

Anthropology

SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION

Faculty

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Anthropology is an unusually broad discipline that embraces biological, historical, and cross-cultural study.

Anthropology courses at Kenyon reflect these three distinct but inter-related areas.

Biological anthropology studies the complex connections between our biological and cultural existence, investigating how humans have evolved in the past and how we are continuing to evolve in the present. More advanced courses focus on such topics as human skeletal anatomy, human paleontology, primate behavior, and human adaptation to changing environmental conditions.

Courses in archaeology allow students to learn about prehistoric peoples of the New World (Aztecs, Maya, Inkas, Moundbuilders, and Pueblos) as well as the Old World (Egypt, Mesopotamia, and European megalith

builders). Methods of investigation are also covered. Field study provides students with first-hand experience in conducting archaeological research.

In cultural anthropology courses, students can study native North Americans and the peoples of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America, as well as such topics as tourism, ethno-medicine, sexuality and gender, politics, and linguistics.

All anthropology courses deal with human diversity.

Beginning Studies in Anthropology

A first course in anthropology should be any of the four one-semester introductory courses listed below. Each course combines lecture and discussion and has an enrollment of no more than twenty-five to thirty students. Look for the ♦ symbol, designating courses most appropriate for first-year students or upperclass students new to the anthropology curriculum.

ANTH 111 Introduction to Biological Anthropology

This is the first course in biological anthropology, required for upper-level work in biological anthropology courses.

ANTH 112 Introduction to Archaeology

This is the first course in archaeology, required for upper-level work in archaeology.

ANTH 113 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

This is the first course in cultural anthropology, required for upper-level work in cultural anthropology.

Having completed an introductory course, students may enroll in any upper-level course in that area of the anthropology program. Alternatively, students may enroll in another introductory course to gain a broader understanding of anthropology. Diversification credit is earned either by taking an introductory course and an upper-level course in the same area of anthropology or by taking two introductory courses.

The Anthropology Major (minimum of 5 units)

Minimum requirements are described below. Note that all departmental courses are one semester in length (.5 unit each) and that all courses have limited enrollment.

Foundation Courses

An introductory course in each of the three anthropological subdisciplines is required: biological anthropology (ANTH 111); archaeology (ANTH 112); and cultural anthropology (ANTH 113). These courses should be taken as early in the major as practicable and may be taken in any sequence. All upper-level courses in anthropology normally have one of the foundation courses as prerequisite.

Upper-Level Courses

A minimum of six upper-level courses (3 units) is required, including at least one course in each of the three anthropological subdisciplines (biological anthropology, archaeology, and cultural anthropology).

Capstone Course

All departmental majors must enroll in Anth 499 (Senior Seminar in Anthropology) during the fall semester of their senior year.

Senior Exercise

The senior exercise in anthropology consists of a core of common readings, three seminar meetings at which the seniors and all faculty members

in anthropology discuss these readings, and an examination in which students write a take-home exam in response to one question from a list provided by the faculty. The topic of the seminar generally requires an integration of three subdisciplines, and readings are frequently from new books that faculty members are exploring for the first time. The goals of this exercise are to place students and faculty together in the roles of expert and colleague, to critique and analyze readings together orally, and to have each student produce a synthetic essay out of this common experience.

Seminar meetings take place during the early months of the fall semester. After these three meetings, the faculty members construct between two and four essay questions, and students select one for the exam. Students have approximately one month to complete the essay and are encouraged to discuss their ideas with faculty members and to utilize additional sources based on either library research or readings from other classes. The essay due date falls just before the Thanksgiving break. Faculty members evaluate the papers and students are notified in writing about their performance in December. Each student's paper is read by at least two members of the faculty, who also provide written and/or oral comments. Some students may be asked to rewrite the paper at this point.

Faculty members judge the students' performance not merely on the quality of the essay (clarity, insight, and technical proficiency) but also on participation in the whole process of the exercise itself, especially the timely submission of the essay, as well as thoughtful and active participation in the discussions.

Honors

The Honors Program in anthropology provides students with the opportunity to conduct significant independent research on a topic of their choice. Typically, a student will propose a research focus in consultation with a member of the faculty who agrees to

serve as the project advisor. Late in the student's junior year or early in the senior year, she or he submits a brief description of the honors project to the department. This synopsis outlines: the central question being addressed, what methods will be used in conducting the study, and how the thesis will be organized. All anthropology faculty not on leave at the time of the proposal's submission review the document and decide whether it will be approved or declined based on the proposal's intellectual merit, feasibility, the student's past classroom performance, demonstrated motivation in pursuit of excellence, and organizational skills. After the project is approved, the student builds an honors committee consisting of the advisor and one other faculty member who need not be an anthropologist. The student's senior year is spent conducting the research and writing the honor's thesis, although both processes may well have begun in previous years. The thesis is read by both members of the honors committee as well as a third person who is an expert in the field dealt with in the thesis but is not a part of the Kenyon faculty. An oral thesis defense, involving the student and the three readers, takes place near the end of the spring semester. The readers then determine whether to award "no honors," "honors," "high honors," or "highest honors" to the thesis based on the written document and the student's defense of his/her work. Please consult the description of the anthropology honors program available in the departmental office in Palme House or on the Web page at www.kenyon.edu/x11218.xml.

Requirements: GPA 3.33 overall; 3.5 in the major. A student may petition to have these prerequisites waived.

Classes: All students pursuing honors take ANTH 498 during the spring and fall semesters of their senior year.

Due Date: Honors theses are due in the anthropology department office on April 1 or the closest Monday after that date. The thesis defense is scheduled for a time after April 1 that is convenient for the student and the readers.

The Anthropology Minor

All minors will include a minimum of 2 units of coursework. No more than half of the courses may be taken at the foundation level (i.e., ANTH 111, 112, 113). Courses will typically be taken from at least two department faculty members. The courses selected for the minor will have a clear and cohesive focus (e.g., a subdiscipline within anthropology) or a substantive theme to be examined within the discipline. The specific cluster of courses to be included within the minor will be selected by the student in consultation with a member of the department's faculty, who will serve as advisor. The final selection of courses will be approved by the department chair and subsequently reported to the registrar.

First-Semester Courses

Introduction to Biological Anthropology

◆ ANTH 111 (.5 unit)
Murphy

Biological anthropology is the study of the biological diversity of our species and the evolutionary history that has led us to our present condition. The course will include: (1) the examination of the genetics underlying evolution and the mechanisms by which change occurs; (2) variation and adaptation among living humans; (3) living primate populations as keys to understanding our evolutionary past; and (4) human evolution. This course is designed to expose students to the breadth of biological anthropology and to prepare them for upper-level classes in anthropology and related disciplines.

Introduction to Archaeology

◆ ANTH 112 (.5 unit)
Schortman

Today people increasingly live in highly industrialized and urban civilizations. But how long have humans had "civilization?" What is "civilization" and how can it be

recognized? This course will address these questions, first, by looking at the basic elements of archaeology and its place in anthropology. Some of the topics we will cover include the history of archaeology, fundamental aspects of fieldwork and analysis, and the prehistoric record from the first humans to the origins of civilization.

We will begin the chronological sequence with the Old Stone Age, or Paleolithic, a long period during which basic human cultural practices and beliefs became established. Our next topic is the development of agriculture and settled life around the globe, innovations that permitted the growth of complex social organizations that culminated in civilization and the state. In the latter part of the course, we will study the first, or “pristine,” civilizations, focusing on Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, and the Indus Valley. The course concludes with a survey of development in North, Central, and South America, including the Maya, Aztec, and Inka.

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

◆ ANTH 113 (.5 unit)
Suggs, staff

This course introduces students to the discipline that studies and compares other cultures. Students learn about the main concepts used in anthropology and how anthropologists conduct research, while also discovering how people live in other times and places. Students will learn about theories that provide frameworks for understanding and comparing cultures. Ethnographies—descriptions of life in particular places—give students factual materials with which to apply and critique such theories. Through this introduction to the study of culture in general, and an exposure to specific cultures, students inevitably come to reexamine some of the premises of their own culture. Note: Section 02 uses ethnographies almost exclusively about Asia and also counts as an Asian studies course.

Anthropology of Food

ANTH 220 (.5 unit)
Murphy

This course investigates the central role food plays in human biology and culture. We will explore food from an evolutionary perspective, examining nutritional variations in subsistence strategies ranging from foraging to industrial societies. Students will come to understand that food is a cultural construction as we look at the symbolism and utilization of food from a cross-cultural perspective. Finally, utilizing a biocultural perspective, we will combine our understanding of biology and culture to see the effects of social, political, and economic issues on human nutrition. A variety of methods are utilized in nutritional anthropology, ranging from ethnographic techniques to methods in biological anthropology for assessing the impact of nutrition on human biology. Throughout the semester, students will become familiar with the variety of approaches used to study nutritional anthropology. Prerequisite: ANTH 111, 112, or 113. Enrollment limited.

Beginning Maya Hieroglyphs

ANTH 254 (.5 unit)
Urban

This course will focus on the interpretation of Maya hieroglyphic texts. The first half will be devoted to methods of analysis: dating and calendrics, the structure of Maya discourse, phoneticism in the writing system, and basic vocabulary. The second part will consider texts from Yaxchilan, Tikal, Caracol, Uaxactun, Copan, Chichen Itza, and other sites. Topics covered will be the origins and growth of kingship, dynastic succession, warfare, religion, and the role of women among the elite. Enrollment limited.

Old World Prehistory

ANTH 333 (.5 unit)
Urban

This semester the course will center on the topic of the Neolithic. After reviewing current theoretical views on the beginnings of domestication and sedentism, we will look at the actual evidence from plants, animals,

and ecology to assess which theory or theories (if any) best explains this major transition in cultural evolution. Next we will examine early social complexity in Western Asia, focusing on new material from Anatolia. In the third section we will look at the biological and cultural transformations the Neolithic wrought in Europe. Finally, we will look at Neolithic monuments from several perspectives: engineering, social organization, landscape, and ritual. The course will combine lectures, demonstrations, discussions, audio-visual materials, and student presentations. Prerequisite: ANTH 112.

Theory and Method in Archaeology: Household Anthropology

ANTH 338 (.5 unit)
Bell

This year's theory and method course will focus on the study of households and how they relate to larger political and social organizations in both the past and the present. The course will begin with a survey of topics in household organization (household composition, activities, and residential patterns). We'll then move on to examine how households are recognized in the archaeological and ethnographic record and the ways in which analysis at the household level can provide insight into larger political, economic, and social structures. We'll finish the course with an analysis of households in the El Paraíso Valley, northwestern Honduras. This course is required for participants in the Kenyon Honduras program and those students interested in working with raw data acquired through archaeological and ethnographic fieldwork. Students who have not participated in the Kenyon Honduras program will be furnished with a data set for analysis. Prerequisites: permission of the instructor and ANTH 112.

Human Sexuality and Culture

ANTH 350 (.5 unit)
Suggs

In popular thought, sex is about “the birds and the bees” and “doing what comes naturally.” Yet anthropology

teaches us that for human beings the natural is the cultural. Based on that premise, this course looks for cultural patterns in sexual belief and behavior. We begin with an examination of the evolution of sexuality. Is sexuality or sexual behavior expressed the same way by all peoples? Why do humans avoid incest? To what extent are gender roles biologically determined? Are sexually transmitted diseases primarily biological or social problems? How do sexual norms reflect sociocultural adaptations? These are just some of the questions we will confront in this course as we examine the functional and structural significance of sexual behaviors in the sociocultural milieu. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited.

Race and Ethnicity in American Anthropology

ANTH 460 (.5 unit)
Schortman, Urban

This course examines several issues. First, we will look at how the concepts of “race” and “ethnicity” have been defined within anthropology, particularly American anthropology. Does “race” exist? Why (or why not) are “race” and “ethnicity” the same? In exploring these questions, we will examine both bioanthropological and socio-cultural approaches to these terms. Next, we will look at a variety of groups within the United States that are known as races or ethnic groups: Native Americans; Hispanics/Latinos; Americans of Asian descent; and those of us whose ancestors came, in colonial times or later, from Africa. Lest we forget that even white folks have “race” and “ethnicity,” we will look at a new trend in cultural anthropology, whiteness studies. Here we will discuss how various immigrant groups have “become white,” and consider current ideas about the meaning of “whiteness.” The course will use readings, films, and television as materials for study and discussion; students will be responsible for presentations on various groups, as well as for choosing some of the audio-visual materials. Prerequisites: ANTH 113 and junior or senior standing. Enrollment limited.

Individual Study

ANTH 493 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course is for students who wish to do advanced work beyond regular courses or to study topics not included in course offerings. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Honors

ANTH 497 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course is for students pursuing departmental honors. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Seminar

ANTH 499 (.5 unit)
Schortman

Beginning with the Age of Discovery, developing through the periods of conquest and colonization, and continuing into the present, anthropology has embodied as well as defined the Western world’s experience with “other” peoples and cultures. Within this broad historical context, this course investigates the emergence and definition of anthropology as a discipline by focusing on (1) significant theoretical issues and “schools” of thought (e.g., evolutionism, functionalism, materialism, and structuralism); (2) biographical and intellectual portraits of several major figures who were instrumental in formulating these issues; and (3) continuing controversies in the elucidation of certain fundamental principles (e.g., “culture,” “relativism,” and “the primitive”). Prerequisites: at least three courses in anthropology.

Second-Semester Courses

Introduction to Biological Anthropology

◆ ANTH 111 (.5 unit)
Hardy

See first-semester course description.

Introduction to Archaeology

◆ ANTH 112 (.5 unit)
Schortman, Urban

See first-semester course description.

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

◆ ANTH 113 (.5 unit)
Suggs, staff

See first-semester course description.

Biocultural Adaptations

ANTH 324 (.5 unit)
Hardy

Although biological anthropology relies heavily on an evolutionary perspective, it is also concerned with understanding the interactions between human biology and culture. This biocultural perspective seeks to appreciate how humans adapt to their environment through a combination of biological, cultural, and physiological adjustments. We will explore how humans adapt to a wide variety of environmental factor, including high altitudes, climates, nutrition, and disease. The emphasis will be on understanding our biological and cultural responses to stress and the contexts in which these can be adaptive or maladaptive. Prerequisites: ANTH 111, 112, or 113. Enrollment limited.

Special Topic: Culture and Disease

ANTH 392.01 (.5 unit)
Murphy, Suggs

This course introduces students to the anthropological study of disease ecology and medical systems in other cultures. We will explore the role of disease in humans from an evolutionary perspective, noting the influence that culture, ecology, economy, history, and politics have had in the past as well as the present. In addition, we will look at the efficacy and nature of both non-Western and Western ethnomedical systems and the cultural and psychodynamic features of illness. Throughout the course we will examine the application of a medical anthropological perspective in developing sensitivity for cultural and biological variation within the United States and abroad. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited.

Special Topic: Religion and Resistance in New World Societies

ANTH 392.02 (.5 unit)
Schortman, Urban

Most of people in the United States have a stereotypical vision of Indians in the western states kitted out with tomahawks, bows and arrows, and even guns, engaged in attacks against white settlers or the fighting with the cavalry. Many also can envision the Aztecs or Incas fighting with encroaching, armored conquistadores. A less well-known, more subtle, and more long-term form of resistance can be found in religion: new forms of religion that fortify Native American cultures, such as the Ghost Dance; and syncretic forms, such as the versions of Catholicism in Mesoamerica and the Andes that unite native beliefs with Christianity. Nor are these forms of religious resistance limited to Native Americans: candomble and umbanda, blending African, Native American, and European traditions, continue to be a force in many parts of the Americas; Quakers are well known for their opposition to war; and “liberation theology” is often cited as a cause of revolution in Central America. In this course we will examine a number of religious traditions from an anthropological viewpoint, looking at aspects that are syncretic, and/or revivals of older forms (known as revitalization movements), but always examining how religious beliefs are embedded in the larger cultural systems of which they are parts. Examples that we will consider are the Iroquois’ Handsome Lake movement, the Ghost Dance, the Caste War of the Yucatan, Andean syncretic and revitalization cults, and popular black saints in Brazil. The course will combine lectures, discussions, student presentations, readings, and films. Prerequisite: ANTH 113. Enrollment limited.

Special Topic: Bioarchaeology of Sub-Saharan Africa

ANTH 392.03 (.5 unit)
Murphy

Africa is a vast continent with an incredibly diverse set of people and cultures. The goal of this course is to demonstrate the complexity and depth of sub-Saharan Africa’s past through the exploration of human skeletal and archaeological evidence. Most people are aware that Africa is the birthplace of our species, and we will begin our journey by exploring human origins and technological innovations. Unfortunately, other cultural complexities such as the emergence of food production, indigenous states, and the development of long-distance trade are usually attributed only to Egyptian civilization. This course seeks to fill in the missing details of innovation and complexity for the rest of the continent by discussing the evidence for a vast array of societies in sub-Saharan Africa’s past. Prerequisites: ANTH 111, 112, or 113. Enrollment limited.

Drinking Culture: The Anthropology of Alcohol Use

ANTH 474 (.5 unit)
Suggs

In this advanced research seminar, students will develop and undertake ethnographic projects focusing on the meaning of normative alcohol use among Kenyon students. Projects undertaken in the past have focused on a wide range of issues (e.g., the intersection of gender and alcohol consumption, social networks constructed in acts of drinking, drunken comportment as a culturally learned construct, the ways that alcohol is used to express adulthood, and the role of alcohol in the bonding of athletic teams.) We seek to understand what students on our campus “get” from drinking besides “drunk,” and to situate that understanding in a larger historical, social, and cultural framework. Prerequisite: ANTH 113 and permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited.

Individual Study

ANTH 494 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course is for students who wish to do advanced work beyond regular courses or to study topics not included in course offerings. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Honors

ANTH 498 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course is for students pursuing departmental honors. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

The following may be offered in 2007-08:

- ANTH 111 Introduction to Biological Anthropology
- ANTH 112 Introduction to Archaeology
- ANTH 113 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- ANTH 243 Peoples and Cultures of Sub-Saharan Africa
- ANTH 244 Cultures of Southeast Asia
- ANTH 324 Biocultural Adaptations
- ANTH 325 Human Skeletal Analysis
- ANTH 332 Survey of Mesoamerican Prehistory
- ANTH 338 Theory and Method: Household Archaeology
- ANTH 348 South American Archaeology
- ANTH 350 Human Sexuality and Culture
- ANTH 351 Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective
- ANTH 353 Psychological Anthropology
- ANTH 362 Contemporary Anthropology: Field Data
- ANTH 392.01 Culture and Disease
- ANTH 392.03 Bioarchaeology of Sub-Saharan Africa
- ANTH 465 History of Anthropological Thought
- ANTH 469 Topics in Mesoamerican Anthropology
- ANTH 471 Ethnomedicine
- ANTH 474 Drinking Culture: The Anthropology of Alcohol Use