Anthropology

www.abdn.ac.uk/anthropology
What Is Anthropology?

Anthropology is the study of human societies and cultural differences. Responding to the challenges of our time, such as how to live sustainably on our planet, we need to know how people in different places live and give meaning to their existence. We need to see the connections among all aspects of life – family, economic, political, religious, ecological – that are otherwise parcelled up between different disciplines for separate study.

Anthropology provides this approach. It looks at social life ‘from the inside’, from the point of view of those living it. Anthropologists study with people, learning to see things in the ways they do. That can lead us to perceive our own world quite differently too. We invite you to join us in this exploration of what it means to be human today and in the future.
Why Study Anthropology at Aberdeen?

International reputation for excellence

Aberdeen's department of Anthropology has an international reputation for excellence in teaching and research. We provide a supportive yet challenging environment within which students develop knowledge of anthropology, including issues of pressing concern for people the world over. Students are supported by research-active staff who are internationally recognised experts in their fields, and our courses reflect staff specialisms.

An outstanding student experience

We are committed to providing students with an outstanding student experience, with a focus on excellence in teaching. This involves a wide variety of course assessments, including a mix of traditional exams, group work, debates, and museum exhibitions. From year 3 (the Honours level), students are offered considerable choice in course selection, the courses reflecting staff research expertise. The programme allows for specialisation on the part of students, culminating in a dissertation on a topic chosen by the student. Students work on their dissertation from the second half of year 3 into the first half of year 4.

An innovative degree programme

We offer an innovative programme, with the emphasis throughout on work at the cutting-edge of the discipline. You will benefit from the close links with other programmes in the Schools of Social Science; Geosciences; Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture; and Divinity, History and Philosophy. The Anthropology Department also has close relationships with the University’s King’s Museum and Elphinstone Institute. With their unique anthropological and ethnological collections, they provide special opportunities for undergraduate students. Above all, you will be enthusiastically welcomed into an environment where staff and research students are actively engaged in top class, internationally recognised research. Our students are very active in University societies and debates. The Anthropology Society is one of the most active student societies on campus, and arguably the one that runs the most interesting events.
A forward-looking teaching programme

Our teaching programme involves the following themes:

• Religion and politics: Analysing the importance of religion in human life, its connections with politics, asking how we can best understand religion and politics.

• History and the legacy of colonialism: Discussing the history of relations between empire and the indigenous people encountering imperialism.

• Human environment relations: Understanding how humans in different parts of the world relate to and understand the environment in which they live, and the movement of people in that environment.

• Culture, creativity and objects: Exploring the importance of creativity and making in human life, including the curating and exhibiting of objects.

• Ethnographic focus: A unique ethnographic focus on the North, including Siberia, Alaska, Canada, Scandinavia, Iceland, Greenland and Scotland with further expertise in Central Asia, North Africa, the Andes, Tibet and Northern India.

• Research methods and anthropological theory: Understanding how research is done in anthropology and how anthropologists engage with theoretical ideas.

These themes allow us to keep pace with new global challenges that people face and emerging issues in the discipline of anthropology. As a department, we are well-placed to explore these challenges and issues and equip our graduates with the skills and knowledge to contribute to the tackling of these challenges.
We offer two types of Honours degrees. The first is a Single Honours Degree in Anthropology. The second is a joint degree, where Anthropology is combined with another discipline, e.g. International Relations, Sociology, English, History, Geography, Archaeology (many other combinations are possible).

**Year 1: Introduction to Anthropology I & II**
In the first year we offer two courses, Introduction to Anthropology I: Peoples of the World in the first term and Introduction to Anthropology II: Questions of Diversity in the second term. We explore key questions in the discipline – does human nature exist, and how does culture affect the way we think and act? Week by week, we take on social issues such as migration, climate change, religious conflict, international development, and colonialism and post-colonialism. We use case study material from around the world, drawing on anthropologists’ first hand accounts of their fieldwork along with sources from the communities themselves. These are presented in lectures, readings and small group tutorials. Our first year classes are designed for people with no prior study in the subject.

**Year 2: Key debates in anthropology; Re-imagining colonialism**
In the second year we offer two courses:

- **Key Debates in Anthropology** explores some of the key questions that anthropologists have debated: what it is to be human, the nature of human interaction with other humans, with non-humans, and with the environment, and the different ways that people perceive the world and act within it. Themes explored in this course include the category of the person, morality and ethics, art and aesthetics, what is power, how to engage with Otherness, and how anthropologists engage actively, outside academia, in development, health or business.

- **Re-imagining Colonialism** explores contemporary colonial expressions from an anthropological perspective. It is split into two main themes: Material Histories and Mediated Histories. Within these themes it will address topics such as the ‘capturing’ of cultures in museums, kinship and politics, gendered colonialism, economic development, media, aboriginal rights and contemporary resistance movements.
**Year 3: Researching in anthropology, anthropological theory, choice of themes in anthropology**

At level 3 (Junior Honours) all students take a course in Anthropological Theory and single honours students take courses in Doing Anthropological Research and Ethnography. Single honours students furthermore do a course preparing them for their own individual research projects. Under the close supervision of a member of staff, single honours students begin work on their individual research projects, potentially involving the collection and analysis of original fieldwork material. In addition, all students have several course options from which to choose, each of which reflects a particular subject area within anthropology.

The course options include:
- Society and Nature
- Emotion, Self and Society
- Visual Anthropology
- Religion, Power and Belief
- Medical Anthropology

**Year 4: Choice of courses from a list of electives; Dissertation through supervised study**

At level 4 (Senior Honours) students choose from a wide range of courses and single honours students complete an original research dissertation on a subject of their choice. Joint honours students can also write their dissertation in anthropology.

Our Senior Honours courses include:
- Indigenous Rights
- Morality and Belief in Islam
- Museums and Society
- Constitutional Imagination
- Humans and other Animals
- Roads: Mobility, Movement and Migration
- Anthropology of Landscape
- Anthropology of the North
- Materials, Technology and Power in the Andes
- Oral Traditions
- Anthropology and Art
Careers

Our students move on to work in a variety of careers, from business to the public sector and charities. The cultural insights offered by anthropology are in demand in many professions. While not usually thought of as a vocational degree, anthropology provides flexibility and distinctiveness in future career paths. In your degree you’ll be challenged to think critically and trained in how to understand society from many different perspectives. You’ll be equipped with practical skills in working with people in a variety of contexts. For more careers information, see https://www.discoveranthropology.org.uk/career-paths.html

Study Abroad

In recent years, many of our students have spent time studying abroad, mostly in North America or Europe but also in Hong Kong and Japan. Opportunities to study abroad are provided through the Go Abroad schemes. Students who wish to study abroad should plan ahead. Anthropology students thinking of going abroad should go in their second year. Limited options for study abroad are also available in third year for joint honours students.

How Do I Apply?

Applications to this degree programme are made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). You apply online at www.ucas.com and may apply to up to five institutions on the full-price UCAS application. Prospective students (and their parents/guardians/teachers) are welcome to visit the University at any time, or attend our University-wide Open Days in August and October. Please contact the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, who will be happy to make arrangements for a visit with a member of the department.

Where Can I Get Further Information?

For further details relating to Anthropology at Aberdeen, please visit www.abdn.ac.uk/anthropology
For all other inquiries, contact:
Student Recruitment and Admissions Service
University of Aberdeen, University Office
King’s College, Aberdeen AB24 3FX
Tel: +44 (0)1224 272090/91
E-mail: sras@abdn.ac.uk
Web: www.abdn.ac.uk/study
Or be our friend at
www.facebook.com/universityofaberdeen
www.twitter.com/aberdeenuni
For further details relating to Anthropology at Aberdeen, please also visit www.abdn.ac.uk/anthropology

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