

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology and Education (Ph.D.)

Brief Program Description —The program in Anthropology and Education offers a disciplinary approach that carefully explores and contributes to the analysis and understanding of educational processes in schools and classrooms, in families, community centers, in churches and in all settings globally where education may proceed. The Ph.D. degree is awarded through the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Columbia University.

General Requirements

Minimum Point Requirement

Each student develops, in collaboration with their advisors, a program of study in anthropology designed to establish a high level of competency. A minimum of 75 points of acceptable graduate credit is required for the Ph.D. These credits may be earned by course work, through independent study, and through guided research.

Program Plan

Along with the faculty report of the examination and proposal, students are required to complete a “Program Plan” of study utilizing the college Degree Audit system. For more information on this, please see the ODS website under the tab Degree Audit. Upon administrative review by ODS, the student will be requested to acquire recommendation for the Master of Philosophy from the department. After receiving approval from the department, ODS will finalize the process with GSAS which signals a change of status, particularly as it relates to the student’s relationship to Columbia University.

Continuous Registration

The student becomes obligated to register for continuous dissertation advisement (ITSF 8900) until the dissertation has received final approval. The fees can be waived through a variety of means for at least four semesters (e.g., by registering for ITSF 6200: Fieldwork Outside the United States; leaves of absence; etc.)

Examination Credit

Of the 75 graduate points required for the degree, a minimum of 45 must be taken for evaluative letter grade.

Major Courses (45 points)

These courses prepare students with the requisite knowledge of the epistemological, theoretical, methodological, ethnographic, and substantive areas of anthropology. These courses also aim to develop competency in the discipline while addressing the specific intellectual interests of the student. At least 40 of these points must be in anthropology courses.

At least 15 points of the anthropology requirements must be taken within the program. A minimum of 25 points of the 40 points of the anthropology course requirements must be taken at Teachers College or in other faculties of Columbia University. Up to 15 points in anthropology courses may be taken at other graduate institutions who are members of the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium, to satisfy the major course requirements..

Several required kinds of courses must be taken (30 points): the four semester sequence of

colloquium (plus summer field research), which represents the core training module of the program (12 points); two area courses, one within and one outside of one's focus (6 points); two sub-field courses in linguistic anthropology, as most other courses will be in cultural anthropology (6 points), and research methods courses beyond the colloquium (6 points), which must include at least one methods course uncommon to anthropology (such as statistics).

Specific Requirements and Typical Course of Study

Specifically Required of All Students:

- **ITSF 4011 (*Contexts of Education / First Year Colloquium*)** — First course in colloquium sequence, to be taken during the student's first Fall semester.
- **ITSF 5610 (*First- and Second-Year Colloquium in Applied Anthropology*)** — Taken in the Spring semesters of the student's first and second years.
- Ten to twelve weeks of summer field research to be carried out at the end of the student's first year. Up to 6 points in ITSF 6910 Studies in Anthropology and Education may be earned for this research.
- **ITSF 5611 (*Second Year Colloquium in Anthropological Method*)** — Taken in the student's second Fall semester.

Other Course Requirements:

- **Area Courses:** Two ethnographic area courses. An "area" may be a geographic region as well as a substantial population with self-identifying members such as ethnic, gendered, and racialized groups, subcultures, professions, and transnational populations. One geographic regional ethnographic course must be taken from outside the student's main area of ethnographic interest; the other area course should be from within the student's area of specialization. If no area course focused within a student's primary area of interest is offered during the period of coursework, students will need to arrange an independent study focused on this area.
- **Research Methods Courses:** Six points besides the colloquium sequence. These courses should be chosen to provide a thorough grounding in anthropological research methods, such as Introductory Methods of Ethnography and Participant Observation plus a different kind of methods course (outside the program):
 - Introduction to Statistical Analysis
 - Quantitative Methods in International and Comparative Education
 - Network Analysis
- **Subfield Courses:** Two courses in linguistic anthropology or sociolinguistics. Some possible courses include:
 - Language, Cultural Politics, and Education
 - Communication and Culture
 - Global Literacies
- **Other Major Courses (15 points):** 15 additional points of anthropological coursework. Most, if not all, of these courses should be seminars in social theory and/or ethnography that relate to the topics of the student's research. Mainly these will be in anthropology at

Teachers College, GSAS's Department of Anthropology, or elsewhere within the consortium where students find the most relevant courses.

Grade Requirements — An overall grade average of B+ is expected. Receiving two B grades or lower, two Incomplete grades, or one F grade will lead to a review by the program faculty and may result in dismissal from the program.

Transfer Credit Policy

We encourage students to request for transfer credits as part of program planning. We regularly approve the transfer of credits even if the courses are not directly anthropological however, if the program faculty determine that transfer credits are not directly related to anthropology it must be clear that:

1. that all remaining 45 points must have been cleared by us as anthropological; and that
2. should problems surface at exam time, we might require extra classes beyond the minimum.

Students who will need to transfer credits accumulated from institutions other than Teachers College or from other departments will need to apply for a transfer of credit. It is advisable to have transfer credits done by the end of the first year of study, but it must be completed prior to the completion of the certification exam process to ensure that the student has met all requirements and is ready to begin the dissertation process. The transfer of credits policy , procedures, contact information, and FAQ are available through the [Office of the Registrar's website](#).

Transfer Credit Evaluation — Of the 75 points required for the degree, a minimum of 45 points must be completed at Teachers College, and a maximum of 30 points may be transferred or earned in graduate courses from other recognized graduate schools.

Language Requirement

Both programs in Anthropology and Education and Applied Anthropology require a high level of proficiency in one language other than English. To demonstrate this please see Appendix D in the ODS Ph.D. Requirements Bulletin. The programs are committed to the fundamental importance of language skills for anthropological research, whether for gaining access to secondary literatures in a foreign language, to utilize works in other intellectual traditions, or in primary research. Evidence of appropriate language training is now required by granting agencies, and advanced language skills are a requisite for making contributions to many fields of anthropological inquiry.

Language training should be considered central to a student's program of graduate training. Language courses are not generally calculated as part of the regular course load, and they do not satisfy GSAS requirements for graded courses. First- and second-year students should seek advice from the faculty about gaining advanced proficiency in a principal research language to satisfy the program requirement. Thereafter, the dissertation sponsor should be consulted.

The purpose of the language proficiency exam is to test reading knowledge of a language of scholarship. Spoken fluency is a plus but in some cases insufficient preparation for the written translation of scholarly texts. Students should keep this in mind and prepare accordingly. Passage of the language exam is required for admission to candidacy, the M.Phil. degree, and ABD

status, which is required by many dissertation grants such as the Wenner Gren and NSF. Therefore students should complete the exam prior to the qualifying exam and dissertation proposal defense.

Course, Examination, and Dissertation Advisement

Advising at TC can seem a bit confusing because there are occasions in a doctoral student's career that may or may not involve different faculty members in the advisor role: a preliminary advisor, an exam advisor, and a dissertation advisor (formerly called "sponsor.") In addition, students may change advisors at other times, if this seems appropriate, given the student's changing interests.

In accordance with TC policy, all students are assigned a randomly selected preliminary advisor prior to arrival to assist with coursework planning and other matters. Students must meet with their advisor for approval of their program plan at the beginning of each semester before finalizing their course schedule. In addition, each student meets with the assembled faculty two or three times a year—at registration and at the ends of the first and second years. Students are expected to talk about their interests and plans with all members of the faculty.

By the end of the first semester of the second year, or after they have completed a third of the total required courses, students are required to ask one of the program faculty members to advise them on the organization of their examinations and preparation of the dissertation proposal, and other matters related to the dissertation process. The faculty member should be chosen based on their theoretical, methodological, or area expertise. Often this faculty member becomes the advisor of the dissertation. However, within certain guidelines (check with ODS), any faculty member of Columbia University is eligible to serve as dissertation advisor.

As their interests change, students may decide to ask a different faculty member to serve as advisor. This process is relatively informal in the initial stages. By the time the proposal has been accepted and an advisor has signed on the dissertation, changing this advisor requires that a formal request be made to the Program Director, Department Chair, and ODS so that all involved are made aware of the change.

Certification as Doctoral Student, Dissertation, and Completion of Program

All students are required to go through the following steps:

Comprehensive Exam —All doctoral students must pass the Advanced Certification Exam. Its purpose is to test the student's proficiency with key concepts and issues in anthropology as well as mastery of basic professional literature in the chosen areas of specialization. Certification shows that the student has attained competencies outlined in the course requirements as well as the methodological, area, and topical knowledge necessary to conduct their proposed research and meet expectations of anthropological professionalism.

The Advanced Certification Exam consists of three written examinations: Area, Theory, and Methods. The precise scope must be approved at the onset of the exam preparation process by the major advisor or advisors. After the written exams have been graded by First and Second Readers, an oral examination follows. It includes follow-up questions on the written exams. Upon successful completion of the three written examinations, an oral examination is given (typically immediately preceding the dissertation proposal hearing — see next section). The student must pass the oral examination satisfactorily to advance to the dissertation proposal hearing.

Typically, one written examination focuses on the ethnographic world region or global population most relevant to the student's dissertation project. The second focuses on the theoretical perspectives most relevant to the proposed dissertation research and the student's future professional goals. The third focuses on either anthropology and education or applied anthropology.

These proctored examinations are administered live in one of the Program's offices unless special arrangements have been made through the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities.

Exam Preparation and Scheduling:

Each written examination is prepared and graded by two examiners, the First and Second Readers, based upon bibliographies the student prepares in collaboration with the examiners, who, along with the student's advisor, must approve the final lists.

1. Exams are best taken in the third year, even before all courses have been completed.
2. The Advisor for the exams must be a member of the core faculty of the Programs in Anthropology.
3. Assembly of final bibliographies for the exams **MUST** start no later than early in the semester before the student plans to take the exam and minimally 6 months prior to the month of the exams. Ideally, students will begin assembling preliminary lists as soon as they enter the program, drawing on their coursework and independent reading.
4. Bibliography length is flexible within a range of 50 to 75 items. The final draft of each bibliography should include a brief statement (200 words) summarizing the main issues the exam addresses, as well as 5 questions that the bibliographies help to answer. Students will find that assembly of bibliographies works best if they develop questions and select readings in a reciprocal process, listing the 10-12 most relevant items below each question.

5. In initial meetings with the advisor, 4-6 of the exam readers will be selected. Readers must be approved by the advisor. At least 2 of the 6 readers must be members of the core faculty of the Programs in Anthropology. The other readers may come from the Program, elsewhere at TC, CU, or other institutions, with qualifications that conform to TC (EdD, PhD) and GSAS (PhD) rules.
6. One of each pair of readers is designated First Reader. First Readers must be specialists in the topics focal to the exam and Second Readers must be conversant with those topics.
7. Students are expected to draft bibliographies in consultation with the readers in time for the readers and the student's advisor to approve the bibliographies by the end of the semester prior to the exam.
8. While students are drafting bibliographies, they should also start choosing dates for each of their exams. This must be scheduled with the Anthropology Program Assistant. Note that exams are not scheduled in the summer or in the latter half of the semester.
9. The final drafts of each bibliography must be officially approved no later than 3 months prior to the student's exams, and ideally 6 months prior. This means that bibliographies for Fall semester exams must be approved by the end of the Spring semester in May, and Spring exam lists no later than the end of November.
10. Once each draft is approved, the student will have their advisor and each reader sign the 'Final Approval of ACE Bibliographies' form and send it in to the Anthropology Program Assistant, along with the ACE Scheduling Form that indicates the dates of the student's exams for the following semester.
11. The readers of exams may edit the questions the students will be asked to answer during the exam.

Dissertation Proposal —

1. From the outset of their studies students should begin ensuring that they have adequate competence in any field language(s) necessary for the dissertation research they will propose. In some cases necessary field languages differ from those covered by the language examination, which focuses on languages of scholarship.
2. After passing the comprehensive exam, an oral examination is given on the student's proposal for field research. It is typically held immediately after the oral component of the certification examinations. The oral examination, also called the dissertation proposal defense, lasts for around an hour. The student briefly presents their research (<10 minutes), and the faculty members discuss and ask questions about the project.
3. The student's advisor forms a committee of two to three members of the core faculty of the Program and the student's dissertation sponsor. If the sponsor is different from the advisor, they will assume the role of official advisor subsequent to passage of the proposal oral exam.
4. Candidates must pass both the written and oral part of the examination to be recommended for certification. In the term the Dissertation proposal defense is held, students must be registered for ITSF 7500.

Dissertation Field Research — One to two years of original anthropological field research is required in preparation for the writing of the dissertation. In each term this post-proposal dissertation field research is held, students must be registered for ITSF 6200. This course grants full-time status and meets the requirements of Obligation for Continuous Enrollment from ODS.

Dissertation

After completing a period of field research, the student starts writing. This is best done in close contact with the sponsor who determines when drafts are ready to be circulated to other members of the committee. When the sponsor and at least one other committee member deem the dissertation ready, a defense is set. The membership of the final committee is discussed in consultation with the sponsor. In the final term of defense, all Ph.D. students must register for TI 8900, a course that signals to GSAS that a Ph.D. defense is being held.