
   e) None of the above

2) For the most part of its history, humanity relied on a(n) ___ economy
   a) Industrial
   b) Foraging
   c) Tribal
   d) Complex
   e) Specialized
   f) None of the above

The questions will be administered in class either at the beginning, during or at the end of class three times during a specific semester. This will allow us to track students’ learning and to establish a typical learning curve for each and the specific anthropological goals (“do we find a rather slow or fast learning curve?”, “What material needs reinforcing across the board for the faculty members as a whole”, “Where should a specific teaching be amended?” etc.). Once done we can implement strategies to intervene in order to enhance the learning experience *across the board*.

### Student Learning Outcomes for the Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anthro learning outcomes p. 3</th>
<th>1=intellectual breadth, 2=global</th>
<th>1, 2</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
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<td>Spring 2017</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**B = Beginning, M = Middle, E = End**

B = outcome introduced in beginning of development, such as in introductory course
M = outcome covered in middle stages of development
E = outcome fully developed at the end of career, such as in a capstone course

### Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The Department offers numerous upper division classes that range from magic, religion and witchcraft, economic anthropology, psychological anthropology, medical anthropology, to anthropological history, research field methods and statistical analysis. Although each course is often taught with different conceptual emphasis and uses a different teaching style, every instructor strives to address similar pedagogical concerns. For our upper-level courses we expect our students to be able to build on their foundational knowledge acquired in lower-level course. Our measurement will evaluate students’ ability to move from data to integrating this knowledge in a critical way. The mid-level courses are an ideal place to assess whether students are acquiring this new integrative skill.

#### 3) Inquiry and Critical Thinking Outcome (UNLV criteria #3, 8, 9)

- a) acquisition of the ability to establish relationships between scientific questions, data, and interpretations.
- b) apply these skills to real-world issues.
- c) awareness of how anthropological knowledge is generated
- d) recognition of the limitations of data, claims, and interpretations.

Regardless of the specific 400-level course, students will be presented vignettes of research situations that are free of specific content. In order to find the answer students will have to demonstrate critical thinking in their evaluation of the question.

Jack, an anthropology student meets an old lady at a bus stop. While sitting, the woman tells Jack all about her religious background. Jack later uses this “data” as the foundation for his research paper on this specific religion. What is the scientific validity of his conclusions based on this encounter?

- a) It is legitimate to use the encounter as a basis for his conclusions.
- b) We cannot evaluate since we do not know anything about his research methodology.
- c) It is legitimate since she is representative of the experience of that religion.
- d) There is no validity in his approach.
3. Methods, Instruments and Analysis. What instruments will be used over the five years? Which learning outcomes will be assessed by the instruments? Who is responsible for instrument development/validation and data collection? When and where will data be collected over the five years? How will results be reported (e.g. percentages, ranks, state or national comparisons) and what are the expected measures (results that would indicate success)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Instrument</th>
<th>Learning outcome(s) assessed (list by #)</th>
<th>Person responsible for instrument &amp; data collection</th>
<th>When and where will data be collected</th>
<th>Expected Measures (results that would indicate success)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 101 18 question assessment</td>
<td>1a, b, c and 2a, b, c</td>
<td>Data collected by instructors and given to the Undergraduate Committee to aggregate and summarize</td>
<td>Every spring and fall semester</td>
<td>We will analyze and compare learning curves for each learning outcome across the semesters. We are hoping for a 70% or greater success rate.</td>
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ANTH 400s
Critical thinking vignettes 3 a, b, c, d
Data collected by instructors and given to the Undergraduate Committee to aggregate and summarize
Every spring and fall semester
We will analyze and compare learning curves for each learning outcome across the semesters. We are hoping for a 70% or greater success rate.

4. Analysis & Closing the Loop Strategies

As all anthropology minors and majors take same mid- and upper-level courses, we measure student learning using representative samples, and thus ensure analytical power and statistical/quantitative validity. This approach further systematizes and standardizes quantification and analysis.

Within this analytical framework, we bridge our methodological and conceptual frameworks and explicitly align our SLO goals with that of UNLV and with the general education vision of UNLV such as life-learning, inquiry and critical thinking, and global and multicultural SLOs.

In this vein, we are well prepared, structured, and positioned to leap forward with the assessment process. Our layered approach involves monitoring and measuring student learning at different stages—e.g., lower-, middle-, and upper-level courses—at will. This approach also permits the department coordinators to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the instruments to collect, analyze, and interpret data. As such, we have the capacity to measure and test both whether our students are learning and whether student learning assessment program is on the right track. The approach leaves room for retooling and upgrades as well as insures progress by detecting glitches and correcting them en route.

Overall, the student learning assessment program in the department of anthropology inherently informs faculty and forms a basis for their teaching objectives. And by design, the SLO program creates a system of positive feedback.

Anthropology SLO Program Coordinators:
Dr. Debra Martin, Undergraduate
Dr. Peter Gray, Graduate
Dr. Barb Roth, Chair

The faculty of the Department of Anthropology has been successfully researching and applying assessment tools for several years now. We have been very involved in how assessment is developed, implemented, monitored, and applied. For instance, 3 of our faculty attended the spring 2010 Assessment workshop and 2 of our faculty were chosen as UNLV Library Faculty Institute Fellows (2010). Additionally, we have continued to implement variable strategies to assess student learning outcomes, tools of strategic teaching, and applications for “closing the loop” and applying different pedagogical approaches to improve our content delivery and increase student learning. For example several of our courses evaluate learning outcomes at the
beginning and end of the course using survey questions. We also evaluate student comprehension and learning throughout the semester. For example one of our instructors applies the “muddy concept” assessment tool in lower-level courses:

1) Throughout the semester, usually once a week, we do a timed 1-minute writing exercise where students write what the "muddiest" concept was, that is, what parts of what was covered do they feel they just didn't get? I collect these, and use them to figure out if I need to go over something again, or move on to new topics. They are easy to look through even if there are 50 of them because they only write for 1 minute. It provides steady stream of information from students about what they understand and what they don't without them needing to say it publically in class.

2) Mid semester, I hand out an anonymous evaluation sheet (as part of a formative evaluation process). I usually collate all of the various comments and make a power-point slide of the general themes that emerge, both the things people like and the things they would like to see changed. I talk about what I can change, and what I can't change but will try and work on, etc. So we really close the loop, they give me mid-semester feedback about their learning styles and I discuss with them how I will change what I am doing to try and meet those concerns etc.

Formative Evaluation:
1. How is the pace of the course so far for you? Too fast? Too slow? Just right?
2. Are there any things that bother you about the course (lecture style, the way material is approached, etc.) thus far?
3. Anything you would like to see changed?
4. Am I being clear about what I want you to know? Yes? No? Sometimes?
5. Suggestions for the rest of the semester (Changing anything? Improving things?)

For upper-level courses these forms of dynamic assessment are also used:

1) To increase participation and decrease lecture style presentations, we do a short (2 minutes timed) in class writing assignment after several ideas from the readings are put out there with a few powerpoints. They grapple with the question for several minutes, and then I randomly choose people to read what they wrote ... it generally gets discussion going because students have something to say written down right in front of them. It also allows me to choose people who are quieter and less likely to respond to a question just thrown out to the whole class. I collect the writing and it forms attendance-taking for the day as well.

2) Turn-to-your-neighbor: I use this a couple of times a month as a way to put out a question and let students discuss it with someone sitting by them for 5 minutes, and then I randomly call on the teams to tell us what they came up with. This is a good way to engage quieter students, as they are in a team now and when called on both can help formulate what ideas they discussed.

3) Jigsaw/Groups work: We do this about 3 times a semester -- with about 45 students, I ask them to form groups of 6 or so, by turning around and sliding into a small cluster, and each group is given a different part of a "problem" or question to grapple with. They discuss among themselves how to present a coherent answer to their particular question. Then each group reports out, and the questions are designed to build on one another, with each group providing a different part of the "puzzle" and at the end, we discuss the parts and pull it together into a whole. These are very lively and the students sort of bond and get to know other students in the class during these group work days.

Additionally in our large ANTH 100 level courses some faculty utilize the “clicker” system to track student response and learning statistics. As discussed we have also developed or ANTH 101 course to have the same textbook. This enables us to efficiently standardize our assessment of first and second year students without undue burden on the faculty.
Assessment

Assessment for Anthropology 428  Fall 2014 (Jiemin Bao)

I gave out the following assessment exam (not for credit) at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Here are the questions:

1. What does “Jim Crow” laws” refer to?
2. Where does the word ‘ethnicity’ come from?
3. What does white privilege refer to?
4. What is identity politics?
5. What do the concepts overcommunicated and undercommunicated refer to?
6. What does the concept of the “melting-pot” mean? What is the effect of such a concept?
7. What does colorblind mean?
8. What does imagined community refer to?
9. What does a “hot” or “cold” society refer to?
10. Which group does the “blood quantum” policy apply to?

Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Initial Exam (%)</th>
<th>Final Exam (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>21</td>
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### Conclusions

There was a dramatic increase in knowledge from the beginning to the end of the semester.
Anth 455 – Archaeological Theory
Assessment Summary
Fall 2014

Assessment Procedures: Each student in Anth 455 was given a pre-test and post-test to determine their knowledge of ten topics addressed during the semester. Ten students participated in the assessment testing, so their results are included in the data presented here.

Students were to briefly describe (in 1-2 sentences) what they knew about each of the following topics on the first day of class and again on the last day of class.

Topics:
1) Lewis Binford
2) Processual Archaeology
3) Typology
4) Marxist Archaeology
5) Reconstructing identity using the archaeological record
6) The variety of theoretical approaches used over time in archaeology
7) The influence of anthropological theory on the archaeological record
8) Cultural Resource Management
9) That archaeological theory was sometimes quite controversial
10) Human Behavioral Ecology

Results:
In general, students in the Anth 455 were unfamiliar with most of the topics when they started the class. Six students (60%) knew of Typology, five (50%) knew of approaches to identity in the archaeological record, four (40%) knew of Binford, Processual Archaeology, the impact of Anthropology on archaeological theory, and that theory was controversial, three (30%) knew of Cultural Resource Management and Human Behavioral Ecology, two (20%) knew the major theoretical approaches in archaeology, and none (0%) knew of Marxist approaches in archaeology.

The post-test established that the majority of students had learned about these topics; if they knew about them at the beginning of the class, they learned more about the topic and those that had never heard of the topic in general displayed an understanding of the topic. There were several exceptions to this. One student per topic (10%) did not display an understanding of the following topics in the post-test: Processual archaeology, major theoretical approaches, the influence of anthropological theory, and Cultural Resource Management. Three students (30%) did not understand Human Behavioral Ecology after taking the class and four (40%) did not understand Marxist approaches to archaeology.

This assessment will help me when I teach the class in the future as it is very apparent that I need to spend more time on teaching about Marxism and Human Behavioral Ecology.
Alyssa Crittenden  
ANTH102 – Fall 2014  
Metrics and Student Comments

The first test question was meant to determine if the students could critically evaluate and articulate the difference between convergence and divergence and provide examples of “homology” and “analogy”.

The second test question was meant to evaluate whether or not they were understanding how natural selection can account for flexible responses to environmental contingencies – something that requires critical thinking and an ability to think outside of the box. They were asked to provide examples of how individuals can adjust their behaviors in response to ecological circumstances.

Pre-test at beginning of semester

![Fq of Grades](image)

Post-test at end of semester
Students improved from the pre-test to the post-test. The mean score on the pre-test was 69%, with a large number of students falling below 70%. They clearly did not understand the concept. For the post-test, the mean score was 80%, with a significant increase of students obtaining 80% or more.

**Qualitative Data:**

In order to determine what aspects of the course students were struggling with, I asked them to please answer the following question, “What is the most difficult aspect of this course so far and how are you overcoming it? How can this course better help you to meet your goals?”

My aim was to determine effective ways to close the loop. Using the information provided by students in their free response questions and during an open discussion forum held during class in the middle of the semester, I was able to take the following actions:

- I was able to reevaluate the learning goals for the course in the module on genetics, allowing me to reform my expectations for student performance during the following semester.
- I revisited material that was particularly confusing and attempt to engage the students using different teaching tools, such as videos, labeling exercises online, and providing the common names of the fossils to help students keep track of the different hominid species.
- The most surprising comment from students was not in regard to curricular development, but rather in response to the course material in general. As this course is an introduction to human evolution course, I introduce the basic principles of Mendelian genetics and the basic tenets of natural selection. This detailed course on evolutionary theory was new information to many of my students and they found that they had to hide their homework or discussion of course content from their religious family members. This is incredibly valuable information for a professor to obtain! I was able to open discussion forums during class to discuss the ways in which students were dealing with this issue and extend office hours if they wanted to discuss the matter in private.
“I found it hard to learn about the different types of hominids/hominins such as *H. erectus*, Australopithecus, and so on. I also found it difficult to learn about the finches, and genes because I would get confused. I overcame my difficulty by trying to explain it to myself as simply as possible, creating fun, simple puns, and asking classmates for an explanation.”

“Genetics. I overcame that difficulty by studying the slides. Also seeing now phenotype is just genotype and environment cleared a lot up, surprisingly.”

“I have grown up in a very very conservative home. I have been raised with religion in my life and in my family. My mother finds it difficult to hear me discuss evolution or even study it. I tend to just not talk about it.”

“I found all the information in this class difficult, I’m very Catholic and all of this material is new to me and not very easy to accept. Especially sharing it with my family. I overcame it by … I just had to open my mind to the facts. I ended up being overwhelmed by all the information and what I still have to learn, because it’s not stopping here.”

“Getting down the species names of hominins was incredibly difficult for me. Knowing who came first and the milestones they achieved. Watching videos and comparing my notes between ANTH102 and 105 really helped. This is also really weird, but giving them common names like *A. afarensis* Lucy really helped. If I renamed them, I could remember, “Oh, John is *H. heidelbergensis*, Tim is *H. ergaster* and Tom is *H. erectus* – Tim and Tom are brothers” kind of helped.”