

Assessment Report for Academic Year 2016-17

International Studies Program, TCNJ

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The International Studies Program assessed in the Spring 2017 semester how well students understood basic concepts used by scholars in the assigned readings. The Program's first learning goal requires: "Upon completion of the International Studies Major, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the field of International Studies, by defining key concepts such as nationalism, state formation, social movements, revolutions, and colonialism." Given the multidisciplinary nature of the field, some agreement on basic terms is desirable and this task is appropriate for an introductory class.

The final exam required that all students define several major concepts, four of which were used in the program assessment. These four concepts were chosen because they had clear and consistent definitions that were emphasized in class. (Note that due to my error, the last concept differed by instructor; my two sections defined "globalization" while Professor Berbecel's class defined "colonialism"). Using a common example of an advanced answer, the instructors judged student responses on a zero-to-three scale. Each instructor did this while grading the final exams. The rubric appended to this report provides more detail.

The table below shows average scores as well as the range.

Term	Mean Score	Low Score	High Score	Number of responses
Nationalism	2.4	0	3	45
State	2.1	0	3	45
Globalization	2.5	0	3	29
Colonialism	2.4	1	3	16

Most students were able to define in the terms in a "good" or "advanced" way. While the range shows that some students had erroneous answers, the means suggest that these were relatively rare. The score for defining a state is the lowest but this is one of the wooliest concepts in the social sciences. Overall, the assessment shows a good to advanced preparation for further work in International Studies.

Future versions of this assessment would be more useful if they linked the scores to other data about the students. First, comparing these scores to students' final grade in INT 200 (and perhaps later the senior seminar) would show the usefulness of understanding basic concepts. Of the nine students in my two sections who scored a zero or one on at least one concept, six of them received a "F" and two earned a "C" for the final class grade. A more complete and differentiated analysis could tell more. Second, comparing results to student learning inputs (such as time spent studying, if the student was a transfer student in their first semester, or other factors that may affect learning) would allow the program to target with special help students at academic risk.

Learning Outcomes Assessments
International Studies Program, TCNJ, Spring 2017
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Learning Outcome 1: Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the field of International Studies, by defining key concepts such as nationalism, state formation, social movements, revolutions, and colonialism.

	1- erroneous	2- basic	3- good	4- advanced
Nationalism				
State				
Globalization				
Colonialism				

Examples of advanced answers; students answers may

Nationalism – an imagined horizontal and sovereign community limited in membership and scope based on language, culture, ritual or symbol (Anderson 1983).

State – the differentiated institutions of a country exercising a monopoly of legitimate violence and meeting external challenges (Nettl, 1968).

Globalization – a long-term process of economic, ideological and cultural integration across and within national borders (Frieden 2006).

Colonialism – an institutionalized relationship of social control and mercantilism by one country over another (Frieden 2006).

Sources

Benedict Anderson 1983. *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso).

Jeffrey A. Frieden. 2006. *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the 20th Century*. New York: Norton.

J. P. Nettl. 1968. "The State as a Conceptual Variable," *World Politics* 20, 4:559-592.

Learning Outcomes Assessments
International Studies Program, TCNJ, Spring 2017
Learning outcomes 1 and 2.

Student name or number:

Section of INT 200

Learning Outcome 1: Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the field of International Studies, by defining key concepts such as nationalism, state formation, social movements, revolutions, and colonialism.

	1- erroneous	2- basic	3- good	4- advanced
Nationalism				
State				
Colonialism				

Total out of 9 points: _____