



## **Anthropology Faculty**

### **College of Arts and Sciences**

#### **Expected Outcomes for Anthropology Undergraduates**

The discipline of anthropology is characterized by the breadth and diversity of its four subfields of study (archeology, cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and physical anthropology). Students majoring in anthropology at URI are expected to gain basic knowledge in each subfield and, using this knowledge, learn to think holistically about human issues. Included in the development of holistic thinking skills should be an appreciation of how anthropologists use evolutionary theory and cross-cultural comparisons to solve scientific problems. These capabilities developed by students in the anthropology program are the cumulative product of the following elements:

- Courses in the anthropology major are distributed over the four subfields of the discipline, including (1) introductory courses in each subfield, (2) a course in methods of inquiry and (3) two theory courses, one of which integrates the four subfields.
- Strongly recommended supporting electives include a course in inferential statistics and a foreign language through the intermediate level, and others recommended by the advisor as appropriate to the student's specific area of interest.
- The General Education requirements.

#### **Knowledge**

**1. Depth and application of knowledge:** At graduation anthropology majors should be able to:

- Describe the breadth of anthropology and be able to characterize the range of anthropology's distinctive philosophical and methodological approaches with respect to other disciplines within the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical development and centrality of the "four-field approach" in American anthropology, with the ability to define each subdiscipline's contributions to the whole.



- Explain the basic processes of biological evolution and specifically, describe the evidence for humankind's descent from apes and the subsequent course of human evolution.
- Describe modern human biological diversity and articulate an informed position on the question of biological races of humans.
- Demonstrate a scientific understanding of the development and operation of contemporary ethnic/cultural variation in humans, including an appreciation of ethical concerns arising from that variation.
- Demonstrate the ability to think holistically and comparatively in describing human life-ways using non-ethnocentric methods.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the wide range of past and present human biocultural systems, including ecological relationships, social and cultural organization, and ideology (belief systems).
- Assess the relative advantages and disadvantages of using archaeology as a method for elucidating culture history.

**2. Methods of inquiry:** At graduation anthropology students should understand the various methods of inquiry appropriate to anthropological research and have the ability to:

- Understand the place of research in the development and evaluation of scientific theories in general and anthropological theory in particular.
- Understand the importance of the mental-behavioral and emic-etic distinction in anthropological research and theory building.
- Comprehend different research methodologies, their strengths and limitations as applied to anthropological research questions.
- Be able to understand the use of quantitative methods in the analysis of data from all four sub fields of anthropology and have the ability to evaluate the use and misuse of analyses of quantitative data in anthropological research.



**3. Problem solving:** At graduation anthropology students should have acquired the ability to apply the holistic approach of anthropology to addressing complex problems facing humans in today's world through a demonstrated ability to:

- Articulate anthropological insights into contemporary issues of multiculturalism and diversity with reference to both past and present human biological and ethnic or cultural variation.

### Communication

**4. Information management:** At graduation anthropology students should be able to gather and interpret information from diverse sources and be able to:

- Prepare and manipulate databases.
- Critically evaluate and draw supportable conclusions from databases.

**5. Communication:** At graduation anthropology students should be able to communicate clearly and be able to:

- Write concisely and logically, incorporating relevant data and knowledge.
- Speak clearly and effectively in the presentation of ideas.
- Prepare effective visual materials to accompany verbal presentations.

### Personal Growth

**6. Ethical principals:** At graduation anthropology students should be able to understand and apply ethical principles to the conduct of anthropological research and the applications of its findings.

**7. Global awareness:** At graduation anthropology students should have developed an extensive and detailed awareness of the great variation in human biocultural adaptations worldwide and the implications of this variation for present-day human interactions.



## Assessment

All anthropology majors will be required to assemble a collection of their best work (including papers, exercises, or other assignments) from their undergraduate anthropology courses. For each student, this should include material from *at least two* of the discipline's subfields (linguistics, archaeology, cultural anthropology, physical anthropology). Early in the spring semester of each year, all graduating seniors will submit their collected materials for faculty review. These materials will then serve as the starting point for individual "exit interviews" to be conducted by a panel of no fewer than three faculty members (these interviews will have no bearing on a student's graduation status). After the year's exit interviews have been completed, the entire anthropology faculty will meet to discuss the students' performances. It is anticipated that the combination of submitted class materials and exit interviews will yield important feedback about the anthropology curriculum and its effectiveness in achieving the program's educational goals.

In addition to the pre-graduation assessment of seniors, a "one year post-graduation" sample survey of former majors will be conducted every spring. This survey will gather information on several indicators of programmatic effectiveness, including successful admission to graduate school, successful employment, and overall satisfaction with their anthropology degree and the URI experience.

### A Note About the Dynamic Nature of this "Outcomes" Plan

Although it seems self-evident, we note here that this Outcomes Plan, like all examples of its genre, is subject to periodic change. Courses may be added or deleted, especially following turnover in the anthropology faculty. Furthermore, the skills and/or areas of knowledge emphasized in any continuing course may be changed if said course is assigned to a new instructor. The anthropology faculty will evaluate the effectiveness of the entire program annually, with general modifications being made as deemed necessary.