

Anthropology

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Known as the 'holistic science of humankind', anthropology attempts to understand humanity in the broadest of comparative perspectives and in relationship with other animal species and the physical world. Among all the liberal arts disciplines, anthropology is unique in its goal of bridging the humanities, natural and social sciences, and in its long view of human time (from prehistory to the present). Together with their professors, anthropology students seek answers to the age-old question "what does it mean to be human?" through the detailed study and comparison of cultural traditions.

Distribution: Courses completed in anthropology apply to the social sciences and cultural pluralism (selected courses) distribution areas.

Total credits required to complete an Anthropology major: 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.

Learning Goals: Upon graduation, a student will be able to:

- **Major-Specific Areas of Knowledge**

- Understand how anthropological theory has developed over time and how this changes perception of human social and cultural diversity.
- Have a familiarity with the sub-disciplines of anthropology and how each specialization contributes to an understanding of human social and cultural variability.

- **Critical Thinking**

- Critically assess issues involving human physical and cultural evolution and appreciate how these contributed to the development of contemporary diversity across the globe.
- Analyze central aspects universal to culture such as kinship, gender, ritual and religion, exchange, and language, and how such aspects vary across time and space.

- **Research**

- Organize in-depth research on anthropological issues based on collected field data or literature searches, and creatively, expressively, clearly, and soundly write reports.

- **After College**

- Develop a strong foundation for careers or acceptance into graduate schools that capitalize on qualitative methods and data analysis, understanding of cultural diversity, and critical assessment of normative value systems.

- **Citizenship**

- Bring broad perspectives to discussions outside of Whitman that deal with the state of the human condition, whether within the local community, the nation, or in global affairs.

The Anthropology major: A total of 36 credits in anthropology to include Anthropology 101, 201, 490 and 492 (or 498); plus 22 additional credits. Of those additional credits, students must take at least one course in each of the following categories: Ethnographic Skills (312, 317, 325, 337, or 339) and bio- and environmental materialities (259, 300, 304, 306, 328 or 360). Students in their final year majoring in anthropology must pass a senior assessment consisting of an oral defense and/or presentation of their senior project (or honors thesis).

Honors in the major: Students do not apply for admission to candidacy for honors. To be considered for honors candidacy students must have the minimum Cumulative and Major GPAs specified in the faculty code (3.300 and 3.500, respectively). Students who wish to pursue honors must write a thesis that fulfills the requirements of thesis in anthropology as discussed in consultation with the thesis advisor and at least one other committee members. To earn honors in the major, a candidate must additionally achieve distinction on the oral examination and earn an A or A- on the thesis (as recorded in Anthropology 498). A copy of the Honors Project must be submitted to Penrose Library.

The Anthropology minor: A minimum of 20 credits including: Anthropology 101 and Anthropology 201; plus twelve additional credits in anthropology.

The Anthropology-Environmental Studies combined major: The requirements are fully described in the *Environmental Studies* section of the catalog.

101 Becoming Human: An Introduction to Anthropology

Fall, Spring

Fall: Blavascunas; Spring: Yuan

4 credits

An introduction to foundational approaches in anthropology with an emphasis on understanding the human condition in broad historical, material, and cross-cultural contexts. Drawing on key ideas such as cultural relativism, human diversity, evolution, language, and “Othering,” case studies will explore the interplay between material and biological factors and particular social conditions for producing diverse ways of life. Open to first-year students and sophomores; juniors and seniors by consent only.

201 The Strange Familiar: Fundamentals of Cultural Anthropology

Fall

George

4 credits

An introduction to the history, theory, and methods of cultural anthropology. Students will be evaluated through in-class exams, short essays, and ethnographic research and writing exercises. Open to sophomores and juniors; seniors by consent only.

206 Anthropology and Europe

Spring

Blavascunas

4 credits

“Europe” exists as a category under constant negotiation and renegotiation. This course asks what the region of Europe has meant to the field of anthropology and how ethnography has both sustained and contested ideas of Europe. How is European geography lived, constructed and contested by a multitude of actors, institutions, and ideologies? The course examines recent ethnographic debates and ethnographies that question the status of Europe as a category with an essential meaning.

220 China Now

Spring

Yuan

4 credits

Since the end of the Maoist era and the beginning of "Reform and Opening Up" (beginning in 1978), China has experienced staggering social changes, from transitioning to a market economy to re-entering the global political theater as an increasingly influential superpower. This course explores these transformations and their consequences for Chinese society and politics, national and regional cultures, and ordinary life. We will examine topics including the history and politics of "Reform and Opening Up"; urbanization, migration, and the division of labor in cities and countryside; shifts in mass consumption and mediated desire; the social reproduction of traditional concepts like "guanxi" and "face"; religion and ethics; and ecological and environmental imaginations in 21st-century China. The class format will be mixed, lectures + discussion; assignments will include short paper assignments (4-6 pages), weekly forum posts, and a final presentation of a research topic.

225 Global Christianity

Fall

Yuan

4 credits

This course examines Christianity in its multiplicity and diversity, from its origins in a pluralistic ancient Mediterranean world to the spread of Christian practices and cultural forms throughout the globe. Through engagement with anthropology, history, theology, and literary texts, we will explore how various Christian texts, concepts, institutions, practices, and narratives have circulated among different populations in distinct socio-historical contexts. The course centers around two key questions: How has Christianity been formed and reformed through its global encounters? And how have these encounters in turn shaped the world as we know it? May be elected as Religion 225.

246-248 Special Topics in Peoples and Cultures

1-4 credits

Any current offerings follow.

246 ST: The Anthropology of Design**Fall****Pribilsky****4 credits**

Las Vegas video poker machines, water pumps in developing countries, everyday office furniture, the ubiquitous smartphone: our worlds are shaped by intentional objects and their power to inform our habits, action, and sensations. This course offers an introduction to the anthropology of design – a field that bridges academic and commercial ventures in a pursuit to understand how people make, circulate, and use products. Fusing standard approaches and concern of cultural anthropology with the eclectic field of Science and Technology Studies (STS), this class will explore diverse historical and cultural forms of how things humans make come to embody complex social trajectories. Beginning with philosophical investigations into the relationship between materials, form, and craft, we will proceed through ethnographic case studies of design as both an expertise and an ordinary practice. All along, we'll look at ways "design thinking" as an open-ended and often unpredictable process of creativity shares affinities with anthropology's core method of ethnography limits of that comparison. Class will be run in a seminar manner with short analytical papers and reading responses and a final research project. Distribution area: social sciences.

247 ST: Carceral Cultures**Spring****Serin****4 credits**

This course offers students an intellectual toolkit for thinking critically and engaging politically with contemporary problems of mass incarceration. Drawing on historical, ethnographic, legal, and literary texts on slave plantations, native reservations, internment camps, prisons, refugee camps and immigration detention centers in diverse cultural and geographical locations, we will rethink capital, labor, and political economy; regimes of racialization and gendering; and sovereignty and biopolitics in imperial, post-colonial, settler-colonial, and neoliberal contexts. We will also attend to the experiences and alternative imaginaries of those captive in carceral complexes in an effort to learn from abolition movements. May be elected as Politics 201. Distribution area: social sciences.

257 Chinese Society and Culture**Not offered 2019-2020****4 credits**

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.

258 Peoples of the Tibeto-Burman Highlands**Not offered 2019-20****4 credits**

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.

259 Culture, Environment and Development in the Andes**Fall****Pribilsky****4 credits**

This course focuses on the intersection of two major concerns in global development—environmental sustainability and the self-determination of indigenous communities—as they play out in the Andes region of South America. Environmentally, this mountainous region is home to astounding biotic and geomorphological diversity and concentrations of major watersheds, glaciers, and complex forests. Culturally and politically, the Andes region also stands out as a locus of Latin America's indigenous rights movement. This course asks a series of questions centered on understanding environmental issues and movements from the perspective of indigenous peoples, including: How are pressing environmental changes altering indigenous livelihoods and how are indigenous groups responding to these challenges? How do indigenous movement politics rooted in struggles for sovereignty and legal recognition intersect with global environmental concerns and social movements to address climate change, water resources, and

biodiversity? How do approaches to development that take seriously nature-culture connections address issues of indigenous livelihoods and sustainability and in what ways do they fail? Readings will draw from anthropology, geography, global health, political theory, journalism, and history. This course builds on Anthropology 201, but it is not required. May be elected as Environmental Studies 259, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 259 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies.

300 Malignant Cultures: Anthropologies of Cancer
Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Cancer – the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body – is the cause of nearly 13 percent of all deaths annually. (Over 12 million cancers are diagnosed each year with a corresponding 8 million deaths.) Because of its often unknown direct causes, and its association with suffering and the disfigurement of the human body, cancer is frequently described as a “dreaded” disease, the name itself serving as a metaphor for unchecked disorder and chaos. This course, blending a reading seminar with community-based research, will explore a variety of sociocultural dimensions of cancer, from the epidemiology and demographics of the disease, with a particular focus on how cancer maps on to social inequalities including race and ethnicity, to its cultural history – its rich metaphors, symbols and social connotations. Readings will explore cancer in the US as well as its rising incidence in the developing world. Drawing from medical anthropology, course themes will explore both the possibilities and limitations of an ethnographic approach to mine cancer’s meanings, with special attention placed on the perspective of sufferers and the sociocultural contexts in which the disease occurs. In the community-based research portion of the class, students will carry out their own ethnographic research and/or service-learning projects among different cancer communities in the Inland Northwest. Students will have the opportunity to explore issues such as survivorship, the intersection of cancer with poverty, race, ethnicity and gender/sexuality, cultural aspects of treatment, environmental justice, support groups and advocacy, and health activism. Assessment of student performance will be determined through short essays, class participation and leadership, and completion of a community ethnography project.

304 Anthropology of Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Medicine
Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Medical systems vary depending on time, space, place, available (and desired) resources, culturally held beliefs, politics, and socioeconomic circumstances. This course explores medical systems – combinations of healthcare philosophies and treatment modalities – from anthropological perspectives. In particular, students will: 1) study complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), a broad category of medical systems that includes Traditional Chinese Medicine, Naturopathy, Chiropractic, and Homeopathy; 2) consider the rising popularity of CAM in North America and how this has (or has not) affected healthcare policy and conventional practice; and, 3) examine who accesses CAM, in what forms, and for what conditions. Second, students will learn how CAM systems are integrated with biomedicine in what is called “integrative medicine” (IM), for diagnoses and treatment plans. Finally, the course will reflect on what anthropology can bring to the study of CAM/IM: how risks and efficacies of CAM therapies are measured and assessed; how patient-provider relationships shift when biomedical and CAM systems are integrated; how standards of practice and provider training and certification are evaluated; and how underserved populations attain and use CAM/IM.

306 Culture, Politics, Ecology
Spring Blavascunas

4 credits

This seminar examines a range of approaches to the analysis of ecological and social processes, drawing on interpretations of different socio-ecological studies in anthropology and geography. Covers cultural ecology and political ecology. Topics include human/environment relations through the lens of gender, race, class, livelihoods, the topic of nature and nature conservation, local knowledge, resistance and resilience, environmental discourses, social movements and the connections between production and consumption. Students will gain an understanding of how hierarchies, privilege, status and power shape patterns of natural resource use; who and what causes

environmental problems; and what the solutions might be. May be elected as Environmental Studies 306, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 306 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies.

312 Ethnographic Film Studies

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

An introduction to the history, theory, and practice of ethnographic film and video. The course is divided into two parts. Students view, read about, discuss, and review a series of classic and contemporary ethnographic films, while simultaneously producing their own in small groups using resources from the college's Multimedia Development Lab. *Prerequisite:* Anthropology 201 or consent of instructor.

313 Communism, Socialism, and the Environment

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

In an age where many associate climate change and environmental destruction with capitalism, what can we learn from the history, ideology and practice of socialism and communism? Was communism uniformly destructive to the environment, marked by catastrophes like the Chernobyl meltdown or the nightmarish geoengineering of Three Gorges Dam in China? What are the unexpected environmental surprises or sustainable aspects of the communist experiment, inadvertent as well as purposeful? This course provides both political theory and case studies to examine what was state socialism, the Communist Party, the experience of living in a Communist country. The course will draw on materials from environmental history, post-socialist anthropology and political ecology to explore the lived realities and utopian projects of communism and socialism. Course draws examples from around the world, including eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, Cuba, Brazil and Tanzania. May be elected as Environmental Studies 313, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 313 to satisfy the social sciences course requirement in environmental studies.

317 Language and Culture

Fall

George

4 credits

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

Fall

Morrissey

4 credits

The course will trace the development conceptually and historically of explanatory theory for sociocultural phenomena from the discipline's origins in classical thought up through the challenges of postmodernism and poststructuralism in the 1980s. "Schools" of thought such as Racism, Environmental Determinism, Marxism, Cultural Evolutionism, French Structuralism, cognitive science, cultural ecology, and symbolic and interpretative anthropology are analyzed comparatively to emphasize the contribution of each to an emergent synthetic theory of culture. Anthropology majors must take 318 prior to the start of their senior year. Anthropology 318 is a prerequisite for taking Anthropology 490. Three lectures per week. *Prerequisite:* eight credits in anthropology or consent of instructor.

325 The Anthropology of Digital Media

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

In this course we will explore anthropological approaches to the ways in which people use new media to interact, play with language, and construct various identities in a wide range of political and cultural contexts. We will compare popular and scholarly discussions of media to each other and to our own observations of how real people behave online and in other digitally-mediated spaces. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major. *Prerequisite:* four credits in anthropology or film studies or consent of instructor.

328 Medical Anthropology
Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

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 among 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.

330 Resistance and Refusal
Spring

Yuan

4 credits

What does it mean to push back against power? Since the 1970s, resistance has been a dominant framework for cultural anthropologists. Emerging out of interests in social inequality, hegemony, and power, anthropologists have sought to analyze practices of “resistance” at multiple scales, from mass political movements to the “hidden transcripts” of everyday life. This focus on resistance has also met its own resistances, most recently from scholars who have theorized “refusal” as an alternative framework for understanding counter-hegemonic practices. In this seminar, we will engage with texts on a variety of issues -- including civil disobedience, peasant uprisings, postcolonial and indigenous protests, religious “piety” movements, non-sovereign politics, and ethnographic refusal -- to explore the following questions: What is the difference between resisting and refusing -- and why does it matter? How do acts of resistance and refusal generate new structures of power? And what might the future of resistance and refusal look like? Class format is seminar (discussion-based) and assignments include short papers (4-6 pages), oral presentations on readings, and a final exploratory paper on a research topic.

337 Regional Ethnographic Fieldwork: Researching and Writing Culture
Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

This course, run as a workshop-seminar, introduces students to the ins and outs of ethnographic research, from research design to ethics and writing. Focused around a different research topic or problem in eastern Washington chosen each year the course is taught (e.g., housing, health care for the poor and uninsured, food security), students will devise an ethnographic research project amendable to the employment of a variety of ethnographic methods. Methods may include mapping, linguistic/discourse analysis, focused observation, ethnographic interviewing, and focus groups. Technical readings on ethnographic methods, ethics, and writing will be supplemented with critical readings from anthropology and related fields germane to the particular year’s topic of study. Assignments will include short papers and a final ethnographic report. *Prerequisite:* Anthropology 201 or consent of instructor.

339 Ethnographic Research and Writing
Fall

George

4 credits

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.

347 Special Topics in Anthropology
1-4 credits

Any current offerings follow.

347 ST: Culture, Politics, and Ecology in Southwest China
Summer 2020

Blavascunas and McKhann 2 credits

This course is an optional, field component continuation of Anthropology 306 (Culture, Politics, Ecology; spring 2020), involving three weeks of study and travel in northwest Yunnan Province. The goal is to deepen student understanding of the general issues of cultural and political ecology raised in the regular spring semester course through a focused study of a geographical region that is at particular environmental, cultural and political risk. Home to half of China's minority nationality populations, Yunnan Province is experiencing rapid economic development that is bringing prosperity to poor minority areas, but at the cost of indigenous cultural institutions. *Prerequisites:* Anthropology 306 or Environmental Studies 306 and acceptance into this Crossroads course (application available in September 2019).

349 Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of Cities

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

An upper-level introduction to the subfield of urban anthropology using ethnographic examples that explore the form and quality of urban life in the United States, Europe, and selected non-Western cultures. Case studies will be read to assess the varying theories and methods applied in anthropological analyses of cities, their significance in the broader field of urban studies, and the provocative themes that emerge such as social networks, violence, health and disease, and homelessness. The course examines contemporary U.S. "inner city" problems, rapidly urbanizing cities in the developing world, and trends in today's emerging "global cities." May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major.

358 Social Bodies, Diverse Identities: the Anthropology of Sex and Gender

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Sex and gender have been framing, analytical categories throughout the history of anthropology. This course explores why sex and gender are invaluable to understanding the human condition. Yet, "sex" and "gender" are not stagnant categories. Instead, they vary across time, place and researcher. Thus, while considering cross-cultural expressions of sex and gender in the ethnographic record, this course is also designed to examine theoretical developments in the field. May be elected as Gender Studies 358. *Recommended Prerequisite:* Anthropology 201 or Gender Studies 100.

360 The Cultural Politics of Science

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

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. May be elected as Environmental Studies 362, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 362 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies.

417 Independent Study in Anthropology

Fall, Spring

Staff

1-4 credits

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

490 Senior Seminar

Fall

Morrissey

4 credits

The goal of this course is to help students further explore the role of social theory and its relevance to the development of anthropological research. In a seminar setting, students will read and critically discuss a number of contemporary anthropological monographs possessing exemplary theoretical, methodological, and empirical

sophistication. Short written assignments will supplement in-class discussion. As a secondary goal, students will craft and workshop a proposal for their own capstone research project. Required of, and only open to, senior anthropology majors.

492 Senior Project

Spring

Morrissey

2 credits

Senior major students create a substantial original capstone project based on the previous semester plan.

498 Honors Thesis/Project

Spring

Morrissey

2 credits

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