

# Master of Arts in Anthropology

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## What is Anthropology?

Anthropologists are concerned with the origin, history, and future of the human species. Our mission is to further our understanding of past and present human societies in their cultural, biological, and environmental contexts. The discipline provides students the knowledge and skills they will need to navigate these complex, multicultural, and rapidly changing worlds. Because we study what it is to be human, the field is one of the most wide-ranging of the academic disciplines.

There are three main subdisciplines of anthropology, all currently taught in our department: archaeology is concerned with studying the human past based on the material culture left behind; biological anthropology is concerned with human evolution and variation, and sociocultural anthropology is concerned with the many ways humans organize themselves and create, reproduce, and reject meaningful patterns of life in changing local and global circumstances, including through language. Anthropologists across all of the subdisciplines apply holistic, comparative, and evolutionary perspectives and a range of methodologies in their research. We are committed to fieldwork and the application of this knowledge to helping people better understand one another.

## Why study Anthropology at KU?

Students have many reasons for pursuing graduate degrees in anthropology. Some are curious about the origins of the human species. Others are fascinated by the diversity of human experiences in ancient and modern periods. Some students intend to pursue international careers, where they will use languages and work in cultural contexts very different from those in which they were raised. Others plan to work in museums collecting and curating human cultural resources. Some wish to pursue graduate training in one of the field's subdisciplines, while others seek to use their anthropological training as preparation for professional schools, including law, medicine, public health, journalism, business, and engineering. There are many professions where the broad scientific, humanistic, and multicultural knowledge available through the study of anthropology can be useful — in education, healthcare, law, social work, business, human resources, public affairs, cultural resource management, or laboratory research.

The Anthropology Department at the University of Kansas maintains a holistic and integrative approach to studying human beings. Our world-class program has particular strengths in the Americas in all three subdisciplines, and it is committed to engaged research with community partners.

Funding is available for MA students admitted into the Anthropology program.

### **For specific questions about our program, please contact us:**

The University of Kansas  
 Department of Anthropology  
 Corinne Butler  
 Graduate Program Coordinator  
 E-mail: cebutler@ku.edu

## Admission to Graduate Studies

### Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

## Graduate Admission to the Anthropology Program

The anthropology graduate program begins at an advanced level. Preparation for the program through completion of an undergraduate major in anthropology is encouraged but not required. Some undergraduate preparation in fields closely related to anthropology, such as biology, sociology, psychology, linguistics, economics, geography, or geology is strongly recommended. Undergraduate courses in such subjects as biology, philosophy, genetics, computer science, and history are of considerable value to the graduate student in anthropology.

Proficiency in a modern foreign language and in statistics is of special importance to candidates for graduate work in anthropology and will optimally have been acquired during the undergraduate years.

Submit your graduate application online (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>). Other required application materials are:

- A resume or curriculum vitae (CV)
- A writing sample of your best academic work
- A personal statement describing your academic objectives and professional goals that clearly indicates the disciplinary track of interest (i.e., archaeology, biological anthropology, or sociocultural anthropology)
- Applicants who wish to be considered for departmental financial support (GTA or GRA positions, fellowships, etc.) should *clearly* state this in the personal statement
- Transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate study completed
- Three letters of recommendation from faculty members or others with whom you have worked and who know your work well
- Non-native speakers of English must meet English proficiency requirements (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) set by KU Graduate Studies

Most application materials can be uploaded to the online application. GRE scores are not required.

To be admitted, two KU Anthropology faculty members must be identified who could serve as the applicant's primary and secondary advisors. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the faculty members prior to applying, to establish interest and determine whether they would be a good fit with the advisors' research expertise. Applicants should identify these potential mentors in their application, but they do not need to submit

written confirmation from these faculty as part of their application; they will be identified by the department during the selection and admissions process.

## Deadlines

The deadline for Fall graduate applications is December 1 of the preceding year. (If December 1 falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be the next business day.) Late applications are not accepted. Spring/summer admission is not offered.

More information on application requirements is available on the department's website (<https://anthropology.ku.edu/graduate-admission/>).

Students who are interested in enrolling in graduate level coursework in the Department of Anthropology without formal admission to a graduate program at KU are encouraged to apply for graduate non-degree seeking student status. See the department's website (<https://anthropology.ku.edu/non-degree-seeking/>) for further details.

## M.A. Degree Requirements

The M.A. program is a general curriculum for students who wish to earn an M.A. en route to the Ph.D. program in anthropology or who plan to pursue graduate studies only to the M.A. level.

## Coursework

Completion of 30 credit hours of graduate work in anthropology and related disciplines is required. At least 50% of coursework for the master's degree must be at the 700 level or above. No more than 6 hours of independent research or thesis credits (ANTH 896, ANTH 897, ANTH 898, ANTH 899, ANTH 996) may count toward the 30 hour total.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Required Courses</b>		<b>6</b>
ANTH 801	Proseminar I in Anthropology	
ANTH 802	Proseminar II in Anthropology	
<b>Concentration Courses</b>		<b>23</b>
See concentration sections below for more information specific to selected concentration.		
<b>Students select one of the following degree completion options for at least 1 credit hour:</b>		<b>1</b>
ANTH 899	Master's Thesis (Thesis Option)	
OR		
ANTH 896	Graduate Research (Research Paper & Other Research Project Options)	
	or ANTH 897 Internship Research	
	or ANTH 898 Internship Analysis	
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

## Core Competencies

In addition to the two required Proseminar courses, students must demonstrate competency in a set of Core Topics, including:

1. Professionalism
2. History/Theory in the Four Fields of Anthropology
3. Knowledge in the Area of Specialization
4. Stewardship/Engaged Research
5. Research Methods

All courses must be selected in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

Core Competencies may be fulfilled in two ways: through completion of relevant courses (with a grade of "B" or better in each), or the submission of research papers deemed satisfactory by their committees. The research paper option could include research papers written outside of regular coursework such as papers written for publication, papers written as a GRA, papers written while a graduate student at an outside institution, etc. The papers, collected in a portfolio, will be evaluated as part of the Master's Final Exam/Qualifying Exam.

## Concentration Requirements

### Archaeology

#### Coursework

Graduate students in archaeology are expected to demonstrate expertise in the substantive content, methodological framework, and theoretical orientations of both topical (e.g., lithic technology, ceramic technology, faunal analysis) and geographical areas (e.g., Great Plains of North America, Mesoamerica, Western, Central, Southeast Europe, etc.). This expertise is demonstrated through successful completion of coursework, relevant field and lab training, and the MA thesis/research paper/other research project.

#### Research Skills

Students develop critical research skills through formal coursework and informal apprenticeship-style training outside of classes during their first two years of study. Students may expect to participate in small research projects prior to beginning their dissertation research to gain experience; they can expect co-authorship on any papers emerging from projects to which they provide substantive contributions.

#### Grant Writing

To succeed in archaeology, students need to develop excellent grant writing skills. Each student is therefore required to write a research proposal and strongly encouraged to submit it to an external funding agency prior to advancement to candidacy. All eligible students are strongly encouraged to apply to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program during their first two years of graduate school.

## Biological Anthropology

### Coursework

Because biological anthropology, and in particular anthropological genetics, draws upon the methods and theory of multiple disciplines, it is generally expected that students take courses offered outside the department early in their training, particularly in the Division of Biological Sciences. Such courses generally include biometry and population genetics if students do not already have a background in these topics. As their research progresses, students may also take courses related to their specific research interests both within and outside the department, such as in geology, linguistics, archaeology, sociocultural/linguistic anthropology, and Indigenous Studies. Students will choose their course of study in consultation with their advisory committee.

#### Research Skills

Students develop critical research skills through formal coursework and informal apprenticeship-style training outside of classes during their first two years of study. Students may expect to participate in small research projects prior to beginning their dissertation research to gain experience; they can expect co-authorship on any papers emerging from projects

to which they provide substantive contributions. Under the direction of the laboratory manager and other senior personnel, students who use the laboratory facilities are expected to assist in the maintenance and improvement of all shared facilities and resources, including the modern DNA laboratory, the ancient DNA laboratory, the Laboratory of Biological Anthropology, and all samples and reagents.

**Grant Writing**

To succeed in biological anthropology, students need to develop excellent grant writing skills. Each student is therefore required to write a research proposal and strongly encouraged to submit it to an external funding agency prior to the Oral Comprehensive Exam. All eligible students are strongly encouraged to apply to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program during their first two years of graduate school. Students are encouraged to further hone their grant writing skills through independent study with faculty via graduate research/readings (ANTH 996) or a similar course or workshop in grant writing. Students deficient in writing skills will be required to undergo additional training through the Writing Center or other workshops as recommended by their committees.

**Meetings and Advising**

All graduate students in biological anthropology are expected to meet regularly with their advisor to discuss progress in their research. Students can expect additional regular meetings with senior personnel on specific projects, and with the entire laboratory group. Because regular advising is crucial to making progress in genetics research, biological anthropology graduate students are encouraged to meet with their full advisory committees at least annually. Failure to meet regularly with their advisors and attend laboratory meetings over the course of a semester will result in students being placed on probation during the next evaluation period.

**Sociocultural Anthropology**

**Coursework**

In addition to the shared requirements for all students in the M.A. in Anthropology, students in the Sociocultural concentration also complete the following courses:

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Current Sociocultural Theory</b>		<b>3</b>
ANTH 704	Current Cultural Anthropology	
<b>Methods</b>		<b>3</b>
ANTH 783	Doing Ethnography	
<b>Sociocultural Electives</b>		<b>17</b>
Students will choose the remainder of courses in consultation with their advisory committee.		
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>23</b>

**Knowledge in Area of Research**

Sociocultural anthropology students develop expertise in particular theoretical topics and the historical, social, and cultural background(s) of the countries or regions where they will conduct research. Students must either take courses that build topical and area expertise or complete literature reviews (e.g., in ANTH 896) for each topic under the supervision of their doctoral committee members. Literature reviews should follow the model of articles in The Annual Review of Anthropology. The courses and/or literature reviews are intended to be of direct use to students' dissertations and serve as a foundation for their future research and publications.

**Methodological Training**

Ethnography is the hallmark of sociocultural anthropological research and the method used by the sociocultural anthropologists in this department. In addition to ANTH 783 Doing Ethnography, Sociocultural students are encouraged to acquire skills in qualitative and quantitative methods for methodological fluency.

**Language Training**

Graduate students in sociocultural anthropology must demonstrate either (a) a working spoken knowledge of a second language if it is necessary for their research, or (b) reading competency in a second language in which documents and publications relevant to their research specialization have been written. This may be achieved by taking courses up to an intermediate competency (equivalent to four semesters), through training abroad, or through another mechanism as directed and approved by their advisor and committee.

**Meetings and Advising**

Sociocultural anthropology students must meet with their advisor/committee chair at least once per semester, either in person or digitally.

**Master's Final Exam**

The M.A. degree will be awarded upon the successful completion of a Master's Final Exam. The Anthropology program offers three options for this exam, including a thesis, project defense, and a research paper. All defense options may result in a grade of Satisfactory, Honors, or Unsatisfactory. In cases of an unsatisfactory grade, the student may repeat the exam only with the approval of the Anthropology Graduate Committee. In no cases may an exam be taken three times.

A. Thesis Option. Students completing the thesis defense option must complete at least one and no more than six hours of ANTH 899 Thesis. The MA thesis proposal should be developed in consultation with the student's principal advisor. A completed thesis should be submitted and defended no later than the sixth semester of enrollment. Conditional on approval by the student's M.A. committee, students must schedule and successfully complete a thesis defense open to the University community and pass an oral defense of the thesis. The oral defense will consist of a presentation of research, open to the public, followed by a period of examination by the committee in closed session. This option is particularly recommended for students that do not intend to complete a Ph.D.

B. Research Paper Option. Students must complete at least one and no more than six independent research hours of Graduate Research (ANTH 896), Internship Research (ANTH 897), Internship Analysis (ANTH 898). Students may produce or be the primary contributor (e.g. first author) to an appropriate paper publishable by a peer-reviewed journal, The M.A. project proposal must be developed in consultation with the student's principal advisor. The paper should be defended no later than the sixth semester of enrollment. Co-authorship is permitted if the student has primary responsibility for: 1) conceiving the project; 2) collecting new data or analyzing previously collected data; and 3) completing the finished project. Conditional on approval by the M.A. committee, students must schedule and successfully complete a defense open to the University community. The oral defense will consist of a presentation of the research paper, open to the public, followed by a period of examination by the committee in closed session.

C. Other Research Project. Students must complete at least one and no more than six independent research hours of Graduate Research (ANTH 896), Internship Research (ANTH 897), or Internship Analysis (ANTH 898). A project proposal should be developed in consultation

with the student's principal advisor. A completed project such as an edited book or monograph, or other scholarly product, such as an online resource, documentary film, or museum exhibition, should be submitted and defended no later than the sixth semester of enrollment. Conditional on approval by the M.A. committee, students must schedule and successfully complete a defense open to the University community. The oral defense will consist of a presentation of the project, open to the public, followed by a period of examination by the committee in closed session.

## **Continuation to the Ph.D.**

Students who wish to continue in the doctoral program must complete a Qualifying Exam. The Qualifying Exam can be taken at the same time as their Master's Final Exam or on a separate occasion (see Ph.D. in Anthropology (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/anthropology/phd/#requirements>) section of the catalog under the Qualifying Exam heading for additional details). Following deliberation of the student's qualifications, the master's committee will notify the student and Director of Graduate Studies of their recommendation regarding the student's continuation in Ph.D. level study.

## **University Policies & Requirements**

A list of all policies of the Office of Graduate Studies is available in the Policy Library (<https://policy.ku.edu/office/Graduate-Studies/>).

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- display professionalism.
- display critical thinking and integration of knowledge, history, theory.
- display mastery of scholarly literature in area of specialization.
- display advanced knowledge of stewardship, ethics, engaged research.
- display ability to design and carry out original research.