Anthropology, PhD

Learning Outcomes

Disciplinary Expertise

Graduate students will gain an in-depth understanding of anthropology and the discipline's contributions to the 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 PhD leads to the accomplishment of professional-level skills in conducting independent research, and normally features specialized training in one or two of the discipline's subfields. Doctoral education is guided by a PhD committee composed of members of the faculty competent in the particular areas and topics chosen by a student. Students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00.

The doctoral program includes an integrated process of progressively developing and completing reading lists, developing and submitting research proposals to funding agencies, developing and defending a dissertation prospectus, and writing two comprehensive exam essays. Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination and the dissertation prospectus, a student advances to candidacy for the PhD. To complete the PhD, all doctoral candidates are required to conduct independent anthropological research, write a dissertation, and defend it.

For students who enter the doctoral program with an existing MA (in anthropology or a related field), the faculty develop an individualized program of study based on a student's existing coursework and goals.

PhD students may also elect to pursue an optional concentration in feminist anthropology.

For program requirements, refer to the current Graduate Student Guidebook on the Department of Anthropology website.

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 cultural resource management–archaeology MA program. 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 or MA thesis); and
- an application for graduate funding.

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

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.

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Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
72 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]		
Students may elect to pursue an optional concentration in feminist anthropology; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.		
Students who are first-time teaching assistants must also complete ANTH:5001 Graduate Teaching Pro-Seminar Graduate Teaching Pro-Seminar.		
	Hours	**0**
First Year		
Fall		
Seek Internal Review Board (IRB) Approval [c]		
Required Theory course [d]		3
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**9**
Spring		
Language Competency Requirement [f]		
ANTH:5110	Anthropological Data Analysis	3
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**9**
Second Year		
Fall		
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**9**
Spring		
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**9**
Third Year		
Fall		
Exam: Doctoral Comprehensive Exam [g]		
ANTH:7110	Research Design and Writing [h]	3
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**9**
Spring		
Dissertation Prospectus [i]		
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**9**
Fourth Year		
Fall		
ANTH:6015	Thesis	9
	Hours	**9**
Spring		
ANTH:7501	Dissertation Writing Seminar	1
ANTH:6015	Thesis	8
Exam: Doctoral Final Exam [j]		
	Hours	**9**
	Total Hours	**72**

a A maximum of 18 s.h. of coursework outside anthropology (this includes and is not in addition to the 9 s.h. allowed at the MA level) may count towards the degree requirements; beyond the MA degree, no more than 9 additional semester hours of ANTH:6005 may count towards the PhD degree.

b 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.

c 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.

d Sociocultural Anthropology option: ANTH:5101; Archaeology options: ANTH:3237, ANTH:5201; Biological Anthropology options: ANTH:3308, ANTH:4315, ANTH:5301.

e Electives may include courses in other relevant study, a maximum of 18 s.h. of directed study, and dissertation credit. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate level elective coursework and sequence.

f Students should consult with their advisor and committee and determine both existing and needed language competencies. A record of the status of, expected training in, and decisions (including waivers) related to language competency must be included in the student's file by the time of candidacy. The Language Competency Report can be found on the department website.
g The student will prepare two comprehensive essays: one in the geographical area of specialization and the other in the primary topical area of specialization. In some subfields and for some projects, a geographical area may not be relevant, and the student will focus on two topical areas. Each paper will address a question posed by the committee in consultation with the student.
h Typically this course is offered in fall semesters only. Check MyUI for course availability since offerings are subject to change.
i The dissertation prospectus should present a research question that contributes to ongoing discussions in anthropological scholarship, explain the background and significance of the question, and describe the methods that the student plans to use to answer it. The student publicly defends their prospectus before their PhD committee by the end of the final exam period of that semester
j Dissertation defense.