

# Anthropology

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Known as the “holistic science of humankind,” anthropology attempts to understand socio/cultural systems in the broadest of comparative perspectives. Anthropology seeks to examine the differences between the vast variety of existing human societies and to explain their development from simplest beginning to modern complexity. Archaeology and physical anthropology add a unique time depth to the discipline among the social sciences.

Anthropology courses coded at the 200 level are ethnographic survey courses (i.e., courses about some particular culture area). Courses coded at the 300 level are theoretical-topical (i.e., aimed at particular theoretical issues). All of these courses are open to students of all levels.

A student who enters Whitman without prior college-level preparation in anthropology will have to complete 36 credits to fulfill the requirements for the anthropology major. Courses completed in the anthropology major apply to the social science and alternative voices (selected courses) distribution areas.

**The Anthropology major:** A total of 36 credits in anthropology to include Anthropology 101, 102, 318, 490, 491 and 492 (or 498); plus 20 additional credits including at least one course from two of the following clusters: (219, 257, 258), (259), and (233, 239, 240, and 249). Students may also fulfill the 200 level by taking a special topics course (247). Only one 247-course will be allowed to meet the 200-level course requirement. In the final year students majoring in anthropology must pass a senior assessment consisting of a written thesis and an oral defense.

**The Anthropology minor:** Anthropology 101, 102, 318; plus eight additional credits in anthropology.

**101 Paleoanthropology: An Introduction to Archaeological and Physical Anthropology**

4, x

Rollefson

A basic introduction to the goals, concepts, and methods of archaeological and physical anthropology. Human origins, evolution, and modern variation are the focus of physical anthropology. Archaeology will be examined as a means of reconstructing extinct cultures. The broad evolution of culture from plio-pleistocene to the origins of civilizations will be surveyed in archaeological perspective. Three periods per week. Open to first-year students and sophomores; juniors and seniors by consent only.

**102 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology**  
 x, 4

McKhann

An introduction to the cross-cultural study of social and cultural systems employing a combination of ethnographic and anthropological theoretical materials. Three periods per week. Open to first-year students and sophomores; juniors and seniors by consent only.

**219 Chinese Religion**  
 4; not offered 2008-09

An introduction to the religions of the Han Chinese people. The emphasis is on the range of everyday religious beliefs and practices, rather than on institutionalized Buddhism and Taoism. Topics include: myth, cosmology, state religion, and the cults of ancestors, gods and ghosts, folk Buddhism and Taoism, and religious syncretism. Distribution area: social science or alternative voices.

**231 Archaeology of South America**  
 4; not offered 2008-09

A survey of the archaeological evidence in South America from the earliest occupations until European conquest in the 16th century AD. The course traces developments from the earliest hunter-gatherer societies to the emergence of states and empires. Readings will concentrate on increasing sociopolitical and socioeconomic complexity revealed in settlement patterns, economic diversity, art, architecture, and ritual practices, and how these developments varied across the diverse environmental regions of the continent. Distribution area: social science or alternative voices.

**233 Archaeology of East Asia**  
 x, 4

Rollefson

An investigation of the rich tapestry of cultural development in eastern Asia from the earliest evidence of Stone Age occupations through the civilizations of the eighth century AD. Attention is focused on adaptations to environmental and socio-economic factors that led to stable agricultural production; the emergence of civilization, states and empires; and the interaction of local and regional politics as expressed in cultural expressions of art, science, and conquest. Distribution area: social science or alternative voices.

**238 The Archaeology of Mesoamerica**  
 4; not offered 2008-09

A survey of the archaeological evidence in Mexico and Central America from the earliest occupations until European conquest in the 16th century AD. The course traces developments from the earliest hunter-gatherer societies to the emergence of states and empires. Readings will concentrate on increasing sociopolitical and socioeconomic complexity revealed in settlement patterns, economic diversity, art, architecture, and ritual practices. Distribution area: social science or alternative voices.

### **239 Prehistoric Archaeology of Europe**

4, x

**Rollefson**

Prehistoric Europe is a course designed to survey the general patterns of human physical, cultural and social development in the continent from the earliest appearance of human activity until the ages of metallurgy. The changes in those general patterns over an immense period of time are placed against a backdrop of major alterations of local and regional climate as well as movements of people (including Greeks and Romans) and ideas along convenient routes of communication.

### **241 Culture, Health, and Indigenous Development in the Andes**

4, Summer 2008

**Pribilsky and Morrissey**

This course is a critical introduction to the complexities of contemporary indigenous livelihoods in the Andes region with a specific geographic emphasis upon the country of Ecuador and a thematic emphasis on issues of health and development. Working on the assumption that to understand issues of health and development requires contextualized knowledge of the interactions between cultural traditions and practices, environmental constraints, social movements, ever-changing political landscapes, and the effects of global economic restructuring, this course explores its themes historically (reaching back to the Inca period and the challenges of Spanish colonization) and through a number of disciplinary and analytical lenses, including anthropology, epidemiology, demography, gender studies, and cultural politics. Topics will include: a critical investigation of "traditional" healing and medicine, the impact of indigenous movement activity on health and development regimes, food security and insecurity, nutritional and subsistence challenges, the burden of infectious disease, family planning and reproductive health, and the impact of changing foodways. *Prerequisites:* Acceptance into the Whitman College Ethnographic Field School in Highland Ecuador.

### **247 Special Topics in Peoples and Cultures**

1-4

### **248 Native Cultures of North America**

4; not offered 2008-09

This survey course examines a cross-section of peoples and cultures from native North America, focusing on culture areas, languages, religions, tra-

ditional practices as well as contemporary life and current issues facing native communities today. Attention will be paid to how social, political, cultural and historical events have come to shape and inform present day relations and identity formations. Ethnographic and historical information constitute the bulk of the course, which also includes native North American influences, origins, and pre-contact history. Particular attention will be paid to the peoples of the Columbia River Plateau, which includes the confluence of the Snake and Columbia rivers and surrounding region. Distribution area: alternative voices.

### **249 Prehistoric Background to Western Civilization**

4, x

**Rollefson**

The course examines the general patterns of human physical and cultural evolution from 1.5 million years ago until the beginnings of "civilization" in western Asia. Students are exposed to the results of archaeological surveys and excavations, gaining experience in the methods of analysis and interpretation of environmental and social parameters that influenced and witnessed increasingly complex cultural development. The emergence of religious ceremony, craft specialization, refinement of economic strategies, and the intensification of social and political complexity are considered from Anatolia in the north, Iraq in the East, and Israel, Jordan and Sinai to the south. Distribution area: alternative voices.

### **257 Chinese Society and Culture**

4, x

**McKhann**

An introduction to modern Chinese society and culture, rural and urban, with an emphasis on enduring cultural practices and modern transformation. Using ethnographies and films, this course looks at changing ideas about cosmos, the individual, family, gender, social relations, ethnicity, politics, and the state from late imperial times to the present. Distribution area: alternative voices.

### **258 Peoples of the Tibeto-Burman Highlands 4; not offered 2008-09**

An introduction to the society and culture of the Tibetan, Yi, Naxi, Jingpo, and other peoples living in the region of southwest China, northern Myanmar (Burma) and Tibet. Studies in history, religion, politics, and social structure point out the differences as well as the similarities among these Tibeto-Burman peoples. Distribution area: alternative voices.

### **259 Andean Culture and Society Since the Inca**

x, 4

**Pribilsky**

An introduction to the history and culture of the highland Andes region of South America. The first half of the course will be focused on pre-Columbian cultures of the Andes with an emphasis on the art, architecture, religion, and political structure of the Inca Empire. The challenges of Spanish conquest

and the culture of colonialism that followed will be analyzed for clues to understanding modern Andean culture. The second half of the course will be devoted to an ethnographic survey of modern Andean societies (in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru) with emphasis placed upon issues of race and ethnicity, *mestizaje*, ritual and religion, exchange and reciprocity, health and medicine, gender and family life, and environmental adaptation. Distribution area: social science or alternative voices.

### 305 Archaeology Method and Theory

x, 4

Rollefson

The course investigates the history and current status of the theories and methods used to obtain, analyze, and interpret information in the archaeological record for the purpose of reconstructing human cultural development. The course material includes projects using artifactual materials curated at the Maxey Museum, and at least one field trip to an archaeological site in the Northwest is planned each semester.

### 312 Visual Anthropology

4; not offered 2008-09

An introduction to the history, theory and practice of ethnographic documentary, focusing on film and video, but including drawing, painting and photography as modes of visualizing the anthropological subject. The work of the course is evenly divided between theory and practice. Students view, read about, and discuss ethnographic documentaries, while simultaneously producing their own in cooperative small groups. *Prerequisite*: Anthropology 102.

### 317 Language and Culture

4, x

McKhann

Language is examined as a cultural system. The first half focuses on language *structure* and includes a discussion of signs, reference, meaning, and categories. The second half examines language *use* in socially situated contexts (pragmatics), and deals with problems of participant relations, poetic and discourse structure, and the analysis of myth and ritual as linguistic genres.

### 318 History and Theory in Anthropology

4, x

Morrissey

The course will trace the development conceptually and historically of explanatory theory for socio-cultural phenomena. "Schools" of thought such as Racism, Environmental Determinism, Marxism, Cultural Evolutionism, Structuralism, and Neo-Boasian Particularism are presented and contrasted with an emphasis on the contribution of each to an emergent synthetic theory of culture. Three periods per week. *Prerequisite*: eight hours of anthropology or consent of instructor.

### 324 Myth and Religion in Traditional Societies

4; not offered 2008-09

A comparative examination of the role of mythology, ritual, and belief in socio-cultural systems. The primary emphasis is on belief and religious systems other than the major organized religions. Three periods

per week.

### 327 Anthropology and History

x, 4

McKhann

A seminar exploring and attempting to reconcile the differences between symbolic anthropological and historical approaches to the study of events. Readings by Radcliffe-Brown, Cohn, Sahlins, Comaroffs, Ladurie, Burke, Denig, Furet, Braudel, and other anthropological historians and historical anthropologists. Open to all students, but intended especially for upper-level anthropology and history majors. Enrollment will be limited to 12 students.

### 328 Medical Anthropology

4, x

Pribilsky

Medical anthropology looks at the interface between culture and health in all its forms across the spectrum of societies and cultures. A starting point for this course will be distinguishing physical "disease" from cultural understandings of "illness." We will then explore the ways worldviews, beliefs, and practices shape both the incidence of disease and the experience of illness. Topics may include: the relationship between biology, ecological processes and culture, ethnomedicine, trance and healing, political economic determinants of sickness, cultural assumptions of biomedicine, cross-cultural mental disorders, "culture bound illnesses," gender and health, and cultural conceptions of the body. Throughout the course, special attention is paid to the possibilities of ethnographic fieldwork for the critical study of health. In the Fall 2008 version of this course, because it coincides with an election year focusing strongly on issues of universal health care, students will carry out assignments aimed at developing an "ethnography of the uninsured" in the Walla Walla Valley.

### 337 Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork: Researching and Writing Culture

4; not offered 2008-09

The goal of successful ethnographic fieldwork has been summed up by one prominent anthropologist as "to figure out what the devil [societies] think they are up to." But how do anthropologists exactly do this? This course, run as a workshop, looks at how cultural anthropologists devise research projects, collect data, and present their findings in ethnographic form. The first two-thirds of the course will be devoted to a hands-on exploration of various ethnographic methods. Students will select a "field site" to practice ethnographic methods with the culmination of their work being a written ethnography about a group of people or cultural phenomena. Methods will include: mapping, linguistic and analysis, analysis of ritual behavior, ethnographic interviewing, and participant observation. During the last one-third of the course we will analyze new and alternative strategies of writing ethnography and the debates surrounding them. *Prerequisite*: Anthropology 102 or consent of instructor.

### 339 Ethnographic Research and Writing

4, Summer 2008

Pribilsky and Morrissey

This course is a hands-on workshop in how to conduct ethnographic research and present findings in the genre of ethnographic writing. We will look at how cultural anthropologists and other ethnographers propose research questions and designs and execute ethnographic projects. Readings will combine straightforward discussions of the technical aspects of specific methods with reflections on the ethnographic process drawn from ethnographic writings themselves, fieldwork reflections, and fictionalized accounts of the fieldwork experience. The primary assignment of this course is for students to devise and execute their own ethnographic research project on issues of health, migration, and culture in the highland community of Cañar, Ecuador. Each week of the course, students will critically study and employ a different method or set of methods (to include, for example, participant observation, direct systematic observations, surveys, qualitative interviews, life histories, kinship analysis, genealogies, and cultural mapping) in their research site. Class time will be divided between short lectures on specific methods, discussion of readings, and a workshop analyzing each student's experiences of using different methods in the field. The final portion of the course will explore approaches and styles for writing ethnography and the debates surrounding them. As a final project, students will be expected to produce a 20- to 25-page ethnographic report of their research. All student projects must be pre-approved by the Whitman College Institutional Review Board. *Prerequisites:* Acceptance into the Whitman College Ethnographic Field School in Highland Ecuador.

#### **347 Special Topics in Anthropology** 1-4

#### **358 Sex and Gender in Anthropological Perspective** 4; not offered 2008-09

An introductory survey to anthropological thinking about gender and sex beginning with an early disciplinary emphasis on "sex roles" among hunters and gatherers and ending with contemporary research on "gendered identities." Topics will include: nature vs. nurture debates, sex and reproduction, cultural construction of motherhood, third genders, and gender and religion. Organization of the course will follow along the development of different approaches and debates within anthropology, including psychological, structuralist, symbolic, feminist, and Marxist perspectives. Distribution area: social science or alternative voices.

#### **360 The Cultural Politics of Science** 4, x Pribilsky

An upper-level introduction to the widening field known as science and technology studies (STS). Interdisciplinary in scope, this course primarily draws on ethnographic attempts to understand how science and technology shape human lives and livelihoods and how society and culture, in turn, shape the development of science and technology. Throughout the course we will be particularly concerned with ways that scientific

visions and projects, broad in scope, articulate, mirror, distort, and shape hierarchies based on such categories as gender, race, class, development, definitions of citizenship, understandings of nature, the production of knowledge, and global capitalism. Topics may include: race-based pharmaceuticals, climate debates and "natural" disasters, genomics, politicized archaeology, science in postcolonial contexts, DNA fingerprinting, clinical trials, cyborgs, nuclear weapons production, and human/nonhuman relationships. Distribution area: social science.

#### **417 Independent Study in Anthropology** 1-4, 1-4 Staff

For advanced students only. The student will undertake readings in depth in an area of theory or content of his own choice. *Prerequisite:* consent of instructor.

#### **490 Senior Thesis Research Seminar** x, 1 Staff

This course is a forum where seniors begin conceptualizing, designing, and carrying out a senior thesis. Emphasis will be placed upon defining research problems and posing questions of inquiry, organizing and utilizing literature reviews, and organizing data sources. Each week one or two individuals will present their thesis proposals in draft form for critique and discussion. In addition to fostering an attitude of cooperation, the goal of the seminar is to help students focus analytically on an anthropology topic and to craft a viable plan of independent research to be executed over both semesters of their senior year.

#### **491 Thesis Research** 1, x Staff

Senior major students undertake basic bibliographical research in a topical area leading to the writing of a thesis. A thesis outline and research plan, as well as a reading list, will be generated.

#### **492 Thesis** x, 2 Staff

Senior major students record in a thesis a substantial original research project based on the previous semester plan and basic bibliography.

#### **498 Honors Thesis** x, 2 Staff

Designed to further independent research leading to the preparation of an undergraduate honors thesis in anthropology. Required of and limited to senior honors candidates in anthropology. *Prerequisite:* admission to honors candidacy.