Anthropology

The anthropology major and minor are administered by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology: Professors Battaglia, Lass, Morgan, Roth; Assistant Professor Babul (on leave 2015-16); and Five College Assistant Professors, Klarich and Aulino.

Overview

Anthropology at Mount Holyoke College is devoted to the study of human cultural diversity through time and around the world. The approach is cross-cultural, the perspective non-ethnocentric. The analytic tools will help students make sense of the human condition no matter how familiar or foreign it may seem. Our courses are designed to expose students to a variety of cultures and introduce them to the different topics, theories, and methods of the discipline of anthropology.

Contact Info

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Requirements for the Major

Credits

- A minimum of 32 credits in anthropology
- 12 credits at the 300 level

Courses

- 105, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- 235, Development of Anthropological Thought (Sociology 223, Development of Social Thought)
- 275, Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology
- 350, Issues in Contemporary Anthropological Theory
- One cultural area course

The cultural area requirement can be fulfilled in various ways:

1) An area course in anthropology
2) Studies abroad
3) Foreign language through two semesters at the intermediate level
4) An area course in another discipline

Only Option 1 (area course in anthropology) provides academic credit towards the major. The others satisfy the cultural area requirement and perhaps credit towards graduation but not credit towards the 32 required for the major. Discuss your options in advance with your advisor to be sure credit will transfer.

Note: Anthropology 295 or 395 do not count toward the requirements of courses in the major at the 200 and 300 level.

Requirements for the Minor

Credits

- A minimum of 20 credits in anthropology, including:
  - 105, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
  - 4 credits at the 300 level (cannot be fulfilled by 395)
  - 12 additional credits above the 100 level

Course Offerings

ANTHR-105 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
Fall and Spring
Introduces the analysis of cultural diversity, including concepts, methods, and purposes in interpreting social, economic, political, and belief systems found in human societies.

Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
J. Hamilton, L. Morgan, J. Roth, M. Watson
Credits: 4

ANTHR-204 Anthropology of Modern Japan
Fall
Since the mid-nineteenth century, Americans have viewed Japan as the Orient's most exotic and mysterious recess, alternately enticing and frightening in its difference. Intense economic relations and cultural exchange between Japan and the U.S. have not dispelled the image of Japanese society and culture as fundamentally different from our own. In this course, we will strive for greater understanding of shared experiences as well as historical particularities. Issues covered may vary from one semester to another, but frequently focus on work, women, minorities, and popular culture. Films and anthropological works provide ethnographic examples of some key concepts.

Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
J. Roth
Credits: 4

ANTHR-212 Shopping and Swapping: Cultures of Consumption and Exchange
Spring
We shop for our food, for our clothes, for our colleges. We purchase cars, manicures, and vacations. It seems that there is little that cannot be bought or sold. But we also give and receive gifts, exchange favors, 'go dutch' in restaurants, and invite friends for potlucks. This course examines exchange systems cross-culturally, in order to understand their cultural significance and social consequences. It explores how our own commodity exchange system, which appears to be no more than an efficient means of distributing goods and services, in fact contains intriguing symbolic dimensions similar to the gift exchange systems of Native North America, Melanesia, and Africa.

Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
J. Roth
Prereq: Anthropology 105.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-216 Issues in Anthropology

ANTHR-216CA Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Collecting the Past: Art and Artifacts of the Ancient Americas'
Fall
Early European explorers, modern travelers, collectors, curators, and archaeologists have contributed to the development of ancient Latin American collections in museums across the globe. This course traces the history of these collecting practices and uses recent case studies to demonstrate how museums negotiate--successfully and unsuccessfully--the competing interests of scholars, donors, local communities, and international law. Students will learn how archaeologists study a variety of artifact types within museum collections and will have the opportunity to conduct independent research projects using pre-Columbian pottery collections from the Mount Holyoke Art Museum.

Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
E. Klarich
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors
Prereq: One course in archaeology, anthropology, history of Latin America, museum studies, or art history.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-216HP Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Feminist Health Politics'
Fall
Health is about bodies, selves and politics. We will explore a series of health topics from feminist perspectives. How do gender, sexuality, class, disability, and age influence the ways in which one perceives and experiences health and the access one has to health information and health care? Are heteronormativity, cissexism, or one's place of living related to one's health status or one's health risk? By paying close attention to the relationships between community-based narratives, activities of health networks and organizations and theory, we will develop a solid understanding of the historical, political and cultural specificities of health issues, practices, services and movements.
Crosslisted as: Gender Studies 241HP
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
J. Luce
Credits: 4

ANTHR-216MA Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Maya Ethnography'
Fall
Maya culture has long attracted the attention of travel writers, tourists, and anthropologists. This course introduces students to historical and contemporary patterns of Maya culture through careful analysis of ethnographic texts. We will read Maya cultural formations against the historical backdrop of colonial and postcolonial Latin American history, from Spanish colonialism through the Guatemalan civil war and into the present. Discussions will cover the content of ethnographic accounts as well as the institutional and disciplinary contexts of research. The course will pay particular attention to Maya history and cosmology as intertwined fields of cultural knowledge and practice.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
M. Watson
Prereq: Anthropology 105.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-222 Making Class Visible
Spring
This course examines questions of social class within the Mount Holyoke community, at critical intersections with race, gender, and disability. Drawing upon readings in anthropology and film studies that critique the notion of a homogeneous 'community' and offer alternative theoretical models, students will focus reflexively on three projects: the co-production of an ethnographic film, the creation of an advertising campaign for the film, creation of a website, for extending the conversation about class. Among the questions we explore at all three sites are: What is your idea of work? Where and when do you notice class? Is class a topic of conversation and/or storytelling in your family?
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
D. Battaglia
Prereq: Anthropology 105.
Notes: 1 meeting plus screenings and production time to be arranged
Credits: 4

ANTHR-230 Language in Culture & Society
Fall
Every society is held together by systems of interpersonal and institutional communication. This course examines the nature of communication codes, including those based on language (speaking and writing) and those based on visual images (art, advertising, television). To understand communication in its social and historical dimensions, we study the psychological and cultural impact of media revolutions and then look at ways communication systems manipulate individual consciousness. Illustrative examples are drawn from Western and non-Western societies.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
A. Lass
Prereq: Anthropology 105.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-235 Development of Anthropological Thought
Spring
This course will review the key issues and paradigm shifts in the development of anthropology from its foundations in classical thought through its emergence as an independent discipline to its coming-of-age in the 1960s. The readings will include works from the American, British, and Continental traditions.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive; Writing-Intensive
A. Lass
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors
Prereq: 8 credits in Anthropology.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-240 Medical Anthropology
Fall
Biocultural aspects of disease and healing are examined through case studies of nonindustrialized societies, including the relationship between malaria and sickle cell anemia in West Africa and ritual cannibalism, AIDS, and a degenerative nervous-system disorder (kuru) in highland New Guinea. This course surveys the cultural construction of suffering and healing, the medicalization of human social problems, and inequities in the distribution of disease and therapy.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
L. Morgan
Prereq: Anthropology 105.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-245 Global Health and Humanitarianism
Spring
This course examines global health disparities and the unequal distribution of disease, focusing on the health consequences of poverty, structural violence, and globalization. In addition, we critically examine the foundations of global humanitarianism and the complexities, constraints, and prospects for working collaboratively across borders to resolve global health problems. Readings will address how global health is constructed and represented, and why humanitarian endeavors (charitable, philanthropic, NGO, religious, etc.) have emerged as the preferred manner of addressing global health problems in the contemporary era.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
L. Morgan
Prereq: Anthropology 105.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-275 Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology
Spring
This course examines anthropological fieldwork techniques, including interviewing and participant observation, as well as qualitative approaches to the analysis of cultural data. Topics include cross-cultural field techniques, research design, ethical dilemmas, and the difference between academic and applied research. Research projects are an integral part of this course.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Community-Based Learning
M. Watson
Restrictions: This course is limited to Anthropology majors.
Credits: 4
ANTHR-295 Independent Study
Fall and Spring
The department
Instructor permission required.
Credits: 1-4
Course can be repeated for credit.

ANTHR-310 Visual Anthropology in the Material World
Spring
In this course we go behind the scenes and behind the screens of anthropological museums, film, television, and publications such as National Geographic Magazine, to explore the social contexts of image production, distribution, and interpretation. Focusing on visual activism and ethics, we consider how popular portrayals of our own society and of others’ both shape and are shaped by hierarchies of value in the material world. Finally, we leave the walls of the classroom to produce home movies of places which others call home - workplaces, temporary shelters, artistic environments, and so forth.
Crosslisted as: Film Studies 320MW
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Community-Based Learning
D. Battaglia
Prereq: Anthropology 105 and 4 additional credits in Anthropology department.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-316 Special Topics in Anthropology

ANTHR-316AR Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Anthropology of Religion'
Spring
Religion counts among anthropology's most central and enduring areas of interest. This course traces a history of anthropological attention to belief and ritual from the nineteenth century to the present. We will read classic and contemporary ethnographic studies of religious systems, covering topics that include spirits and animism, totemism, magic, witchcraft, mythology, taboo, sacrilege, orthodoxy and orthopraxy, religion and modernity, and secularism. The course will scrutinize 'religion' itself as a cultural and analytical category, and it will question how an anthropological perspective alters perceptions of the global politics of religion today.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
M. Watson
Prereq: 8 credits in Anthropology department.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-316EG Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Eggs and Embryos: Innovations in Reproductive and Genetic Technologies'
Fall
This seminar will focus on emerging innovations in the development, use and governance of reproductive and genetic technologies (RGTs). How do novel developments at the interface of fertility treatment and biomedical research raise both new and enduring questions about the "naturalness" of procreation, the politics of queer families, the im/possibilities of disabilities, and transnational citizenship? Who has a say in what can be done and for which purposes? We will engage with ethnographic texts, documentaries, policy statements, citizen science activist projects, and social media in order to closely explore the diversity of perspectives in this field. We will also experiment with "public engagement" activities designed to foster knowledge and conversations about RGTs and the questions and concerns they might raise.
Crosslisted as: Gender Studies 333EG
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
J. Luce
Prereq: 8 credits in gender studies or anthropology.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-316GF Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Gender, Food, and Agriculture in the Global Context'
Not Scheduled for This Year
This course explores the gendered domains of food and agriculture as they unfold within household and community economies in the global south and in G-8 countries. We will examine the place of women in systems of food production, processing, marketing, and consumption. We will address locally regulated markets, cuisines, and peasant farming systems as they interface with international neo-liberal systems of market and trade. We will also pay close attention to emergent women's agricultural cooperatives and unions as they shape new transnational coalitions that offer sustainable (and flourishing) solutions to problems associated with post-industrial agriculture.
Crosslisted as: Gender Studies 333JF
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
C. Heller
Restrictions: This course is open to Juniors and Seniors.
Prereq: 8 credits from Anthropology or Gender Studies or permission.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-316PG Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Who's Involved?: Participatory Governance, Emerging Technologies and Feminism'
Spring
Deep brain stimulation, genome sequencing, regenerative medicine...Exploring practices of 'participatory governance' of emerging technologies, we will examine the formal and informal involvement of citizens, patients, health professionals, scientists and policy makers. What initiatives exist at local, national and transnational levels to foster science literacy? How do lived experiences of nationality, ability, class, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality become visible and/or disappear within constructed frameworks of participatory governance? How can feminist ethnographic research and feminist theory contribute to a larger project of democratizing knowledge production and governance?
Crosslisted as: Gender Studies 333PG
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
J. Luce
Prereq: 8 credits in gender studies or anthropology.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-316SP Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Space, Place, and Way-finding'
Spring
What makes a home feel like home? What makes a neighborhood feel alive and vibrant? Architects and urban planners develop elaborate designs meant for specific kinds of human uses, and yet we find that people often use spaces for purposes quite different from those that planners intended. In this course, we will explore the ways in which people dwell in the abstract spaces of planners, turning them into inhabited places. We will also explore the ways that people navigate through and between these spaces that have been compartmentalized into politically and socially bounded units. A variety of theoretical perspectives will be applied in diverse cultural cases to better understand the ways in which peoples inhabit the world.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
J. Roth
Prereq: 8 credits in Anthropology department.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-331 Anthropology and Sexualities
Fall
This seminar focuses on contemporary anthropological scholarship concerned with the varieties of sexual expression in diverse cultural settings. We will read ethnographic accounts of sexual ideologies and the politics and practices of sexuality in Brazil, Japan, Native North America, India, and elsewhere. We will examine anthropological theories of sexuality with an emphasis on contemporary
issues, including performance theory, 'third gender' theories, sexual identity formulation, and techniques used by various societies to discipline the body.

Crosslisted as: Gender Studies 333AS
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
L. Morgan
Prereq: 8 credits in Anthropology, Gender Studies, or a combination of the two.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-334 Memory, History & Forgetting
Spring
In this seminar we question the distinction between myth and history and consider the relationship of historical consciousness to memory, forgetting, and other types of temporal awareness. We then examine the relationships among literacy, art, nationalism, and the invention of tradition and test the limits of ethnohistory. Finally, we look at the ways in which relics, museums, and tourism have all helped make history—as fact, experience, or commodity—possible.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive; Writing-Intensive
A. Lass
Credits: 4

ANTHR-346 Identities/Differences: Anthropological Perspectives
Fall
This course examines notions of person and self across cultures, with specific reference to the social construction and experience of cultural identities. Discussions focus on issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and the values of individuality and relationality in different cultures.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Community-Based Learning
D. Battaglia
Prereq: 8 credits from the anthropology department.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-350 Issues in Contemporary Anthropological Theory
Fall
This course offers an appraisal of the core questions and theoretical frameworks of the past two decades. It covers the relationship of fieldwork to theory building, new trends in anthropological analysis, and critical examinations of the uses and abuses of anthropological data.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive; Writing-Intensive
A. Lass
Restrictions: This course is limited to seniors.
Prereq: 8 credits from the Anthropology department, seniors only.
Credits: 4

ANTHR-395 Independent Study
Fall and Spring
The department
Instructor permission required.
Credits: 1-8
Course can be repeated for credit.