

ANTHROPOLOGY

Mission Statement

Straddling the humanities and social sciences, anthropology critically examines the complexity of human and nonhuman life across a range of field sites. Anthropologists conduct fieldwork to better understand concepts like culture, history, and power. In doing so, we make the strange familiar and the familiar strange. The anthropologists at Denison use ethnographic, archival, and archaeological research methods to understand complex phenomena in the past and present ranging from religion, semiotics, and cross-cultural healing systems to translation, human rights, and processes of "globalization." We teach and support our students with the aim that they will be able to craft solutions for enduring and emerging problems facing humans and our planet.

The Department of Anthropology at Denison has faculty who specialize in archaeology and cultural anthropology, as well as in medical and semiotic anthropology.

Faculty

Associate Professor and Chair Veerendra P. Lele

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

Visiting Assistant Professor Celia Tuchman-Rosta

Academic Administrative Assistant

Nancy Welu

Anthropology Major

Code	Title
A major in Anthropology must complete five core courses:	
ANTH 101	Introduction to Anthropology
ANTH 201	History of Anthropological Thought (by end of sophomore year)
ANTH 301	Ethnographic Methods (by end of junior year)
ANTH 202 or ANTH 203	Human Origins & Prehistory (any class year) Introduction to Archaeology
ANTH 401	Senior Capstone Seminar
And five (5) electives of which three (3) must be at the 300 level.	
10 Courses Total	

Anthropology Minor

Code	Title
ANTH 101	Introduction to Anthropology
ANTH 201	History of Anthropological Thought
ANTH 202 or ANTH 203 or ANTH 301	Human Origins & Prehistory Introduction to Archaeology Ethnographic Methods
And three (3) Anthropology electives (at least one of which must be at the 300 level)	
6 Courses Total	

Courses

ANTH 101 - Introduction to Anthropology (4 Credit Hours)

Anthropology, defined broadly, is the study of human being. This begs the question: what does it mean to be human? This course introduces students to how anthropologists study being human in both the past and present. As many have said, the goal of anthropology is to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange. We will do this by examining our evolutionary development as a species, the material archaeological record, language and linguistic practices, and human culture. This course will introduce you to anthropology not just as an academic discipline, but also as a way of understanding our place in the world, or, indeed, a way of being in the world.

ANTH 199 - Introductory Topics in Anthropology (1-4 Credit Hours)

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

ANTH 201 - History of Anthropological Thought (4 Credit Hours)

This course introduces students to a history of anthropological ideas, and also to a 'genealogy': a critical overview of concepts that have contributed to the shaping of the discipline of anthropology in its current formation. Beginning with antecedents in classical works describing people and cultures, we will then read and discuss modern ideas in the 19th and 20th centuries when the field of anthropology takes on more recognizable shape, and then consider some of the most recent theories including such things as multispecies ethnography. The ambition of this course is to immerse students in the long conversation (including debates and discontinuities) of anthropology, and to provide students with a foundation for engaging directly with the most current research and knowledge in the field.

Prerequisite(s): ANTH 101, or consent of instructor.

ANTH 202 - Human Origins & 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.

ANTH 203 - 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.

ANTH 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.

ANTH 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.

ANTH 245 - Studies in Anthropology (4 Credit Hours)

Special topics in Anthropology.

ANTH 299 - Intermediate Topics in Anthropology (1-4 Credit Hours)

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

ANTH 301 - Ethnographic Methods (4 Credit Hours)

This course offers an overview of ethnography as a method of knowledge production characterized by intensive field research and as a genre of writing in anthropology. It will enable students to develop a deeper understanding of how anthropologists design, conduct, and analyze their research, as well as how they go about presenting their work to various audiences. The course will especially consider how relations of power shape the discipline and account for its trajectory.

Prerequisite(s): ANTH 101 and ANTH 201, or consent of instructor.

ANTH 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): ANTH 100.

ANTH 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): ANTH 100.

ANTH 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): ANTH 100.

ANTH 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): ANTH 100.

ANTH 345 - Special Topics (4 Credit Hours)

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

ANTH 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): ANTH 100.

ANTH 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Directed Studies are undertaken at the initiative of the student and may involve any topic acceptable to the student and an instructor.

ANTH 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Directed Studies are undertaken at the initiative of the student and may involve any topic acceptable to the student and an instructor.

ANTH 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Independent Study in Anthropology.

ANTH 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Independent study in Anthropology.

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

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

ANTH 401 - Senior Capstone Seminar (4 Credit Hours)

This course is designed to help students synthesize and sharpen their anthropological thinking around a theme envisioned by the instructor. Over the course of the semester, students will build upon knowledge and skills acquired through coursework in the major to develop a major research proposal. It will also provide opportunities for reflection on the development and ongoing relevance of anthropology as a discipline for us as scholars and citizens. Required of all senior majors.

Prerequisite(s): ANTH 101, ANTH 201, ANTH 301.

ANTH 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)

Research in selected topics in Anthropology.

ANTH 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)

Research in selected topics in Anthropology.