

Anthropology, MA

Graduate study in anthropology is open to individuals with varied undergraduate majors and training backgrounds.

Graduate students normally are admitted under the assumption that they intend to pursue the PhD. The department also offers a terminal MA, with a focus on cultural resource management (CRM) in archaeology, which provides academic preparation for a professional career in that field.

PhD students who enter the program with a bachelor's degree are typically awarded a master's degree upon fulfilling program requirements at the end of their second year. The MA portion of the PhD program features coursework across all subfields of anthropology. Students are also strongly encouraged to conduct independent summer research, which is often supported by departmental and other university-based funding sources.

For additional information, view the Graduate Programs website and the current Graduate Student Guidebook on the Department of Anthropology website.

Learning Outcomes

Disciplinary Expertise

Graduate students will gain an in-depth understanding of anthropology and the discipline's contributions to our understanding of people and culture, in the past and present.

Skills for Independent Research

Graduate students will acquire professional and ethical research, reasoning, methodological, and management skills to identify important research problems. They will also learn how to design and execute a project, productively engage with feedback, and successfully report (via writing and presentations) the results of their independent research to diverse sets of audiences.

Teaching Contributions

Graduate students will learn how to communicate anthropological concepts and theories effectively and ethically to different audiences.

Disciplinary, Academic, and Community Contributions

Graduate students will develop service, mentoring, and leadership skills that enable them to advance and support professional, management, academic, and community needs.

Requirements

The Master of Arts program in anthropology requires 30–36 s.h. of graduate credit, depending on a student's previous anthropological training. Students may count a maximum of 9 s.h. earned in courses outside of anthropology toward the MA in anthropology. It is expected that a full-time student will complete all MA requirements by the end of the second year in the program. Students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00.

Master's degree students who choose to focus on cultural resource management—archaeology normally do not go on to earn a PhD in anthropology.

By the end of their first semester, each student must select an MA committee, consisting of an advisor and two additional professors. Each year, students compile, in consultation with their advisor, the three strongest papers written for anthropology courses, conferences, or journals; an annotated bibliography; their current curriculum vitae; and a three-page narrative to describe their intellectual trajectory in the MA program to date.

Master's degree students who intend to earn a doctorate should consider taking a statistics course during their MA study.

General Coursework

MA students not pursuing the cultural resource management—archaeology focus must complete core seminars in all three subfields (total of 9 s.h.).

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
ANTH:5101	Seminar Sociocultural Anthropology	3
ANTH:5201	Seminar: Archaeological Theory and Method	3
ANTH:5301	Seminar: Biological Anthropology	3

Electives

In consultation with the advisor and committee members, a student selects a minimum of 21 s.h. of additional coursework to complete the remaining semester hours required for the MA. Elective work may include courses in other disciplines, directed study, and up to 6 s.h. of MA thesis credit for students who choose the thesis option.

Cultural Resource Management—Archaeology Focus

Most archaeological excavations and surveys are conducted as cultural resource management (CRM), so it is essential that all researchers who work with archaeological data and individuals committed to site preservation have a basic understanding of CRM. Students who select this focus area learn about the field and how to address related ethical issues as well as technical and theoretical challenges.

Students must complete the archaeological core graduate seminar. They must also complete a research paper, which is an archaeological study with a substantive data analysis directed toward an explicit archaeological research problem, suitable to meet the section three requirement for the Registry of Professional Archaeologists application form.

The cultural resource management—archaeology focus requires a total of 30 s.h., including 24 s.h. of coursework and 6 s.h. of independent research or thesis credit.

Required Coursework

Course #	Title	Hours
Both of these:		
ANTH:3240	Cultural Resources Management Archaeology: Practice and Practicalities	3
ANTH:5201	Seminar: Archaeological Theory and Method	3

Area Electives

Course #	Title	Hours
Two of these:		
ANTH:3243	Archaeology of the American Midcontinent	3
ANTH:3257	North American Archaeology	3
ANTH:3260	Pleistocene Peopling of the Americas	3
ANTH:3265	Archaeology of the Great Plains	3

Technical Electives

Course #	Title	Hours
Four of these:		
ANTH:3207	Animal Bones in Archaeology	3
ANTH:3237	Politics of the Archaeological Past	3
ANTH:3255	Introduction to Archaeological Ceramics	3
ANTH:3295	Field Research in Archaeology	3
ANTH:3305	Human Osteology	3

Independent Research or Thesis

Course #	Title	Hours
6 s.h. from these:		
ANTH:6005	Independent Study: Anthropology	arr.
ANTH:6010	Research: Anthropology	arr.
ANTH:6015	Thesis	arr.

Graduate Education

Graduate education prepares students with advanced knowledge and skills in specialized fields. At the University of Iowa, the Graduate College advocates for student-centered graduate education and supports equitable application of rules and policies across graduate programs.

Academics

University of Iowa graduate credentials are regulated by policies and requirements found in the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations. This includes minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements for academic standing and degree conferral. The Graduate College sets the minimum requirement. Individual graduate programs may establish higher GPA requirements.

Admissions

Graduate student applicants must meet admission requirements for both the Graduate College and the program to which they have applied. University of Iowa graduate admission requirements are published by the Graduate College and on the Graduate Admissions website.

Financial Support

Graduate students might be eligible for financial support. Several contingencies apply, including degree program and award type, satisfactory progress toward degree, satisfactory completion of all duties related to an appointment, and

availability of funding. Graduate students should inquire directly with their program for more information about funding availability. The Graduate Student Employment Standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters except wages, which are covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

Admission

Applicants for admission to the graduate program in anthropology are considered regardless of their previous field of training. Students without previous training in anthropology are expected to perform additional work as necessary to achieve the competence expected for their degree objective.

Students normally are admitted under the assumption that they intend to pursue the PhD, with the exception of students entering into the MA program with the cultural research management-archaeology subprogram. Students without an MA in anthropology devote the first two years to fulfilling the MA requirements. After those requirements are completed, the student's committee may award the MA with admittance to the PhD program.

Students with an MA in anthropology from another institution may proceed directly into a PhD program organized around their special research interests. If they lack any of the requirements of the graduate program at the University of Iowa, they are informed of those requirements when admitted. Acceptance of credit hours from other institutions will follow UI regulations.

Applicants for admission to the graduate program must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Anthropology graduate program applicants are required to upload the following documentation to the University of Iowa Graduate Admissions online application:

- official academic records/transcripts from previous institutions attended;
- a brief statement of interest or intent regarding why graduate study in the Department of Anthropology is desired;
- three letters of recommendation;
- a writing sample (preferably a research paper); and
- an application for graduate funding.

For more information concerning the required application elements, see Graduate Admissions Process on the Department of Anthropology website.

When completing the online Graduate College Application for Admission for Degree, applicants should enter MA or PhD based on their final degree objective. Students at the MA level do not write a thesis, so "MA (thesis)" is not an option. For questions about which degree option to choose, contact the Department of Anthropology.

Career Advancement

Graduates establish careers at universities, colleges, museums, healthcare institutions, and a diverse range of governmental and nongovernmental agencies. For more information, see Careers and Opportunities on the Department of Anthropology website.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

Anthropology, MA

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
30 s.h. must be graduate level coursework; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. ^{a, b, c, d}		
Students who are first-time teaching assistants must also complete ANTH:5001 Graduate Teaching Pro-Seminar.		
Hours		0
First Year		
Fall		
Establish Master's Committee ^e		
Seek Internal Review Board (IRB) Approval ^f		
ANTH:5101	Seminar Sociocultural Anthropology	3
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		9
Spring		
Master's Portfolio ^h		
ANTH:5201	Seminar: Archaeological Theory and Method	3
ANTH:5301	Seminar: Biological Anthropology	3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		9
Second Year		
Fall		
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		3
Spring		
Master's Portfolio ⁱ		
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Exam: Master's Final Exam ^j		
Hours		6
Total Hours		27

a terminal MA degree, with a focus on cultural resource management-archaeology (CRM).

- d Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.
- e Composed of three members of the anthropology graduate faculty, one of whom serves as the committee chair, and the student's faculty advisor.
- f Students who conduct research involving human subjects (e.g., ethnographic research in the summer months) are required to submit a detailed application about the scope of their study and data collection methods through the HawkIRB system for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.
- g In consultation with faculty advisor and committee members, students select a minimum of 21 s.h. of additional coursework to complete the remaining semester hours required for the MA; may include courses in other disciplines and up to 9 s.h. of directed study. Students who intend to earn a doctorate should consider taking a statistics course.
- h Compile, in consultation with faculty advisor, the three strongest papers written for anthropology courses, conferences, or journals; an annotated bibliography of 3 topical areas with 5 key annotated references in each; current curriculum vitae; and a three-page narrative to describe intellectual trajectory in the MA program to date.
- i Compile, in consultation with faculty advisor, the three strongest papers written for anthropology courses, conferences, or journals; an annotated bibliography of 3-4 topical areas with 6-10 key references in each; current curriculum vitae; and a three-page narrative to describe intellectual trajectory in the MA program to date.
- j Discuss committee and format with faculty advisor and graduate program coordinator.

- a Some students may complete up to 36 s.h. of graduate coursework for the degree, depending on their previous anthropological training. Students should consult with their faculty advisor to determine if this is necessary and, if so, which coursework is appropriate.
- b A maximum of 9 s.h. of coursework outside anthropology may count towards the degree requirements.
- c Students normally are admitted (whether with a master's or a bachelor's degree) under the assumption that they intend to pursue the PhD degree. The department also offers