

3 Most Frequently Asked Questions regarding ANTHROPOLOGY as a major:

1. What is anthropology, anyway?

Anthropology is the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities. Anthropologists rely on the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities to investigate our subject matter: human culture both present and past. Anthropology is divided into 4 sub-disciplines:

a) Physical or Biological Anthropology is the study of human and non-human primate variation within an evolutionary framework. Physical anthropologists study human evolution, evolutionary anatomy, primatology, forensics, medical anthropology, and more. Jane Goodall, a primatologist, worked with the Gombe chimps in Tanzania, whereas Paul Farmer, a medical anthropologist and M.D., founded the well-known human rights foundation, Partners in Health; medical anthropology clearly draws from both the biological and cultural sub-disciplines. The TV show *Bones* is based on the fiction writing of Kathy Reichs, a forensic anthropologist.

b) Archaeology is the examination of material remains left by humans in the past. These remains range from the monumental pyramids of Egypt to Native American architecture at Mesa Verde in Colorado; they also include simple hearths and tool-making debris left at the campsites of our earliest ancestors as they colonized the globe over 50,000 years ago. Famous archaeologists of the past include Howard Carter, who discovered King Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt. More recently, Meg Conkey of UC-Berkeley challenged archaeologists to investigate gender in prehistory through innovative contextual analysis.

c) Cultural or Socio-Cultural Anthropology is the study of people living today. Cultural anthropologists have traditionally studied "exotic tribes" such as the indigenous people of Papua New Guinea, but today the field is by no means limited to such groups. Contemporary anthropologists might study immigrant communities, such as Burmese and Somali refugees in Greeley, or hip-hop music culture adopted by middle class teenagers in the United States. Cultural anthropologists examine culture change, global development, sex and gender, religion, health and healing, and a variety of other areas. Margaret Mead, Franz Boas, and Claude Levi-Strauss were cultural anthropologists.

d) Linguistic Anthropology explores the relationships between language, culture, and social life, including how the ways we speak allow us to convey aspects of our identities and social memberships; how we learn to convey cultural meaning through language, and the ways in which languages and styles of speaking morph over time. We do not currently offer a linguistics course at UNC, but we infuse linguistics into all of our classes. Deborah Tannen (*You Just Don't Understand; That's Not What I Meant*) is a linguistic anthropologist.

2. What can I do with this degree?

If you can dream it, Anthropology is the major for you. Medical Anthropology (physical and cultural anthropology) and Cultural Resource Management (Archaeology) are the fastest growing areas in employment in Anthropology. Students with Anthropology degrees find work in museums, government, education, and the private sector.

3. Why should I study Anthropology at UNC?

The UNC Anthropology Department provides a small-school feel in a mid-sized research university. Upper division courses are small, facilitating close interactions between students and professors. We challenge students to find their voice and their interest, and we mentor them as they mature and grow.

UNC Anthropology's Mission statement is as follows: We seek to make sense of the human world and also engage with others to solve complicated social and environmental problems. We cross cultural boundaries, examine the archaeological record, investigate our primate and hominid past, and question what the future holds. We guide students in applying cultural anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and physical anthropology as professionals and scholars in a collaborative environment.

We have a unique major which allows students to tailor their major to their area(s) of interest and/or career aspirations; it is applied (hands-on), practical, fun, and fascinating.