
Sociology and Anthropology

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A dual discipline! The Sociology and Anthropology Department provides students with intellectual tools for understanding contemporary and historical cultural patterns and social issues such as globalization, nationalism, racism, sexism, embodiment, and the complex layering of inequalities in everyday life. These two disciplines approach the study of social life from different avenues, each bringing a set of separate and overlapping analytical and research tools to intellectual tasks that are complementary and synergistic. Our students seek knowledge about societies of the world and the social dynamics within them. To that end, our majors each conduct independent projects based on primary research and/or fieldwork during their senior year.

Sociology and Anthropology analyze experiences at the level of the individual or the group and connect them to larger social dynamics. The disciplines illustrate how matters that are often perceived as "private troubles" are actually consequences of cultural categories and social structures, including those that appear and feel natural and inevitable. Among the goals of Sociology and Anthropology are to acquire knowledge about different social groups and culture systems and to engage critically with the complexities of social life.

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology offers a Course Major, Honors Major and Minor, Major and Honors Major in Medical Anthropology and Special Majors, but no Course Minor.

Overview of the Curriculum

Acceptance to the SOAN department normally requires completion of at least two courses in the department.

In order to graduate, all majors housed in the Sociology and Anthropology Department are required to complete at least the following assigned/core courses:

1. ANTH 001- Foundations: Culture, Power, and Meaning
2. SOCI 001- Foundations: Self, Culture, and Society
3. At least one designated methods course
4. A 2-credit senior thesis (SOAN 096/097 or SOAN 180F/180S)

The "Foundations" courses offer key introductions to the department's two fields; anthropology and sociology. Each highlights the distinct but complementary theories and methods of the two disciplines and provides a solid background to ongoing debates in each discipline. Throughout the courses, we will examine concepts fundamental to both sociology and cultural anthropology and how these disciplines have changed over time.

The 2-credit senior thesis requirement, in which the student works closely with a faculty advisor, is normally completed in the fall and spring semesters of the senior year.

The requirement includes:

1. SOAN 098- Thesis Writers Masters Class
2. SOAN 096/097(Course) or 180F/180S (Honors)- Thesis tutorial

The senior thesis project represents the centrality of research to our disciplines, and allows students to develop their research interests through working directly with a faculty member. Students develop their analytical and writing skills and learn the process of developing and conducting a substantial research project from proposal to completed manuscript.

ANTH/SOCI/SOAN 001-019: Introductory courses serve as points of entry for students wishing to begin work in the department and normally serve as prerequisites to higher-level work in the department. (some higher courses may, however, with permission of the instructor, be taken without prerequisite)

ANTH/SOCI/SOAN 020-090: Regular courses

ANTH/SOCI/SOAN 095-099: Directed Reading, Independent Study, Course Thesis

ANTH/SOCI/SOAN 100 to 180: Honors Seminars and Thesis

Note: Course labeling within each of the three tiers of offerings reflect internal departmental codes rather than levels of advancement or particular research areas. Consult the listings for prerequisites particular to each course.

For current course and seminar listings, consult the website at <https://www.swarthmore.edu/sociology-anthropology/current-courses>

First Course Recommendations

ANTH 001. Foundations: Culture, Power and Meaning offers students a foundation in the theories, methods, and history of the discipline of cultural anthropology. Anthropology is a comparative study of culture, practice, and human diversity. This course will introduce students to some of the discipline's key conceptual innovations, theoretical approaches, and past and present debates. Anthropologists study various societies to understand how meaning is constituted and circulated, how daily practices are structured by social norms and power systems, and how people resist, subvert, and transform inequalities and common modes of identification. Drawing on deep engagement with specific groups, communities, and processes, anthropology offers unique insights into pressing questions of our time, such as the effects of the global circulation of capital and people and how social structures, cultural-political ideologies, and everyday life interact. Topics to be covered include ritual and religion, kinship and family, gift and exchange, citizenship and nationalism, gender and sexuality, medicine and healing, media and circulation, and food and consumption. Students will gain familiarity with ethnography, anthropology's flagship genre. We will also explore the discipline's key field research methods and the ethical issues related to its goals to understand, interpret, and represent the lived experiences of people in diverse contexts.

SOCI 001. Foundations: Self, Culture and Society a foundational introduction to the discipline of sociology. Throughout the course, we will examine key theories and concepts sociologists use, reading authors like W.E.B. DuBois, Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Bourdieu. We will also explore some of the key issues sociology tackles, including race and racism, gender and sexism, class and inequality, and the role of states and other power structures in shaping these and other facets of our social world.

Course Major: Acceptance Criteria, Requirements and Options

Acceptance to the SOAN course major normally requires completion of at least two courses in the department with at least a B average for work in the department and at least a C average overall.

The applicant's performance in department courses is discussed during the application review process; we also consider carefully an applicant's potential for carrying out the department's senior thesis requirement.

Course majors are required to complete at least eight units of work in the department; of the eight, five are assigned/core, see overview of curriculum above.

Course Minor: Acceptance Criteria, Requirements and Options

Sociology and Anthropology Department does not offer a course minor.

Honors Major: Acceptance Criteria, Requirements and Options

Acceptance to the SOAN honors major normally requires completion of at least two courses in the department with at least a B average for work in the department and at least a B average overall.

The department will evaluate the progress of students writing Senior Honor Thesis before the end of November. If progress is deemed inadequate, the student will be asked to withdraw from Honors.

Students seeking to complete an honors major are required to complete at least nine units of work in the department;

- five are assigned/core, see overview of curriculum above
- two 2-credit preparations. These preparations can include seminars, a course plus attachment, paired upper-level courses, or off campus study. The latter three forms of preparation must have the advance approval of the supervising faculty member and of the department.

Honors preparations (3):

1. Thesis preparation: The thesis will be sent (the last day of April in your senior year) to and read by an external examiner, who will also administer an oral exam. These will be the bases for the examiner's evaluation of the thesis.
2. Two 2-credit (non-thesis) preparations: evaluations will be in the form of written assignments or examinations given by the external examiners and completed by honors students at the end of the senior year. External examiners will also administer oral examinations.

Honors Preparation with Attachments

Students wishing to prepare for honors through a course plus an attachment must obtain permission from the instructor. Honors preparation will consist of the following materials:

- the syllabus for the course.
- the syllabus for the attachment
- written materials as requested by the instructor. The syllabus for the class and for the attachment, plus the written materials, if any will be forwarded to the external examiner. The external examiner will be asked to prepare a written examination based on the material as a unified whole. An oral examination will follow.

Honors and Off-Campus Study

There are a number of ways in which off-campus study can be either integral or complementary to an honors major in Sociology and Anthropology. These include, but are not restricted to, the development of an honors preparation from work abroad and preparation for the senior thesis. To explore off-campus study possibilities, students must consult with the Chair of the department.

Students who contemplate basing an honors preparation on off-campus study work must seek the department's conditional approval for this, before undertaking off-campus study. Upon returning from abroad, students must

request departmental approval of the honors preparation based on work done abroad. To do this, students must submit to the department all materials done abroad, including syllabi and written work, which are intended to be part of the honors preparation. Upon review of these materials, the department will notify the student as to whether or not the proposed honors preparation is approved. Students should expect approval of only one honors preparation which includes off-campus study.

Honors Minor: Acceptance Criteria, Requirements and Options

Acceptance to the SOAN honors minor normally requires completion of at least two courses in the department with at least a B average for work in the department and at least a B average overall.

The department will evaluate the progress of students writing Senior Honor Thesis before the end of November. If progress is deemed inadequate, the student will be asked to withdraw from Honors.

Students seeking to complete an Honors minor normally complete at least five units of work in the department;

- three are required: ANTH 001, SOCI 001, and at least one designated methods course
- one 2-credit preparation: an honors seminar, a thesis, a class with an attachment, or with permission, paired upper level courses.

The Honors Minor includes: One honors preparation in Sociology and Anthropology. Depending on the format of the presentation, the examiner will receive the materials:

1. Thesis preparation: the thesis will be sent (the last day of April in your senior year) to and read by an external examiner, who will also administer an oral exam. These will be the bases for the examiner's evaluation of the thesis.
2. Non-thesis preparation: evaluations will be in the form of written assignments or examinations given by the external examiners and completed by honors students at the end of the senior year. External examiners will also administer oral examinations.

Special Major: Acceptance Criteria, Requirements and Options

Acceptance to a special major housed in SOAN normally requires completion of at least two courses in the department with at least a B average for work in the department and at least a C average overall.

Most Special Majors need to be anchored in a home department. When a student anchors their special major in the department of Sociology and Anthropology, they must fulfill the requirements below. In many cases, the best option is pursuing a course major, since the department is not required to approve a Special Major application.

Requirements:

1. Must complete the assigned/core courses see overview of the curriculum above.
2. Four credits from outside of the department must be included as part of the special major.
3. In putting together the special major, it is advisable that the student only designate ten courses as part of the major. That way there will be no problems with the 20-course rule.

Special Major: Medical Anthropology

Applicants for the Course and Honors Special Major in Medical Anthropology will usually be expected to have completed at least two courses in the department, grades of at least B for work taken in the department and to have at least a B average overall.

The special major in medical anthropology is a regularized special major and offers students the opportunity to tailor a scholarly exploration of medicine, health, and illness with a foundation in anthropology. Medical anthropology is a dynamic subfield of the discipline that offers important theoretical, critical, and comparative

perspectives to the study of medical systems and healing practices in different cultures, and it provides ways to shape the work and practices of medical institutions and professionals. Medical anthropology pays attention not only to biomedicine and scientific knowledge but also to diverse ways of healing, managing pain, and defining wellbeing. It also pays close attention to the different local, national, and global forces that shape the health and wellbeing of various groups and their access to resources and knowledges. This special major will be of particular interest to students interested in graduate work in medical anthropology, the study of medicine, and those planning on pursuing training and work in diverse professions of the health field.

Requirements:

1. Must complete the required core courses, see overview of curriculum above
 2. Must complete at least one of the following two courses in the SOAN department:
 - ANTH 043E. Culture, Health, and Illness
 - ANTH 049B. Comparative Perspectives on the Body
- Additional recommended SOAN courses include:
 - ANTH 002F. Anthropology of Childhood and the Family
 - ANTH 003G. First-Year Seminar: Development and its Discontents
 - ANTH 039C. Food and Culture
 - ANTH 053B. Anthropology of Public Health
 - ANTH 103. Humanitarianism: Anthropological Approaches
 - ANTH 133. Anthropology of Biomedicine
 - SOCI 050B - Medicine as a Profession
 - A maximum of four credits from outside of the department may be included as part of the special major, with permission from the department. Students are encouraged to tailor their courses outside the department to their particular areas of interest. Some recommended courses at Swarthmore include:
 - POLS 048. The Politics of Population
 - ECON 075. Health Economics
 - ENVS 035/POLS 043B. Environmental Justice: Theory and Action
 - LITR 074F. A History of the Five Senses
 - HIST 066. Disease, Culture, and Society in the Modern World: Comparative Perspectives
 - HIST 080. History of the Body
 - PSYC 038. Clinical Psychology
 - RELG 031. Healing Praxis and Social Justice
 - RELG 035. Religion and Medical Ethics
 - Additionally, students are encouraged to explore course offerings in the Tri-Co Health Studies Program and at the Health & Societies program at the University of Pennsylvania. Studying abroad could also be a valuable opportunity for the study of medical anthropology. Please consult with your advisor for guidance on course selection beyond Swarthmore.
 - In putting together the special major, it is advisable that the student only designate ten courses as part of the major. That way there will be no problems with the 20-course rule.

Honors Special Major

Students seeking to complete an honors special major housed in SOAN are required to complete at least 11 units of work in the department;

- five are the required core, see overview of curriculum above.
- three 2-credit preparations. These preparations can include honors seminars, a course plus attachment, paired upper-level courses, or in special circumstances off campus study. The latter three forms of preparation must have the advance approval of the supervising faculty member and of the department.

Honors Special Major in Medical Anthropology

Students seeking to complete an honors special major in medical anthropology are required to complete the above requirements for the special major in Medical Anthropology

- + three 2-credit preparations. These preparations can include honors seminars, a course plus attachment, paired upper-level courses, or off campus study. The latter three forms of preparation must have the advance approval of the supervising faculty member and of the department.

Honors preparations (4):

- thesis preparation: The thesis will be sent (the last day of April in your senior year) to and read by an external examiner, who will also administer an oral exam. These will be the bases for the examiner's evaluation of the thesis.
- three 2-credit (non-thesis) preparations: evaluations will be in the form of written assignments or examinations given by the external examiners and completed by honors students at the end of the senior year. External examiners will also administer oral examinations.

Thesis / Culminating Exercise

In order to graduate, all majors housed in the Sociology and Anthropology Department must complete a 2-credit thesis. The 2-credit senior thesis requirement, normally completed in the fall and spring semesters of the senior year, includes the Thesis Writers Masters Class and a thesis tutorial in which the student works closely with a faculty adviser.

The senior thesis project represents the centrality of research to our disciplines, and allows students to develop their research interests through working directly with a faculty member. Students develop their analytical and writing skills and learn the process of developing and conducting a substantial research project from proposal to completed manuscript.

AP-IB Credit

Considered on a case-by-case basis for majors and minors.

Transfer Credit

Considered on a case-by-case basis for majors and minors.

Off Campus Study

Because of its strong cross-cultural and transnational orientations, the Department encourages students to study abroad. Anthropologists and sociologists greatly value engaging other societies and understanding different cultures. For many, off-campus study provides a basis for their senior thesis project (see the Department's homepage for a listing of students' projects). This combination of breadth of knowledge, global understanding, and independent research make Sociology and Anthropology an ideal liberal art major.

Research and Experiential Learning Opportunities

The Sociology and Anthropology Department emphasizes independent research. We prepare students to conduct research on primary and secondary documents as well as to conduct interviews, engage in participant observation, organize focus groups, administer surveys, and produce ethnographic films. By senior year, our students are ready to write a senior thesis that is not only based on library research but also in real-world experience. Recent student research projects have focused on issues such as alternative development programs in Latin America, immigration policies in the United States, and human rights in Africa. Independent research conducted by our students is one feature that consistently distinguishes them when they are pursuing jobs, fellowships, or graduate school admission.

Some students have the opportunity to conduct original research with faculty – whose approaches run the gamut from ethnography to textual analysis to survey research. Students also explore the historical development of Sociology and Anthropology. Research design, qualitative research, and statistical analysis are important components of many of our courses, enabling students to undertake rigorous research projects and best analyze, interpret, and communicate their findings. The curriculum also provides opportunities for students to learn techniques to creatively convey their work through photography and documentary films.

Experiential and Service Learning Opportunities

Experiential learning is an important component of much work in Sociology and Anthropology. Our department strongly supports participation in study abroad as well as work in the field. For many students, these experiences challenge them to ask questions that eventually serve as foundations of their senior thesis project. Study abroad and fieldwork provide an opportunity for students to develop contacts and gain rapport within their eventual research setting. Funding is available from the department and the College to support students in their pursuit of these experiences.

Summer Opportunities

Summer funding opportunities exist and are particularly relevant for juniors planning research towards their senior thesis projects. Grants from a variety of college-administered sources are available to support research by students during the summer. Please have a look at our website: <http://www.swarthmore.edu/x8583.xml> to learn more about our extensive and generous funds for travel, research, internships, and faculty/student collaboration. We especially encourage our juniors to explore these possibilities. Funded summer research has often been the basis for fine senior theses.

Teaching Certification

Each year, in conjunction with Education Studies, a number of our majors seek a teacher's certification. Students contemplating teacher certification would normally schedule their program in a semester, which does not conflict with their senior thesis. Such programs should be developed in close consultation with advisors in the Education Program.

Life After Swarthmore

Our graduates have the tools to analyze the many sociological and anthropological issues they have studied at Swarthmore in their careers and/or further education. Career paths include work in either anthropology or sociology.

Alumni reflections:

Gil Kemp '72
Scarsdale, N.Y.

President, Home Decorator's Collections

...[T]he insight into people and culture and the general analytical skills I learned from my Swarthmore professors has been the foundation of a satisfying and stimulating business career that has permitted me to serve millions of American consumers. I majored in sociology and anthropology because learning about people and their behavior fascinated me then, and it continues to be the bedrock of my career.”

Karen Strier '80

Madison, Wis.

Hilldale Professor of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin - Madison

“The Swarthmore faculty provided great advice and guidance that helped me articulate my interests in biology, psychology, and anthropology. They were flexible and supportive of my study-abroad program, in which I conducted a field study of wild baboons in Kenya. Ultimately, I merged in interests into a career as a biological anthropologist studying wild primates.”

Laurie Fitzmaurice '93

San Diego, Calif.

Commercial development manager, Sempra Pipelines and Storage

“The department’s open-minded approach and inquisitive nature enabled me to combine my interests in culture and literature. I spent six months in Chile, interviewing women writers. The Sociology and Anthropology Department’s ability to see across disciplines distinguishes it from the other academic areas and represents a tremendous strong point.”

Mufaddal Dahodwala '08

Cherry Hill, N.J.

Student, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

“The Sociology and Anthropology department embodied what I wanted to get out of my Swarthmore education. Differing perspectives were not only respected, but encouraged – this really pushed my intellectual limits and made me better for it. My thesis provided the ultimate test of what I had learned: not just in terms of social theory but also in the ability to take an event or argument, break it apart into several pieces, analyze them, and then make my own suggestions for how to improve it. I know I will carry those skills to my career as a physician.”