PHD IN ANTHROPOLOGY: BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Graduate students in Biological Anthropology acquire the PhD degree through mastery of a core curriculum and completion of advanced study and research in a chosen field of specialization. The curricular goal is to foster understanding of human biological adaptation and its evolutionary basis through study of ecological, demographic, genetic, developmental, paleontological, behavioral, and epidemiological dimensions of human adaptation. Comprehensive training in theory and topical research provides the base from which a student's specialization can be developed under the direction of a supervisory committee.

During the first six quarters of enrollment, the student gains contact with faculty in the program and acquires the general competence and background necessary for advanced work through a series of required core courses. The comprehensive and general examinations follow this part of the program. The second part of the program involves research and completion of an acceptable dissertation project. Appropriate time for completion of the entire program is five to six years.

ADMISSION

An applicant for admission to the graduate program must have a BA or BS degree. An undergraduate major in anthropology is helpful, but those who have not majored in anthropology are also encouraged to apply. In the review of an application, course work in the following areas is considered especially desirable as preparatory for advanced studies: biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, biology and zoology, mathematics, and statistics. Before applying, prospective applicants are strongly advised to consult the list of departmental biological anthropology faculty, to carefully note whether the faculty they are interested in working with are accepting new graduate students, and to get in touch with prospective faculty mentors.

ADVISING

An entering student is assigned an advisor from the biological anthropology faculty. Students should stay in regular contact with their advisor, bring questions to them, keep them apprised of their progress, let them know of challenges they are facing and consult with this advisor each quarter concerning study plans. (The supervisory committee chairperson when named continues this role - see below). The student's first year advisor may be different from the final PhD committee chair. Advisors may shift based on the changing interests of the student - however students should always have at least one advisor.

PHD DEGREE

Candidates for the PhD degree must:

1. Satisfy the Graduate School's requirements (see the UW Graduate School).
2. Complete the core curriculum.
3. Pass the comprehensive examination.
4. Submit an acceptable PhD dissertation proposal.
5. Present a dissertation colloquium.
6. Pass the general examination.
7. Fulfill the teaching requirement.
8. Submit an acceptable PhD dissertation; present a seminar based on the dissertation.
9. Pass the final examination.

CURRICULUM
a) A student with a limited background in biological anthropology must complete, upon entry to the program:

  **BIO A 502** (6 credits) Preceptorial Reading in Biological Anthropology.

b) If, in the view of the advisor, a student has a limited background in other subfields of anthropology, the student must complete, as soon as possible, either or both of the following:

  i) **ANTH 500** (6 cr) Preceptorial Reading in Sociocultural Anthropology
  
  ii) **ARCHY 501** (6 cr) Preceptorial Reading in Archaeology

c) Students must take at least five 400 or 500 level BIO A core courses (of at least 3 credits each). Among these five courses, students must complete at least one course in each of the four core competency areas. A single course can only fulfill competency requirements for one area at a time. Students should select their core courses in consultation with their advisor(s).

Core competency areas:

1) Human Biology/Health (HB)
2) Paleoanthropology/Anatomy (PA)
3) Evolution (E)
4) Primatology (P)

Core courses with competency area categories in parentheses:

  - **BIO A 413** Human-Primate Interface: Implications for Disease, Risk, & Conservation (P)
  - **BIO A 420** Anthropological Research on Health Disparities (HB)
  - **BIO A 450** Biodemography Seminar (HB, E)
  - **BIO A 455** Reproductive Ecology Laboratory Seminar (HB)
  - **BIO A 465** Nutritional Anthropology (HB)
  - **BIO A 470** Evolution of Human Behavior (E)
  - **BIO A 471** Evolutionary Perspectives on Parenting and Childcare (HB, E)
  - **BIO A 473** Biological Adaptability of Human Populations (HB, E)
  - **BIO A 476** Sociocultural Ecology and Health (HB, E)
  - **BIO A 477** Evolutionary Perspectives on Sex and Gender Roles (E)
  - **BIO A 482** Human Population Genetics (E)
  - **BIO A 483** Human Genetics, Disease, and Culture (HB, E)
  - **BIO A 484** Human Life Cycle (HB, E)
  - **BIO A 485** Research in Growth and Development (HB, E)
  - **BIO A 486** Primate Socioecology (P, E)
  - **BIO A 487** Human and Comparative Osteology (PA)
  - **BIO A 488** Primate Evolution (P, E, PA)
  - **BIO A 491** Issues in Human Paleontology (PA)
  - **BIO A 495** Growth and Development: Infancy (HB)
  - **BIO A 496** Growth and Development: Adolescence and Reproductive Maturity (HB)
  - **BIO A 520** Human Behavioral Ecology (3-5) (E)
  - **BIO A 521** Hominin Evolution (E, PA)
  - **BIO A 522** Hominin Evolution (E, PA)
  - **BIO A 523** Social Networks and Health: Biocultural Perspectives (HB)
  - **BIO A 526** Quantitative Methods and Modeling for Biocultural Anthropology (HB)
  - **BIO A 544** Applied Biomechanics of Human Movement (PA)
  - **BIO A 550** Skeletal Biology and Prehistoric Demography (PA)
  - **BIO A 559** Laboratory Methods in Anthropological Genetics
  - **BIO A 568** Human Reproductive Ecology (E, HB)
  - **BIO A 569** Behavioral Ecology and Demography (E)
  - **BIO A 584** Topics in Ecology and Adaptation (E)
  - **BIO A 588** Topics in Primate Evolution (PA, P)
  - **BIO A 591** Issues in Hominin Paleontology (PA)

d) In addition to the five core courses required above students must take **BIO A 525** Biocultural Research Methods & Study Design.

e) These courses provide a broad view of the theory, methods and research concerns of biological
anthropology. They also provide students an opportunity to identify their primary research interests and those of the faculty. A student must complete the core courses with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. A grade of less than 2.7 in any core course is unsatisfactory; normally, the student must repeat the course, but may, by petition to the biological anthropology faculty, seek to remedy the deficiency in another way.

f) Finally, each student must complete one of the following statistics sequences for a grade (or the equivalent as approved by the biological anthropology faculty)

- BIOST 511, 512, and 513,
- BIOST 517 and 518,
- SOC 504, 505, and 506, or
- POL S 500, 501 and 503.

g) Each student must satisfactorily complete all of the requirement listed above (except completion of BIO A 525 Biocultural Research Methods & Study Design) before taking the comprehensive examination.

h) Students may choose to take additional courses, relevant to their particular research interests; these should be chosen in consultation with the student’s advisor.

**COMPREHENSIVE (WRITTEN) EXAMINATION**

This is an examination of the student's general knowledge of biological anthropology, as derived primarily from the contents of the core courses and as applied to current issues in the field. The examination consists of questions selected by the faculty and is designed to test a student's ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate theories, concepts and data. Students are expected to work with their advisor to pick an additional one or two reading committee members. This comprehensive written examination reading committee will make a recommendation to the graduate faculty in biological anthropology who will determine the final score of the exam.

Students are expected to take this examination during finals week in the spring quarter of their second year. The faculty sets the dates of the examination. The exam comprises four questions and is scheduled for six hours. The complete examination may be taken once and leads to one of three outcomes:

- **Pass**, with the recommendation to proceed in the PhD program – awarded when the score on each question is 3.0 or above.
- **Conditional Pass** – awarded when the answer to one or two questions are scored at or below 2.9. The condition is satisfied when the student demonstrates competence by successfully retaking the relevant portion(s) of the examination.
- **Failure** – awarded when the answers to three or more questions are scored at or below 2.9. Students who fail this examination may not proceed toward the PhD although they may, provided the overall score on the comprehensive examination is at least 2.7, earn a terminal MA.

**MASTER’S DEGREE**

Upon completion of all required coursework and scoring at least 2.7 overall on the comprehensive examination the student can obtain an MA degree.

**PHD SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

A student should always have at least one advisor throughout their entire time in the PhD program, although this advisor may shift over time. Students should constitute a full committee as they begin to write their dissertation proposal. The supervisory committee shall consist of a chairperson (the advisor) chosen from the graduate faculty in biological anthropology, a Graduate School Representative (GSR), and from two to four other members. At least half of the full committee (excluding the GSR) must be from the biological anthropology faculty. The GSR committee member must not be in the same department as the student/committee chair and must not have collaborations or other conflicts of interest with the student/committee chair (see [https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/dottoronal-degree-policies/graduate-school-representative-gsr-eligibility/](https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/dottoronal-degree-policies/graduate-school-representative-gsr-eligibility/) for more details).
The student should discuss committee member choices with their advisor and their developing projects with prospective committee members.

**DISSETRATION PROPOSAL**

After completing the master's degree, the student subsequently presents a formal written proposal of original research to the supervisory committee. The supervisory committee may require the student to complete one or more literature reviews as part of developing the dissertation proposal. Where appropriate, the proposal should be prepared in a form suitable for submission to a funding agency (e.g. NSF DDIG).

**COLLOQUIUM**

The candidate presents an overview of the proposed dissertation research in a colloquium to which all members of the Department of Anthropology are invited. The colloquium is usually held before the general exam, but also can be combined with the general examination.

**GENERAL (ORAL) EXAMINATION**

A two-hour general examination focusing on the candidates proposed area of research and its theoretical and methodological foundation is administered by the supervisory committee. The general examination should be taken within five quarters (of enrollment) of taking the comprehensive examination and must be scheduled in advance with the Graduate School (via the graduate program advisor in anthropology). Upon successful completion of the general examination, the student is admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

**TEACHING REQUIREMENT**

Before receiving the PhD degree, the candidate is expected to serve as a teaching assistant in anthropology, or teach a course in anthropology at least once. The course must be evaluated by the students enrolled and this evaluation should be shared and discussed with the PhD student's advisor.

**SEMINAR AND FINAL EXAMINATION**

Following completion of research, the candidate prepares a dissertation which is submitted to the dissertation reading committee (see the UW Graduate School [4]). On the recommendation of this committee, the candidate presents to the community a seminar based upon the dissertation, and then sits for the final examination (an oral defense of the dissertation required by the Graduate School and administered by the PhD supervisory committee).

**GRANT FUNDING AND PUBLISHING**

While not a formal requirement of the PhD program, students are strongly encouraged to apply for external grant funding and to begin publishing their research in peer-reviewed journals before completion of their PhDs. Peer-reviewed publications allow the broader dissemination of ones work to benefit the scientific community and demonstrate ones capability to so meaningfully contribute. Grant funding allows one to conduct higher quality research and demonstrates ones ability to support their work and have an external check on the merits of their research plans. It is difficult to get post-PhD jobs in academia without a strong grant funding and publication record. For students who decide not to continue in academia, grants and publications are still likely to be helpful on the job market. Students should strategize with their advisor about applying for grants and submitting their work for publication.
[2] https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/doctoral-degree-policies/doctoral-degree-requirements/
[3] https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/doctoral-degree-policies/graduate-school-representative-gsr-eligibility/
[4] https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/doctoral-degree-policies/appointment-and-responsibilities-of-a-doctoral-
reading-committee/