ANTHROPOLOGY - MASTER OF ARTS (MA)

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 a required cross-subdisciplinary seminar on the list of classes required for this total, 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 in 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), primatology (the study of the behavior and ecology of nonhuman 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 sub-disciplines. 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 Kou 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-plant 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.

**Dual Degree Program**

**Anthropology (MA/MBA)**

The MBA/MA in anthropology dual-degree program enables students to earn an MBA and an MA in anthropology simultaneously over three or four years depending on the student's subdiscipline in anthropology. Students in this MBA/MA program pursue careers in managing the business aspects of archaeological projects, working in the growing field of corporate cultural anthropology and ethnography or museum management.

**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 credits of previous course work 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 Jan. 15. Students with no previous graduate work should apply for entrance into the MA program, which if successfully completed will prepare them for the PhD program. 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.

**Course Requirements**

Students may have a primary specialization in any of the major subfields of anthropology: archaeology, cultural or biological anthropology. The department expects graduate students to maintain a breadth of competence in general anthropology through the master’s degree with specialization intensifying with progress toward the PhD degree.

All entering graduate students must have had the equivalent of ANTH 4000 Quantitative Methods in Anthropology or ANTH 5000 Quantitative Methods in Anthropology or take the course (or, in the case of cultural anthropology students. an appropriate "tool course") during their first year in residence.

As partial fulfillment toward a graduate degree, all students are required to take one graduate seminar focusing on one of the two subdisciplines outside of their primary specialization. Other specific course requirements are established through a consultation with an academic advisor.

Additional information about other specific areas of specialization and other requirements for the degree may be obtained by writing directly to the Department of Anthropology, and by referencing the Master's Degree Requirements (catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/anthropology/anthropology-doctor-philosophy-phd) section. Information is also available on the Department of Anthropology (http://www.colorado.edu/anthropology) website.

**Archaeology Subdiscipline**

The terminal MA track in archaeology is for students intending to earn only an MA degree who enter the program with BA, BS or non-anthropology MA or PhD degrees. The degree is designed for students who wish to pursue careers outside of academia (e.g., Cultural Resource Management, Park Service, etc.). The terminal MA is a non-thesis degree, but does require that students take a 3-credit independent research course (ANTH 7840) that will include the completion of a publishable paper and an oral defense of that paper by their MA committee.

Note that, although graduate students carrying only 5 credits are considered to be full-time at CU Boulder, making timely progress through our program and taking elective classes in the first year generally requires students to carry three classes (9 credits). Students who choose to carry fewer than three courses per semester are still expected to complete the proseminar in the first year, regardless of what other classes might be offered, and should understand that such a choice may add significantly to the time it takes them to complete their course work.

**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**

Biological anthropology students will apply directly to the PhD program in biological anthropology (catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/anthropology/anthropology-doctor-philosophy-phd).
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Core Requirements
One graduate-level anthropology seminar not in the student’s subdiscipline (any non-split-level graduate seminar, including bridging seminars)  
ANTH 5000  Quantitative Methods in Anthropology 3

Electives/Thesis
Select one of the following plans: 24

Plan I
ANTH courses at the 5000 level or above
ANTH 6950  Master’s Thesis

Plan II
ANTH courses at the 5000 level or above

Recommended Elective Course Work
ANTH 5060  Nutrition and Anthropology
ANTH 5070  Methods in Biological Anthropology
ANTH 5110  Human Evolutionary Biology
ANTH 5170  Primate Evolutionary Biology
ANTH 5120  Advanced Biological Anthropology

Total Credit Hours 30

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

Degree Plans
Plan I: Thesis
MA students in archaeology and biological anthropology are normally expected to write a thesis.

Plan II: Comprehensive Examination
In consultation with their advisor, students in cultural anthropology have the option of completing their MA degree by examination only.

Cultural Anthropology Subdiscipline
The terminal MA track in cultural anthropology is for students intending to earn only an MA degree who enter the program with a BA, BS, MS, or non-anthropology MA or PhD degrees. The terminal MA is a non-thesis degree, but does require that students take a 3-credit independent research course that will include the completion of an approximately 30-page paper in their fourth semester, which will be evaluated by the members of their committee. The MA comprehensive exam will be eliminated.

Required Course Work
Select either: 3

ANTH 5840  Guided Study
An Ethnographic Area course (ANTH 5565, 5630, 5690, 5730, 5750, 5760).

Core Requirements
ANTH 5780  Core Course-Cultural Anthropology 3
ANTH 5785  Advanced Seminar in Cultural Anthropology 3
ANTH 7300  Seminar: Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology 3