

Anthropology Academic Learning Compact

The anthropology program seeks to impart a broad perspective on past and present peoples and cultures around the world through study of the methods and materials of the discipline. Through required coursework, students develop content knowledge of the scope and objectives of cultural anthropology and archaeology, and of at least one other subdiscipline (biological anthropology and/or linguistics). They also acquire in-depth critical knowledge of the theory and methods of anthropology. Students are encouraged to participate in fieldwork, which requires training in interpersonal communication. Students further develop their research skills and a critical perspective through the completion of a senior research project, conducted under the supervision of a faculty member in the program with the participation of at least two additional faculty members.

An established curriculum of required courses supplemented by a range of elective courses, tutorials and field research projects enable students to accomplish these goals. All students concentrating in anthropology must satisfy one introductory course in cultural anthropology and in archaeology, plus an introduction to either linguistics or physical anthropology. Many students choose to take all four. These courses establish a foundation for **content-building** in the discipline and introduce students to the written and oral **communication skills** required of social scientists. Students build on **content knowledge** through a range of area course offerings on prehistoric, historic and contemporary world cultures, focusing particularly on North American, Latin America and the Middle East. Most of these courses are organized as seminars, enabling faculty to help students develop strong **communication skills** through class participation, oral presentations and a range of writing assignments. Since anthropology is a research discipline that emphasizes individual and small-team fieldwork, **critical, independent thinking** and **strong communication skills** are emphasized in all of our courses. Particular courses, for example, those devoted to topics such as race and ethnicity, religion and cultural ecology, foster **critical comparison** of perspectives on **content knowledge**. Two requirements, History of Anthropological Theory and Method and Theory in Archaeology, help students to develop advanced **critical thinking and writing skills** while providing general **content knowledge** that will be needed for graduate study.

Students develop specialized **content knowledge** in theory-building and culture areas through tutorials, internships, field schools, study abroad programs and independent field research projects. Most students conduct off-campus ethnographic or archaeological research to gather data for their senior theses. Intermediate college-level, oral and written **communication skills** in a language other than English is a requirement of our program, and many students conduct research projects in non-English-speaking countries.

An Area of Concentration in Anthropology includes:

1. Introductory courses in cultural anthropology, archaeology and either physical anthropology or anthropological linguistics. Here **content knowledge** is primarily emphasized, but **critical perspectives** are offered and students develop **communication skills** through writing assignments, oral presentations and field projects.
2. Thematic courses on a range of topics. **Content knowledge** is stressed, building on the **communication skills** and **critical perspectives** developed in the introductory courses.
3. Advanced theoretical seminars in both cultural anthropology and archaeology. These courses combine **content knowledge, critical thinking and communication** through reading materials, seminar discussion/presentations and intensive writing assignments. Students are trained to **think critically** about how anthropological data are collected and how information is represented through cultural and archaeological theory, academic publications and museum displays.
4. Intermediate competence in a foreign language. **Communication skills** are the obvious emphasis here, but knowledge of another language also helps students to **think critically** about cultural differences and facilitates the acquisition of new **content knowledge**.

5. Senior thesis research, usually in the form of an off-campus ethnographic or archaeological field project.
 - a. Cultural anthropology students are required to take a course in field research methods; this course emphasizes **critical thinking** and **communication skills**. All projects involving interviews with human subjects must be vetted by the New College Institutional Review Board, which evaluates the clarity, organization, and ethical merit of students' written proposals. Proposals that do not demonstrate sufficient **content knowledge, critical thinking and communication** will not be accepted by this interdisciplinary board. The board also requires that students working with human subjects take a standardized, on-line training course, the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative Course in the Protection of Human Subjects.
 - b. Targeted archaeology courses incorporate field research methods, and archaeology students are encouraged to participate in field, museum and laboratory projects. These activities emphasize the **critical thinking** and **content knowledge** needed to conduct archaeological research and evaluate data, plus the **communication skills** needed to present the findings to professional and popular audiences.
6. A senior thesis and oral baccalaureate examination, in which the student is asked not only about her or his thesis research but also about broad foundation concepts in anthropology. Here **content knowledge, critical thinking and communication** are highlighted. Most students prepare extensively for their oral exams by consulting with their professors and drafting formal presentations.

Expected Outcomes

1. Students should demonstrate a broad knowledge of the scope and objectives of Cultural Anthropology, and of its history and theory.
2. Students should demonstrate a basic grounding in the methods and theory of Archaeology, and of the main events and socio-cultural transformations in the human past.
3. Students specializing in Cultural Anthropology should acquire training in the theory and field methods of ethnography and exposure to the range of human diversity.
4. Students are encouraged to participate in fieldwork and/or internships at museums or other institutions that provide training in anthropological or related fields. These experiences may provide the material for a senior thesis.
5. Students should demonstrate college intermediate level speaking, reading, and writing competence in a foreign language.

Strategies for tracking student progress

A variety of methods are employed to assess the progress of students in Anthropology. The most basic methods are class participation and presentations, research papers, examinations, and consultations between faculty and students.

The Provisional Area of Concentration form and Thesis Prospectus form require faculty sponsors to certify that a student is making adequate progress toward meeting the goals of the program. Review and signature by three members of the anthropology faculty are required for a thesis prospectus in anthropology.

Students are encouraged to participate in fieldwork projects, which are monitored by faculty. In the case of fieldwork and internships conducted off-campus under the sponsorship of other institutions, students must submit a report and/or journal to their faculty advisors, who must also receive an evaluation from the person supervising the fieldwork or internship.

Anthropology students must research and write a senior thesis under the supervision of a faculty member, and defend it in a baccalaureate examination before a faculty committee that not only assesses the student's thesis, but also his or her know-ledge of the discipline and overall liberal arts education.

Students who do not satisfy all requirements are not allowed to proceed to the baccalaureate exam.

Anthropology faculty assess the success of the program by regularly reviewing course enrollments, student performance in courses, tutorials, fieldwork and research, the number of majors, and the number of students admitted to graduate and professional schools.

Anthropology faculty regularly monitor graduate school admissions as a measure of success and thoroughly investigate any failure to find an appropriate placement for a student who seeks to continue in the field.

Examples of Measures, Outcomes and Evidence that May Be Used to Demonstrate Competencies

1. Certification of student academic contracts. Each semester, the process of reviewing evaluations from students' courses enables the advisor to discover strengths and weaknesses in the areas of **content knowledge, critical thinking** and **communication skills**.
2. Evaluation of senior thesis and baccalaureate examination.