

ANTHROPOLOGY, BA

Anthropology is the comparative study of human diversity through time and across the world. Its scope spans the humanities, the social sciences, and the biological, physical, and evolutionary sciences. As a history of the human species, anthropology studies all human biological and behavioral variation, including nonhuman primates, from the earliest fossil records to the present. Anthropology uncovers the patterns of past and present societies and seeks to understand the ways cultural meaning and political power have shaped human experience.

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, anthropology consists of three subfields:

- archaeology – the investigation and analysis of the remains from past cultures, uncovered through excavation;
- biological anthropology – the study of human evolution and the roots of the biological and genetic diversity found among contemporary peoples; and
- sociocultural anthropology – the comparative study of society, politics, economy, and culture, whether in historical times or today.

Students can also take classes in anthropological linguistics, the analysis of language and its place in social life. Comparative and empirical work—and fieldwork in particular—are the hallmarks of anthropology on this campus.