

ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

Students who matriculated prior to the Fall of 2023 may choose to graduate with an Anthropology/Sociology (ANSO) degree. For those students interested in Anthropology (ANTH) please see the Anthropology major.

The Anthropology/Sociology major is not offered to students who matriculated Fall 2023 or thereafter.

Departmental Guidelines

The major in Anthropology and Sociology is designed to meet the educational needs of three kinds of students:

1. those whose interests focus on a liberal arts education and who wish to use the disciplines to understand cross-cultural patterns, social institutions, and socio-cultural change;
2. those who wish to use anthropology and sociology as a background for certain occupations such as law, social work, medical and health sciences, business, public service, and human service careers; and
3. those who expect to pursue graduate study in anthropology or sociology, leading to a teaching, administrative, or research career.

Mission Statement

The Department of Anthropology/Sociology is firmly committed to the principles of a liberal education. Our task is to provide students with the most rigorous and comprehensive approaches to knowledge and analysis appropriate within a fully merged undergraduate program in Sociology and Anthropology.

Our commitment to teaching also defines for us the importance of active scholarship through which we may practice our disciplines and encourage similar pursuits among our students. Since our graduates enter into a wide range of professional, administrative, policy-oriented and other occupations, our goal is to transmit, foster, and produce knowledge and practice that involve students in their own learning experience. In this respect we want to encourage students to take their education into their own hands, by helping them to engage personally in research, analysis, and writing about diverse human societies.

We have therefore sought to create a learning environment within which students may critically examine social life, its organization, and its meaning. We believe that the development of a perspective that examines the human condition in empirical, analytical, comparative, historical, and holistic terms makes a significant contribution to intellectual development. In pursuing such a goal, we assist students to develop, integrate, and utilize knowledge. To this end our mission is to produce knowledgeable learners and social agents who have a self-reflective sense of their potential contributions to the enhancement of the human condition.

Faculty

Associate Professor Veerendra P. Lele, Department Chair

Associate Professors John Davis, Shiri Noy; Assistant Professors Jane Saffitz, Hosna Sheikholeslami, John Soderberg

Academic Administrative Assistant

Nancy Welu

View faculty profiles and contact information (<https://denison.edu/academics/anthropology-sociology/contacts/>)

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Anthropology and Sociology Major

A major in Anthropology and Sociology must complete ten courses within the department. Six of those courses comprise a core curriculum including:

Code	Title
ANSO 100	People, Culture and Society
ANSO 290	The Development of Social Thought
ANSO 316	Contemporary Sociocultural Theory
ANSO 350	Field Research Methods
ANSO 351	Survey Research Methods
ANSO 460	Senior Research Seminar

The other four courses are electives that a major may select from among the department offerings. At least three electives must be at the 300 level. ANSO 460 - Senior Research Seminar and one elective at the 300-level are waived for students undertaking a two-semester senior research in the department (ANSO 451 - Senior Research / ANSO 452 - Senior Research). In addition, majors in Anthropology and Sociology should select an advisor from the departmental faculty. Anthropology and Sociology advisors assist majors in both advance planning and selection of course work.

Anthropology and Sociology Minor

Completion of a minor in Anthropology and Sociology requires a student to complete ANSO 100 - People, Culture and Society, ANSO 290 - The Development of Social Thought, and either ANSO 316 - Contemporary Sociocultural Theory, ANSO 350 - Field Research Methods or ANSO 351 - Survey Research Methods and three electives for a total of 24 credits. At least one elective course must be at the 300-level. In addition, minors in Anthropology and Sociology should select an advisor from the departmental faculty (in addition to the advisor in their major). Anthropology and Sociology advisors assist minors in both advance planning and selection of course work.

Courses

ANSO 100 - People, Culture and Society (4 Credit Hours)

An examination of fundamental questions concerning the nature and foundations of sociocultural behavior. The course presents a variety of sociocultural approaches for understanding human nature and hominid evolution, cross-cultural similarities and differences, the sources of inequality, and the enormity of recent social change. This course is required of all majors and minors in Anthropology/Sociology.

ANSO 210 - Sex and Gender in Society (4 Credit Hours)

This course compares and evaluates a variety of theories which attempt to explain the origins, persistence and effects of gender in American society. In particular, it explores a number of settings that may include: the family, the work place, the political arena, religious activity, violence against women, and face-to-face interactional contexts. Special attention is given to the ways in which race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation shape gender experiences. Although its primary focus is American society, the course compares problems of sexual inequality in American society with other, quite different, societies in order to gain a comparative understanding of how discrimination, prejudice, and structural inequality, wherever they are found, create special problems for women. Throughout, the focus is on learning to use structural, historical, and theoretical information as guides to understanding social change and the choices facing women and men.

Crosslisting: WGST 210.

ANSO 212 - Race and Ethnicity (4 Credit Hours)

Contrary to the expectations of many modern social theorists, race and ethnicity continue to be important elements in the lives of contemporary people, serving as frameworks through which individual identities, community actions, and cultural meanings are interpreted. This course will introduce students to the sociocultural analysis of racial and ethnic identities. How did ethnic and racial identities and communities develop over time? Why does race, though now understood to be a social rather than a biological category, continue to be (mis)understood as a biological category? How do aspects of political, class, gender, and sexual identities influence racial and ethnic identities? We will use a global perspective to understand the conception of race and ethnicity. We will explore these topics among others including cultural and historical variability of ethnic and racial categories, the dialectical formation of identity, and the persistence of certain forms of racial and ethnic prejudice. Students will be expected to examine critically their own common assumptions and presuppositions about race and ethnicity, and to begin developing the theoretical tools for interpreting life in an ethnically diverse world.

Crosslisting: BLST 212.

ANSO 218 - Sociology of International Development (4 Credit Hours)

International development is the study of how countries and people across the world move towards an increased standard of living and quality of life. In this course we will take a sociological approach to the study of development, turning to the task of defining international development, questioning fundamental assumptions about what it means to live "a good life" on the individual level and what it means to be a "developed country" at the national level. We will draw from multiple theories and perspectives to interrogate what international development means and how it has proceeded. This course is a Denison Writing Intensive Seminar, that is, it has a W-overlay. As such all of the goals of the course will be served by developing your research skills and substantive, conceptual, and methodological understandings via writing.

ANSO 220 - Medical Anthropology (4 Credit Hours)

This course offers an introduction to contemporary topics in medical anthropology, the most prominent subfield in anthropology today. Our approach will be to critically examine assumptions about what constitutes health, medicine, and the body. To this end, we will treat science as a cultural practice and western medicine—what anthropologists refer to as biomedicine—as one system of healing alongside others. Additional topics will include the role of belief, meaning, and placebo in healing; structural inequality and political economy; rationality and "ways of knowing" illness; global mental health; suffering and embodiment; disability worlds; constructions of normality and pathology; medical humanitarianism; medicalization and pharmaceuticals; and the role of ethnography in tending to cross-cultural instantiations of health, medicine, and the body.

ANSO 221 - Contemporary Japan (4 Credit Hours)

Japan often conjures images steeped in tradition such as samurai warriors, sumo wrestlers, and geisha clad in kimono. At the same time, however, contemporary Japan is just as easily associated with businessmen, anime, automobiles, and high technology. How have "tradition" and "change" fueled competing visions of Japan what it means to be "Japanese"? How does one go about reconciling these conflicting views? How have these debates evolved over time? How have variously situated individuals and groups in society negotiated shifting circumstances? These questions will be at the heart of this seminar as we consider case studies from different segments of Japanese society. A range of material will be treated as "texts" for analysis and discussion including anime, manga, literary works, and films as well as ethnographic scholarship on Japanese society.

Crosslisting: EAST 221.

ANSO 224 - Human Origins and Prehistory (4 Credit Hours)

This course begins with a review of biological anthropology's view of humanity. How do humans appear when studied with the tools biologists have developed to understand other species? We then explore what we know about the lives of our earliest ancestors and the clusters of new human-like species emerging over the next few million years, including our own about 200,000 years ago. The last part of the class turns to archaeological views of humanity. We survey the diversity of human experiences as our ancestors spread around the globe, creating art, starting farms, and building cities. Throughout, our emphasis will be on how researchers know what they know and what assumptions are built into different narratives of human origins.

ANSO 225 - Introduction to Archaeology (4 Credit Hours)

Most human experiences have gone unrecorded: because they occurred beyond the reach of written records, because those making records did not include them, or because the records have been lost. This course surveys the distinctive combination of scientific and humanistic methods that archaeologists use for unearthing these lost realms of human experience. The course is divided into three segments: the discipline's development, techniques, and contemporary questions. Where possible, students will gain hands-on experience with archaeological techniques. We will also consider how archaeology and narratives about the past are embroiled in contemporary social conflicts.

ANSO 242 - Community Resilience (4 Credit Hours)

The impacts of a shock on a community are not necessarily determined by the scale of the shock, but greatly influenced by community preparation. Community resilience is the capacity of a community to withstand, recover from, and respond positively to crisis or adversity. This course focuses on place-based communities in a variety of local and global contexts and the assets that shape those community's efforts to maintain or improve local quality of life and sustainability.

Crosslisting: ENVS 242.

ANSO 245 - Studies in Anthropology and Sociology (4 Credit Hours)

Special topics in Anthropology and Sociology.

ANSO 290 - The Development of Social Thought (4 Credit Hours)

An investigation of the classical foundations of social thought and sociocultural theory in sociology/anthropology. The course will concentrate on the original works of authors such as Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Weber, Durkheim, Martineau, DuBois and other significant authors of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This course is required of all majors and minors in anthropology and sociology. No First Year students.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 299 - Intermediate Topics in Anthropology/Sociology (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

ANSO 316 - Contemporary Sociocultural Theory (4 Credit Hours)

Analyses of central theoretical questions in anthropology and sociology. Historical developments and major paradigms within the two disciplines are explored. The process of theory construction is examined and a critical perspective developed. Required of majors.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100 and ANSO 290.

ANSO 318 - Public Perspectives on Science and Religion (4 Credit Hours)

Elites and publics alike mobilize science and religion to support opposing positions on issues ranging from education to families to government spending. In this course we will examine social science research about how science and religion are defined and how these two ways of knowing have been framed as compatible or in opposition to each other as sources of moral and cultural authority in the U.S. and beyond. We will explore how preferences for scientific and religious understandings interact and shape public perspectives on social, political, and economic issues.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 321 - Anthropology of Human Rights (4 Credit Hours)

This seminar interrogates the social life of rights by situating human rights within critical analyses of law, society, and culture. A brief examination of key human rights documents and institutions will be followed by an analysis of topics and case studies selected to juxtapose Asian and Western contexts. A primary concern of this seminar will be to scrutinize how human rights get reworked and refashioned in a range of local settings by various actors on the ground pursuing social justice.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 322 - Anthropology of Islam (4 Credit Hours)

This course examines historical and contemporary approaches to the anthropology of Islam and Muslims. The first part considers historical and theoretical debates about whether an anthropology of Islam and/or Muslims is, indeed, possible, including debates that consider whether such a category such as "Islam" exists and how it has become an object of study. The second part will focus on contemporary ethnographies of Islam and Muslims. Of particular interest to us will be lived experiences of Muslims around the globe through the following broad topics: the role of ritual in Islam, Islamic piety movements, the relationship of Islam and modernity, the role of authority and difference in the lives of contemporary Muslims, and emerging "Islamic" economies. Key questions include: What does an anthropological approach have to offer the study of Islam and Muslims, and what can the study of Islam/Muslims offer anthropology? No prior knowledge of or exposure to Islam is required, but prior familiarity with anthropology is necessary.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 324 - Archaeology and Skeletons (4 Credit Hours)

This course introduces the identification and analysis of bones from archaeological sites. Our primary focus is the anatomy of the musculoskeletal system for humans and a selection of other mammal species. Students will gain hands-on experience with skeletal anatomy and learn about a variety of techniques archaeologists use to study bones. We will also take up case-studies from different time periods as examples of what bones can reveal about our ancestors' lives and social worlds.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 325 - The Archaeology of Religion (4 Credit Hours)

When did humans first "get religion"? Why are religious practices so common across the last 30 millennia of human history? What does religion tell us about human cognition and how human societies have changed across those millennia? Do other species have aspects of religion? How is it possible to study religious beliefs and practices through the material culture of long dead groups? Such questions have troubled archaeologists for generations, but, in recent years, new perspectives have emerged. This seminar investigates current archaeological thinking about religions as we examine a variety of case studies, including Upper Paleolithic caves in France, Moche temples in the Andes, and inscribed pottery in antebellum North America.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 330 - Unruly Bodies (4 Credit Hours)

What does it mean to inhabit an unruly body—that is, a body that is marked or othered in some way? How do we experience embodiment? And how does our bodily presence in a deeply unequal world shape identity, personhood, and politics/ethics? This course draws on theoretical approaches across critical race, disability, feminist, queer, and science and technology studies to unearth taken for granted assumptions about who/what bodies are and how they become sites of social and political contestation. That is, rather than presume bodies to be material artifacts, symbolic representations, or disciplined subjects, we will attend to the processes and relations through which bodies are made, unmade, and remade under particular configurations of power. We will pay specific attention to ethnographic approaches to marked bodies/ embodiment and draw on a range of texts, images, films, and podcasts across anthropology and cognate fields. In the process, you will develop a critical understanding of what is at stake in various approaches to thinking through bodies and a greater awareness of the possibilities that cohere in your own embodied self.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100 or consent of instructor.

ANSO 339 - Culture, Identity and Politics in Caribbean Society (4 Credit Hours)

This course focuses on the social, cultural and political life of the Caribbean area, especially the English and French speaking areas. A fragmented group of nations decidedly on the periphery of the global economy, the Caribbean was once one of the richest areas of the world. Its riches then depended on the labor of enslaved Africans; the fruits of the plantation economy were enjoyed mainly by European planters. What is the legacy of such a history? We review the variety of Caribbean policies, from the strong democratic traditions of Jamaica to the autocratic rulers of Haiti, and explore how the Caribbean's unique combination of cultural influences affect the political processes, ways of life, class divisions and ethnic stratification evident in the Caribbean today.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 343 - Demography of Africa (4 Credit Hours)

In this course, we begin by reviewing current literature to clearly define the term, Demography. Next, we examine the demographic processes of population change in the continent of Africa. Demographic processes include mortality, fertility and migration. In addition, we explore patterns of urbanization, economic development and educational attainment. We analyze survey data from the African Census Analysis Project and Demographic Health Survey. Upon completion, you should be familiar with a variety of demographic processes that allow an examination of interesting demographic, social and anthropological questions.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 345 - Special Topics (4 Credit Hours)

Special topics offered at an advanced level not covered in regular courses.

ANSO 348 - Semiotic Anthropology (4 Credit Hours)

This course is an introduction to semiotic anthropology. Semiotic is the study of signs and representation, the study of how meaning works. This course will cover the basic aspects of semiotic theory focusing primarily on the semiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce. As an anthropology course, we will study human meaning and human semiosis in our cultural, empirical world. We will explore issues of meaning and material culture, language and linguistic practices, the boundaries of 'human being', and racial, ethnic and gender identity formations in various communities throughout the world. And we will explore the semiosis of these topics through cultural practices ourselves, including some combination of the following: horseback riding, museum visits and artefact analysis, clothing and fashion, playing soccer, attending a sporting match, and musical performance.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 350 - Field Research Methods (4 Credit Hours)

This course provides experience in the design and implementation of field research. In addition to techniques of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data, we examine the history of social research, ethical questions involved in field research, and the theoretical assumptions on which various research strategies are based. Students will construct and implement research designs using field research techniques including ethnography, participant observation, and content analysis. Quantitative analysis including descriptive statistics will be included. Required of majors. ANSO 350 and ANSO 351 may be taken in any order.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 351 - Survey Research Methods (4 Credit Hours)

This course provides experience in the design and implementation of sociocultural research. In addition to techniques of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data, we examine epistemological issues that underlie social research, ethical questions involved in research, and the theoretical assumptions on which various research strategies are based. Students will construct and implement research designs using survey research and secondary data analysis. Quantitative analysis, including descriptive and inferential statistics, analysis of variance, and simple regression will be included. Required of majors. ANSO 350 and ANSO 351 may be taken in any order.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100.

ANSO 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)**ANSO 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****ANSO 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****ANSO 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****ANSO 371 - Kindness in Unsettled Times (4 Credit Hours)**

Kindness has captured the popular imagination as an important moral imperative and generalized behavior instruction, with elicitations to "be kind" characterizing brands, talk shows, and classrooms in efforts ranging from business success to anti-bullying. However, what kindness means varies over time, place, and across people. In this course we will examine social science research about kindness, thinking about how we can define, measure, and understand kindness. We will engage with scholars to ask what kindness is, but also whether and why it is important for trust, well-being, and development. We will take a sociological approach, looking at kindness in context: for example, how do different situations, cultural scripts, inequalities, and identities shape understandings of kindness? We will focus on how uncertainty is related to kindness, and how kindness may manifest differently during "unsettled" times of social change.

ANSO 399 - Advanced Topics in Anthropology (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

ANSO 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**ANSO 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)****ANSO 460 - Senior Research Seminar (4 Credit Hours)**

An integrative course designed to be a culmination of students' work in the major. This course focuses on the design and completion of semester-long research projects by senior majors. The course will provide the basis for reflection about the nature and importance of anthropology and sociology as disciplines and in relation to our role as researchers and citizens. Required of Senior Majors.