

ANTHROPOLOGY

Room 236 Main Building

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Program Overview

The Anthropology Department at the American University of Central Asia is the only anthropology program in Central Asia. Located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, Kyrgyzstan has long been and continues to be at the cultural, social, political, and cultural crossroads of major global events and processes. Understanding these dynamics will significantly enrich the global body of Anthropological knowledge, bridge the Central Asian past, present and future, and contribute to the growth and development of our region. The mission of our department is to build a Central Asian school of thought in Anthropology that will reflect the needs, aspirations and future hopes of the region adapting the best anthropological theories and practices from the global intellectual terrains. Our program aims to build sustainable mechanisms for strengthening academic research capacities through establishing the first undergraduate curriculum in anthropology in Central Asia. By introducing this academic space we will provide a platform for world and local researchers to understand this fairly unexplored territory on the map of global worldviews, and to foster the dialogue between this space and other more established knowledge spaces throughout the world.

Required Courses

ANTH 107: Cultural Concepts and Social Networks

(Introduction to Cultural Anthropology)

ANTH 120.1: International Development: Donors, NGOs, Communities and Cultures

(Introduction to Development Anthropology)

ANTH 111: Introduction to Archaeology

ANTH 200: History of Anthropological Theories I

ANTH 302.1: Fieldwork Research Methods

ANTH 400.1: History of Anthropological Theories II

ANTH 300: Fieldwork (in Anthropology)

ANTH 301: Fieldwork (in Archeology or in International Organization)

ANTH 411.1: Senior Seminar

Choose three courses from the following (optional):

ANTH 220.1: Archaeology of Central Asia

ANTH 310.1: Gender, Kinship and Family (Anthropology of Kinship)

ANTH 320.1: Ethnicity and Identity in Multicultural Societies

ANTH 330.1: Religion and Spirituality as Cultural Categories

(Anthropology of Religion)

Choose two courses from the following (optional):

ANTH 315: Professional Practice and Project Management

ANTH 232.1: Language, Culture and Power (Linguistic Anthropology)

ANTH 232.1: Production and Exchange in Social Life (Economic Anthropology)

ANTH 132.1: Races, Human Diversity and Biology

(Introduction to Physical Anthropology)

Choose one course from the following (elective):

- ANTH 304: Islam in Central Asia: an Anthropological Approach (Anthropology of Islam)
- ANTH 224: Folklore of Central Asia
- ANTH 201/201.1: Human and Culture Co-evolution
- ANTH 258/258.2: Rock Art of Eurasia
- ANTH 215/215.1: Globalization, Migration and Transnationalism
- HIST 222: History of Central Asia: Culture and Identity
- HIST 307: Great Game: the International Competition for Central Asia
- ANTH 376: Power, State and Informal Politics in Central Asia (Political Anthropology)
- ANTH 235: Peoples and Cultures of Central Asia
- ANTH 259: Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East
- ANTH 208: Religion and Culture in Japan

Suggested Order of Study

<i>Fall Semester</i>		<i>Spring Semester</i>	
<i>Freshman Year</i>			
Cultural Concepts and Social Networks (Introduction to Cultural Anthropology)	6	Introduction to Archaeology	6
		International Development: Donors, NGOs, Communities and Cultures (Introduction to Development Anthropology)	6
<i>Sophomore Year</i>			
Archaeological Fieldwork (<i>summer</i>)	3	Fieldwork Research Methods	6
History of Anthropological Theories I	6	Archaeology of Central Asia (<i>optional</i>)	6
Races, Human Diversity and Biology (Introduction to Physical Anthropology) (<i>optional</i>)	6		
Language, Culture and Power (Linguistic Anthropology) (<i>optional</i>)	6		
<i>Junior Year</i>			
Anthropological Fieldwork (<i>summer</i>)	3	History of Anthropological Theories II	6
Ethnicity and Identity in Multicultural Societies (<i>optional</i>)	6	Gender, Kinship and Family (Anthropology of Kinship) (<i>optional</i>)	6
Religion and Spirituality as Cultural Categories (Anthropology of Religion) (<i>optional</i>)	6	Senior Seminar	6
Production and Exchange in Social Life (Economic Anthropology) (<i>optional</i>)	6		
<i>Senior Year</i>			
Senior Seminar	6		

Course Descriptions

ANTH 107: Cultural Concepts and Social Networks (Introduction to Cultural Anthropology)
6 credits

This course will acquaint you with important basics, on which all the anthropological theory and works are based and without which any anthropological research would hardly be possible. It is designed to celebrate the difference, creativity, and inventiveness expressed through culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and personality. It will also deal with the destructive aspects of culture and social life: the effects of class, caste, ethnic, racial and gender hierarchies in both simple and complex societies.

ANTH 120/120.1: International Development: Donors, NGOs, Communities and Cultures
(Introduction to Development Anthropology)

3/6 credits

This course introduces students to the field of development and to the role that anthropologists play in it. It will look at the history of development effort and evolution of its concept and will analyze major theories of development. It will review major directions of the development work, such as participatory development, use of indigenous knowledge, micro-credit schemes, natural and cultural resources management, politics of development, etc. It will introduce students to the nature of development projects and main principles of working with the communities, donors and local governments. Finally, this course will introduce students to the development discourse in the context of Central Asia. All in all, this course will be essential for anthropology students thinking of a career in applied anthropology and interested in the contemporary issues of developing nations.

ANTH 110/111: Introduction to Archeology

3/6 credits

This course examines theory, methods and techniques of investigating, reconstructing, interpreting, preserving, and ultimately learning about the past. It will briefly review human cultural chronology from the time of first humans, from the earliest Paleolithic ages to the present, and deal with not only the artifact remains but also with important social, economic, and even ideological questions, such as those on the origins of food production, social inequality, and civilization.

ANTH 200/200.1: History of Anthropological Theories I

3/6 credits

Prerequisite: ANTH 105/107

The course seeks to explore the appearance and development of the essential anthropological currents and concepts. We will make an attempt to discuss the evolution of anthropological theories in terms of national traditions: English, American, French, German and Soviet. At the end of the course, students will learn precursors of anthropology; evolutionism in all its guises; diffusions and culture area theories, functionalism and structural-functionalism; action-centered theories; processual and Marxist perspectives.

ANTH 300: Fieldwork (in Anthropology)

3 credits

Prerequisite: ANTH 302/302.1

This course introduces students to practical, hands-on fieldwork that will be done in a particular off-campus setting. The students will have an opportunity to implement their knowledge and skills obtained during the Fieldwork Research Methods course and to use their techniques at the research site, as well as to compile and analyze the data received.

ANTH 301: Fieldwork (in Archeology)

3 credits

Prerequisite: ANTH 110/111

Students will use various kinds of archaeological methods, such as the investigation of archaeological monuments, dating, synchronization, and excavation. Students have the opportunity to participate in archaeological fact-finding trips within the region in Bishkek, Balykchy, Bel-Saz, Chap, Kochkor, Bashy-Sook, Son-Kol, Tash-Rabat, and Ak-Olon. At the end of the fieldwork, students present their diaries and submit a report on their fieldwork to the instructor.

ANTH 302: Fieldwork Research Methods

3 credits

Prerequisite: ANTH 105/107

This course introduces the qualitative research methods with a focus on the tools of ethnography: interview techniques, survey methods and qualitative data analysis. Students will gain some practical experience in research design, developing research questions, selecting research site(s), case(s), and informants; conducting interviews, observation and participant observation and analyzing collected data. The main goal of the course is to prepare the students for the summer fieldwork.

ANTH 400: History of Anthropological Theories II (Contemporary Anthropological Thought)

3 credits

Prerequisite: ANTH 200/200.1

This course is intended to give a selected overview of anthropological theory from the 1960s to the present. Much of the readings covered in this course are not anthropological per se, but rather could be classified as social theory. This course introduces students to a range of classic and contemporary social theorists upon whose work anthropologists have frequently drawn in analyzing their ethnographic and historical case material.

ANTH 411: Senior Seminar

3 credits

Prerequisite: ANTH 200/200.1

This course is designed to help students in preparing and writing their senior theses. It represents a mixture of instructor and guest lectures. There will be no required readings. From the very beginning students start working on their own thesis and on literature review. In this course, students learn to develop a key research idea, to compose a paper outline and to design research methodology for their senior thesis. At the end of this semester students are expected to complete one or two chapters of their senior theses.

ANTH 220/220.1: Archaeology of Central Asia

3/6 credits

The course introduces the specific features of the archaeology in Central Asia. We will get the knowledge about human cultural chronology from the earliest Paleolithic ages, to the present in the region of Central Asia. You will know more about sites of first people who settled in prehistoric time, ancient and medieval nomads of Central Asia, development of medieval urban culture, prosperity of Silk Road and late medieval nomad culture. You can imagine the space of the Central Asian archaeology in the world. We will also examine exciting discoveries that make the news during the semester. The outline of the course was built in chronological order.

ANTH 310: Gender, Kinship and Family (Anthropology of Kinship)

3 credits

The course examines kinship, social organization, gender, politics and new reproductive technologies. It will study some kinship systems existed in the past and present and look at different theoretical concepts on kinship, marriage and family.

ANTH 320/320.1: Ethnicity and Identity in Multicultural Societies (Ethnicity and Identity)

3/6 credits

Prerequisite: FYS 111/114/116

The course will discuss definitions, methods and main approaches to the study of ethnicity and ethnic identity, ethnic stratification and ethnic relations in multiethnic states. It will explore the relationship between ethnicity and culture, ethnicity and race, ethnicity and nationalism, ethnicity and democracy. The course will discover the origins of ethnic conflicts, the ways of its prevention and resolution, and finally the contradiction existing between ethnicity and globalization.

ANTH 330/330.1: Religion and Spirituality as Cultural Categories (Anthropology of Religion)

3/6 credits

Prerequisite: FYS 100/111/114/116

The aim of this course is to give students an idea of the anthropological approach toward religion. In this course students look at the themes that have guided the anthropology of religion throughout the centuries. It also aims to present, analyze and discuss various religious phenomena, such as rituals and sacred sites, witchcraft and sorcery, death and spirit possession. The course will concentrate on traditional religions and the non-formal practices of major religions.

ANTH 315: Professional Practice and Project Management

3 credits

ANTH 232/232.1: Language, Culture and Power (Language and Culture)

3/6 credits

Prerequisite: FYS 100/111/114/116

This course introduces one of the four traditional fields of anthropology - linguistic anthropology that represents "the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice". The aim of this course is to understand the crucial role played by language in the constitution of the society and its cultural representations.

ANTH 391: Production and Exchange in Social Life (Economic Anthropology)

3 credits

Prerequisite: ANTH 105/FYS 111/114/116

This course critically engages the idea of economies and markets by looking at different modes of exchange - from non-capitalist (gift) exchange to our modern "free market" - as well as the societies in which they emerged. Throughout the course, we will seek to understand how modern aspects of capitalism (debt, credit) relate to their non-market predecessors. Throughout the semester, we will explore the changing conceptions that surround ideas like gifts, values, debt/finance, commodities, and the market. More broadly, this course seeks to clarify the relationship between exchange/production and political institutions.

ANTH 132/132.1: Races, Human Diversity and Biology (Introduction to Physical Anthropology)

3/6 credits

This course offers a detailed introduction to physical/biological anthropology through the presentation of the human evolutionary record and the present diversity of Homo sapiens. It traces human evolution from its earliest primate beginnings over four million years ago to the appearance of anatomically modern man, at least c. 40-35,000 B.C. The course proceeds with a description of the advanced physical and behavioral characteristics of the primate order. In addition to the consideration of the fossil palaeontological record, archaeological materials and biochemical evidence are presented to document the story of our evolution.

ANTH 224: Folklore of Central Asia

3 credits

This course is designed to give students a general overview of what folklore is and what styles/genres it has all over the world. The ultimate outcome of the course is to acquaint students with the Central Asian folkloric genres based on oral tradition. Within the framework of the course we will work on themes, symbols, and motifs of oral narratives, exploring various interpretations. We will also look at folkloric material as a performance, paying attention to folk minstrels (akyns, bakshy, ozan, jyrav), narrators of folklore. Much emphasis would be on basic skills like recalling sequence of events, separating main ideas from details, recognizing fact from opinion, summarizing, outlining and note-taking.

ANTH 376: Power, State and Informal Politics in Central Asia (Political Anthropology)

3 credits

This course charts the development of an explicitly anthropological approach to the study of the political phenomena. This course explores the constitution of political authority in reference to ethnographic investigations that will take us from the problems of early state origins to the transformations of the post-colonial/post-socialist. Our discussions and readings bring forward the problems of structure and process, history and practice, that animate anthropological approaches to political life. Throughout the course, we will attempt to define anthropology's distinct contribution to the study of the political and set forth an agenda for the field's role in contemporary theory and practice.

ANTH 235/235.1: Peoples and Cultures of Central Asia

3/6 credits

This interdisciplinary course is an introduction to the history, politics and culture of Central Asia from the ancient periods to present days. Ethno-historical and cultural survey will take in those regions, which today comprise former Soviet republics (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan), Mongolia, Xinjiang, Northern Afghanistan and Northern India. Students will examine ways in which Central Asia and its sedentary and pastoral cultures have been central to the world history and civilizations. Through the primary and secondary readings, class-discussions and audio-visual materials they will also become familiar with various theories and methodologies used to study ethnic and cultural identity of the region.

ANTH 259: Peoples and Cultures of Middle East

3 credits

The course will provide an anthropological introduction to the Middle Eastern region. It will discuss such issues as history, religion, ethnicity, the importance of kinship, family and tribal relations, folk culture and printed media. Specific classes will address the position of women in the Middle East and the challenges the society and people in the region are faced with today.

ANTH 208: Religion and Culture in Japan

3 credits

The course discusses the cultural development of Japan, looking at the Japanese culture and religion from a historical perspective. It will discuss the main religions of Japan, Shinto and Buddhism, Bushido – the way of the warriors, Japanese festivals, arts, theatre and modern life of the Japanese. The last part of the course will be devoted to the modern traditions of Japan that have been developed recently under the impact of modernity and globalization.

ANTH 304 **Islam in Central Asia: an Anthropological Approach** (Anthropology of Islam)

6 credits

This course introduces the basic concepts of Islam and provides with knowledge on a brief history of Islam in Central Asia. The course is designed to teach students to look at Islam from

an anthropological perspective and to analyze and interpret religious practices from insider's point of view. Within the course students will have an opportunity to be familiarized with ongoing scholarly debates on current issues of Islam through reading academic papers and participation in the class discussions. Students also will be encouraged to contribute to ongoing academic debates through individual research projects, which will be based on ethnographic data.

HIST 222 History of Central Asia: Culture and Identity

3 credits

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the contemporary history of Central Asia and integrate the theoretical and practical issues in the study of history with important "facts" and approaches necessary to make sense of Central Asia. In a chronological order, we will explore the historical developments in the region, both in the sedentary areas and in the nomadic territories, beginning with the Russian colonization in the 19th century and concluding in the post-Socialist period. Many of the readings focus on Central-Asian region's development, providing students with a greater understanding of how processes take place locally and regionally.

ANTH 201/201.1: Human and Culture Co-evolution

3/6 credits

The course goal is to show how the evolutionary framework can unify the concepts of human origins, changes and cultural diversity. The course presents human diversity in a dynamic concept where human expansions over time and geographical space have fashioned our present biological and cultural world. You can understand how biological and cultural theories have themselves evolved in an attempt to paint a more and more precise picture of human evolution, both in a genetic and anthropological framework.

ANTH 215/215.1 Globalization, Migration and Transnationalism

3/6 credits

This course will focus the theoretical intersections between three distinct yet strongly interrelated themes that have clearly characterized the turn of the 21st century: globalization, migration, and transnationalism. Globalization signifies the fusion of ideas and cultures, homogenization and differentiation, Bollywood movies and sushi bars. Migration refers to physical movement of people across geographic space: labor migrants, refugees, pilgrims, conquistadores, hippies, academics. Transnationalism, the youngest of these three phenomena, in some ways brings together the first two topics, as it considers how new social fields emerge on both regional and global scales, crossing multiple borders and challenging the authority of the nation-state as a key signifier of identity and belonging. Each of these three phenomena represents an established field of study in its own right, extensively theorized and possessed of a substantial and growing body of literature. Our attempt at mixing and stirring them in the anthropological frying pan will be a teaching/learning experiment that aims to challenge reductionism, spark creative thinking and analysis, and enhance the complexity of students' perceptions of the global community of the 21st century.

ANTH 258/258.2 Rock Art of Eurasia

3/6 credits

This course explores rock art studies as an important line of archaeological evidence for prehistoric life ways the world over. We will study rock art with reference to human aesthetic and religious expression, scientific investigation, interactions with landscape including economic activities, expression of ethnic identities and boundaries, and its significance to local peoples, researchers and cultural heritage tourism. Also this course requires students to see rock art in its landscape context.

HIST 307 Great Game: the International Competition for Central Asia

3 credits

The course examines geopolitics, economy and scholarly explorations in the period of the Great Game. “Great Game” relates to the international competition for the dominance in Central Asia, especially in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century and exactly between Great Britain and Russia. The geographic area will be the region from Iran to north-western China and from Kazakhstan to Afghanistan, Northern Pakistan and Northern India, and, to a lesser degree, Tibet. They will become familiar with the descriptions and accounts left by Western and Russian travelers and draw some intellectual links to the contemporary socio-political and cultural situation in the world and the region.