Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

The Anthropology Department at the University of Kansas

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. As flows of people, ideas, money, and goods are crossing borders at unprecedented speeds, we are encountering human diversity now, more than ever before. 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 four main subdisciplines of anthropology: Archaeology is concerned with studying the human past based on the material culture left behind. Biological or physical anthropology is concerned with human evolution and variation. Linguistic anthropology focuses on the relationship between language and culture, as well as the documentation of the history and evolution of languages over time and across space. Cultural anthropology is concerned with the many ways humans organize themselves to live together, questioning past and present patterns of meaning and power relationships on local and global scales. 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 wanting to major in anthropology. Some students plan to work as 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.

Anthropological Research Opportunities at KU

- Laboratory of Biological Anthropology (LBA): Founded in 1975, the LBA was established as a research center of the University of Kansas. The LBA has supported graduate and undergraduate student research in biological anthropology, human genetics, and genetic epidemiology.
- Archaeological Research Center: Located in historic Spooner Hall on the main campus, the archaeology laboratory offers research space and support to Anthropology faculty and graduate students, Archaeology staff, Museum Studies interns, affiliate curators and research associates and visiting scholars.
- Field Schools: Anthropology faculty offer field schools in archaeology, biological anthropology, and cultural anthropology. Undergraduates 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.

For specific questions about our program, please contact us:
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Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (http://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

Graduate Admission to the Anthropology Program

The Graduate Record Examination is recommended but not required for admission; however, to be considered for university fellowships (GTA appointment), GRE scores are required. The 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. Graduate courses in Anthropology are reserved for students who are admitted to a graduate program in the Department of Anthropology.

Proficiency in a modern foreign language and in statistics is of special importance to candidates for graduate work in anthropology and should be acquired during the undergraduate years. All students entering the program with a bachelor’s degree must enroll in the M.A. program. Admission to the Ph.D. program is ordinarily contingent upon completion of the master’s degree in anthropology. A student with a master’s degree in anthropology from another institution may apply directly to the Ph.D. program.

Submit your graduate application online (http://graduate.ku.edu/ku-graduate-application).
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.

Research Skills & Responsible Scholarship Requirement (RSRS)

The Graduate Studies' policy on Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship also requires the following:

1. Every doctoral student is required to have training in responsible scholarship pertinent to the field of research.
2. Every doctoral student is required to obtain research skills pertinent to the doctoral level of research in their field(s).

Languages or other research skills used to satisfy the RSRS requirement must be approved by the student's committee. Since these are research skills, students are advised to master them early in the program, so they may be utilized in further course work, independent study, and research. The aspirant must satisfy 1 of the following options before taking the comprehensive exams:

• Demonstrate a comprehensive reading and speaking knowledge of one foreign language relevant to the student's research interests, in which there exists a significant research literature in anthropology. Foreign students may use their native language to fulfill this option only if the language is considered to be an adequate research tool for their program.
• Demonstrate proficiency in the reading of 2 foreign languages relevant to the student's research interests, in which there exists significant research literature in anthropology.
• Demonstrate proficiency in the reading of 1 foreign language relevant to the student's research interests, in which there exists significant research literature in anthropology, and competence in another research skill relevant to the student's special research requirements in anthropology. This latter requirement may be satisfied by knowledge of a language in which there is no written research literature, but which the student will employ in fieldwork.
• Demonstrate competence in 2 research skills relevant to the student's special research requirements in anthropology.

Residence Requirement

2 semesters, normally consecutive, or 1 semester and 1 summer session must be spent in resident study at KU.

Field Statements

Students must become thoroughly familiar with the literature pertinent to their specializations and doctoral research problems. The student who submits field statements is asserting that he or she has achieved competence in limited areas defined by the subdiscipline, as demonstrated by bibliographies and written treatments of the research problems in those areas. The comprehensive examinations are based on the areas specified in the field statements.

Written and Oral Comprehensive Examinations

The student's doctoral committee devises and judges the written comprehensive examinations, which may be taken either together or at different times. If the committee is satisfied with the caliber of the student's field statements and written examinations, they may schedule the oral comprehensive examination, providing all other requirements have been fulfilled.

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.

Defense of the Dissertation

When the dissertation is accepted by the dissertation committee, a final oral examination is held.

Handbook for Graduate Students

Detailed information, application deadlines, and general information may be found in the Graduate Student Handbook, available on the Anthropology Graduate website (http://anthropology.ku.edu/helpful-links-graduate-students).