Anthropology is the study of human beings and cultures throughout the world during the present and past. Said another way, it is the study of "who we are, and how we came to be that way." Anthropology is partly a natural science, partly a social science, and partly a humanistic study. Anthropology majors compare and contrast the biological, social, and cultural similarities and differences of humans and their societies across the globe and develop a sophisticated understanding of the biological unity of our species.

As an anthropology major you’ll take courses in the four sub-fields of anthropology, which include biological anthropology, archaeology, sociocultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology. Students planning a professional career in anthropology generally specialize in one of those sub-fields. Through your coursework, you will gain invaluable insights and perspectives about people across many cultures and times and develop intensive research and writing skills. An anthropology major offers a holistic education that, regardless of the job attained after graduation, provides a perspective on humanity that inspires a lifetime of engagement with the issues of importance to our globalized society.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study anthropology at the University of Minnesota, you gain the added advantage of a College of Liberal Arts education. At CLA, the liberal arts mean you get more than just a degree in one major or another; it means you will be exposed to different areas of study, to different ways of thinking and learning. In fact, the liberal arts teach you how to learn—how to ask the right questions, how to
problem solve, and how to innovate. The liberal arts highlight the complexities of our world, because here at CLA you will study not just, say, politics or art but also where politics and art intersect, where science and ethics intersect, where economics and the environment intersect.

Meet Our Students

Anthropology and history student Dana Queen reflects on her time at the University of Minnesota as she prepares to graduate in the spring. Her dedication to creating programs for informal learning spaces in libraries has been nurtured by her liberal arts education and experiences.

Read more about Dana's story, and learn more about our undergraduate program.

Student Experiences

Internships in Anthropology: Gain Valuable Experience in the Twin Cities and Beyond

Did you know? Our department has its very own internship reflection course! Students taking an internship can use this course to reflect on ways that their work experience is preparing them for successful careers - and receive credit for the work.

Learning Abroad in Anthropology: Prepare to Lead in a Global Economy

“Study abroad is an invaluable part of any undergraduate study program, but it is especially important for anthropology students. Often experience abroad leads to
language and cultural expertise, and frequently to a career for life. Even if students pursue careers outside of anthropology—law, business, medicine or public service—their time abroad will always be a shining star in their educational background, and a life-changing event.”

—William O. Beeman, Department Chair

Learn more about study abroad for Anthropology majors.

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader

• Anthropology Club

Undergraduate Research: Turn Your Curiosity into New Knowledge

Anthropology undergraduates are encouraged to pursue their interests and to personalize their education. Students have the ability to work with a faculty member to design their own independent study course. The credits from an independent study course can apply to a student’s major. Talk to our anthropology undergraduate advisor and the faculty member you’re interested in working with to find out if an independent study is the right option for you.

Meet Our Faculty

The US court system may not seem like a place that could shape how those practice their religion—but assistant professor Aisha Ghani’s research has found that the way Islam is brought into court can affect Muslim practices in America.

Read more about Professor Ghani's work.
Meet Our Alumni

“I’m using every facet of what I’ve learned.” By combining the skills learned in her anthropology degree, design, and her interest in health care, Monica Looze has found her ideal profession at Mayo Clinic.

Read more about Monica's story.

CLA Graduates: Successful Careers and Purposeful Lives

CLA graduates succeed in many different careers — law, health care, medicine, business, government, teaching, advertising, arts and entertainment, international relations, and more — precisely because they understand how to navigate a complex and interconnected world. As our alumni explain below, “Being a good employee means being curious, and continuing to evolve, and learn, and educate yourself, and I can think of no stronger foundation for doing that than a liberal arts education.”

“An education in the liberal arts is a springboard to lifelong career success”
-- Dean John Coleman
You might also explore

Art History
Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature
History
Sociology

Associated Careers

Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations Managers; Anthropologists and Archaeologists; Archivists; Museum Curators; Exhibit Designers and Museum Technicians; Forensic Scientists; Historians; Sociologists

Admission Information

FRESHMAN: Admission information

TRANSFER STUDENTS: Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts

Beyond admission, if you have questions about transferring, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has transfer advisors to help. Please feel free to contact them about any of the topics below!

• Course plans before transferring
• Estimated time to graduation
• Career preparation in CLA
• Getting ready for orientation, if admitted
• Connecting with major/minor departments