Master of Education in Anthropology and Education

Program Description — The Ed.M. in Anthropology and Education is for students who have already obtained a master degree and are looking to extend their knowledge of anthropology and/or education. Students can usually transfer up to 30 credits from their previous master degree. Description reflects the same as the Master of Arts program.

The master program in Anthropology and Education is concerned with 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 policy-making because of its emphasis on 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.

In addition to core Anthropology courses, we encourage our students to take courses with other departments and program 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.

Our program offers students related courses and concentrations in a highly individualized fashion. We strive to maintain smaller entering cohorts in order to magnify every student’s experience. 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 support these interests. Below is a list of concentrations that students can choose from:

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

**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 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.)

**Minimum point requirement** — Minimally, candidates for the Master of Education degree in Anthropology and Education take 40 points in courses related to the main fields of the discipline, including at least 25 points in sociocultural anthropology. This may include work in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences or in one of the other professional schools, or area institutes of the University. A minimum of three courses (9 points) must be taken in fields foundational to anthropology (economics, history, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology).

An additional 20 points must also be taken to complete the course of study. These courses should be chosen so as to enhance the professional preparation of the student in his or her expected field of practice, whether it is in education,
public service (either at home or abroad), business, etc. They may be organized so as to satisfy the requirements for a Masters of Arts degree in a professional field. These courses may be taken at Teachers College, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, one of the other professional schools, or area institutes of the University.

**Required courses** — No individual course is required, per se, for the Ed.M. in Anthropology and Education. However, courses offered by the department are all considered “core courses” and can be used to 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** — Up to 30 of the required 60 points may be transferred from previous graduate course work to the extent that they fulfill some of the requirements listed above. In the case of students designing a joint M.A./Ed.M. with other programs at the College.