

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

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 are 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?

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, such as 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.

We are committed to fully funding all Ph.D. students for at least four years.

Anthropological Research Opportunities at KU

KU Anthropological Genetics

The KU Anthropological Genetics group maintains three laboratories and computing resources for graduate and undergraduate students wishing to incorporate genetics into their research.

- The **Anthropological Genetics Research Facility** has laboratory spaces for contemporary genomic analyses, as well as post-PCR and NGS library purification.
- The **Ancient DNA Laboratory** consists of cleanroom facilities and equipment for working with ancient DNA.
- **Laboratory of Biological Anthropology (LBA)** (<https://kuanthgen.org/facilities/the-laboratories-of-biological-anthropology-lba/>), founded in 1975, was established as a research center of the University of Kansas. The LBA currently houses DNA samples and training facilities for undergraduates.

KU Archaeology

The Archaeology program at KU has a number of resources for graduate students.

- **Field Schools:** Anthropology faculty offer field schools in archaeology, biological anthropology, and cultural anthropology. Undergraduate and graduate students have conducted independent and collaborative research in the United States, including Alaska; Mexico, Central, and South America; sub-Saharan Africa; and Asia.
- **Archaeological Research Center**, located in historic Spooner Hall on the main campus, offers research space and support to Anthropology faculty and graduate students.
- **KU Lab for Applied Archaeological Science (KLAAS)**, located in Malott Hall, KLAAS applies experimental and interdisciplinary approaches to traditional questions in archaeology.
- The **ODYSSEY Archaeological Research Program** is run through the Kansas Geological Survey (KGS). ODYSSEY supports field- and laboratory-based research on the archaeology of the late Pleistocene and early Holocene in North America, primarily in the Great Plains. ODYSSEY has supported numerous graduate and undergraduate students from the Department of Anthropology.

For specific questions about our program, please contact us:

The University of Kansas
Department of Anthropology
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Graduate Program Coordinator
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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), and a description of your planned research
- 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 on 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 about departmental admissions is available on the department 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.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The Ph.D. in anthropology is awarded to candidates who have demonstrated specialized competence in one or more of the general fields and who have contributed to the body of knowledge and theory in the specialized field through independent, original research.

Coursework

Students in Anthropology must complete 30 credit hours by the end of the semester of completion of the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam. 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.

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

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		9
ANTH 707	Responsible Research and Scholarship in Anthropology	
ANTH 801	Proseminar I in Anthropology	
ANTH 802	Proseminar II in Anthropology	
Concentration Courses		21
See concentration sections below for more information specific to selected concentration.		
Post-Qualifying Exam Courses		18
Of these 18 hours, no more than 9 may be in independent study (ANTH 896, 897, 898, or 996). Dissertation hours (ANTH 999) may not be counted toward this requirement.		
Total Hours		48

Core Competencies

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

- Professionalism
- History/Theory in the Four Fields of Anthropology
- Knowledge in One's Area of Specialization
- Stewardship/Engaged Research
- Research Methods

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

Core competencies may be fulfilled 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 for publication, papers written as a GRA, papers written while a graduate student at an outside institution,

etc. The papers, collected in a written portfolio, will be evaluated as part of the Qualifying Exam.

Students who complete an M.A. in Anthropology must fulfill their Core Competencies prior to the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam.

Research Skills & Responsible Scholarship Requirement (RSRS)

The University requires that every doctoral student have training in responsible scholarship pertinent to the field of research and obtain research skills pertinent to the doctoral level of research in their field(s). This requirement is satisfied by completion of ANTH 707.

Qualifying Exam

All students seeking a Ph.D. must undergo a Qualifying Exam upon completion of their coursework, ideally in the second semester of their second year of study. The Qualifying Exam is a holistic evaluation of the student's suitability for the Ph.D. program, taking into account the student's overall capacity and preparation for graduate study leading to the Ph.D., the student's intellectual ability, self-application, creativity, portfolio of work, and prior performance in the program.

At the qualifying exam, the student's committee will assess the student's progress in achieving each of the department's established learning outcomes. If a student fails to achieve at least an "Introductory (I)" level of each learning outcome, the committee will provide the student the opportunity to do supplemental work to meet the requirement. This supplemental work may take the form of a short (~3 page) paper on the relevant topic, or something comparable. The work must be completed within 30 days and approved by the committee within 10 days after submission. Only in cases of excessively poor performance (e.g., failure to achieve an appropriate level in at least 3 of the 5 learning outcomes), or failure to complete the supplemental work by the deadline, will the student be required to retake the entire exam.

Students have the option of undergoing the Qualifying Exam in conjunction with or shortly following their M.A. exam. Students who elect *not* to receive the M.A. will have a standalone oral Qualifying Exam, with exam questions drawn from topics related to the student's written portfolio, administered in a closed session. If the student fails the exam, they may attempt the exam once more in written form.

Dissertation Proposal

From the beginning of doctoral study, the student should plan to conduct a doctoral dissertation project. This is an independent piece of research, usually requiring fieldwork, and leading to a dissertation that contributes to anthropological knowledge. For doctoral students in anthropology, the dissertation proposal shall be in the form of grant proposal appropriate to the subdiscipline. This proposal will form the basis for the Oral Comprehensive Examination, and students are expected to modify or draw upon this proposal in writing a grant application to fund their dissertation research.

Proposed dissertation chapters and timeline of research should also be provided to the Doctoral Committee and described in sufficient detail that the Committee can assess their merit and feasibility.

In the proposal, the student is expected to review the state of knowledge pertinent to the topic, describe the research problem, and explain the methods to be employed in the investigation.

Doctoral Candidacy

All Ph.D. students must pass an Oral Comprehensive Examination by their fourth semester of post-M.A. enrollment (or completion of the Qualifying Exam). This exam will be based in part upon a dissertation proposal, which must be approved by the doctoral committee at least three weeks before the Oral Comprehensive Examination is scheduled. The exam is administered by the doctoral committee and is closed to the public. It may result in a grade of Honors, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. Upon passing the exam, students are advanced to candidacy. In the case of a grade of Unsatisfactory, a student may repeat the exam a second time only with the approval of the student's Doctoral Committee and the Anthropology Graduate Committee. A third try is not permitted.

At the comprehensive exam, the student's committee will assess the student's progress in achieving each of the department's established learning outcomes. If a student fails to achieve at least a "Developing (D)" level of each learning outcome, the committee will provide the student the opportunity to do supplemental work to meet the requirement. This supplemental work may take the form of a short (~3 page) paper on the relevant topic, or something comparable. The work must be completed within 30 days and approved by the committee within 10 days after submission. Only in cases of excessively poor performance (e.g., failure to achieve an appropriate level in at least 3 of the 5 learning outcomes), or failure to complete the supplemental work by the deadline, will the student be required to retake the entire exam.

Following completion of the Oral Comprehensive Exam, students must continue to enroll in accordance with the Office of Graduate Studies Post-comprehensive Enrollment Policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-candidacy/>) until all Ph.D. requirements are met.

Format of the Dissertation

At the dissertation proposal stage, the student and committee will agree upon one of two options for the dissertation.

Option 1: The dissertation must consist of at least two publishable papers based on original research and suitable for publication in subdisciplinary journals, a literature review or synthesis, an introduction, and a concluding chapter.

Papers may have multiple authors; however, for it to be included as a chapter the student must be the primary (first) author and have contributed the majority of research and have written the first draft, as approved by the committee. Papers do not need to be published before the dissertation defense, but they must be submission-ready.

Option 2: The dissertation may be a traditional monograph. The student and committee will discuss the length and format of the monograph during annual committee meetings.

Defense of the Dissertation

When the dissertation is accepted by the doctoral committee, a final oral examination is held. The final oral examination is open to the public. The exam may be graded Honors, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. In the case of an unsatisfactory grade, a student may repeat the exam a second time only with the approval of the student's Doctoral Committee and the Anthropology Graduate Committee. A third try is not permitted.

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, the qualifying exam, the doctoral proposal, and the doctoral dissertation. Students will choose their course of study in consultation with their advisory committee.

Fieldwork and Laboratory Research

All graduate students in archaeology must display proficiency in conducting archaeological fieldwork as demonstrated by active and successful participation in the equivalent of at least one four-week field season such as an accredited archaeological field school or an approved field research project. Experience in working directly with archaeological materials is also expected of all students. Regular participation in archaeological field and laboratory research, in addition to specific work leading to the completion of a dissertation, is an integral part of the doctoral program. Specific details will be determined by the student in consultation with the doctoral advisor and Ph.D. 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. All archaeology PhD students are expected to regularly present research to their colleagues within the department and are encouraged to make presentations regularly at national and international research conferences after achieving candidacy.

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.

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.

Presenting research

All biological anthropology PhD students are expected to regularly present research to their colleagues within the department, and encouraged to make presentations regularly at national and international research conferences after achieving candidacy.

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.

Sociocultural Anthropology

Coursework

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

Code	Title	Hours
Current Sociocultural Theory		3
ANTH 704	Current Cultural Anthropology	
Methods		3
ANTH 783	Doing Ethnography	

Sociocultural Electives

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Students will choose the remainder of courses in consultation with their advisory committee.

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 996) 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 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 2nd 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 4 semesters), through training abroad, or through another mechanism as directed and approved by their advisor and committee.

Stewardship/Engaged Research

Sociocultural anthropology students are expected to actively contribute to the discipline and society at large. They must complete one of the following or another task approved by the committee to graduate with a Ph.D.:

1. Write a letter/editorial (reviewed by advisor) to politicians, newsfeeds, journals, magazines, newspapers
2. Hold a leadership position in the Graduate Students for Anthropology club (GSA)
3. Hold a leadership position in national or regional anthropology organization
4. Conduct service-learning in a course as student or TA
5. Produce a short well-supported video for YouTube or other venue
6. Undertake 30+ hours of internship
7. Design a website with well substantiated data

Grant Writing

Grant writing is a fundamental competency in sociocultural anthropology. Students prepare for grant-writing by building a dissertation proposal with guidance from their doctoral committees. The dissertation proposal is a template for actual external grant applications, such as to the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the US

Department of Education's Fulbright-Hays award, the Social Science Research Council, and the National Science Foundation's Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant.

Meetings and Advising

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

University Policies and Requirements

A list of all policies of the Office of Graduate Studies is available online in the 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.