

Introduction to
Anthropology:
Holistic and Applied
Research on Being
Human

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MODULE 1: WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY

What is Anthropology?

“The essence of the anthropological point of view is that in order to understand ourselves, we need to study others.” –J. H. Rowe, 1965

Anthropology is a diverse field that encompasses what it means to be human. It is a field for people who are curious about why people act the way they do. Anthropologists make strange things familiar and find the strange in familiar things. To some degree, we are all anthropologists. If you have ever found yourself questioning why various groups of people have different marriage customs or wondering who built the first city in the world or what makes humans different from other primates, then you are already thinking anthropologically!

Anthropology is different than other fields because of how anthropologists study human life and culture. They utilize **holistic**, **comparative**, and **relative** approaches because so many human cultures exist, and those cultures are impacted by a large number of factors. For example, an anthropologist may study refugee groups with a focus on the of



Video 1.1. Check out what anthropologists do with MIT Anthropology’s “Doing Anthropology” video for more details!

hate speech on a Pennsylvania community. Other anthropologists may study how prehistoric humans responded to rising or falling sea levels and climate change over thousands of years along the coast or the complications of human skeletal analysis.

Because it is such a diverse discipline, anthropology typically is separated into four fields: **cultural, linguistic, archaeology, and biological**. Most anthropologists specialize in one or two of these fields. These four fields help divide the study of humanity into more manageable pieces, but they don't exist in a vacuum, separate from one another. Some researchers identify an additional fifth field of **applied anthropology**. Anthropological research often overlaps multiple fields as anthropologists search for answers to explain human complexity. This is because anthropologists recognize the importance of a **holistic** approach—to understand one piece of the puzzle, you must see how each puzzle piece interacts to create the whole picture.

Each of the four fields can be characterized by common theoretical approaches or methodologies, but there is a lot of variation within each of these fields. **Cultural or social anthropology** and **linguistic anthropology** strive to understand aspects of human culture that relate to the mind and communication, while **archaeology** and **biological or physical anthropology** emphasize the body and physical objects that we use throughout our lives.

Cultural anthropologists work with living human populations to understand how cultures form and are influenced by the world around them. They might question how a society's rules are established, including proper ways to dress, communicate, eat, and worship, or they might question how established rules impact people's daily lives. Cultural anthropologists use both qualitative and quantitative measures in their work. The foremost method used is **participant observation**, wherein the anthropologists live within a community to understand how its dynamics work by engaging with the individuals in that community by talking to local people in informal settings or using more systematic methods, such as one-on-one interviews or questionnaires. They may also live in the same type of housing, prepare the same foods, and complete the same chores as the local occupants to gain a deeper insight into how the community functions. These field experiences often culminate in **ethnographies**, or narrative descriptions of the culture.

Ethnographic studies provide descriptions and interpretations about the practices of different cultural groups. Common topics include perspectives of race, gender, marriage, religion, social class, and politics. These studies help reduce miscommunications between different cultural groups and provide raw data for cross-cultural comparisons. Cultural anthropologists illustrate the humanity of seemingly disparate groups to help people recognize that, despite the differences between us, we all have more in common than not. While many cultural anthropologists work in academic settings, others take an **applied** approach and work with non-profit or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Linguistic anthropologists work with living and dead languages to explain how languages are made, how they change, and how they function in society. Linguistic anthropologists examine how the broader contexts of culture, history, and biology influence language. They also explore what is important to a cultural group by the types of words that exist in a language, how people use these words to communicate and create identity, and how the way people speak reflects how they perceive the world. For example, how many different words can you think of to represent an automobile? Now, compare that to the number of different words we use to discuss snow. Linguistic anthropologists are not limited only to vocal communication; they also examine non-verbal aspects of communication, such as body language.

Archaeologists study the past. Typically, this is accomplished by conducting excavations to recover **artifacts**, which are objects made or used by people, such as pottery, stone tools, or the foundation of ruined buildings or structures. Archaeologists study artifacts rather than people because artifacts are often the only materials remaining from an old culture. Archaeologists use artifacts to understand how people lived, population densities, production and trade, economics, politics, and social structure. They may map the location of houses or ceremonial architecture, study the contents of trash pits, or analyze how artifacts were made. Today, most archaeologists work in **cultural resource management**, a type of **applied anthropology** that makes sure archaeological information is not lost during new development projects. Archaeologists traditionally did not

interact with living populations, but in recent years, more archaeologists have started communicating with descendent populations and other invested parties to help make sense of the past.

Biological anthropologists study how humans adapt to different environments in the past and present. Biological anthropologists may study skeletal structures (bone and teeth), fossils, or genetics of humans and other primates. Among other topics, this includes studying human evolution, biological variation, and disease. Two types of biological anthropologists deserve special reference: **Primatologists** study living non-human primates to understand the origins of social practices such as social grouping, kinship, and politics. **Paleoanthropologists** study fossilized bones and teeth of early hominids to understand biological changes and anatomical variation in species over time. Biological anthropologists are interested in the integration of biology and culture to shape human lives. They compare modern humans against living and fossilized primates to explore what makes humans unique from their closest relatives.

Examples of **applied** biological anthropology include **forensic anthropology**, wherein practitioners assist in medicolegal or humanitarian efforts to identify unknown individuals, and **medical anthropology**, wherein practitioners study the historical and political factors that influence health, illness, and healing and treatment among different groups.

Despite these different approaches to anthropology, all these fields incorporate a comparative aspect to explore what it means to be human. To really understand the differences between two groups of humans or primates, anthropologists compare the way they live and speak, the objects they use, and their unique biological traits. This **comparative approach** dovetails nicely with the **holistic** tenants of anthropology. Human culture cannot be understood based on a single characteristic, nor can it be understood in isolation and without comparison to different groups. Therefore, throughout this OER, there will be links to short case studies of anthropological studies from around the world to illustrate these concepts and help you critically engage with the materials.

As previously discussed, most anthropologists also incorporate an applied aspect into their work. Some researchers consider **applied anthropology** to

be a fifth subdiscipline, while other researchers consider this to be the application of anthropological fields to solve human problems—the relevance of anthropology in everyday life. Applied anthropology combines different aspects from the four fields to find customized solutions to real-world problems. Some anthropologists argue that this is the ultimate goal of anthropology: studying humans to make a difference in contemporary people’s lives and help them think more critically about their worlds.

There are many types of applied anthropologists who work in numerous settings: NGOs, government offices, hospitals, universities, and museums. In fact, according to the American Anthropological Association, more than half of anthropologists work in an applied setting. Many new students have questions about employment potential with an anthropology degree. Therefore, several links are provided below regarding recent employment potential and statistics.

What is Culture

What does it mean to be human? The concept of **culture** is the main way that anthropologists explore this question. However, defining culture can be difficult. Culture has many different definitions, especially, depending on who you ask. In 2020, Merriam-Webster’s dictionary listed six different definitions for the concept, which can further confuse people trying to understand this intangible concept. At a basic level, culture is the shared ideas that unite a group of people. It helps us make sense of the world and figure out where we fit in it while also helping us create and maintain social relationships and our identity in comparison to other groups of people. It encompasses all aspects of the world that humans have created, including all our knowledge as a society, the objects we use, the places we live, how we communicate, and our social institutions. You can argue that it is how we differentiate ourselves from nature.

Clearly, culture is a vast concept that covers everything from what we believe in, to the rules and morals that govern how we act, and the way we interact with other humans. Culture, however, is not tangible, and it is not something inherent in the artifacts or symbols we use. Culture is not something you can simply see and understand; it is not something you can

excavate. Rather, it's something that must be learned and experienced. Culture must be interpreted from objects, including the patterns and associations of how and where objects are found or used in society.

Culture is so integrated into the foundations of our existence that it becomes second nature, and we often forget that we live in a world constructed upon shared ideas. Another way to describe culture is “the acquired pair of glasses through which we see life” (BECA 2012). If you wear glasses, you probably don't think about it constantly throughout the day. You may take for granted the enhanced clarity of the world around you because of your corrected vision. Culture is like a pair of glasses: when you are wearing them, the world around you makes sense. However, when you don't have them on, everything is confusing and blurry. Daily, you don't even notice or see your glasses even though they're resting on the bridge of your nose. However, once you stop and think about the fact that you're wearing them, suddenly you can't help but see your glasses and be cognizant of how they help you comprehend the world around you.

If you were visiting a country with an unfamiliar culture for the first time, such as Vietnam, you might not be able to make sense of the way people interact. It may seem confusing because you don't have the cultural glasses to clarify what you are seeing. Over time and through observation, however, you might begin creating your Vietnamese cultural glasses. Initially, you may be confused by what you perceive as a lack of simple manners. For example, in Western cultures, ritualized expressions of 'thank you' or 'sorry' reflect basic etiquette when you purchase food or bump into someone, but this is not common practice in Vietnamese society. The ritualized or constant use of these terms may be perceived as insincere or proud in Vietnam because they are reserved for situations to reflect sincerity, virtuousness, and humility. You may notice in Vietnam that basic etiquette and respect are presented in different ways, such as transferring money to the cashier using both hands when making a purchase, which is different than in Western cultures. Therefore, through observation, you may create your Vietnamese cultural glasses, and these practices will begin to make sense and may even become second nature for you.



Figure 1.1. Examples of transaction etiquette in two different cultures. Images from Flickr/United States Naval Academy and US National Archives and DVIDS.

It is also important to recognize that just because someone is born into a society with one set of rules and norms, that doesn't mean that their culture is any better or worse than another group's. Culture is not natural. Each culture is constructed based on a peoples' specific histories, experiences, and environments. In other words, every pair of glasses is custom made to fit a specific world view. It's not something that can be ranked or discussed in superlatives, but it is something we can learn about and appreciate.

Recognizing these differences is important because our culture becomes second nature to us, and we often forget that we live in a socially constructed world. D. F. Wallace, in his commencement speech to the graduating class of Kenyon College in 2005, articulated this phenomenon (Farnam Street 2020): "The most obvious, important realities are often the ones that are hardest to see and talk about." He also illustrated this idea with a short didactic story:

"There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, 'Morning boys. How's the water?' And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, 'What the hell is water?'"

In this story, water represents culture. Like the glasses in the previous example, it surrounds us in our everyday life and impacts everything we do. However, we rarely think about how our actions are informed by cultural norms that we have been exposed to our entire lives. We begin to think our way of life is natural and don't notice the cultural structure that is the foundation of our interactions and behaviors. Wallace further clarifies the importance of recognizing that people may have different cultural perspectives: "the exact same experience can mean two totally different things to two different people, given those people's belief templates and two different ways of constructing meaning from experience."

Emic and Etic Perspectives

With so many types of cultural views and perspectives, anthropologists face the challenge of how to accurately and respectfully describe and interpret different cultural behaviors. To assist with this, anthropologists employ two critical types of perspectives to gather data: **emic and etic perspectives**. An emic perspective incorporates a subjective and informed perspective, in which the anthropologist participates and observes. An etic view refers to an objective and detached perspective that can only be achieved after an emic awareness is gained. Etic views allow anthropologists to deeply understand a group's motivations, beliefs, and behaviors, but the anthropologist then steps back to provide a neutral assessment of an event. Many anthropologists combine these approaches when they conduct field work.

One way to conceptualize emic versus etic perspectives is to consider a kid's birthday party. If you want to learn about kids' birthday parties, you can join in yourself and participate with the children as they partake in party activities, such as pinata games. By putting on a blindfold and swinging the stick, you gain an emic appreciation of the ritual that wouldn't be achieved through only watching. Once you've participated and understand why and how the game works, you can step back and watch kids play the game in an enriched, etic manner.

For an anthropological example, researchers have studied differences in governmental and local/folk perspectives regarding environment and climate research and policy. Rat infestations are a considerable problem for farmers

around the world. Up to 17% of rice harvests are lost to rodents in Indonesia, which equates to food and productivity loss for hundreds of millions of people per year. As farmers have increased planting and harvesting to compensate, rat populations have correspondingly increased. However, not all rats are agricultural pests. The most prominent culprit in Indonesia is the rice field rat (*Rattus argentiventer*), and the Indonesian government and local communities have attempted to deal with this burden in various ways.

In Indonesia, the government strives to present the country as a place of modernity, often downplaying the traditional heritage of the outer islands. The government recognizes the problem presented by rats and encourages the use of pesticides to remove them. Rats are pests, and, therefore, pest management systems are determined to be the best way to deal with these challenges. However, this perspective attempts to handle the issue in a manner that doesn't align with traditional community beliefs and practices. In fact, local communities report that when pesticides are used, rats become angry and return to the fields within a year.

The local community perspective is markedly different than the Indonesian government. Farmers in the outer islands, such as East Flores, view rats as a part of their culture, wherein the farmers and rats co-exist and have a long-standing relationship that stretches back into antiquity. According to local tradition, the ancient ancestors of rats came from the sea and have a deep connection with the water. When the humans' homeland was destroyed in a storm, people took to boats to seek out a new home, and the rats acted as navigators on the boats to help people find a new place to live. Therefore, rats are not simply pests, and, even today, they deserve respect. They are simultaneously friends who assist and enemies who ravage the fields.

Despite the government's stance on rats, the people of East Flores prefer to deal with these creatures in a traditional way via the rat ceremony. The rat ceremony is performed by village elders, and local communities report that this ceremony is much more effective than pesticides. Community cooperation is imperative. The rat ceremony includes a pig sacrifice, the procession of a hand-carved rat in a canoe from the agricultural fields to the shore, consecration of the fields with a mixture of forest goods and saltwater,

and a waiting period before returning to the fields. The ceremony is a polite request for rats to return to the sea from whence they came. According to the local communities, the rats do not return to farming fields for years after this performance.

All across Southeast Asia, local communities have their own beliefs and rat management systems. However, in the case of Indonesia, these views are often at odds with governmental approaches. In fact, the government approach can pose possible health and groundwater pollution risks to the community. Luckily, these drastically different perspectives and solutions do not have to work in opposition. Someone with an emic perspective, who understands the relationship between people and rats, can step back objectively and provide an etic perspective for the government. They can help find solutions that are sensitive to local beliefs but still effectively resolve the problems.

Throughout the region, farmers and scientists work together to incorporate both scientific and folk ecological perspectives to deal with rats in ways that satisfy both the government and communities, such as rice-fish farming, synchronized planting, standardized irrigation banks, and community trap barrier systems. These approaches help decrease rat populations while minimizing pesticide use. Both perspectives have value, and anthropologists often attempt to utilize emic and etic perspectives for a broader, more holistic understanding.

Holistic Perspective

Anthropology is **holistic** in nature. Because culture is complex, it helps to study many different puzzle pieces, or components of culture, to understand how it functions as a whole. As demonstrated in the examples above, studying just one component provides a limited picture. For instance, if you were trying to teach someone what it meant to be a part of American culture, what pieces of American culture would you focus on: politics, religion, sports, education, entertainment, or something else? Would you focus on a specific region, like the north, south, or Midwest? Does American culture vary based on what type of climate or environment you live in? How recent would your examples be: from the past year, five years, or twenty

years? Can you point to any one individual who perfectly embodies this set of American ideals, or would you need to discuss a lot of different individuals and situations?

Cultural factors are interconnected and cannot be fully explained on their own. Culture is such a multi-faceted concept, that any one component can tell you a lot and nearly nothing at the same time. The relationships between these components are critical to understand how cultural systems function. This is nicely illustrated in the folktale, “The Blind Men and the Elephant,” wherein six blind scholars, who have never seen an elephant, each attempt to describe an elephant based on the part of the elephant they touch—the side of the body, the ear, the tail, a leg, the trunk—and each individual has a very different perspective based on their experience, but by discussing how each piece of the elephant contributes to the animal as a whole, they produce a much more complete and robust understanding of the creature.

An excellent example of holistic anthropology is encapsulated in Jason DeLeon’s *Undocumented Migration Project*. Hear him talk about his work with border crossers, which incorporates cultural, archaeological, biological, and linguistic approaches.



Video 1.2. Check out Jason De León discussion on decoding the stories of border crossers for his Undocumented Migration Project video for more details!

Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism

Another goal of anthropology is to promote **cultural relativism** and diminish the negative influences of **ethnocentrism**. For example, you are visiting Vietnam for the first time and unfamiliar with the culture. You’re put off by what you perceive as a lack of basic manners such as someone not apologizing when they brush past you or saying “thank you” when you hold a door open for them. You might feel overwhelmed and find yourself comparing your own culture with Vietnamese culture and thinking about how people in your own culture are friendlier and have much better manners. This is an example of **ethnocentrism**. Interactions are more stressful and difficult when people focus on their differences rather than finding a

common ground. On the other hand, if you find yourself wondering what Vietnamese tourists might find rude about your culture if the tables were turned—maybe the way you dress, or open-mouth laughing, or tipping service workers in restaurants—then you are employing a model of **cultural relativism**.

Every culture has a myriad of practices and behaviors that seem completely normal to them but may be utterly bizarre or offensive to people from other cultures. We all have implicit biases towards ethnocentrism because we know our own culture(s) the best. The trick is recognizing our actions, acknowledging that all cultures are constructed (not natural), and adjusting appropriately in each situation. We should avoid judging other people and cultures based on our own culture's set of rules and norms. The standards of one culture are not a world-wide standard for all other cultures. Instead, by trying to understand and appreciate the diversity of other cultures, we promote better communication and interactions. Additionally, you may learn surprising new things.

These ideas are encapsulated in the *TED Talk* “The Danger of a Single Story,” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In her talk, Adichie warns that our single stories, such as stereotypes, can lead to critical misunderstandings about people and their culture. Her talk demonstrates how we can benefit in our own identity and interactions with others.



Video 1.3. Check out Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED Talk on the danger of a single-story video for more details!

Examples of Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism

Hijab. The hijab headscarf worn predominantly by women of Muslim faith is depicted as a contentious piece of clothing. It has been viewed variably as a symbol of terrorism, violence, oppression, and liberation. Women have been socially shamed, harassed, and pressured to either wear it or remove it by people within and outside of their cultures. However, many of these actions represent external judgment and biases that fail to engage individuals to find out their specific reasons for wearing the scarf. The hijab

has come to represent different things including religious identity, ethnic pride, resistance to American beauty standards, and convenience. Assuming that this one piece of clothing has a universal meaning can represent a dangerous ethnocentric perspective, which can be observed even in a search of recent news stories in the United States and beyond.

Hmong. The Hmong are a minority cultural group from Southeast Asia. Traditionally, they are a patrilineal society of farmers led by a shaman. The shaman is seen as both a political leader and healer. Their culture has not been static or unchanged over the centuries. Like all cultures, it has adapted over time based on factors like interactions with other cultures or environmental changes. For example, during the Vietnam War, the Hmong fought with the United States, were later persecuted throughout Southeast Asia, and many were forced out of their homeland. The consequences of fighting with America are still visible in daily life. Some local governments do not recognize Hmong rights or sovereignty, and other groups often practice illegal mining and logging activities in the area, destroying the natural environment and forcing the Hmong to find new places to live. Since the war, more than 200,000 Hmong refugees have migrated outside of Asia, predominantly, to the United States.

The Hmong are well known for their shamanistic practices. The shaman is one of the most respected individuals in their society. Unlike Western medical practitioners, the shaman is a healer who adheres to personalistic treatments for the body, mind, and soul, interfacing with supernatural forces to heal patients (see Module 17: Health and Medicine). These differences have resulted in misunderstandings and frustrations between Western medical practitioners and Hmong communities that migrated to the United States. Hmong individuals did not understand or trust doctors that only focused on physical ailments, and they only visited Western hospitals as an alternative to traditional methods. Similarly, Western doctors did not recognize the importance of rituals that Hmong shaman use to promote holistic health. Medical anthropologists can help in these types of situations to resolve conflicts and help promote better communication.

One of these Hmong shamanistic rituals is the practice of string-tying. The string-tying ritual is one of many rituals that are of great importance to

Hmong communities. Shamans tie strings around the wrists of their patients to shield them from evil spirits that manifest as illnesses. The strings aid in healing and are visual markers of the ritual. These string charms signify the binding of the soul to the body, and different colors are used to signify specific blessings and ward particular spirits.

Western hospitals were unfamiliar with these practices and did not afford these rituals much merit or respect. When Hmong were admitted to the hospital following a shamanic ritual, hospital staff would cut the strings from the Hmong patient's wrists. This led Hmong individuals to become upset by the disturbance in rituals that may have been rendered ineffective by the loss of the string, and it also led to heightened distrust of Western doctors. In failing to recognize the importance of the strings, Western hospital staff represent examples of **ethnocentrism**. To them, it was simply an old piece of string that needed to be removed for proper medical care; they saw no value in this object.

On the other hand, once the hospital staff began working with the Hmong shamans, both sides began to understand each other's perspectives and practices. Now, hospital staff understand the importance of the string-tying ceremony and do not remove the string from the patient's wrist. The staff at Dignity Health in Merced, California, embraces a more holistic practice that incorporates mind and body. This includes inviting shaman into the hospital to perform rituals among Hmong patients, which has resulted in increased trust of Western medical practices and less frustration for both groups. These actions represent **cultural relativism**, wherein Western doctors and Hmong shamans both made efforts to understand each other and the significance of their cultural and medical practices.



Video 1.4. Check out the video about how the staff of Dignity Health is integrating Hmong practices at their hospitals.

Why Liberal Studies Matter?

Liberal arts, like anthropology, are designed to broaden the minds of students to recognize learned prejudice and uncritical assumptions they hold about the world. With liberal studies, students are exposed to multiple perspectives and encouraged to challenge their own views. Liberal arts inspire people to question the world around them, find and interpret facts, and make informed decisions. These types of skills prepare students for jobs in diverse fields where critical and creative thinking skills are valued to troubleshoot problems and concerns. It is incorrect to represent liberal arts and higher education as out-of-touch with the needs of today's societies.

As for anthropology in particular, numerous case studies are presented throughout this OER to demonstrate the relevance of applied anthropological perspectives to different situations across the world. These studies are presented to help you think critically and engage these concepts on a deeper level than you may have before.

Anthropology is not without its ethical concerns. The discipline arose from a curiosity of the broader world, but this curiosity was not often tempered with concern about the new cultures encountered. Anthropological research, whether based on the past or present, can have impacts on the lives of real people. This research can be used to provide a sense of identity and closure for people or inform social policies. Therefore, it is crucial that anthropologists heed the perspectives of their informants and carefully consider what and how information is presented to avoid harm to these cultures and individuals. In the past, this was not always important to anthropologists, and it led to disastrous effects (see Module 2: A Brief History of Anthropology).

For archaeology, specifically, recovery of artifacts and remains is inherently destructive. Once a site is excavated and all artifacts are removed, there is no opportunity to come back later and do it again. For example, say you excavated an ancient village site before a modern road was constructed on top of it. You would need to take very careful notes, sketch maps, and photographs: the size and shape of the village, the location of any palisades, and the size and location of any features such as structures, cellars, and pits.

The types, distribution, and frequency of artifacts, plant remains, or animal bones found on site, etc. would also need to be recorded. If you go back to the laboratory and begin your analysis, only to realize that you forgot to document something, you do not have the opportunity to go back. Once objects are out of the ground, **context** is lost. You can't put everything back and try again.

Summary

Anthropology is a field for people who are interested in other cultures and expanding their own cultural awareness. Anthropologists require detailed observational and documentation skills to thoroughly understand cultural phenomena. With anthropological research comes great responsibility to do right by the people and cultures we study whether living or in the past. Whether it is your own culture or someone else's, people and their cultures deserve respect and open-mindedness instead of ethnocentrism and vain curiosity.

Review Questions

- **T/F.** The four subfields of anthropology include archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and sociocultural anthropology.
- **T/F.** To understand what it means to be human, anthropologists study the concept of culture and how it varies between groups.
- **T/F.** Ethnography is the study of interrelationships among all living things in an environment.
- **T/F.** A good example of applied anthropology is working to develop a vaccine without understanding the cultural factors that contribute to the spread of disease or sick peoples' hesitation to seek medical care.
- **T/F.** Cultural norms, such as hand gestures and dietary taboos, vary widely among cultures.

Discussion Questions

- Describe the four fields of anthropology. How does each field offer a different way to understand what it means to be human?
- What is culture? Why is it so difficult to define?
- How can an emic perspective help someone understand cultural differences and address miscommunication between groups?
- What does it mean that anthropology is holistic? What is your major? How can anthropology help you understand concepts and questions in your field of study?

Activities

1. Anthropology is the study of humans, our cultures, the evolution of our species, and what makes us different from other animals. Find a news article that directly discusses anthropology (e.g., *Science Daily*, *Live Science*, *Smithsonian*, *Time*, etc. are good news sources). Your article *must* mention published academic research. This may be indicated by wording such as "research in an anthropological journal" or "according to researchers at a university" or something to this effect.
 - In the discussion board: post the URL to the news story, identify where this research is published (What journal? What university are the researchers from?), identify the subfield of anthropology (more than one may be represented: cultural, biological, archaeological, or linguistics), summarize the research. What is the news story about? How does this research inform the public about humanity or culture? Include the research question, the human cultural group being studied, and the time period (is it a living group or a long-dead group of people? How long ago did they live?). **The story must directly discuss HUMANS!** Did this article challenge your preconceived notions of anthropology?
2. Meet a stranger and ask to hear their story (and ask if you can share it). Step outside of your comfort zone and try to meet someone of a different age, background, or walk of life. Describe the interaction, what you learned about the other person, and how this made you think differently than your initial expectations. Do not simply provide a transcript or interview log; instead, write a narrative. Consider the perspectives provided in the "Single Story" video as you work on this assignment. Based on the assignment from *ANTH101.com*.
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

Key Terms

Anthropology: The study of the full scope of human diversity and the application of that knowledge to help people of different backgrounds better understand one another (Guest 2014:7).

Applied anthropology: The application of anthropological fields to solve human problems.

Archaeology: The study of human cultures in the past using artifacts and other objects.

Artifacts: Objects made or used by people.

Biological anthropology: The study of human cultures based on the biology and behavior of humans, their extinct ancestors, and non-human primates.

Comparative approach: A method to study human cultures that assesses differences between multiple groups of humans or primates, such as their habits and lifestyles, the way they communicate, the objects they use as part of their daily life, and their unique biological traits.

Context: The historic, political, or environmental circumstances that influence behaviors and ideas.

Cultural anthropology (also called Social or Sociocultural anthropology): The study of human cultures in the present through participation, observation, and interview of living people.

Cultural relativism: The idea that cultures must be understood on their own terms and based on their own contexts instead of being judged by the standards of a different culture.

Cultural resource management: Heritage management as defined by local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

Culture: The collection of learned behaviors, ideas, languages, and traditions that characterize a social group.

Emic perspective: A personal perspective of a culture developed within that culture, through immersion and participation.

Ethnocentrism: The practice of judging a culture by the standards of a different culture.

Ethnography: A description or interpretation of a society written by an anthropologist who conducted field research in that society.

Etic perspective: An outside, presumably objective or standardized, perspective of a culture developed through observation and interview.

Forensic anthropology: An applied type of biological anthropology where anthropologists assist with the recovery and analysis of human skeletal remains for medico-legal purposes.

Holism: An all-encompassing, relational perspective wherein an understanding of the individual pieces of a cultural system are critical to understanding the whole system.

Linguistic anthropology: The subfield of anthropology that focuses on living and dead languages to explain how languages are made, how they change, and how they function in society.

Medical anthropology: An applied type of bio-cultural anthropology where anthropologists work with communities to understand the relationships between health, community, and environment.

Paleoanthropology: A type of biological anthropology that studies the fossils of early human ancestors to understand how humans developed.

Participant observation: An ethnographic research method where researchers join a cultural group and participate to learn first-hand about a culture.

Primatology: A type of biological anthropology that studies living non-human primates to determine what makes humans unique.

Suggested Readings

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