Course Number/Title ANTH 146 Culture and Conflict      GE Area V
Results reported for AY 2016-2017      # of sections: 5      # of instructors: 3
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Department Chair: Roberto Gonzalez     College: Social Sciences

**Instructions**: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be **electronically submitted**, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by September 1 of the following academic year.

**Part 1**

To be completed by the course coordinator:

1. What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

**GELO #2:** *Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.*

2. What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

One instructor assessed the formations of global identities – linkages and differences – through directed course readings about the reconstruction of Japan’s government, civil society, emergent popular media and industry, and the remaking of national subjectivity following the Second World War. Students completed directed ethnographic and historical readings about the destruction of Japanese cities, the collapse of political authority, and the role of the Supreme Command Allied Power (SCAP) in Japan’s rebuilding. Students also completed readings about popular responses to trauma – both material and in the national-symbolic – in the wake of the American bombings, and the ways that popular toys, comics, and films worked as screens for rebuilding Japanese national sentiment and working through the collapse of cultural authority. For instance, readings focused on the *Gojira* (Godzilla in English), *Tetsuwan Atomu* (Atomic Boy), and the lasting Japanese interest in cyborg figures. Finally, readings also addressed contemporary figures like that of the “shut-in” (*hikkikomori*), Japanese youth that withdraw into private – individuals seen as expressing the anxieties of young Japanese people entering adulthood after the collapse of the Japanese economic miracle and a now-two-decade-long recession. These popular culture figures (especially Godzilla and the cyborg) are clear examples of international linkages in the joint American-Japanese imagination – as well as admissible forms of industry and ideology under the SCAP. However, these cultural metaphors work in different ways across national contexts. The example provided students with a way to understand ubiquitous popular cultural figures as a product of national and international conflict; and as a tool for digging beneath surfaces to uncover very different perspectives and cultural experiences addressed by these forms. The instructor tested students on their understanding of the history of US-Japanese relations; on their understanding of methodological tools/operations for situating popular culture in relation to history; and as a tool for unpacking the artistic expression of political and personal trauma. They were required to articulate their understanding of these interrelated questions through take-home essay assignments. Students were asked to choose the aspect of course readings about Japan that they found most compelling: for instance, trauma; political control; the development
of the Japanese toy industry and media like Godzilla; or contemporary figures like the hikkikomori. Thus, a number of students wrote essays about the American influence on the development of the Japanese toy industry and popular media. Others wrote essays that performed close-readings of the significance of Gojira to Japanese audiences – and the different reactions that Americans had to the film. Finally, others wrote about hikkikomori as an expression of the social confusion and interrupted life trajectories of young Japanese adults that run into difficulties living up to cultural values imposed by their parents’ generation. In general, student essays successfully met course expectations – and Japanese toys and media worked as a successful entry-point for students to understand the aftermath of war, intertwined international political economy, and set of cultural figures in a new light. Reflecting on his sections, the instructor found that, while course readings were certainly “college-level,” he would not describe them as overly-challenging. However, he did think that students – upper-division students – struggled with them in two ways: first, simply as forms of ethnographic and historical writing that demand active reading. Second, insofar as, despite my urgings, students lacked confidence in drawing their own analyses, opinions, and conclusions about course texts. This was reflected in student anxiety over being asked to write papers that – despite his framing and narrowing of options in writing prompts – were still seen as very “open-ended” (or, somewhat off-point, as “just your own opinion”) to students. Some of this anxiety is to be expected. And some of it is a sign of student weakness in assembling an argumentative essay. He observed that, among other skills, anthropology has a place in helping students expand their skill, confidence, and abilities in synthesizing social science argumentation, data, and ideas in pointed form.

A different instructor assigned directed ethnographic and historical readings about the green revolution and its impact on both local and international environments. To build on this GELO, he had several “in class” discussions about globalization, localization, outsourcing, and the impacts international capitalism has on local economies. Students look at the impact of international “cash cropping” and how it affects diet, culture, and consumption in America. In online sections, the instructor requires students to have a discussion with each other to compile complete points for that week. After the midterm, the instructor steered the class to this GELO with the intention it be assessed during the final exam. For several semesters now, he has found this the best way to introduce and then assess LOs. For the actual assessment, the instructor asks students to answer a specific question in essay format, but to include examples from lecture/discussion. He has found that students tend to remember the discussion we have on the LOs and include them in their essays. Students were tested on their understanding of this history of the green revolution, cash cropping, and consumption; on their understanding of methodological tools/operations for situating culture in relation to history; and as a way to understand the ways that unequal distribution of resources and wealth influence local culture. They are required to articulate their understanding of these interrelated questions through essay assignments. The instructor found the combination of in-class discussions and film really give students a clear view of the linkages between ethnic identities and the global culture. Students became really focused on outsourcing good and culture, but once you let them view how other cultures turn the process of outsourcing into an interaction with American people, resources, and culture, very strong discussions can emerge. Anthropological thinking helps students expand their skills, confidence in, and ability to synthesize social science argumentation, data, and ideas in written form. The most prominent shortfall, according to the instructor, was a degree of stubbornness in American university students to see the effect of international identities on American culture. However, a very simple way Mr. McCrary has found to challenge this is merely a discussion of food culture in the bay area. Students quickly recognize the variety of cuisine is related to the diversity of the communities they live in.

The third instructor had students examine the roots of social and racial conflicts and their political and economic linkage to local and global communities. Using anthropological readings on structural violence and global conflicts, students analyzed the effects of foreign conflicts on the United States and our own culture. For example, the decade-long El Salvadoran and Guatemalan civil wars, with the ensuing resettlement and integration of thousands of Central American refugees in this country, had a profound social and political impact on American culture. And Mahatma Gandhi’s nonviolence civil disobedience, which strongly affected American grassroots movements such as the civil rights and antiwar movements of the sixties and Black Lives Matter, among many others, has shaped American political activism. Students completed readings from an edited volume of studies on violence and conflict entitled Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology, by two
anthropologists, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois; and they wrote a research paper on a contemporary conflict, first addressing its cultural impact on American society and then making a recommendation on a plan for conflict resolution.

(3) What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)

No major modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year.

Part 2

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes.

(5) If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE GELOs for writing.

No sections of ANTH 146 had enrollments greater than 10% of the recommended enrollment limit this academic year.