

Anthropology Program Requirements

Master of Arts in Anthropology and Education

M.A. Fast Facts:

Approx. 11 courses in a 1 ½ - 2 ½ year span
Full-time or Part-time
Integrative Project (Master Thesis/Article)

Program Description — The master program in Anthropology and Education concerns the cultural, social, and linguistic dimensions of education. Our program offers insight to better understand inequalities, cultural differences, linguistic diversity, and the wealth of human life for educational purposes. We examine educational processes in schools and classrooms, in families, on street corners, in community centers, in churches, and in all other non-conventional education settings.

Anthropology is well positioned to answer some of the toughest questions of education and policymaking because it emphasizes spending time with and learning from *people*. The program highlights participatory ethnography: engaging in and observing human activities and conversing with people as a means of improving education and collaborating with local groups and organizations. As one of the only master programs in Anthropology and Education in the world, we offer a unique outlook on how to understand and support diverse approaches to education in and outside the classroom.

Our program offers students courses and related concentrations in a highly individualized fashion. We strive to maintain smaller entering cohorts to magnify every student's experience. In addition to core Anthropology courses, we encourage our students to take courses with other departments and programs at Teachers College and Columbia University, more generally. For example, many of our students take courses in the International and Comparative Education, Technology in Education, and Applied Linguistics programs.

The concentrations below help students organize individualized course selections into cohesive courses of study. Our students choose a concentration that most aptly fits their research or professional interests, while faculty work with students to create a course schedule that supports these interests. Below is a list of concentrations that serve as guidelines to you:

- Urban Education
- Culture and Communication
- Ethnographic Theory and Methods
- Education Beyond Schools
- Applied Anthropology

Urban Education:

As the human population increases, moves around the globe, and settles in ever denser urban environments, we must develop new understandings of the populations educators face. To the classic issues regarding poverty and class stratification, or ethnic and racial multiplicity, new issues have arisen surrounding migration and the delocalization of many groups. Our emphasis in Urban Education introduces students to the issues and current thinking on how to reform educational institutions to serve populations in their conditions.

Careers for students who have emphasized Urban Education include working in governmental and non-governmental agencies concerned with the educational aspects of their work (in the worlds of medicine, communication, business, etc.) both in the United States and abroad.

Suggested programs of study include:

- 16 points in general anthropology
- 6 points in research methods techniques
- 10 points in courses related to specific issues in urban education (including courses in sociology, economics, international education, etc.)
- an internship in an urban educational institution
- an integrative project related to the course work and internship

Culture and Communication:

Much of education has to do with communication. Teachers project their voices to classrooms of students. Students read and write, though how they do so may not coincide with the predominant languages or varieties of schools. Disagreements happen on playgrounds. Young people learn from grandparents and parents. Students take standardized exams, upon which schools can be judged as “failing.” Much, if not all, of education is communicative, and communication is inextricably linked to and indicative of cultural and linguistic differences.

Our emphasis on communication means that educational initiatives must be culturally and linguistically relevant and sustaining. We aim to re-think much of educational research through a more communicative-focused perspective that foregrounds diversity. This concentration encourages students to ask: How does communication happen? How can we, as researchers, teachers, policymakers, and activists, understand language? What consequences do ways of speaking and writing have for students, teachers, and administrators? And how do institutional conceptions of communication and identity complicate successful schooling and life for students?

Careers for students who have emphasized Communication & Culture include teaching, working in governmental and non-governmental agencies concerned with the educational or communicative aspects of their work (in the worlds of medicine, communication, business, etc.) both in the United States and abroad, curriculum design, and ethnographic consultation.

Suggested programs of study include, with 32 total points:

- 15 points in general anthropology (for example, courses like Communication & Culture; Languages, Cultural Politics, and Education; Dynamics of Family Communication; or other anthropology courses that the student sees as relevant)
- 3 or more points in ethnographic research methods techniques (to better be able to listen to others)
- 6 points in courses related to communication and/or culture outside of the anthropology program, including courses in bilingual education, applied linguistics, international education (where there are several courses on language policy and literacy), literacies etc.
- 6 points in courses outside the program that develop practical skills (such as about culturally relevant pedagogy)
- an internship that applies the themes of the course of study
- an integrative project related to the course work

Ethnographic Theory and Methods:

This concentration seeks to combine critical approaches of the study of organizations, schools, and other kinds of institutions with close ethnographic observation and analysis. We train students in anthropological theory that considers various levels of social life, moving from the details of daily life to state governance and regimes of power, as well as across the globe with today's mobile flows of people, technologies, and ideas. This concentration combines this approach to theory with methods courses that help students systematically understand how to learn *from people*, not merely to study, measure, or evaluate them.

Students from this concentration are well prepared to apply to doctoral programs in anthropology, other social sciences, or education, as well as to seek jobs based on their methodological expertise. Increasingly companies, NGOs, and multinational corporations seek employees who can carefully observe, interview, and write up reports about how to improve their workplace, as well.

This two-year program builds on an apprenticeship model around a supervised research project. While students have much flexibility, they are encouraged to follow our colloquium sequence, including a first year focusing on readings foundational to anthropology; a course that meets with two years of cohorts and various faculty members to discuss the students' original research projects; and a second-year course that works with students to analyze the research that they have conducted. It also focuses on courses introducing ethnographic methods and techniques.

The first year culminates with a research proposal and summer ethnographic fieldwork. The second year develops what was started through courses and seminars that take the students through the analysis and writing of the research project they conducted at the end of their first year. For their paper for graduation, students end up with a draft of an article (around 25-30 pages) that has benefited from significant feedback of peers and faculty.

Suggested program of study includes:

- 15 points in general anthropology (courses like Social Contexts of Education, Cultural Foundations of Education, Globalization, Mobility, & Education, Anthropology of Education)
- 6 points in methodology (such as Introduction to Participant Observation and Ethnography, Advanced Ethnographic Methods, Introduction to Quantitative Methods)
- 6 points in complementary social science and educational courses that can enhance student expertise (such as international and comparative education, sociology of education, political science of education)
- 5 points in relevant electives (such as regional studies courses like Schooling Across the Americas; courses on culturally relevant pedagogy; organizational management, etc.)

Education Beyond Schools:

Education is everywhere, from babies' first exploratory grabs and bumps to adults' groping encounters with new technologies. Schools actually account for relatively little of what we must learn to get along in everyday life. This concentration encourages close examination of settings and practices that fly beneath the educative radar, like sports or gardening or cooking, as well as those that more closely resemble schooling but take place elsewhere, like gyms, community centers, businesses, libraries, and museums.

Schooling itself also extends beyond school walls. For example, middle class American families take school-like behavior with them into all kinds of non-school places like the supermarket when a parent holds up an item and asks a child, "what is this?" or points at a clock and asks, "what time is it?" If judging the answer right or wrong is part of the sequence, then school-talk makes schooling present, beyond school. Further, doing school outside school prepares participants for school, while the education it takes for competency in many jobs like farming, waiting tables, and making things by hand can be arduous yet count for little in the world of credentials. Thus looking at education beyond schools not only helps us understand what happens around us but also how various trajectories on the way to expertise track with or fall outside relations of power.

Suggested programs of study include, with 32 total points:

- 15 points in general anthropology (for example, courses like Communication & Culture; Technology and Culture; Dynamics of Family Interaction; Globalization, Mobility and Education; or other anthropology courses that the student sees as relevant)
- 3 or more points in ethnographic research methods techniques (to better be able to learn from and with others)
- 6 points in courses outside of the anthropology program related to settings and practices through which educating takes place, including courses in media and technology, International & Comparative Education, Family & Community Education.
- 6 points in courses outside the program that develop practical skills (such as arts management or program assessment).
- an internship that applies the themes of the course of study

- an integrative project focused on education beyond schooling
- *Note that students find their own internships. Some may be combined with Independent Study for course credit. Consult your advisor.*

Applied Anthropology:

Applied anthropologists learn from people what they need in order to contribute to reaching a goal or solving a problem. For example, a past student studied disaster warning and response systems for her IP with the aim of designing a system to warn residents of impending mudslides. Another focused on how small farmer communities obtained and used government grants to improve crop yields. A recent MA graduate investigated ways to bring urban and rural Chinese students together online so that urbanites would be exposed to values beyond economic success and rural students could practice their English. Yet another interviewed members of arts groups about their civic contribution with an eye toward developing such a program herself.

Students with specific goals and projects in mind can thus build insights on method and strategy from their coursework, while planning an Integrative Project that reviews relevant anthropological literature or incorporates information on previous applied anthropological endeavors into an essay that can inform an actual proposal to gain support for the project.

Suggested programs of study include, with 32 total points:

- 9-12 points in general anthropology (for example, courses like Communication & Culture; Technology and Culture; Dynamics of Family Interaction; Globalization, Mobility and Education; or other anthropology courses that the student sees as relevant)
- 3-6 points in ethnographic research methods techniques (to better be able to listen to others)
- 6 points in courses outside of the anthropology program related to the contexts of your focal issues (health, language, policy, conflict, diversity)
- 6 points in courses outside the program that develop practical skills (mediation and peace-building, media and technology, planning...)
- an internship that applies the themes of the course of study
- an integrative project related to the course work
- *Note that students find their own internships. Some may be combined with Independent Study for course credit. Consult your advisor.*

Core Course Requirement — At least five courses (15 points) in the Programs in Anthropology, TC.

Other course requirements — Three courses (9 points) taken within TC in fields complementary to anthropology (such as economics, history, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology).

At least four other courses (8–9 points) that directly contribute to the emerging professional interest of the candidate. These may be taken at Teachers College, GSAS, one of the other

professional schools (e.g., Public Health, S.I.P.A., etc.), or area institutes of Columbia University.

Required courses — No individual course is required, per se, for the M.A. in Anthropology and Education. However, courses offered by the program all fulfill the core course requirements.

Integrative project — A non-course, advisor-approved, culminating project is a requirement of all masters' degrees in Anthropology and Education. The exact nature of this requirement is determined with a faculty member.

TC Breadth Requirement — To satisfy college breadth requirements, master students must complete a minimum of 6 points in TC courses that are outside of their major programs. They can reach that 6-point threshold by any combination of courses that they choose in consultation with their advisors. Note that courses in the ICE Programs are outside the Anthropology programs and thus meet the breadth requirement.

Transfer credit evaluation — No transfer credits are allowed for the M.A. program.