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Anthropology

UNDERGRADUATE GUIDE



→ 4TH IN THE UK FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

Guardian University Guide 2024

Why Anthropology?

Anthropology is the study of the diversity of human communities and cultures around the world. It brings together theories about 'being human' from a wide range of Western and non-Western thinkers to understand human action, culture and thought, as studied through long-term international research with the communities themselves. Our courses examine the connections among all aspects of life – family and kinship, economic systems, political and religious institutions, human-animal and ecological relations – and the way in which they come together to create whole ways of living within an increasingly global and postcolonial world.

At Aberdeen our degree draws on the expertise of staff specialists on South America, Tibet and South Asia, the Pacific and the circumpolar North from Scotland and Siberia to Canada. It provides students with training in interview and social research skills, research design, ethnographic reporting and museum skills, culminating in a supervised fieldwork or library-based dissertation project of the student's choice. Anthropology graduates go on to careers in development, foreign affairs, journalism and research, amongst many others.

Why 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.

Anthropology at Aberdeen is currently ranked 1st in the UK for student satisfaction with an overall satisfaction score of 97.2% by the National Student Survey 2023.

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) you are offered considerable choice in course selection, allowing for specialisation in your study and culminating in a dissertation on a topic of your choice. Students work on their dissertation from the second half of year 3 into the first half of year 4.

As a student you can also take part in University societies and debates. The Anthropology Society is one of the most active student societies on campus.

A flexible, innovative degree programme

We offer an innovative programme, with emphasis throughout on work at the cutting-edge of the discipline. You will benefit from close links with other programmes within the School of Social Science, and programmes from other Schools in the University.

With the option to follow a single Honours degree or study Anthropology as part of a Joint Honours degree, you have the flexibility to shape your own degree to suit your particular interests and career plans.

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.



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.



Meet your lecturer

My name is Rob Wishart and I am the honours adviser for the Department of Anthropology. I teach on the first year, Introduction to Anthropology course and focus on topics such as Linguistics, Rituals, and Indigenous rights. I also teach the advanced honours courses Society and Nature, and Anthropology of the North where I teach about my research interests on human-animal-land relationships, politics, and law.

I love how anthropology challenges people to think outside the box and understand events through multiple perspectives, which is also something that employers recognise as a benefit of hiring anthropologists.

Dr Robert Wishart

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Degree structure & content

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 also do a course preparing them for individual research projects and, under the close supervision of a member of staff, begin work on their individual research projects which may involve the collection and analysis of original fieldwork material.

All students have several course options from which to choose, each of which reflects a particular subject area within anthropology.

Our 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.

Senior Honours course options include:

- Indigenous Rights
- Morality and Belief in Islam
- Museums and Society
- Constitutional Imagination
- More Than Human
- Roads: Mobility, Movement and Migration
- Anthropology of Landscape
- Anthropology of the North
- Anthropology and Art



Meet your lecturer

My name is Tanya Argounova-Low, and I am Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Anthropology. My research interests lie in mobility, movement, as well as art, creativity, and material culture in the North and Siberia, where I am originally from.

I teach first year Introduction to Anthropology course and Honours courses, including Roads: Mobility, Movement, Migration which focuses on various aspects of mobility from infrastructure to climate change.

Anthropology provides an excellent opportunity to understand the social phenomena and processes from a different perspective, question stereotypes and see how people in different places around the world live and cope with current challenges.

Dr Tanya Argounova-Low
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Careers & Skills

Anthropology provides insights into the workings of human relationships, groups and institutions which are in demand in many professions. Providing flexibility and distinctiveness in future career paths, anthropology will challenge you to think critically and understand society from many different perspectives.

You will be equipped with practical and transferable skills essential to working with people in a variety of contexts, including communication, creativity, problem solving, research skills, negotiation, diplomacy, reading and compiling statistics, team building, self-initiative, networking.

As well as going on to further education and anthropological research, our students move on to work in a variety of careers, from business

to public sector charities and NGOs, local regional and national governments, journalism and media, and more.

Recent Anthropology graduate destinations include:

- Civil service officer
- Communications specialist
- Government relations officer
- Junior lecturer
- Media researcher
- Media and television producer
- NGO project assistant
- Policy advisor
- Primary school teacher
- Researcher
- Senior project manager
- Start-up founder
- Statistician

For more careers information, see: www.discoveranthropology.org.uk

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Guardian University Guide, 2024 and Times & Sunday Times
Good University Guide, 2024






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