

ANTHROPOLOGY, PHD

Anthropology—the study of humanity in its broadest sense—is, according to Eric Wolf “the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities.” At Tulane, anthropology is divided into four subdisciplines: anthropological archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and sociocultural anthropology. These subdisciplines or fields are interconnected. Anthropologists at Tulane often straddle the boundaries of the subdisciplines, and they collaborate with scholars from other departments and schools of the university. Anthropology is perhaps the world’s oldest cross-disciplinary discipline, and at Tulane, anthropologists study topics as seemingly disparate as two million year-old fossil hominins, capuchin monkeys in Costa Rica, the impact of Islam in West Africa, Mayan hieroglyphic texts, political movements in Mexico, indigenous use of the environment in the Amazon, and variations in spoken New Orleans English—and much more!

The roots of Tulane’s Department of Anthropology date from 1924, when the Department of Middle American Research (now the Middle American Research Institute [MARI]) was founded on the uptown campus. Anthropology courses were first offered at Tulane during the 1938-1939 academic year, and by 1947, anthropologists were employed in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. A separate four-field Department of Anthropology was established in 1968. In the last thirty years or so (1990-2020), the anthropology department has more than doubled in size and diversity, and course offerings reflect that growth. In 2010, the Department and MARI moved into newly-renovated space in Dinwiddie Hall.

Tulane’s Department of Anthropology has long been known for the archaeology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics of Mesoamerica (the region from Central Mexico to El Salvador). Today the teaching and research interests of our faculty have expanded, and in addition to Mesoamerica, they work in North America (especially the southeastern United States and the Gulf South); South America (especially the Andes and the Amazon); lower Central America and the Caribbean; West Africa; the South Asian subcontinent; Southeast Asia; and Europe.

The Ph.D. program at Tulane is competitive; all students admitted to the program receive a stipend and a tuition waiver for five years. If you are interested in applying to the program, please contact the faculty member(s) with whom you are interested in working.

Requirements

Requirements for Graduate Degrees

All graduate studies in the Department of Anthropology are governed by the School of Liberal Arts: <https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/academics/graduate-studies/resources> (<https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/academics/graduate-studies/resources/>)

Requirements for the PhD in Anthropology

- Completion of a one-credit, team-taught introductory four-field course in anthropology** (Introduction to Anthropology ANTH 6001).
- Language competence certification.** This requirement may be fulfilled by:
 - Coursework.** Two options are possible 1) the student presents evidence of attaining an average of B or better grades in a one-year foreign language course taken at the junior or equivalent level (i.e., 5th and 6th undergraduate semesters) within three years of the date of first registration in the anthropology graduate program or 2) the student earns a B or better in a graduate summer language course sponsored by one of the corresponding units on campus (such as Center for Global Education, Stone Center for Latin American Studies, or Office of Study Abroad).
 - Examination.** The anthropology department administers language examinations once each semester. The examination date will be announced via e-mail. Students wishing to be examined respond to the announcement by specifying their subdiscipline of study (anthropological archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, or sociocultural anthropology) and the language in which they wish to be examined. Only languages in which Tulane faculty have expertise may be certified through this process.
 - Native fluency.** Native speakers of languages other than English may petition the Department of Anthropology to count either English or their native language as satisfying a foreign language requirement.
 - Petition.** Those with accredited language study elsewhere may petition the department.
- Completion of two methods courses.**
 - Preferred options by subdiscipline. Other courses may be acceptable if approved by the faculty.
 - Archaeology. ANTH 6010 Quantitative Methods in ANTH (3 c.h.), ANTH 7610 Ceramic Analysis (3 c.h.), ANTH 7560 Environmental Archaeology (3 c.h.), and ANTH 7100 Quantitative Methods Arc (3 c.h.)
 - Biological anthropology. ANTH 6010 Quantitative Methods in ANTH (3 c.h.), ANTH 7450 Methods of Observation in Behavioral Research (3 c.h.), ANTH 7750 Human Paleopathology (3 c.h.), ANTH 7510 Fossil Hominin Taxonomy and Systematics (3 c.h.). One of these courses must be in statistics. Other courses and courses in other departments may be taken if approved by the student’s adviser.
 - Linguistic anthropology. ANTH 6010 Quantitative Methods in ANTH (3 c.h.), ANTH 6420 Linguistic Field Methods (3 c.h.), ANTH 6520 Ethnographic Methods (3 c.h.), ANTH 6580 The Politics of Fieldwork (3 c.h.)
 - Sociocultural anthropology. ANTH 6520 Ethnographic Methods (3 c.h.), ANTH 6580 The Politics of Fieldwork (3 c.h.), ANTH 6010 Quantitative Methods in ANTH (3 c.h.), ANTH 6420 Linguistic Field Methods (3 c.h.)
- Completion of training in grant, proposal or prospectus writing.** This may be fulfilled by satisfactory completion of:

- a. ANTH 7230 Research Design and Grant Writing (3 c.h.)
 - b. Grant writing workshop or course taught elsewhere at Tulane University.
5. **Completion of coursework.** The department requires a minimum of 49 hours of coursework beyond the BA/BS degree, at least 15 hours of which must be taken at the 7000 level. The following coursework requirements pertain to archaeology and biological anthropology:
- a. Biological anthropology students specializing in skeletal biology or human paleontology must take a course in human gross anatomy.
 - b. Biological anthropology students specializing in primatology must take three courses in a related field outside of the anthropology department, as determined in consultation with their adviser.
6. **Completion of academic service/professional training.**
- a. During the first two years of residency the student will receive professional training through a combination of research and teaching assistantships.
 - b. At least one semester must be a teaching assistantship. Assignments for a given semester will be determined through consultation with one's adviser and the department chair.
 - c. Once the student has completed coursework, they will be expected to teach one course as instructor of record in the Department of Anthropology as part of the stipend requirement. Assignments for a given semester will be determined through consultation with one's adviser and the department chair.
 - d. Students are expected to complete six semesters of professional training, including one semester as instructor of record.
7. **Passing comprehensive examinations.** Bioanthropology, sociocultural anthropology and linguistics students will take an 8-hour written comprehensive examination administered over two consecutive days. Archaeology students will take a 9-hour examination over three consecutive days. These exams should be completed before the conclusion of the 6th semester of residency.
8. **Oral examination** (students in Archaeology, Linguistics and Sociocultural Anthropology ONLY).
- a. **Archaeology:** the oral exam will cover regional topics, methodologies, and theories, and answers on written comprehensive exams.
 - b. **Linguistics:** the oral exam will cover the student's area of specialization.
 - c. **Sociocultural:** the oral exam will cover the relevant ethnographic area(s), methodologies and theories.
9. **Submission, defense and approval of a prospectus outlining the proposed dissertation.** The student must petition the department chair for the formation of a dissertation prospectus committee. The student must distribute a copy of the prospectus to every faculty member of the department three business days before the defense date.
10. **Completion of approximately one year of approved anthropological fieldwork.**
11. **Submission, defense and approval of a doctoral dissertation.** Students who intend to defend a dissertation must inform the department chair, in writing, of that intention during the first two weeks of the semester in which they wish the defense to be scheduled. Students must have a complete copy of their dissertation in the hands of their committee members one month before the scheduled defense date.

Transfer Credit Approval

Students may request transfer credit for graduate coursework done at other institutions, as indicated in the School of Liberal Arts Graduate Programs Handbook (<https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/academics/graduate-studies/resources/>).