

Anthropology

What is Anthropology?

Anthropology is the study of various aspects of humans within past and present societies. North American Anthropology is called the “Four-Field Approach,” as it includes under the umbrella of General Anthropology four full disciplines:

- Cultural-Socio Anthropology: The scientific and comparative study of those things we learn, share, and teach others.
- Archaeology: The scientific study of human behavior as evidenced by the materials we’ve left behind.
- Linguistics: The science of language and how humans communicate.
- Bioanthropology: The scientific study of human biological variation.

Why is Anthropology important?

It is vital for us as human beings to understand our origins and also to understand the cultures in the world outside of our own, in order to be able to decide what is best for different societies, and for our entire world.

What courses would I be taking as an anthropology student?

The basic courses in the Anthropology curriculum are Physical Anthropology, Linguistics, Intro to Archaeology, and Cultural Anthropology. Depending on your area of interest, other courses offered include North American Indians, World Culture, Introduction to Rock Art, Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences, Archaeological Field Methods, and Anthropological Research Methods.

What kinds of jobs can you get with a degree in Anthropology?

Depending on the field that interests you, there are even jobs available with an Associate of Arts in Anthropology. Anthropologists work in practically every environment and setting imaginable. Anthropologists can be found working in large corporations or studying primates in Africa. Anthropologists work in deserts and cities, Antarctica, and even at underwater archaeological sites.

Academic Careers

On campuses, in departments of anthropology, and in research laboratories, anthropologists teach and conduct research. They spend a great deal of time preparing for classes, writing lectures, grading papers, working with individual students, composing scholarly articles, and writing books.

A number of academic anthropologists find careers in other departments or university programs, such as schools of medicine, epidemiology, public health, ethnic studies, cultural studies, community or area studies, linguistics, education, ecology, cognitive psychology and neural science.

Business Careers

Many corporations look explicitly for anthropologists, recognizing the utility of their perspective on a corporate team. A corporate anthropologist working in market research might conduct targeted focus groups to examine consumer preference patterns not readily apparent through statistical or survey methods. These anthropologists use their research skills to talk to consumers and users of technology to find out how products and services could be improved to better meet the needs of consumers.

Many archaeologists and cultural anthropologists are self-employed, running businesses that provide services to the government and private sector in artifact management and human behavior. If you want to run your own company, this track might be for you!

Government Careers

The federal government is one of the largest employers of anthropologists outside of academia. Possible career paths include: international development, cultural resource management, the legislative branch, forensic and physical anthropology, natural resource management, and defense and security sectors. State and local governmental organizations use anthropologists in planning, research and managerial capacities.

Contract archaeology, or Cultural research Management (CRM) is a growing occupation with state and federal legislative mandates to assess cultural resources affected by government funded projects. Also, Forensic anthropologists not only work with police departments to help identify mysterious or unknown remains but also work in university and museum settings studying and conserving human remains that might be recent, or from a very long time ago.

The Non-profit Sector

Non-governmental organizations, such as international health organizations and development organizations hire anthropologists to help design and implement a wide variety of programs to benefit society. Many anthropologists work in local, community-based settings for non-profit agencies like the YMCA, local schools, or environmental organizations.