

ANTHROPOLOGY, BS

Anthropology, the study of humanity in its broadest sense, was called by Alfred Kroeber “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, cultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. These subdisciplines are not silos, however; anthropologists at Tulane often straddle the boundaries of the subdisciplines, and we collaborate with scholars from other departments and schools. 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, the impact of Islam in West Africa, Mayan hieroglyphic texts, political movements in Mexico, and variations in spoken New Orleans English.

The roots of Tulane’s Department of Anthropology date back to 1924, when the Department of Middle American Research (now the Middle American Research Institute [MARI]) was founded. 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 until a separate Department of Anthropology was established in 1967. From the early 1990s to today the Department more than doubled in size, and in 2010, the Department and MARI moved into newly-renovated space in Dinwiddie Hall.

Tulane’s Department of Anthropology’s traditional strength has been in the archaeology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics of Mesoamerica (that region from Central Mexico to Nicaragua). However, today the teaching and research interests of our faculty have a much more global reach: North America, especially the southeastern United States and the Gulf South, South America and other parts of Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, East, South and Southeast Asia, and Europe.

Requirements

Thirty credit hours of approved coursework are required for a major in anthropology. Typically, this requirement can be satisfied by ten anthropology courses. Within the 30 credit hours (or 10 courses) required for a major in anthropology, students must fulfill the following requirements for a degree in anthropology:

- At least one course above the 1000 level in each of the four major subdivisions of anthropology: biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and archaeology.
- Five or six elective courses in anthropology.
- Student who choose to receive the B.S. degree must have credit for two mathematics courses.
 - One calculus course, MATH 1210 Calculus I (4 c.h.) or equivalent; and
 - One statistics course MATH 1230 Stats For Scientists (4 c.h.), or a higher level class in statistics, such as ANTH 6010 Quantitative Methods in ANTH (3 c.h.).

Please note the following:

- Students may take no more than two 1000-level courses (six credit hours) as electives to be counted towards the 30 credit hours required for degrees in anthropology.
- Newcomb-Tulane College requires all undergraduates to take a writing practicum or a writing-intensive course to fulfill its undergraduate writing requirement. Some anthropology courses may have writing-intensive sections, but the additional credit hours earned through writing-intensive courses are not counted towards the 30 hours necessary for degrees in anthropology.

Given the diversity of topics of interest to anthropologists, anthropology majors are encouraged to take a variety of courses in the different anthropological subfields and in related disciplines, and they are encouraged to integrate anthropology coursework within pre-professional programs of study. Upon consultation with anthropology faculty advisors, students may count up to six credits (two courses) as electives towards the anthropology major from approved courses in other departments.

The subject matter of anthropology is such that most of the curriculum is not an explicitly ordered sequence. Few anthropology courses at Tulane have specific prerequisites (exceptions, mostly linguistic courses, are noted in the catalog), and anthropology majors are expected to choose their courses from among all those with numbers less than 7000. The 6000-level courses are specifically designed for undergraduate as well as graduate students, and all junior and senior majors should choose freely from among these offerings.

Anthropology majors are eligible to apply for the 4+1 program in anthropology, based on consultation with advisors and other mentors. Students in the 4+1 program can earn B.A. or B.S. degrees in anthropology within four years, and M.A. degrees in anthropology based on an additional year of graduate coursework in anthropology taken during their fourth and fifth years. Requirements for this program are outlined on the departmental web site and in the anthropology majors handbook.

The anthropology department administers the Kenneth J. Opat Fund in Anthropology, reserved for the support of undergraduate research in anthropology. Students majoring in anthropology are encouraged to seek further information from their anthropology advisors about the use of this research fund.