ANTHROPOLOGY - DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

Departmental Subdisciplines

Anthropology in the United States is traditionally divided into four subdisciplines: archaeology, biological, cultural and linguistic. Of these, the first three are major curricular options available to graduate students in anthropology at CU Boulder. Although the three subdisciplines offered in our program require approximately the same minimum number of credit hours for their respective MA and PhD degrees, and all include ANTH 5795 Proseminar in Anthropology plus a required cross-subdisciplinary seminar, they differ substantially in the number of other specific requirements. Particularly at the MA level, there is much less flexibility in some subdisciplines than in others, and students should bear this in mind when choosing their specialty and registering for classes.

Archaeology

The archaeology subdiscipline provides continuous geographic coverage of ancient societies from the Plains of North America through the Southwest and Mesoamerica to the Intermediate Area. The native societies range from egalitarian hunter-gatherers through middle range societies to city-states and empires. The faculty’s theoretical and topical interests include human ecology, ethnoarchaeology, agency and social theory, lithic and ceramic analyses, remote sensing and geophysical applications in archaeology.

Archaeology links with biological anthropology in a number of ways. For instance, archaeologists encountering burials frequently turn to biological anthropologists for analyses of stature, health and other topics. Many archaeologists and biological anthropologists share a deep interest in human ecology, the ways people have adapted to their environments and have affected those environments.

Archaeology also relates to cultural anthropology in significant ways, since much archaeological theory is derived from cultural theory. Given the vast diachronic interests of archaeology, significant archaeological theory is also derived independently from ethnography. Ethnoarchaeology spans the two subdisciplines, as archaeologists study the material culture of functioning contemporary societies to learn how better to make inferences about past behavior. Both archaeology and cultural anthropology study ethnic and political groups in contact with each other, including topics of ethnohistory, migration, acculturation, trade and tribute, conquest, information sharing, elite emulation and the rise of multiethnic powers.

Biological Anthropology

Biological anthropology encompasses genetics (the study of gene structure, processes and patterns of inheritance), paleoanthropology (the study of human and primate evolution in the fossil record), osteology (the study of the skeleton), paleopathology (the study of evidence of disease and trauma in skeletal and fossil remains), primateology (the study of the behavior and ecology of non-human primates) and human biology (biocultural study of biological variation in living human populations).

The biological anthropology faculty at CU have interests and research strengths that cross sub-disciplinary boundaries and foster collaboration with faculty and graduate students in other disciplines and subdisciplines. We share an interest in human ecology, the broad integrative area of anthropology that focuses on the interactions of culture, biology and the environment. We also share an interest in the processes of globalization, which are rapidly changing many aspects of the modern world. As biological anthropologists, we are well positioned to analyze the impact of globalization on the interaction between biology and behavior, and to analyze human and primate adaptations to changing environments and declining biodiversity.

The department offers training in several different aspects of ecology: general ecology, early hominin paleoecology, nutritional, community and evolutionary ecology. Our research foci also include anthropogenic and climatic effects on primate behavior and biology; conservation biology; primate evolution; feeding biology of humans and non-human primates; biogeochemical techniques for studying the diets and habitats of modern and fossil fauna; life history; endocrinology; growth and development; and maternal and infant health.

We carry out research and offer training and research opportunities at a wide range of international sites, including: Bezà Mahafaly, Madagascar; Lajuma Research Centre and the Mokopane Conservation Centre, South Africa; The Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, South Africa; 12 museums in South Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia; Kibale National Park, Uganda; Keneba, The Gambia; Cali, Colombia; Ta Khu Nature Reserve, Kien Luong Karst area and Khau Ca Forest area, Vietnam. Our laboratories offer analytical capabilities and training in a broad range of methods, from measurement of human energy expenditure, to immunoassay and mid-infrared spectroscopy, to plant nutritional analysis. Our field sites offer training and research on primate health, community ecology, plant-animal interactions, forest ecology, nutritional ecology, conservation biology, dental ecology and paleoecology.

Please note that we do not train students specifically in forensics.

Cultural Anthropology

Cultural anthropologists study the cultural patterns and social institutions that shape how people think and behave in human communities across the globe, including their own society. While their findings are frequently comparative or cross-cultural in scope, cultural anthropologists undertake ethnographic studies through intensive participant-observation in particular cultures, subcultures, communities and regions. The insights of cultural anthropology are typically derived from long-term fieldwork conducted in the local language of a community, with the goal of acquiring an integrated understanding of the interactions between individual actors and local, culturally diverse patterns of life. Among the topical interests of the cultural faculty are gender and sexuality, cultural theory, symbolic anthropology, religion and ritual, human ecology, pastoralism, political economy, applied anthropology, medical anthropology, science, technology and society studies, nationalism and ethnic identity, post-colonialism, tourism, history and memory, and visual anthropology. Areas of regional expertise in the department include Latin America, Native America, Atlantic Canada, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Tibet, East Africa, the Caribbean, Polynesia and Western Europe, as well as their respective diasporas around the world.

Additionally, the cultural faculty are united in sharing an interest in globalization, bringing their ethnographic skills to bear on the contemporaneous but countervailing forces that paradoxically tend at once to global homogenization and local fragmentation. Processes related to globalization studied by cultural faculty and students include the increasingly planetary integration of the economy; the spread of human insecurity with the proliferation of ethnic conflict, violence, crime, disease and financial volatility; the global depletion and degradation of environmental subsistence resources; the impact of tourism and large-scale development projects; the internationalization of environmental,
feminist, religious and human rights movements; the universalization of democratic structures; the rise of "world cities"; the invention of new information and communication technologies; and the increasingly global flows of advertising and consumer goods. The cultural faculty's interest in processes of globalization, human ecology and applied anthropology also intersect with areas of specialization in archaeology and biological anthropology.

Requirements

Prerequisites

To be considered for admission as a regular degree student, applicants should have a minimum undergraduate grade point average of 3.00 (4.00 = A) or a Master of Arts degree in anthropology. Graduate Record Examination scores for verbal and quantitative aptitude tests are required. Letters of recommendation and evidence of previous anthropologically oriented experience and work are carefully considered. Students with fewer than 18 credit hours of previous coursework in anthropology are considered deficient and may be asked to present a greater number of credit hours for a degree.

Application

Inquiries concerning applications should be directed to the main departmental office. Completed applications are reviewed once each year and are due by January 15. Students with no previous graduate work should apply for entrance into the MA program, which will prepare them for the PhD program if successfully completed. Students who have or will have completed an MA degree in anthropology by the time of their admission may apply for direct admission into the PhD program, but they may be required to complete specific remedial requirements in some cases. Students with a master's degree in a closely related discipline may be considered for admission to the PhD program on a case-by-case basis, and should expect to meet all the core requirements of our graduate program. Students holding an MS in museum and field studies from CU Boulder may be admitted to the PhD program on condition of completing deficiencies in course work.

Course Requirements

Course work beyond the MA must include a minimum of 18 credit hours and 30 dissertation credit hours.

Archaeology Subdiscipline

Students entering the PhD program with an MA from another institution must complete the proseminar (ANTH 5795) in their first year of residence and the additional Anthropology requirements (see Core Requirements for the MA) within the first two years.

Requirements

Four 7000-level seminars in the department, (in addition to any taken for the MA) at least one of which must be in another subdiscipline, or a team-taught bridging seminar. 12

Two other electives with advisor approval 6

ANTH 8990 Doctoral Dissertation 30

Total Credit Hours 48

NOTE: Any transfer credit or other proposed substitutions for required coursework should be addressed by petition to the Graduate Committee.

Recommended Course Work

The faculty strongly recommends students take one or more additional classes beyond the required minimum, particularly classes in regional culture histories, general anthropology, and relevant topics in other departments (such as geology and geography). Other classes can include any relevant to a student's program of study, including archaeological area and topical classes, ethnographic theory and area classes, and classes in related departments (such as geology, geography, biology, etc.). Elective classes should be chosen in consultation with each student's advisor.

Biological Anthropology Subdiscipline

Students entering the PhD program with an MA from another institution must complete the Proseminar (ANTH 5795) in their first year of residence and the one 5000-level graduate class in Biological Anthropology (see Core Requirements in MA section for suggestions) within the first two years. They must also take Quantitative Methods (ANTH 5000) within the first four semesters if they do not have equivalent training on their record.

Requirements

Four 7000-level seminars in the department, (in addition to any taken for the MA) at least one of which must be in another subdiscipline, or a team-taught bridging seminar. 12

Two other electives with advisor approval 6

ANTH 8990 Doctoral Dissertation 30

Total Credit Hours 48

NOTE: Any transfer credit or other proposed substitutions for required coursework should be addressed by petition to the Graduate Committee.

Cultural Anthropology Subdiscipline

Students entering the PhD program with an MA from another institution must complete the proseminal (ANTH 5795) in their first year of residence. They are also expected to take the Core Seminar in Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 5780), the Advanced Seminar in Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 5785), and Research Methods (ANTH 7300) at their earliest opportunity, unless they demonstrate they have taken equivalent courses elsewhere (by petition to the Graduate Committee with advisor's endorsement). They must also complete an approved "tools" course if they have not already done so or do not have equivalent training on their record.

Foreign language requirement

Language proficiency is essential to research in cultural anthropology, so incoming graduate students are expected to identify and begin study of a foreign language as soon as possible, preferably no later than the first year. For languages not available at the University of Colorado, students are encouraged to begin or advance their language proficiency during the summer following their first year.

Requirements

An approved "Tools" course 1 3

At least two 7000-level seminars in Cultural Anthropology. 6

Three classes or directed readings at the 5000 level or above (Limit: 6 credits of directed readings/Guided Study) 9

ANTH 8990 Doctoral Dissertation 30

Total Credit Hours 48

1 The tools requirement is intended to provide a graduate student in cultural anthropology with a skill or set of skills that will enhance his or her research capabilities. Typically this involves training in a particular methodological technique or analytical process.
NOTE: Any transfer credit or other proposed substitutions for required course work should be addressed by petition to the Graduate Committee.