**Department of World Languages and Cultures**
**Iowa State University**


**M.A. in Anthropology Program Handbook**

Approved by the Anthropology Graduate Faculty on November 24, 2020


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## 1. Program Overview and Outcomes

The Department of World Languages and Cultures offers a Master of Arts degree with a major in Anthropology. The program provides students with advanced training in cultural anthropology and bioarchaeology with the goal of preparing them for additional graduate study or professional work in anthropology and related fields. Students are required to do original field, archival, or laboratory research that will result in a scholarly thesis.

Students who have completed the MA in Anthropology will be able to:
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills consistent with the focus of the graduate program.
- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of scholarly literature in the area of study.
- Conduct qualitative and/or quantitative research via appropriate acquisition, analysis, and reporting of data.
- Articulate research objectives that, when met, will lead to significant contributions to the field of study.

## 2. Admissions

Applications to the program are accepted on a rolling basis. However, to guarantee consideration for Spring semester admission, applications should be submitted no later than October 1, and for Fall semester admission, no later than January 15. As with all graduate programs at ISU, applicants must submit a copy of their academic records (transcripts), GPA from previous undergraduate and graduate degrees, a statement of purpose, and three letters of recommendation. The statement of purpose should briefly outline the applicant's research interests and mention current anthropology faculty with whom the student would like to work.

The program does not require GRE scores. Applicants who have a GPA in their previous undergraduate or graduate degree that is at or below a 3.0 (out of 4.0) may be offered restricted admission. Applicants whose native language is not English must also demonstrate proficiency in English through examination (see 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 of the Graduate College Handbook for the Graduate College's approved testing methods and minimum acceptable scores, https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/chapter.php?id=1#1.1).

All applications will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee in consultation with the DOGE. The Graduate Program Committee will make recommendations to accept/decline each applicant. The DOGE will report these recommendations to the Anthropology section faculty, who will vote to accept/decline each applicant.

## 3. Financial Support

A limited number of Teaching Assistantship (TA) and Research Assistantship (RA) positions are awarded each year to incoming and continuing students. TAs and RAs receive a monthly stipend and partial tuition waiver. TAs either assist with or teach undergraduate courses. RAs assist the faculty member who employs them on specified research tasks. TA and RA positions are limited and are awarded to eligible students with the requisite qualifications for assisting or teaching

specific courses or assisting on specific research projects. Students applying to the program indicate their interest in TA or RA positions on their application forms. Continuing students should notify the DOGE of their interest in a TA position by the first week of the semester prior to the year they would like to be considered for TA funding.

The program also offers several small grants each year to aid graduate students in funding their summer research projects. Applications for these grants are due on March 1 via OneApp.

## 4. Degree Program and Requirements

In order to complete the MA degree  in Anthropology, students must complete required coursework, conduct original research, and write a scholarly thesis, which must be approved by their Program of Study Committee (POSC) through a final oral examination. The Graduate College requires that students have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 to graduate. Competence in statistics or a methodology relevant to the student's program of study must also be demonstrated. Students are required to do original field, archival, or laboratory research that will result in a scholarly thesis. Students are expected to complete the degree within three years. Under extenuating circumstances, the Graduate Program Committee in consultation with the DOGE may choose to provide a student with additional time to finish.

### 4.1. Program of Study

In their first semester of the program, students should submit a POSC agreement on AccessPlus to the graduate college (for a draft form, see https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/student/forms/). The POSC specifies the student's proposed Program of Study (coursework) and the student's Program of Study Committee. Students assigned to specific faculty members upon admission should work with those faculty members to identify the members of their POSC. The DOGE will assist all other students in identifying potential faculty for their POSCs.

The POSC consists of a major professor, who must be a member of the anthropology program graduate faculty, and who chairs the student's thesis committee. Students also may opt to have co-major professors, in which case at least one of the co-major professors must be a member of the anthropology graduate faculty. The POSC must include at least two additional members, one of whom must be from the anthropology graduate faculty and one of whom must be from outside the anthropology graduate major. Students should seek outside members of the committee whose research expertise is relevant to the student's thesis project but offers a different disciplinary perspective on the subject. If the student is pursuing a graduate minor, graduate certificate, or second major, then the outside committee member should be from that minor, certificate, or major program.

Once a student has identified the members of their POSC and those members have agreed to serve on the committee, the student should work in consultation with the POSC to outline a program of study. Once the student and POSC have agreed on the program of study, the student must submit the POSC form to the Graduate College through AccessPlus. If any changes need to

be made to this form, they must be approved no later than the last day of the semester before the semester the student plans to graduate.

**4.2. Course Requirements**

Students are required to take at least 33 credits to graduate with an MA in Anthropology. Courses in the anthropology graduate major must be at the 500- or 600-level to count towards this total. Courses in programs or departments outside of the anthropology graduate major at the 400-level can be counted towards this total.

**All students please note**: students are required to take 9 credit hours per semester to be considered a full-time student. **International Students please note:** students "whose native language is not English and who do not have a bachelor's or advanced degree from ISU or a U.S. institution, or do not meet the TOEFL or IELTS exemption score range, must take the English Placement Test at the beginning of their first semester of enrollment" (Graduate College Handbook 4.4.3, https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/chapter.php?id=4#4.4).

**4.2.1.** All students in the anthropology graduate major are required to take two **core courses**, which are designed to expose students to the major issues and contemporary thinking in both social scientific and natural scientific approaches to the study of anthropology:
- **Anthropology 503**: Biological Anthropology & Archaeology
- **Anthropology 510**: Theoretical Dimensions of Cultural Anthropology

Students should take both of these courses in their first year in the program.

**4.2.2.** All students in the anthropology graduate major are required to take an appropriate methods course such as:
- **Anthropology 531:** Ethnographic Methods or **Anthropology 519:** Skeletal Biology
- Statistics 415
- Statistics 587
- Community & Regional Planning 451/551

The methods requirement should be completed in the first year. In consultation with the Graduate Program Committee, the DOGE will review any requests for courses not on the above list that students would like to count towards the methods requirement.

**4.2.3.** In their second year, all students in the anthropology graduate major must take at least four credits of: **Anthropology 699**: Research.

**4.2.4.** In addition to the above courses, students must take at least **9 additional credits of 500-level** anthropology courses. Beyond the program's required courses, students are encouraged to take courses outside of the department that contribute to the development of their area of concentration and/or independent study courses that focus on their research topic.

**4.3. Thesis Requirements**

All students in the program must write a scholarly thesis that is based on original research. This thesis and the research on which it is based represent the most significant means through which students develop and demonstrate their knowledge of a particular topic within a subfield of

anthropology. Students will work with their major professors and members of their POSC to identify an appropriate topic for their research, a clear question for guiding their research, an ethical and anthropologically-appropriate method for studying the question, and potential subjects, sites, collections, or archives for their research. A thesis is considered complete when it has been approved by the POSC and the Graduate College.

**4.3.1. Research Proposal:** Once a student has identified a research topic in consultation with the POSC, the next step is for the student to write a proposal that includes, but is not limited to: a) the student's research question; b) the purpose and significance of the proposed research; c) the relevant existing literature; d) a discussion of the methodology the student will use to research the question; and, e) a proposed timeline for the research. The student will work on this proposal in consultation with the major professor, who will provide critical feedback on areas of the proposal in need of improvement. Once the student and major professor have agreed on a finalized draft of the proposal, the student will submit the proposal to the POSC for review. Research proposals should be submitted to the POSC before the end of the student's first year in the program. The POSC must approve the proposal before the student can proceed with research for the thesis.

**4.3.2. Responsible research requirements:** All research conducted by students at Iowa State University is subject to the rules and requirements established by the Office of Responsible Research (https://www.compliance.iastate.edu). Students should also review the American Anthropological Association's Code of Ethics (https://www.americananthro.org/LearnAndTeach/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=22869&navItemNumber=652 ).

**Students may not initiate any human subjects research until they have received official approval from the IRB for their specified research project and methodology**. Failure to comply will render any data collected null and void for use in the thesis and may lead to the student's dismissal from the program and/or expulsion from the university. All students conducting research with human subjects must first complete an online training certification (https://www.compliance.iastate.edu/committees/irb/irb-training). Copies of this certification must be submitted to the POSC. Students must then obtain approval from Iowa State's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (https://www.compliance.iastate.edu/committees/irb/review).

Students working with animal subjects or conducting isotope research should carefully consult the requirements for such research with their major professors in order to **ensure that all requisite trainings and reviews by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), or the Radiation Safety Committee (RSC)** are **complete before thesis research begins.**

**4.3.3. Thesis:** Theses are expected to be based on original, empirical research. Analysis should be clearly grounded in existing, current anthropological literature and a methodology appropriate to the discipline. The final thesis should be of a high academic quality. As noted above, students should not begin researching and writing the thesis until their research proposal has been approved by the POSC and the relevant ethics review board(s).

There is no specified required length of the thesis, but most theses submitted by students in the program are between fifty and one hundred double-spaced pages, inclusive of notes, references, and appendices. Students should consult with their major professor to determine the style that is most commonly used in their specified subdiscipline (e.g., Chicago vs. MLA vs. APA). Theses must adhere to the Graduate College formatting guidelines ([https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/thesis/](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/thesis/)). Students should submit their thesis to their POSC at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the Final Oral Examination.

**4.3.4. Final Oral Examination:** Once all of the above requirements have been met, the POSC will administer a final oral examination to the student. This examination will last approximately two hours and may cover any aspects of the student's coursework or research, but the main emphasis will be on the student's thesis. Students must submit the Request for Final Oral Examination ([https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/student/forms/](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/student/forms/)) three weeks prior to the scheduled date of the exam. Additionally, each semester there are deadlines for the last day to take the Final Oral Examination, which are set by the Graduate College. When students have passed their Final Oral Examination, they must submit the Graduate Student Approval Form (which requires signatures from the POSC and DOGE) by the deadline specified by the Graduate College ([https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/student/forms/](https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/student/forms/)). If any conditions were placed on the pass, the major professor must also submit a memo to the Graduate College indicating that all conditions for the pass have been met.

**5. Student Progress and Evaluation**

**5.1. Teaching Assistant Evaluations:** Each year all TAs will be evaluated by their supervising faculty member. If students are teaching a course that does not have a supervising faculty member, the Graduate Program Committee will designate a member of the committee who will review the student's teaching. These evaluations are meant to be formative—they provide faculty with an opportunity to discuss the strengths of TAs' performance and identify any areas that may need improvement as well as discuss ways to make those improvements. Evaluations should include at least one classroom visit to the recitation, lab, online course, or class taught by the TA. TAs receiving favorable performance reviews may continue teaching.  For those who are in need of additional training, the TA will be directed to the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) for additional formative teaching development or to another campus unit who offers similar opportunities to graduate student teachers. Negative teaching performance reviews can result in loss of the teaching assistantship.

**5.2. Annual Progress Report:** Each year all students will complete an annual report of their performance with their major professor. Students will report on their achievements for the year and progress on satisfying the degree requirements. Major professors will provide feedback on their students' progress, note areas of outstanding performance, and identify deficiencies as well as propose measures for addressing them. These evaluations will be conducted at the beginning of each student's second and fourth semesters. These evaluations are designed to foster open communication between graduate students and their major professors on key issues such as programmatic expectations, quality of work, and progress towards the degree.

**5.3. Student Progress:**
The following is the preferred timeline for students to complete the MA degree in Anthropology with important milestones for each semester. This timeline does not include the completion of student research, which often is done during the breaks between semesters. The timeline also does not include additional certifications, minors, or degree programs that students may choose to pursue.

**Semester 1**
- Obtain approvals for and submit POSC
- Complete ANTHR 503 or 510

**Semester 2**
- Complete ANTHR 503 or ANTHR 510
- Complete methods requirement
- Have research proposal accepted by POSC
- Receive ethics approval for research (IRB and/or IACUC and/or RSC)

**Semester 3**
-Complete ANTHR 699 requirement
-Obtain final approval for any revisions to POSC

**Semester 4**
-Apply for Graduation
-Schedule and pass Final Oral Examination
-Submit final approved thesis to Graduate College

These guidelines are meant to provide students with a general outline of important milestones for planning and gauging their progress through the degree program. Students' progress towards completion of the degree will be evaluated periodically through the Annual Progress Reports outlined above.

If a major professor deems that a student is not making sufficient progress towards one or more of the degree requirements, the major professor will communicate this in the Annual Progress Report or in a written statement to the student and the DOGE, which specifies the following: a) the deficiency in the student's progress; b) what the student needs to do to correct the deficiency; c) the time period in which the deficiency must be corrected; and d) the penalty for not correcting the deficiency. In most instances, if the student does not correct the deficiency in the time specified, the student will be dismissed following the procedures outlined in Chapter 9.7 of the Graduate College Handbook (https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/chapter.php?id=9#9.7). The student will have the opportunity to appeal according to the procedures laid out in the Graduate College Handbook (https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/chapter.php?id=9#9.5).

Some indications that a student may not be making sufficient progress in the degree include, but are not limited to:

- Not filing a POSC by the end of the second semester;
- Not completing ANTHR 503 and 510 by the end of the second semester;
- Not having a  research proposal accepted by the end of the third semester;
- Not submitting a thesis draft to the POSC by the end of the fourth semester;
- Not completing all degree requirements by the end of three years.

## 6. Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

All graduate student rights and responsibilities are outlined in detail in Chapter 9 of the Graduate College Handbook (https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/chapter.php?id=9), which includes important information about maintaining academic standing, student grievance procedures, and expectations for assistantship appointments. Students should review this information in detail. The MA program in Anthropology is committed to fostering a positive environment that is conducive to graduate student learning and success and follows all Graduate College policies and procedures.

## 7. Special Graduate Majors

Students pursuing graduate certificates, co-major degree programs, or concurrent graduate degree programs should carefully consult Chapter 4.3 of the Graduate College Handbook (https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/chapter.php?id=4#4.3) and also consult on a regular basis with their major professors and the DOGEs of their programs to ensure that they clearly understand the requirements for both programs and are making sufficient progress towards completing them.

## 8. Program Administration

The DOGE of the Anthropology graduate program must be a tenured faculty member in the Anthropology section and will be appointed by the department chair in consultation with the Anthropology faculty. The primary responsibilities of the DOGE include managing applications of prospective students, coordinating the graduate program in Anthropology (e.g., assistantships), and serving as the signatory on various documents required for graduate education.

All faculty in the anthropology section will serve on the Graduate Program Committee on a two-year rotating basis. Additionally, the Department Chair will also appoint one faculty member from outside anthropology to serve on the committee each year. The Graduate Program Committee will be chaired by the DOGE. The responsibilities of the committee include student recruitment and retention, reviewing and making recommendations on applications to the anthropology faculty, reviewing and proposing revisions to the graduate curriculum, program handbook, and program forms.

Alterations to this handbook can be proposed by any member of the anthropology graduate faculty but must be approved by a majority vote of the anthropology graduate faculty.

## 9. Appendices

### I. Anthropology Graduate Student Progress Report
The purpose of this report is for you to review your progress in the program. This will also provide us with the necessary information to assist you in ensuring timely progress toward the completion of your educational goals.

Complete this form and send a copy to your major professor. Your major professor will add to the document. We would encourage you to schedule a time to meet with your major professor to discuss the form and sign it. If you entered the program in fall, this document must be completed and submitted to the DOGE by Feb 1. If you entered in spring, it must be completed and submitted to the DOGE by Sept 1.

**Name:**
**First semester in program:**
**Calendar year of report:**
What is your funding source this semester: RA, TA or other university source?

**Please check all of the following that apply:**
o   Have a cumulative GPA above 3.0
o   Met with  Major Professor to identify thesis topic
o   Filed POSC form with Graduate College (state semester/year)
o   Have completed ANTHR 503  (state semester/year)
o   Have completed ANTHR 510  (state semester/year)
o   Have completed the methods requirement  (state semester/year)
o   Proposal has been accepted by POSC (state semester/year)
o   Have received ethics approval and completed necessary safety requirements for research project (state semester/year), select which: IRB  IACUC  RSC
o   Have completed ANTHR 699 requirement  (state semester/year)
o   Have scheduled Final Oral Examination  (state semester/year)
o   Have completed all degree requirements and filed for graduation  (state semester/year)

**For the Student:**
Please comment on your progress in the program and what your plans are for the coming year. Please summarize any accomplishments you have achieved, such as awards, conference presentations, workshops attended, etc. Please also explain any areas in which you have not met the preferred timeline. Please provide us with any additional information related to your progress that you would like us to know.

**For the Major Professor:**
A.  Please provide a general overview of the progress of this student and any recommendations for the future. Is this student making satisfactory progress towards the degree? If the student is not making progress, please specify the following: a) the deficiency in the student's progress; b)

what the student needs to do to correct the deficiency; c) the time period in which the deficiency must be corrected; and d) the penalty for not correcting the deficiency.



Student signature: _____ Date: _____
Major Professor signature: _____ Date: _____

## II. Teaching Assistant Evaluation Form

TA Name: _____

Instructor Name: _____

Date of Evaluation: _____

Semester: _____

Course: _____

Evaluation Criteria (5 = excellent, 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = average, 1 = poor, N/A = not applicable)

1.  Knowledge of the course material:      1   2   3   4   5   N/A

2.  Enthusiastic and prepared for section/lab:      1   2   3   4   5   N/A

3.  Speaks clearly and effectively communicates information
    to students:      1   2   3   4   5   N/A

4.  Solicits student discussion, responses, and feedback:      1   2   3   4   5   N/A

5.  Engages student attention in class:      1   2   3   4   5   N/A

6.  Grades and records assignments and/or exams in a timely
    and accurate manner:      1   2   3   4   5   N/A

7.  Interacts well with instructor and other TAs:      1   2   3   4   5   N/A

8.  Overall TA performance:      1   2   3   4   5   N/A

Additional Comments:

TA Signature: _____

Instructor Signature: _____