



Career and Graduate School Workshop for Anthropology Students

Monday, November 12
4:15-5:15 PM, LMH 249 (Lab)

Presenters: Drs. Rhoads, Schwartz and Wroblewski

Anthropology Training and Skills Toolkit

In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, anthropology provides students with skills important for a variety of jobs, including the ability to gather and analyze data, sensitivity to human social and biological patterns, and social and cultural flexibility. Anthropology students are well prepared to “think globally, act locally” –essential in the future in most professions.

Anthropology students who are interested in working in the academic world can pursue an M.A. degree (terminal or Ph.D. preparation) and perhaps a Ph.D. in anthropology. Other students may want to pursue graduate education in related fields such as education, social work, business administration, non-profit studies, museum studies, international development, environmental studies, applied language and communication studies, and so on.

Applied Anthropology is a rapidly growing area of employment in the field, working in a variety of settings -- government agencies, non-profit organizations, medical centers, schools, etc. An applied career focuses on organizations that address contemporary social problems through the application of anthropological methods and knowledge.

As an anthropology major, you are a trained observer who knows the importance of collecting data, in listening and watching what others are doing, in reflecting on what has actually as well as apparently occurred, in researching the context, in applying various explanatory models, and in adopting a broad perspective for framing an understanding. You share a particular holistic vision that requires using a repertoire of methods in order to forge a deeper understanding of situations. This holism characterizes the best anthropology and imparts the perspective which is valued by other professionals.

Each subfield is quite specific and shapes your career aspirations, in areas such as forensics, medicine and nursing, media, social work, social care, tourism, business, management, museums, archaeology, law or education. An undergraduate degree in anthropology can provide you with the skills necessary to make any career a successful one.

Skill Toolbox:

- learning and study skills
- written and oral communication and presentation
- logical, analytical and critical skills, problem-solving; constructing an argument, analytical reading, accuracy in interpreting behavior: anthropologists become familiar with the range of behavior in different cultures and learn how to look at cultural causes of behavior before assigning a priori causes.
- ability to gather, assess and interpret data, statistical and computing techniques, supplement statistical findings with descriptive data gathered through participant observation, interviewing, and ethnographic study; careful record-keeping, attention to details, using a range of social, behavioral, biological and other scientific research methods
- simplifying information, anthropologists learn how to simplify technical information for communication to non-technical people
- time management, organizing and planning
- discussion and group work skills, collaboration
- high level of cultural awareness and sensitivity, cross-cultural communication, multiculturalism, social ease in strange situations, cultural relativism - viewing other cultures from their own internal perspective, anthropologists learn the importance of events and conditions that cause people to do things differently
- social agility, cultural competence, anthropologists know that they don't know – and how to find out; anthropologists learn how to find patterns in the behavior of a cultural group, allowing generalizations about their behavior and predictions about what they might do in a given situation; in an unfamiliar social or career-related setting, anthropologists learn to size up the social rules, thereby becoming accepted more quickly than without anthropological training
- contextualizing, anthropologists pay attention to details, but also learn that any detail might not be as important as its cultural context, and can even be misleading when context is ignored

You can build your own skill toolbox from the curriculum you design and from your high-impact experiences, such as the field school, internships, study abroad, etc. You should work closely with your anthropology adviser and other faculty to design a skills strategy and to build intellectual and marketable assets. For example, in curriculum planning you can choose General Education courses based on the skills you can obtain. Many courses may satisfy both general education requirements and major requirements; others can provide you with skills that are important to the major, such as Statistics (STA 215), which is a required prereq for ANT 300. Other courses emphasizing language/communication and writing are valuable to anthropology students, as well as science/lab courses and getting good critical thinking skills.

Are you interested in working after your B.A.?

You will not open the local newspaper and find a job advertisement that says “Anthropologist Wanted.” Instead, you can market yourself in a variety of fields by highlighting your mastery of relevant and important skills, such as the ones listed above. One of the most important are the sensitivity to cultural diversity and cross-cultural communication, which are at the core values of anthropology. This is relevant in most work situations today.

Resources:

You can find more information about a career in Anthropology at our GVSU Anthropology Website, and at the following sites:

American Anthropological Association - Careers in Anthropology
(<http://www.aaanet.org/profdev/careers>)

American Anthropological Association - For Students
(<http://www.aaanet.org/resources/students/>)

AAA info on what to do with an anthropology degree
(http://www.aaanet.org/resources/students/ant_hrodegree.cfm)

Frequently Asked Questions about Careers in Archaeology
(<http://www.museum.state.il.us/ismdepts/anthro/dlcfaq.html>)

Non-academic Careers in Physical Anthropology
(<http://weber.ucsd.edu/~jmoore/bioanthro/brochure2.html>)

Training for a Career in Applied Anthropology
(<http://www.practicinganthropology.org/training>)

“What to do with a degree in anthropology - Anthropology graduates enter a variety of professions and their employability will no doubt increase as the world becomes ever more globalized” by Craig Scott, *The Guardian* (Friday 20 August 2010)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/aug/21/anthropology-degree-career-options>

Essay on the usefulness of anthro B.A. In today's job market, with video testimonials:
(<http://artscience.nku.edu/departments/sapdept/anthropology/careers-in-anthropology.html>)

Jobs in Archaeology website
(<http://people.tamu.edu/~dcarlson/faq/index.html>)

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook (2012-2013)
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/anthropologists-and-archeologists.htm>

Book on Careers in Anthropology:

- Briller, S. H., & Goldmacher, A. (2009) Designing an Anthropology Career: Professional Development Exercises. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. (Used in Ant 495) . (GVSU e-book: (<http://gvsu.summon.serialssolutions.com/search?s.q=designing+an+anthropology+career>)
- Camenson, Blythe (2005) Great Jobs for Anthropology Majors, 2nd ed. (GVSU e-book) McGraw-Hill Professional. (<http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/ehost/detail?sid=28c5fc93-6f3d-4041-bb30-46bb8352bc27%40sessionmgr115&vid=1&hid=125&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSzzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=nlebk&AN=135369>)
- Flatman, Joe (2011) Becoming an Archaeologist: A Guide to Professional Pathways. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9780521734691 (Zumberge CC107 .F53 2011)
"Becoming an Archaeologist: A Guide to Professional Pathways is an engaging handbook on career paths in the area of archaeology. It outlines in straightforward fashion the entire process of getting a job in archaeology, including the various options; the training that is required; and how to get positions in the academic, commercial, and government worlds. It also includes discussion of careers in related heritage professions such as museums and conservation societies. The book includes a series of interviews with real archaeologists, all young professionals who began their careers within the last ten years. These insider guides offer essential tips on how they got their first job and progressed in their careers. Written in an accessible style, the book is essential reading for anyone interested in the realities of archaeology in the 21st century"
- Guerrón-Montero, Carla (2008). Careers in Applied Anthropology in the 21st Century: Perspectives from Academics and Practitioners. (GVSU e-book) Malden, MA: Blackwell. (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/doi/10.1111/j.1556-4797.2008.00001.x/abstract>)
- Gwynne, Margaret A. (2003) Anthropology Career Resources Handbook. Allyn and Bacon. (Zumberge GN397.5 .G993 2003)
- Institute for Career Research. (2007) Careers in Anthropology, Archaeology. (GVSU e-book) Chicago: Institute for Career Research.
- Nolan, Riall W. (2003) Anthropology in Practice: Building a Career Outside the Academy (Directions in Applied Anthropology). Lynne Rienner. (GVSU e-book)
- Omohundro, John (2002) Careers in Anthropology. McGraw-Hill. (Zumberge GN41.8 .C37)
- Sabloff, Paula L. (2009) Careers in Anthropology :Profiles of Practitioner Anthropologists (GVSU e-book). Ebooks Corporation
- Stephens, W. Richard (2002) Careers in Anthropology: What an Anthropology Degree Can Do for You. Allyn and Bacon. (Zumberge GN 41.8 .C37)
- Strang, Veronica and Blue Powell (2009) What Anthropologists Do. Berg Publishers. ISBN 9781845203542. (GVSU e-book)

Are You Interested in Attending Graduate School?

(Excerpted from the “Advising Handbook” at the Department of Anthropology, UNC-Charlotte)

If you are interested in attending graduate school in anthropology or another field, you should be aware that graduate school is very different from undergraduate programs. In graduate school, there is virtually no hand-holding by the faculty: you must learn independently. Almost all courses are seminars with intensive reading lists, expectations for all students to participate in discussion in a thoughtful manner, and requirements for independent research. All courses are “writing-intensive.”

To earn a M.A. in anthropology takes between 2 and 4 years, while to earn a Ph.D. takes between 6 and 8 years, and sometimes longer. Many undergraduate students think they want to become professors, but they usually do not understand either the time it takes to get the appropriate credentials, nor all the responsibilities of the job, nor the difficulties of the job market. So, if you decide to go forward toward a Ph.D., be sure that you are doing it because you love anthropology. If you decide on an M.A., you will probably focus on employment outside of the academy in applied anthropology.

To be successful in applying for graduate school, you will need to have a GPA over 3.0, scores on the GRE exams over 550 (at the least) on each section, good letters of reference, and a focused and well-written personal statement. For some programs, your credentials must be significantly higher than those outlined above. You will have to convince the admissions committees that you (a) already have the academic skills to be successful in graduate education; (b) have a focused and well thought-out interest in one specific area of anthropology; and (c) have interests that fit well with the faculty of the particular graduate program.

Therefore, you need to investigate graduate programs before applying. If your grades are not adequate, you should consider becoming a “post-baccalaureate” student and taking some more advanced undergraduate courses in a field or fields related to your graduate interest; if you can get excellent grades in those courses, this may outweigh your earlier lower GPA in graduate applications.

A good source of information about graduate school in anthropology, complete with examples of applications and discussions of the pros and cons of graduate school, can be found at: <http://online.sfsu.edu/~mgriffin/consider.html>. Another useful web page is: <http://graduate-school.phds.org/>. At this page, you can find out rankings of different anthropology graduate programs in relation to different features that may be important to you, such as size of program, amount of research support, etc.