

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.

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 of cultures 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.

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

Total credit requirements for 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.

The Anthropology major

- 36 Credits
- Required Courses
 - Anthropology 101, 201, 301, 490, and 492 or 498
 - 18 Additional Credits
- Senior Requirements
 - Anthropology 490 and 492 or 498
 - Oral defense and/or presentation of their senior project or honors thesis
- Honors
 - Students do not apply for admission to candidacy for honors
 - Students must submit a proposal for their thesis or project

An advanced introduction to cultural anthropology, the course will focus on ethnography as both the primary research method and the most common written genre of anthropology. Students will read both classic and contemporary ethnographies, engaging with in-depth studies of key concepts in cultural anthropology; topics may include social and political structures, nature/culture, kinship, race, gender and sexuality, medicine, migration, and more. Evaluation methods include exams, short essays, and ethnographic research and writing exercises. Open to sophomores and juniors; seniors by consent only.

203 Introduction to Environmental Anthropology

Spring

Blavascunas

4 credits

This introductory course in environmental anthropology explores how the field of anthropology, since its inception, has used natural and scientific concepts to explain human diversity and ecological relationships, while simultaneously addressing how culture shapes our understandings of landscapes and peoples' connection to them. Among the questions considered include: What are the relationships between culture and ecology? How does culture mediate relationships with land, water, soils, climate, plants, and animals? And how have these more-than-human beings had reciprocal and constraining relationships with humans? This course also addresses ways scientific knowledge always reflects specific cultural features and historical contexts which shape understandings of concepts such as "nature," ecology, and the environment. Formerly Anthropology/Environmental Studies 306-may not be taken if previously completed 306.

206 Anthropology and Europe

Not offered 2023-24

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 as cultured, rational, a group of nations, and democratic. How is European geography lived, constructed and contested by a multitude of actors, institutions, and ideologies? Where has ethnography stood on matters of the far-right and notions of blood, roots, and soil. The course examines recent ethnographic debates within ethnographies that question the status of Europe as a category with an essential meaning. Course draws examples from the politics of memory and forgetting, migration, ethnic conflict and war, and the metamorphosis of post-socialist societies in Eastern Europe, and the cultural politics of European integration within the European Union.

210 Bring Out Your Dead: Anthropology of Death and Dying

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

Drawing from philosophy, history, literature, film, and various sub-disciplines of anthropology, this course will develop a robust theoretical framework for an anthropology of dead and dying bodies centered on the political, cultural, and scientific problematizations of the boundary between life and death. The course will introduce students to a substantial corpus of anthropological research on death-that-is-life of chronic disease and end-of-life care; biotechnologies and the ethics of remaking life and death; temporalities of death and dying; the necropolitical critique of the social abandonment and killing of racialized, ethnicized, and gendered Others; the management of human remains and relics; the corpse's centrality to the shifting terrain of evidence and the implications of forensics for witnessing of trauma, violence, and loss; and spaces of death and dying as key sites of political mobilization and imaginaries of emancipation. May be taken for credit toward the Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

217 Language and Culture

Fall

George

4 credits

The course examines language as a system, cultural resource, and form of social action. Through an introduction to both linguistics and linguistic anthropology, students explore language's complex relation to cultural practices, ideologies, identities, and local/global hierarchies. Formerly Anthropology 317-may not be taken if previously completed 317.

220 China Now**Not offered 2023-24****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.

223 Religion and the Spirit of Capitalism**Not offered 2023-24****4 credits**

As global capitalism reaches into every corner of human life, what role does religion play in the reproduction of social inequalities, labor practices, and exploitative economies? Did religion sow the seeds of capitalism? How might religious traditions and practices be used to critique capitalism and reimagine the culture it created? In this course, we delve into the entanglements between religion and the dominant economic form of the modern world: capitalism. Areas covered include classical social theories of religion and capitalism (Marx, Weber, Tocqueville, Durkheim); contemporary examples of interactions between religious practice and capitalist processes; and the mobilization of religious traditions in critiquing and resisting capitalism. Topics may include the "Confucian ethic" and economic growth in East Asia; Islamic financial institutions; the effect of Pentecostalism's explosive growth on the economic experiences of African and Latin American communities; the marketization and commodification of religion; and more. May be elected as Religion 223.

224 Anthropology of Religion**Fall****Yuan****4 credits**

This course explores lived religions through an anthropological lens. Through a wide range of ethnographic readings both classical and contemporary, we will delve into topics like myth, ritual, magic, witchcraft, ghosts, healing, religious experience and social movements, while examining how religion intersects with politics, race, gender/sexuality, and economics in diverse socio-cultural contexts. Through the course, we will also take stock of how theories of religion have been integral to the development of anthropological thought, contributing to comparative methodologies and cross-cultural ethnography. In addition to learning about global religious cultures, students will design a locally-focused research project to better understand our own region's religious landscape. May be elected as Religion 224.

225 Global Christianity**Not offered 2023-24****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.

228 Medical Anthropology**Not offered 2023-24****4 credits**

This course serves as an introduction to medical anthropology – addressing a wide range of topical, theoretical, and research aspects of this broad subfield. Medical anthropology begins by challenging and moving beyond the narrow, often clinical, focus of the biological dimension of illness and healing to consider how illness, disease, health, and

healing are always embedded within distinct social, political, and cultural worlds. Through the application of ethnographic case studies, we'll move and compare classic formulations of medical anthropology including sorcery, divination, and shamanism with more recent concerns with the impact and influence of scientific thinking and medical technologies, addressing the cultural implications of everything from epigenetics to CAT scans. Throughout the course, we will pay close attention to the intersections of biology and culture, including ongoing dialogues (and debates) between anthropology and biomedicine. Course activities will include reading ethnographies, small ethnographic research projects, and exams. May be taken for credit toward the Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

240 Global Indigeneities

Spring

Thayne

4 credits

This course focuses on Indigeneity as both an intellectual project and an in-the-world force shaping the lives of Indigenous peoples, including their cultural practices, resistance, and activism. The course will begin with an explanation of varied and often contested genealogies of Indigeneity and Indigenous identity across time, geography, political contexts, and different fields of study (e.g., anthropology, history, political philosophy and theory). Adopting a global perspective, topics will include Indigenous peoples' struggles for autonomy and survival; self-determination and political status under international law; the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; land struggles and the protection of natural resources; cultural resurgence and revival of select traditions; and varied forms of political resistance and decolonization. This course will also look at the parallels and intersections between Indigenous and Native Studies with wider movements against settler colonialism and anti-Blackness. Open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors. May be elected as Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies 240.

246-248 Special Topics in Peoples and Cultures

1-4 credits

Any current offerings follow.

301 History and Theory of Anthropology

Fall

Pribilsky

4 credits

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of anthropological theory with a special emphasis on movements to “decolonize” the discipline starting in the 1960s. Organizationally, the course explores various “schools” of thought in anthropology and their differing conceptual and analytical tools for making sense of human social life and cultural experience. Emphasis will be placed on asking how key questions and approaches have taken form in anthropology and have changed over time. For instance, we will consider what constitutes “classical” theory and the composition of a canon of key works, asking what themes and thinkers get included and which do not, and how criteria of inclusion change. The seminar format emphasizes close reading and active discussion of key texts and theorists. *Prerequisite:* one prior course in Anthropology.

303 Religion and Gender in Global Context

Spring

Schultz

4 credits

This course examines issues of gender and religion as they intersect with global political discourses about women's rights and competing definitions of agency. The study of global religions have been transformed in important ways by encounters with postcolonial and feminist scholarship; similarly, the persistent interest in religious forms of life have shaped how scholars think about gender, sexuality, and feminism in transnational contexts. In this course, we will explore how these dialogues between feminism, postcolonial studies, and religious studies may inform and transform our understandings of categories like “women” and “religion.” Questions explored will include: why have women's bodies and forms of religious dress become charged sites of these negotiations? What assumptions concerning moral agency, freedom, and public/private space invest these sites with meaning in the first place? Why does the sensibility of being modern and politically progressive depend so heavily on particular representations of the appropriate roles and behaviors of women and religion? May be elected as Religion 303. May be taken for credit

towards the Gender Studies major or minor. *Recommended prerequisite*: one course in Anthropology, Religion, or Gender Studies.

310 Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Anthropology

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course will explore how anthropological ideas and theories, both traditional and contemporary, appear in genres of writing not usually associated with anthropology, such as novels and memoirs. We will consider the strengths and weaknesses of different genres of writing for communicating anthropological findings and ideas, discuss questions of truth and knowledge in ethnographic writing, and consider the implications of our discussions for so-called 'public' anthropology. *Prerequisite*: Anthropology 101 or 201 or consent of instructor.

312 Ethnographic Film Studies

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This survey course on the history and theory of ethnographic film will approach cinematic imagination as an instrument of self-othering. How does ethnographic film expose and disrupt the sensory perceptions, common-sense conceptions, and dominant interpretations of social and cultural practice? What is its political potential as an aesthetic form and medium to construct new meanings, tell alternative (hi)stories, and create different worlds? The course will introduce students to seminal works in the genre from its beginnings at the turn of the 20th century to the present, including more recent, self-reflexive, and experimental productions. Requirements include weekly film screenings, film critiques, and a final exam. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major or minor. *Prerequisite*: Anthropology 201 or consent of instructor.

313 Communism, Socialism and the Environment

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

What can we learn from the history, ideology and practice of socialism, anarchism, and communism when thinking ecologically? Was communism uniformly destructive, marked by catastrophes like the Chernobyl meltdown or Mao's war on nature? What are the unexpected environmental surprises or sustainable aspects of socialist experiments, including those in state socialism as well as external to the state? This course provides both political theory and case studies to examine what is/was state socialism, anarchism, and the Communist Party in a global context and with special emphasis on peasants, their agricultural practices, revolutionary inclinations, and obstinacy against the state. The course draws on materials from environmental history, post-socialist anthropology, and political ecology to explore lived realities and utopian projections of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

318 Anthropology of Design

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

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, actions, and sensations. Anthropologists have studied how the things humans make – from a stone tool to cooking pot to a bicycle – are more than their function and utility. This course is an introduction to the anthropology of design – a recent, loosely articulated field of study that bridges academic and commercial ventures in a pursuit to understand how people make, circulate, and use made objects and products. Fusing standard approaches and concerns 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. In other words, we'll look at how technologies, broadly defined, come to take on "a life of their own." We'll begin class by considering how technology shapes and is shaped by political and cultural contexts. Next, we'll move to philosophical investigations into the relationship between materials, form, and craft and finally proceed to read ethnographic case studies of design as both an expertise and an ordinary practice. All along, we will assess ways "design thinking," as an open-ended and often unpredictable process of creativity, shares affinities with anthropology's core method of ethnography. This class is a seminar with discussion (including student-directed discussion) as the primary activity. Assignments will include a short analytical essay, a mini research project on a

designed object, and a semester-long group project developing a design intervention. *Prerequisite:* Anthropology 101 or 201 or consent of instructor.

320 Language and Nationalism
Spring

George

4 credits

This course explores various cultural, political, and historical understandings of the connections between language and group identity, particularly national identity. In particular, it traces the histories and theoretical foundations of - and debates around - the idea of 'one language, one people' and uses ethnographic examples to consider how that idea has played out in contemporary social and political movements. May be taken for credit toward the Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

321 Anthropology of the State
Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

What is the state? What's special about state power and state institutions? How do we understand and experience bureaucracy, state violence, policing, state secrecy, and transparency? How do state structures produce and intersect with constructions of race, gender, class, and other social distinctions? How do we live within and without the state? This course challenges notions of "the state" as a monolithic entity and examines the state as an ensemble of institutions and practices. We will interrogate the foundations of the state and its manifestations in contexts of cultural and social difference. And we will think in novel ways about what it means to approach the state anthropologically — by centering systems of meaning and belief, everyday practices, structures of power, and emergent forms of resistance. Closely engaging with theories of the nation-state, colonialism, hegemony, governmentality, and other concepts, this course will incorporate materials from social theory, ethnography, documentary films, and other genres to examine representations of the state across a variety of socio-historical contexts. Topics may include bureaucratic regimes, policing and incarceration, conditions of "statelessness," crisis management, conspiracy theories and paranoia, and the national security state. *Prerequisite:* four credits in anthropology.

325 The Anthropology of Digital Media
Fall

George

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.

330 Resistance and Refusal
Not offered 2023-24

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.

333 Domestic/Wild: Unruly Homes Wild Biomes
Fall

Blavascunas

4 credits

What are the histories of domestication and what forms has the wild taken? Are home and the wild antithetical ideas? Are agriculture and hunting/gathering really all that different culturally? What power is summoned or rejected by the domestic and the wild in anthropological thought and practice? Topics include the archaeology of domestication, rewilding, multi-species relations, social stratification and hierarchy, nature conservation and intimacy.

337 Regional Ethnographic Fieldwork: Researching and Writing Culture
Not offered 2023-24 **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
Spring **Staff** **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. *Prerequisite:* one course in Anthropology or consent of instructor.

345 The Cultural Worlds of Mountains
Not offered 2023-24 **4 credits**

"What are men to rocks and mountains?" asks Jane Austen's heroine Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*. This class takes up this question and extends it to address a variety of cross-cultural, historical, and comparative entanglements between mountains and humans. Beginning with the comparative study of mountain ecologies, we'll look at similarities in deep time adaptation to mountainscapes (e.g., the Andes and Himalayas) focusing on ways the environment shapes biological and cultural formations. Additionally, the impact of various contemporary environmental concerns (including climate change, deglaciation, and mining) will be understood in the context of adaptation, resistance and activism. We'll supplement work in anthropology and related fields with the meanings of mountains found in literature, poetry, film, and philosophy. From definitions of the sublime to endless pursuits to reach ever higher and more elusive summits, this course will explore the many ways mountains have shaped and been shaped by human imagination. The class will be run as a reading seminar and writing workshop. In addition to short analytic papers, over the course of the semester students will craft their own "mountain essay" using ethnographic and creative nonfiction writing approaches. May be elected as Environmental Studies 345, but must be elected as Environmental Studies 345 to satisfy the interdisciplinary course requirement in environmental studies.

347-348 Special Topics in Anthropology
1-4 credits

Any current offerings follow.

349 Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of Cities
Not offered 2023-24 **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 Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

350 Missionaries and other Anthropologists

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

Missionaries have often been understood or depicted as proto-anthropologists, as early ethnographers, or as a foil against which the field of anthropology has defined itself. Some critics have situated missionaries as anthropology’s repressed other. In this class we will explore the long encounter between Europe and the so-called New World through writings describing that encounter--writings by explorers, missionaries, naturalist-ethnologists, “Natives,” and, eventually, by professional anthropologists. We will consider material resemblances, collaborations and antagonisms, and the ways in which anthropology is both heir to and a departure from missionary practice. Special attention will be given to the anthropological missionary work of Myron Eells, son of the founder of Whitman Seminary. The course will be interdisciplinary, drawing on scholarship and methods from Anthropology and Religious Studies and works on secularism. May be elected as Religion 350.

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

Spring

Staff

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 2023-24

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 Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies 360.

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

George, Pribilsky

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

George, Pribilsky

2 credits

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

498 Honors Thesis/Project

Spring

Staff

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.