

# ANTHROPOLOGY, MA

The Department of Anthropology has offered an award-winning master's degree program since the early 1950s. This is a research degree offered in all four fields of anthropology. Anthropology seeks to understand the nature and origins of human diversity. The preferred approach is holistic of humanity. The discipline draws freely from other fields of study in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. A four-field approach is taken in the MA program, embracing archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and sociocultural anthropology.

With strong training in research methods, application, and theory, our MA program is appropriate both for students intending to continue on the PhD, and for those who will enter careers that require only the master's. For this reason, we do not consider our program a "terminal master's degree." Roughly half of the student admitted into our PhD program each year are graduates of our own MA program.

Upon initial contact, the Department provides a faculty sponsor for each incoming student. This faculty member will become the student's provisional advisor until a faculty member willing to serve as permanent advisor is identified. Students will initially pursue their curriculum under the guidance of this advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. There are a number of general requirements that all students must fulfill to earn the MA degree.

## Admissions

The department of Anthropology only accepts applicants for the fall semester. The deadline for applications to the Anthropology MA program is January 15. Applications must be received prior to January 15 for admission the subsequent fall semester. The earlier the application is received, the more likely it is that financial aid can be awarded.

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission an application must include:

1. A statement of purpose that outlines, identifies, and explains the following:
  - One personal and one professional goal and how it relates to anthropology
  - Why the UA Anthropology program is best suited to help applicants achieve those goals
  - Two UA Anthropology faculty members who are suited to mentor the applicants
  - Any gaps or inconsistencies in the applicant's academic record (it is acceptable to have them, but they should be explained)
2. Three (3) letters of recommendation from individuals (typically professors) who are in a position to evaluate the applicant's academic potential to achieve the outlined goals

Students may submit additional supporting materials (e.g., a curriculum vita, writing sample) if they wish. These are highly recommended.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

## Curricular Requirements

For the MA degree, each student must complete a minimum of 36 credit hours in courses numbered 500 or above. This includes five required courses: ANT 600 Research Design, ANT 641 Culture, ANT 670 Prin Biological Anthropology, ANT 501 Linguistic Anthropology, and ANT 625 Survey History Archaeology. ANT 600 Research Design, ANT 641 Culture, and at least one additional core seminar must be completed during the first year. The goal of these required courses is to establish

a foundation of knowledge in all four subfields of the discipline and in basic research design. For students completing Plan I, during the second year in residence, the student must enroll in at least 6 hours of ANT 599 Thesis Research. The purpose of this coursework is to provide a structure for supervised contact hours with the student's faculty advisor. Such coursework, including the decision as to the number of contact hours required, must be pre-arranged in consultation with the faculty advisor. Without special prior approval of the student's advisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies, ANT 598 Individ Investigations will not count toward the required hours.

## Plan I: Thesis Track

Code and Title		Hours
<b>Research Design</b>		<b>3</b>
ANT 600	Research Design	3
<b>Subfield Cores</b>		<b>12</b>
Take each of the following courses:		
ANT 501	Linguistic Anthropology	
ANT 625	Survey History Archaeology	
ANT 641	Culture	
ANT 670	Prin Biological Anthropology	
<b>Thesis Hours</b>		<b>6</b>
ANT 599	Thesis Research	6
<b>Electives Courses</b>		<b>15</b>
All master's students must take at least five elective courses at the 500 level or above, typically in the Department of Anthropology. The sample courses listed below do not represent an exhaustive list. Furthermore, students may count relevant courses outside the Department with explicit prior approval of the student's primary advisor and Director of Graduate Studies.		
ANT 502	Health Inequities	
ANT 505	Culture, Mind, and Behavior	
ANT 506	Biocultural Bodies	
ANT 509	Ancient Maya Civilizations	
ANT 510	Ethnography of Communication	
ANT 511	Culture Health & Healing	
ANT 512	Anthropology of Europe	
ANT 514	Anthropology of Africa	
ANT 521	Ethnography	
ANT 522	Archaeological Ethics	
ANT 523	Legal Anthropology	
ANT 525	GIS for Archaeologists	
ANT 526	Arch East North Amer	
ANT 527	Radiocarbon for Archaeologists	
ANT 528	Analytical Archaeology	
ANT 534	Archaeology of Food	
ANT 538	Anthropology of Art	
ANT 543	Adv Field Archaeology	
ANT 544	Anthropology And Cemeteries	
ANT 545	Historical Archaeology	
ANT 550	Probs In Anthropology	
ANT 562	Ancient Andean Civilizations	

ANT 564	Paleoethnobotany
ANT 571	Fossil Humans and Evolution
ANT 573	Human Osteology
ANT 574	Neuroanthropology
ANT 575	The Plastic Human
ANT 576	Nutritional Anthropology
ANT 578	Anthro of Human Development
ANT 579	Human Paelopathology
ANT 581	Anthropology is Elemental
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>36</b>

## Plan II: Non-Thesis Track

Code and Title	Hours
<b>Research Design</b>	<b>3</b>
ANT 600 Research Design	3
<b>Subfield Cores</b>	<b>12</b>
Take each of the following courses:	
ANT 501 Linguistic Anthropology	
ANT 625 Survey History Archaeology	
ANT 641 Culture	
ANT 670 Prin Biological Anthropology	
<b>Elective Courses</b>	<b>21</b>

All master's students must take at least seven elective courses at the 500 level or above, typically in the Department of Anthropology. The sample courses listed below do not represent an exhaustive list. Furthermore, students may count relevant courses outside the Department with explicit prior approval of the student's primary advisor and Director of Graduate Studies.

ANT 502	Health Inequities
ANT 505	Culture, Mind, and Behavior
ANT 506	Biocultural Bodies
ANT 509	Ancient Maya Civilizations
ANT 510	Ethnography of Communication
ANT 511	Culture Health & Healing
ANT 512	Anthropology of Europe
ANT 514	Anthropology of Africa
ANT 521	Ethnography
ANT 522	Archaeological Ethics
ANT 523	Legal Anthropology
ANT 525	GIS for Archaeologists
ANT 526	Arch East North Amer
ANT 527	Radiocarbon for Archaeologists
ANT 528	Analytical Archaeology
ANT 534	Archaeology of Food
ANT 538	Anthropology of Art
ANT 543	Adv Field Archaeology
ANT 544	Anthropology And Cemeteries
ANT 545	Historical Archaeology
ANT 550	Probs In Anthropology
ANT 562	Ancient Andean Civilizations
ANT 564	Paleoethnobotany
ANT 571	Fossil Humans and Evolution
ANT 573	Human Osteology

ANT 574	Neuroanthropology
ANT 575	The Plastic Human
ANT 576	Nutritional Anthropology
ANT 578	Anthro of Human Development
ANT 579	Human Paelopathology
ANT 581	Anthropology is Elemental
Total Hours	36

\*ANT 599 Thesis Research will not count towards the MA if a student switches to the non-thesis (Plan II) degree option.

## Dual Degree in Biocultural Health Promotion (MA/MPH)

In conjunction with the Department of Health Science in the College of Human Environmental Sciences, we offer an MA in Anthropology / Master of Public Health dual degree program. This program blends excellent graduate education in biocultural medical anthropology with rigorous, applied preparation in public health education and promotion. We produce graduates versed in assessment of and engagement with health as a biocultural phenomenon, and trained to engage multiple levels of the social ecology of health. Admission to both the Anthropology MA and the Health Education & Promotion MPH programs are required to pursue the dual degree.

For additional details regarding dual degree program requirements, please see the Health Education & Promotion MPH catalog entry.

## Transfer Credit

Graduate School information on Transfer Credit.

## Accelerated Master's Program

Graduate School information on the Accelerated Master's Program.

## Comprehensive Exam / Capstone

### Plan I - Thesis Capstone Requirement

Students completing their MA requirements under Plan I must present and orally defend their thesis to their entire committee. Additionally, students are expected give a public presentation based on the results of their research. These two requirements may be completed jointly or separately. The formal defense can be open or closed to the public at the discretion of the student and advisor.

### Plan II - Non-thesis Capstone Requirement

Students completing their MA requirements under Plan II must submit a portfolio and capstone essay by April 1 of their second year. The portfolio will include assignments from each of the four required core classes and the required research design course (ANT 600). The capstone essay should address the value of four-field anthropology in relation to the student's future vocational goals and as learned in their core courses, drawing on (and citing) readings assigned in those courses. Essays will be read by the entire faculty and must be deemed satisfactory by a majority in order to pass. If a capstone essay is not deemed satisfactory by the faculty, the student will have until August 15 to rewrite. If the student cannot produce a satisfactory essay by August 15, they will be removed from the MA program.

## Plan I - Thesis Process Requirements

Students completing their degree under Plan I are required to conceive and execute a research project under the direction of their MA committee.

By the start of the second semester of academic work, each graduate student will be required to have identified a faculty member willing to

serve as permanent advisor. Students must also name at least two additional faculty members in the Dept. of Anthropology to comprise an MA Committee, which will function as an advisory and research project approval board. The committee must include a representative from at least three of the four subdisciplines of anthropology. Students must also identify an external member of the Graduate Faculty to serve on the thesis committee. Under most circumstances, the external committee member should be chosen from faculty within the University in other departments or divisions. However, under some circumstances, it may be appropriate to invite a faculty member from another university to serve as the outside member. Approval for such action must be obtained in advance from the Director of Graduate Studies, and it is incumbent on the student and their advisor to complete the paperwork necessary to obtain a temporary appointment of the outside member to the Graduate Faculty of the University. In most cases, an outside member from another university should not be an anthropologist. Exceptions to this rule can be granted under compelling circumstances and requires the consent of both the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Committee appointments should be submitted to the Department by February 1 of the student's first year.

Students must submit a completed draft of a research project proposal to their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies by April 1 of the second semester in residence. Students who do not submit a draft thesis proposal by this deadline will be switched to the Plan II Non-thesis track. The thesis proposal must be approved by the thesis committee by the end of the second semester of study. A thesis draft that is approved by the MA advisor must be distributed to the student's committee two weeks before a scheduled defense. The student's advisor will convene the committee as necessary to discuss, refine, and approve the proposal. With the consent of the advisor and committee, the deadline for final approval of the proposal may be extended beyond the second semester of study, to a date no later than October 15 in the third semester of study. If by October 15 the thesis committee has not approved the proposal, the student will automatically be switched to the Plan II Non-thesis track.

With the recommendation of the chair of a student's MA committee, a student may write a Journal-Format Master's Thesis. This is to be a minimum 8,000 word document designed for a specific peer reviewed journal. The student's committee must accept beforehand the decision for the student to write a Journal-Format Master's Thesis and approve the target journal. If the journal accepts fewer words, the student still needs to write 8,000 words, which includes introductory material, references, and appendices. The student can subsequently modify the manuscript to satisfy the journal in question. The Journal-Format Master's Thesis must also follow all Graduate School rules and regulations for a thesis of this type.

Students will work with their advisor to meet deadlines. Under extraordinary circumstances, students can petition the Department of Anthropology Graduate Committee for short extensions.

## Plan II - Non-thesis Process Requirements

Students completing their degree under Plan II are required to complete the curricular requirements, including language / research skill competency, and capstone requirement as outlined above. By the start of the second semester of academic work, each graduate student will be required to have identified a faculty member willing to serve as permanent advisor.

## Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

Graduate School information on Time Limits.

## Student Progress Requirement

All students must make continuous satisfactory progress while enrolled in the Department of Anthropology graduate program. Students should schedule to meet with their advisor at the beginning of each semester to outline goals and objectives for the semester. All students will complete and submit online an annual Graduate Student Activity Report (SAR). The SAR is a checklist of the scheduled requirements for completion of the degree, covers non-degree accomplishments such as papers published or presented, and includes space for a brief written evaluation and expectations for the following year. All students should take this form seriously and must complete this form by March 1.

SAR responses will be shared by the Director of Graduate Studies with the student's advisor. The advisor will review the SAR and rate the student as either 1) exceeds expectations, 2) meets expectations, or 3) fails to meet expectations. Both academic and nonacademic factors will be considered. The student must meet with their advisor to discuss their progress and rating. A signed copy of the SAR and the advisor's evaluation must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair annually by April 1.

Students on assistantships will also receive a review of their progress from their supervisor each semester. The student's progress toward degree completion, advisor's review, and the supervisor's reviews will be considered when making decisions for continuation of assistantship funding.

Advisor Evaluation Criteria:

- **Exceeds Expectations:** The student has an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher, met stated goals and objectives for the year, made satisfactory research progress commensurate with time in the program, completes all research tasks in an ethical manner, follows standard and established research protocols, and has accomplished one or more of the following:
  - a. Presentation of research at an academic meeting (e.g., state, regional, national, international conferences).
  - b. Submission of a research proposal for funding external to the University.
  - c. Received an honor or award reflecting outstanding achievement.
  - d. Submission/acceptance/publication of a research manuscript.
- **Meets Expectations:** The student has an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher, met stated goals and objectives for the semester, made satisfactory research progress commensurate with time in the program, follows standard and established research protocols, and completes all research tasks in an ethical manner.
- **Fails to Meet Expectations:** The student is **NOT** meeting one of the following expectations:
  - a. Maintained a GPA above 3.0
  - b. Met stated goals and objectives for the semester,
  - c. Made satisfactory research progress commensurate with time in the program, or
  - d. Completed all research tasks in an ethical manner.

Students who fail to meet expectations will be placed on probation and have one semester to improve their evaluation to a meets/exceeds expectations rating. If the student fails to improve their rating, the student may be dismissed from the program. The final decision to dismiss a student will be made by the Department Chair, acting on the advice of the advisor and the Department of Anthropology Graduate Studies Committee.

Academic misconduct and non-academic failure are also reasons requiring a student to be deemed to be failing to meet expectations. Depending on the violation, academic misconduct or non-academic failure may result in probation or immediate dismissal from the program.

### • Academic Misconduct

The Department of Anthropology will not tolerate academic misconduct.

Should the Dean or Academic Affairs Officer find the student guilty of Academic Misconduct, the department may review the student's record and dismiss the student from their program of study.

### • Non-Academic Failure

**Definition of Non-academic Failure:** Non-academic failure occurs when a student is dismissed from the program for reasons to do with their ethical or professional conduct rather than academic performance. Examples include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, falsifying data, lying or cheating, acting maliciously against others, serious breaches of collegiality, and violating the principals and codes of conduct of the University of Alabama ([https://graduate.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ua\\_policies\\_chart\\_20170724.pdf](https://graduate.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ua_policies_chart_20170724.pdf)) and the major disciplinary societies, including the American Anthropological Association (<https://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>), the Society for American Archaeology (<https://www.saa.org/career-practice/ethics-in-professional-archaeology>), and the American Association of Biological Anthropologists (<https://bioanth.org/documents/3/ethics.pdf>).

Graduate School information on Student Progress.

## Additional Academic Requirements

Throughout the year departmental colloquia are held, including special presentations by anthropologists and other scholars from outside the university; presentations of current research by departmental faculty and faculty from other schools and divisions; and presentations of current research by graduate students. Attendance at departmental colloquia is mandatory.

## Language/Research Skill Competency

Each student is required to demonstrate competency in a foreign language or research skill. This requirement may be satisfied in one of several ways, including:

- successful completion (meaning a grade of B or better) of at least the second course in a language course sequence such as FR 101 Elementary French I/FR 102 Elementary French II, GN 101 Elementary German I/GN 102 Elementary German II, or SP 101 Introductory Spanish I/SP 102 Introductory Spanish II; or,
- successful completion of a language course designed to demonstrate reading proficiency such as SP 503 Read Proficiency Spanish; or,
- certification of competency by examination from the appropriate language department (language exams are administered by the Department of Modern Languages and Classics and are given once per semester); or,

- successful completion of a graduate level statistics course; or,
- other specialized research competency, contingent on the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students must receive the approval of their advisor before undertaking any of these options. The student will be responsible for furnishing evidence of completion of this requirement to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair.

## Academic Misconduct Information

Graduate School information on Academic Misconduct.

## Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

Graduate School information on Withdrawals and Leave of Absence.

## Academic Grievances Information

Graduate School information on Academic Grievances.

## Grades and Academic Standing

Graduate School information on Grades and Academic Standing.

## Graduate School Deadlines Information

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

## Application for Graduation Information

Information on the Application for Graduation.

All students in the program are eligible for funding via .5 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs). These carry a 9-month stipend determined by the University on an annual basis, plus payment of tuition, and funds that may be applied to the purchase of optional University-provided health insurance (note: the purchase of insurance is mandatory for international students). On occasion, the Department will split a .5 GTA into two .25 GTAs, which then pay a 9-month stipend at half the rate established for a .5 GTA, plus 50% of tuition and 50% of the cost of optional health insurance. Students holding a .5 FTE GTA are limited to registering for 9 credit hours of graduate study per semester.

GTAs are employees of the University and are assigned duties by the Department. Duties can include direct student teaching and assisting professors in instruction. GTAs are responsible for providing relevant feedback and documentation when contacted by departmental staff to guarantee initiation of their stipend payments. In addition, the Graduate School hosts a compulsory workshop for all new GTAs. The workshop is ordinarily scheduled for a two-day period during the week before fall classes begin.

Additional GTA openings for non-academic departments are listed on the Student Jobs website ([http://financialaffairs.ua.edu/hr/student/jobs/pages/studentjobs\\_search.html](http://financialaffairs.ua.edu/hr/student/jobs/pages/studentjobs_search.html)). Work study positions may be available for students who qualify for the Federal Work Study Program through the Financial Aid Office.

Faculty in the Anthropology Department also may fund graduate students as Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), financed by externally sponsored research these faculty are conducting. GRA stipend and benefit levels may vary from those of GTAs. GRA responsibilities vary widely. When a GRA is offered, the supervising faculty member will notify the student of provisions of the offer and requirements if the offer is

accepted. Selection of students for GRAs is separate from the process of awarding GTAs, as GRA offers are made by individual faculty.

All students applying to the MA program will be considered for funding. Funding decisions are made by Department faculty based on recommendations from the Graduate Studies Committee. The Committee considers all information in the student's record, including GPA, recommendations, statement of purpose, and other features of the student's undergraduate and graduate record. Students are ranked based on these criteria, and available funds are distributed based on that ranking.

Funds are re-allocated on a yearly basis. For continuing MA students, funding decisions are made at the end of the first year. Decisions to continue funding a student are made based on the student's performance during the year (as evidenced by their grades and the reports of faculty), completion of a thesis proposal (if completing the degree under Plan 1), and the availability of funding.

Students in the MA program are also eligible to be funded through graduate school fellowships. Nominations for these fellowships are determined by the Graduate Director in consultation with the Graduate Committee and Department Chair. For students applying to the programs, all student application materials are important sources of information in crafting nomination letters.