

## **A Prospectus on the Practical and Economic Value of Anthropology to the USG, Georgia, America, and the World**

This document shows that undergraduate training in anthropology carries great value for students who major in the field as well as to the State of Georgia, the USA, and the world.

### **1. What is Anthropology?**

Anthropology is the study of the entire panorama of what it means to be human. Anthropology studies the evolutionary origins of humans and of human culture while also examining global cultural diversity in the present. Anthropology is also a critical discipline because it examines the impact that Western political, economic, and social ideals have on the rest of the world and assesses how these impacts may affect peoples of other cultures. Anthropology also addresses diversity issues within cultures that pertain to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class. In short, anthropology is interested in what humans are in the present, how we came to be this way, how our actions and ideals shape the world we live in, and where these actions and ideals may take us in future.

Anthropology is a varied discipline that involves four subfields. Archaeology and physical anthropology deal with the history of humanity. Archaeology considers the origins of humans and civilization as well as material manifestations of ethnic difference, political and economic change, trade relations and inter-cultural interactions, and social status in the past. Physical anthropology examines the biological evolution of humanity and the physiological, genetic, and behavioral similarities between humans, pre-humans, and non-human primates. Cultural anthropology studies the cross-cultural differences that exist between societies in solving similar problems such as choosing leaders, distributing power, educating children, organizing and forming families, and distinguishing social status, ethnicity, age, and gender differences. Linguistics examines the origins of languages and the structure of languages to determine historical relationships between language systems while also considering how language is used to mark social differences within societies and how language organizes the way we interpret the world around us and everything in it.

Some of the typical questions anthropologists might ask are:

- How closely are humans related to apes?
- How similar are human behavior and society to ape behavior and society?
- When did we become human and how do we know?
- Did modern humans interact with other species of humans and how do we know?
- When, why, and how did farming, villages, cities, states, and empires arise?
- When do social class, power differences, labor specialization, long-distance trade, and interregional interaction show up in the archaeological record?
- Are humans and their primate relatives inherently violent? What about pre-humans?
- When and why did writing emerge?
- How does language classify everything in our world and provide a framework for interpreting the world around us?
- How are languages related and can we trace human interaction, migration, and culture change through the spread of language?
- What is religion? How does it function in society? Why is it so influential?
- What is the difference between gender and biological sex? How do different societies accommodate people who exhibit non-binary gendered behavior? Why do some societies reject people who are non-binary?
- What are norms, values and morals? Why do they differ between societies?
- How does globalization advantageously and disadvantageously affect the Western and the non-Western worlds?
- How has colonialism operated in the past and how does it continue to operate in the present?

- Why do foodways, house types, clothing styles, belief systems, rituals, political systems, economic systems, marriage customs, and family structure differ between cultures?
- Why does racism exist and why does genocide occur?

## 2. How Does Undergraduate Training in Anthropology Benefit Students?

Undergraduate education in cultural anthropology and linguistics encourages students to think critically about the world around them and develop respect and empathy for people who are not like themselves. Training in cultural anthropology and linguistics also allows students to understand how and why people think and behave differently from themselves. Many Americans and Western peoples in general think their way of life is the only “right” way to live, a position that anthropologists term an *ethnocentric bias*. Cultural anthropology and linguistics encourage students to overcome their ethnocentric biases by exposing them to cultural diversity through time and around the globe to reveal that different people in different places live very differently and what is normal in one place and time may not be normal in another place and time. Cultural anthropology and linguistics also examine processes of cultural change that are involved with culture contact as well as human agency in general, so students appreciate how different norms, values, and morals were between the past and the present in the same society. Cultural anthropology also critically assesses the spread of Western political, economic, and belief systems around the world to expose how the West often negatively impacts other cultures for its own benefit.

Through cultural anthropology and linguistics, students gain specific skills that are applicable in wide-range of careers<sup>1</sup>:

- Training in qualitative and quantitative research methods that allow students to combine statistical analysis with descriptive analysis
- Social ease in unusual situations or with people of different ethnic, racial, gender, or socioeconomic backgrounds
- Analytical and critical reading and thinking skills
- Enhanced problem-solving abilities through organizing and interpreting data as well as assessing the context in which the problem currently exists and has existed in the past
- Applying explanatory models and formulating broad frameworks for understanding problems
- Descriptive, comparative, and interpretive writing skills
- Data-gathering through observation or constructing surveys, questionnaires, interviews
- Ability to see the “big picture” and avoid ethnocentric viewpoints

Through archaeology and physical anthropology, anthropology gives students an appreciation of the antiquity of the human species and human society by providing a sense of where we came from and how we reached our present state. Archaeology and physical anthropology are based on the scientific method and both qualitative and quantitative analysis. In addition to the skills acquired by both cultural anthropologists and linguists, archaeologists and physical anthropologists gain other skills that can be applied in many fields:

- Careful record-keeping and attention to detail
- Project planning, supervisory experience, and teamwork
- Research design, including formulating and testing hypotheses
- Specimen and artifact analysis, curation, and conservation skills
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis that combines social theory with statistical data
- Knowledge of historical preservation and cultural resource management laws
- Excavation methods and mapping/surveying skills
- Analogical thinking skills

---

<sup>1</sup> This list has been adapted from: “Why major in Anthropology?” Boston University Anthropology Program webpage. <http://www.bu.edu/anthrop/undergraduate/why-major-in-anthropology>

- Applications of remote sensing technology, geographic information systems,

In short, anthropology provides diversity sensitivity training and skills in data gathering and analysis, theoretical and methodological applications, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that can be applied in any professional context.

### **3. How do anthropology graduates benefit the State of Georgia?**

#### ***A) Cultural Diversity Issues in Georgia, the US, and around the Globe***

Cultural anthropology asks students to consider what it means to be a good citizen—of their town, their region, their state, their nation, and the world. Overcoming hate, prejudice, and intolerance is one of cultural anthropology’s primary objectives. Because cultural anthropology is inherently concerned with multiculturalism and human rights, the field promotes embracing social and cultural difference rather than fearing either. Cultural anthropology shows students that there is really no single “right way” to live, which encourages students to critically assess how globalization processes that seek to Westernize the entire world might infringe on other cultural groups’ rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness or their right to define those concepts in their own terms. Cultural anthropology can also reduce fear of cultural differences in Georgia’s diverse society by demonstrating that people of both biological sexes and all genders, sexual preferences, races, ethnic groups, religious beliefs, and social classes share many of the same concerns.

Cultural anthropology is also imminently concerned with the concept of human agency—the active choices we make and the strategies we employ to make a place for ourselves as individuals in a larger society or change the values and norms that operate in society. Agency theory exposes students to the idea that there is often an expansive range of acceptable behaviors and strategies in every culture, including their own. Agency theory demonstrates that the range of acceptable behavior or strategizing at the worldwide level is virtually unlimited. Agency theory also examines how individuals can engage in behaviors that maintain society as it is or take action to affect change. The agency concept asks students to think critically about the ideals that exist in a society to govern human behavior and structure access to power and resources. The agency concept empowers students to identify where change needs to occur and devise strategies to make it happen.

In short, cultural anthropology encourages students to participate in shaping their own lives as well as the trajectory of their community, their state, their region, their nation, and the world. By overcoming fear of social and cultural difference, Georgians will become aware of the part they play in an increasingly diverse American nation and an infinitely diverse globalized society. Linguistics contributes to teaching respect for diversity because studying language identifies the values and norms that operate in society by identifying the classificatory frameworks that shape the thought processes involved in constructing prejudice and intolerance in Georgia, the US, and around the world.

Cultural anthropological training is important for Georgians because Georgia habitually ranks among the top ten states in the nation regarding the number of active hate groups.<sup>2</sup> Georgia is also currently one of a handful of US states that do not have hate crimes laws to protect anybody of any race/ethnic group, belief system, gender, sexual preference, physical/mental capability, or biological sex.<sup>3</sup> Most hate groups in Georgia focus on some combination of hate for racial/ethnic groups, religious minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, or the US government. Some of these hate groups also seek to suppress women’s rights. Cultural anthropology encourages Georgia’s college students to develop tolerance of cultural differences and greater sensitivities to diversity issues related class, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexuality, and gender identity while also encouraging students to examine how these types of diversity

---

<sup>2</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center “Hate. Map.” <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/hate-map>

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights First. “Hate Crime Report Card—United States.” <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/our-work/fighting-discrimination/hate-crime-report-card/hate-crime-report-card-the-united-states/>

intersect in ways that make every individual's lived experience at least somewhat different. Appreciating diversity will also prepare Georgians for encounters and interactions with people from other countries as they visit our state, settle here, and build businesses in local areas. In short, cultural anthropology prepares Georgians to be better citizens on their town, their state, and their nation while integrating them into a much wider globalized society that exists beyond the boundaries of their own culture.

### ***B) Antiquity of Humanity and Preserving the Past***

Georgia's history goes much further back in time than English settlement or even Spanish exploration. Native Americans have been in the southeast for at least 13,000 years.<sup>4</sup> Georgia's Native Americans developed the earliest known examples of pottery in North America and they once lived in cities led by powerful chiefs who had regional political and economic influence.<sup>5</sup> Archaeological sites and historic sites need adequate preservation and interpretation so the public can continue to learn about and develop an appreciation for Georgia's historical richness. Archaeologists play a vital role in assessing site significance, obtaining national recognition for sites, and finding grant to help sustain preservation efforts.

Many Georgians collect objects from prehistory and the historic period. At worst, they keep these items in buckets in their garage or sell them on ebay. At best, they put the best examples on display in their homes. Collecting artifacts does irreparable damage to the archaeological record and actually takes data out of the hands of those who are trained to make sense of them. Through public outreach programs, archaeologists play a vital role in educating the public about federal and state laws that prevent looting archaeological sites is paramount to preserving Georgia's past.

State and federal laws also exist to protect Georgia's cultural resources. Archaeologists are necessary to keep the state and local developers in compliance with these laws when roads are widened or re-routed, when utility lines are laid, and new businesses or homes are built. A recent study demonstrated that Georgia's historical tourism industry has a positive impact on the economy even in tough economic times because historic preservation encourages investment, attracts visitors, and gentrifies urban areas in ways that create jobs through the proliferation of small businesses and remodeling historic homes to put them on the market.<sup>6</sup> Through these efforts, Georgia created over 12,000 jobs in the midst of the "Great Recession."<sup>7</sup>

### ***C) A Future in Anthropology?: The Economic Impact of a B.A./B.S. in Anthropology***

According to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce (GUCEW)<sup>8</sup>, about 4% of all college students major in anthropology or archaeology, the median annual salary for a college graduate with a **B.A./B.S. in anthropology, archaeology, or linguistics is \$45,000, and 70% of linguists and**

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-810&hl=y>

<sup>5</sup> For pottery reference: <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-708&hl=y> ; for cities reference <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-707&hl=y>

<sup>6</sup> Rypkema, Donovan and Caroline Cheong (2010) *Good News in Tough Times; Historic Preservation and the Georgia Economy*. [http://issuu.com/georgiashpo/docs/good\\_news\\_in\\_tough\\_times\\_?mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fflight%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true](http://issuu.com/georgiashpo/docs/good_news_in_tough_times_?mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fflight%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true)

<sup>7</sup> Rypkema, Donovan and Caroline Cheong (2010) *Good News in Tough Times; Historic Preservation and the Georgia Economy*. [http://issuu.com/georgiashpo/docs/good\\_news\\_in\\_tough\\_times\\_?mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fflight%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true](http://issuu.com/georgiashpo/docs/good_news_in_tough_times_?mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fflight%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true)

<sup>8</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P., Jeff Strohl, Michelle Melton, "What's Worth? The Economic Value of College Majors." <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/whatsitworth-complete.pdf>

**78% of anthropologists/archaeologists are employed full-time.** GUCEW's stats show that this median wage compares favorably with other majors:

- Education (\$36,000-\$50,000, depending on specialization)
- Media, psychology, or sociology (\$45,000)
- Public health, public policy, and criminology (\$48,000)
- Biology, communications, criminal justice, public relations (\$50,000)
- Technology: Nuclear, Biological, etc. (\$52,000)

According to the most recent iteration of Payscale.com's College Salary Report, the mid-career median annual salary for a graduate with only a B.A./B.S. in anthropology is \$65,000 with archaeologists earning a mid-career salary of \$65,200 and linguists earning a mid-career salary of \$73,500<sup>9</sup>. Archaeology and general anthropology B.A./B.S. holders have mid-career salaries that are higher than those earned by students who majored in education, graphic design, non-profit management, and conservation biology in addition to other fields. Linguistics B.A./B.S. holders earn mid-career salaries that are higher than those earned by B.A./B.S. holders in human resources management, corporate communications, ecology, exercise physiology, and organizational leadership in addition to many other fields.

The GUCEW report cited above also shows that 43% of anthropologists/archaeologists and 47% of linguists go on to pursue a graduate or professional degree. The GUCEW reports also indicate that an advanced degree increases earnings potential for anthropologists/archaeologists by 43% and for linguists by 45%. Students who pursue a B.A./B.S. in anthropology perform well on graduate and professional school standardized tests and they pursue graduate degrees in anthropology, archaeology, physical anthropology, linguistics, international relations, journalism, while some go to medical/dental school, business school, and law school.

- The Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) is used to gauge how well students will do in graduate business programs. The most recent published stats for GMAT scores by major are from 2011-2012, when anthropologists scored 4<sup>th</sup> highest on the GMAT with an average score of 566.<sup>10</sup> Anthropology students also scored better than students in eight out of ten business fields.
- Though specific data is not available for anthropology, results for the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) for 2018-2019 show that social sciences majors had an average score of 505.6, which was on par with students who majored in the biological sciences (505.5) and higher than scores earned by students who majored in specialized health sciences (502.4).<sup>11</sup>
- Anthropology majors also hold their own on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). In 2017-2018, anthropology majors had an average score of 156.04, which was slightly higher than scores for students who majored in political science (153.62) but well above scores earned by pre-law majors (149.09) or criminal justice majors (145.87).<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Payscale College Salary Report. (2018) <http://www.payscale.com/college-salary-report/majors-that-pay-you-back>

<sup>10</sup> Profile of Graduate Management Admissions Test Candidates: Five year Summary 2006-2011. [http://www.gmat.com/~media/Files/gmac/Research/GMAT%20Test%20Taker%20Data/profileofgmatcandidates\\_ty200607to201011.pdf](http://www.gmat.com/~media/Files/gmac/Research/GMAT%20Test%20Taker%20Data/profileofgmatcandidates_ty200607to201011.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> American Association of Medical Colleges. "Table A-17: MCAT and GPAs for Applicants and Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Primary Undergraduate Major, 2018-2019" <https://www.aamc.org/download/321496/data/factstablea17.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> LSAC (2018) Undergraduate Majors of Applicants to ABA-Approved Law Schools. [https://www.lsac.org/sites/default/files/media/2017-18\\_applicants-major\\_0.pdf](https://www.lsac.org/sites/default/files/media/2017-18_applicants-major_0.pdf)

- Anthropologists tend to score about the same as other majors on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). On the 2018-2019 GRE, the average composite score for verbal and math was 302.85.<sup>13</sup> Anthropology majors had an average score of 305. On the analytical writing section, the average score across all majors was 3.5 while anthropology majors scored 4.0.

#### **D) Anthropologists on the Job Market**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, indicates that the median pay for anthropologists is \$63,190 per year.<sup>14</sup> Anthropologists work in both the private and public sectors in a variety of careers. Many federal jobs require an advanced degree in anthropology. However, many state jobs and private sector employment opportunities are open to anthropologists with only a BA.

The federal government is one of the largest employers for anthropologists. According to Fiske (2008), cultural anthropologists, archaeologists, physical anthropologists, and linguists are employed in many government agencies and in most of the major departments in the federal government.<sup>15</sup> Archaeologists find work primarily in the National Parks Service, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Defense, and in museums such as the Smithsonian. Cultural anthropologists and linguists work in intelligence, the Census Bureau, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, USAID, in the military, the FBI, and every major department in the federal government. Physical Anthropologists work for the FBI, intelligence agencies, the military, and in museums.

For anthropologists, many job prospects exist outside the Federal Government as well. Outside the federal government, the American Anthropological Association website contains several articles that indicate that business and marketing are very interested in hiring cultural anthropologists and linguists to assess how people interact with technology and decide on the desirability of objects in order to formulate effective marketing campaigns in the US and abroad.<sup>16</sup> Cultural anthropologists and linguists are also in demand in the non-profit sector, particularly in organizations that deal with issues of international development, international health, and social services.<sup>17</sup> Since most states and the federal government require cultural resources surveys prior to construction or other economic or infrastructural development activities, many archaeologists work for Cultural Resource Management firms. Archaeologists also manage cultural resources and/or interpret the past in state and local museums, state parks, and locally or privately managed historical sites. Physical anthropologists often work investigating crime scenes in conjunction with law enforcement. Because anthropology is a field that focuses on diversity, an anthropology degree can lead to employment in fields such as social services, human resources, law enforcement, journalism, travel and tourism, sales, and personnel management.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Graduate Record Examinations: Guide to Use of Scores, 2018-2019. [http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre\\_guide.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/anthropologists-and-archeologists.htm#tab-5>

<sup>15</sup> Fiske, Shirley J. (2008) Working for the Federal Government: Anthropology Careers. *NAPA Bulletin* 29 (10): 110-130. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1556-4797.2008.00009.x/full>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.aaanet.org/profdev/careers/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.aaanet.org/profdev/careers/Careers.cfm>

<sup>18</sup> Omahundro, John (1998) Career Advice for Undergraduates. *General Anthropology* 4 (2): no pages given. [people.cas.sc.edu/moskowitz/jobs/ACAD\\_ANT\\_Omahundro.pdf](http://people.cas.sc.edu/moskowitz/jobs/ACAD_ANT_Omahundro.pdf)