ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY (Div II)

Chair: Professor James Nolan

- Zaid Adhami, Assistant Professor of Religion and Faculty Affiliate in Anthropology & Sociology; affiliated with: Anthropology and Sociology
- David B. Edwards, James N. Lambert '39 Professor of Anthropology; on leave 2021-2022
- Antonia E. Foias, Preston S. Parish ’41 Third Century Professor of Anthropology
- Kim Gutschow, Lecturer in Religion and Anthropology/Sociology; affiliated with: Anthropology and Sociology
- Nicolas C. Howe, Director of CES and the Environmental Studies Program, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies and Faculty Affiliate in Anthropology and Sociology; affiliated with: Anthropology and Sociology
- Peter Just, Professor of Anthropology
- Joel Lee, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
- James A. Manigault-Bryant, Chair and Professor of Africana Studies and Faculty Affiliate in Anthropology and Sociology and Religion; affiliated with: Religion Department, Anthropology and Sociology; on leave Spring 2022
- Gregory C. Mitchell, Chair and Associate Professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Faculty Affiliate in Anthropology/Sociology; affiliated with: Anthropology and Sociology
- James L. Nolan, Chair and Washington Gladden 1859 Professor of Sociology
- Olga Shevchenko, Professor of Sociology
- Christina E. Simko, Associate Professor of Sociology; affiliated with: American Studies Program
- Ben Snyder, Assistant Professor of Sociology; on leave 2021-2022
- Phi H Su, Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology

The disciplines of anthropology and sociology aim to teach students how to enter into the social/cultural worlds of others, how to grasp those worlds from the viewpoints of their inhabitants, and how to articulate those denizens' habits of mind, worldviews, and values to broader audiences.

Anthropology critically analyzes social forms and practices in all their local and global diversity, illuminating the cultural grounding of the ideologies, narratives, and structures in which we are all implicated. Archaeology extends this analysis to social formations of the historical and prehistorical past. Sociology studies the nature and trajectories of modernity, examining the intricacies of industrial and post-industrial societies and the dilemmas that confront individuals in modern social systems. These disciplines introduce students to classical and contemporary theories that illuminate the contours and contradictions of social experience. The Anthropology & Sociology program promotes a critical engagement with these theories while at the same time bringing evidence and case studies into conversation with theory.

The Department emphasizes qualitative fieldwork in its many forms. We teach students how to formulate, frame, and address intellectual problems. We also teach students the empirical methods widely used in anthropology, sociology, and other related disciplines, including, but not limited to ethnography, participant observation, interviewing, discourse and visual analysis, archival research, oral history, and archaeological methods.

Because the program emphasizes critical thinking skills to assess social claims made by others, and the application of anthropological and sociological skills to present day concerns, undergraduate training in Anthropology or Sociology has proven invaluable to majors pursuing a range of careers, including public policy, diplomacy, international development, marketing, social media development, K-12 education, journalism, medicine, and law.

MAJORS

The department offers separate majors in both Anthropology and Sociology, with a broad and diverse array of courses in both disciplines. The department is committed, however, to the unity of the social sciences. To this end, Anthropology and Sociology offer joint core courses in methodology and theory, as well as several elective courses in common. All joint courses are designated “ANSO.”

Requirements

For the degree in Anthropology or Sociology, students must complete a minimum of nine courses as outlined below:

Core Courses

Majors in both disciplines must take a sequence of four core courses. Three of these are joint (ANSO) courses. The sequences are:
Elective Courses

Majors in Anthropology or Sociology must take five elective courses from the course listings of their respective disciplines or from the joint ANSO listings. Two of the courses chosen are normally at the 300 level or above. In close consultation with their departmental advisors, students may take some selected courses from other disciplines to fulfill major requirements in either Anthropology or Sociology.

Majors in each wing of the department are allowed to count up to two courses in the other wing towards fulfillment of their major requirements.

STATISTICS AND DATA ANALYSIS

In addition to the nine total courses required for the major, it is recommended that Anthropology and Sociology majors take Statistics 101 or a comparable course in statistics and data analysis.

AREA STUDIES CONCENTRATION

Students who wish to combine a major in Anthropology or Sociology with an Area Studies concentration are encouraged to do so. Courses taken to satisfy an AreaStudies requirement may be counted toward the major with prior approval of a student’s departmental advisor. The only exception to this rule is the Area Studies senior seminar, which cannot ordinarily be counted toward the Anthropology or Sociology degree.

LANGUAGE STUDY, STUDY ABROAD, AND WINTER STUDY

Departmental advisors will help interested students integrate a major with study abroad, foreign language study, or field research during the winter study period. The department encourages Williams students to take advantage of established foreign study programs in Egypt, Japan, India, Hong Kong, and other countries. Because some foreign study programs do not offer courses that can be counted toward the Anthropology or Sociology degrees, however, sophomores planning to study abroad in junior year must consult with the departmental advisor before declaring a major.

FAQ

Students MUST contact departments/programs BEFORE assuming study away credit will be granted toward the major or concentration.

Can your department or program typically pre-approve courses for major/concentration credit?

Yes. In some cases, provisional approval can be granted (students should be sure to contact the department for details). We welcome discussions of curricular plans for those major who travel abroad in their junior year. However, typically, students don't have access to all the salient information until AFTER they have taken the course.

What criteria will typically be used/required to determine whether a student may receive major/concentration credit for a course taken while on study away?

Course title and description, and complete syllabus including readings/assignments. The syllabus and readings/assignment information is required in cases when the course title and description are not sufficient to ascertain whether a course should count towards the major. We also request information on course hours.

Does your department/program place restrictions on the number of major/concentration credits that a student might earn through study away?

Yes. We credit two, and in special cases three courses.

Does your department/program place restrictions on the types of courses that can be awarded credit towards your major?

Yes. The expectation is for an intellectually rigorous semester-long course with a paper/exam component.

Are there specific major requirements that cannot be fulfilled while on study away?

Yes. ANSO 205, ANSO 305 and ANSO 402 are almost always taken in the department.

Are there specific major requirements in your department/program that students should be particularly aware of when weighing study away options? (Some examples might include a required course that is always taught in one semester, laboratory requirements.)

Yes. ANSO 305 is offered in the fall and ANSO 205 and ANSO 402 only in the spring. We advise our majors to be aware if they plan to spend all
Give examples in which students thought or assumed that courses taken away would count toward the major or concentration and then learned they wouldn’t:

In one case, a student had assumed that he could take the equivalent of ANSO 205 abroad, and was disappointed to discover that was not the case. He ended up taking ANSO 205 his senior year.

THE DEGREE WITH HONORS IN ANTHROPOLOGY OR SOCIOLOGY

Honors and highest honors are normally awarded for the completion of a year-long research project that has resulted in an original thesis of high quality. Students wishing to write an honors thesis should engage a member of the department faculty as a Thesis Advisor as soon as possible and must submit a proposal for the thesis for department approval no later than the end of spring reading period of the junior year. If the proposal is approved, they will be permitted to register for Anthropology and Sociology 493-W31-494, during which they will write and defend a thesis. If their overall work in the major continues to be of high quality and the thesis is deemed of a similar quality, they may be awarded honors or highest honors in Anthropology or Sociology.

ANSO 205 (S) Ways of Knowing

An applied exploration of how one makes sense of the social world through fieldwork. Some of the key questions of the course are: What are the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of social inquiry? How does one frame intellectual problems and go about collecting, sifting, and assessing field materials? How do qualitative and quantitative approaches to social inquiry differ? How are they similar? What is the importance of history to sociological and anthropological research? How do social researchers use archival and other documentary materials to interpret society? What is the relationship between empirical data and the generation of social theory? What are the ethical dilemmas of fieldwork and of other kinds of social research? How do researchers’ personal biographies and values shape their work? We will approach these problems both abstractly and concretely, through readings in epistemology as well as a series of case studies, drawing upon the field experiences of departmental faculty and guest speakers from both inside and outside the academy. The course will also feature hands-on training in field methods, in which students design and undertake their own pilot field projects.

Requirements/Evaluation: full participation in the seminar, several short written assignments, and a final research essay/proposal

Prerequisites: ANTH 101 or SOC 101 or permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: Anthropology and Sociology majors

Expected Class Size: 19

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Attributes: EVST Methods Courses EXPE Experiential Education Courses

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Olga Shevchenko

ANSO 305 (F) Social Theory

An introduction to social theory in anthropology and sociology, with strong emphasis on enduring themes that cut across disciplinary divides. What is modern about modern social theory? How do social thinkers construe “society” and “culture,” and have these constructions withstood challenges over time? What role does human agency play in the unfolding of social life, and where does that sense of agency come from in the first place? What are the forces that animate social interaction on the level of individuals, social groups and complex units like nation-states? What are the possibilities and limits of systematic approaches to the study of human social experience? The course emphasizes major differences between interpretive frameworks as well as the common elements that contribute to a deeper understanding of the social world.

Requirements/Evaluation: full participation in the seminar, weekly contributions to annotating course readings, and three papers

Prerequisites: ANTH 101 or SOC 101 or ANSO 205 or permission of the instructor

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: Anthropology and Sociology majors
Expected Class Size: 15
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Unit Notes: AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives
Distributions: (D2)
Attributes: AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives

Fall 2021
SEM Section: 01    MR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm    Christina E. Simko

ANSO 402 (S) Senior Seminar
This capstone seminar combines intensive discussion and individual research. Half of the course will be dedicated to the discussion of current debates central to the concerns of both anthropology and sociology, such as the ethics of conducting fieldwork, humanitarianism and relief, global public health, poverty and the city, and environmental conservation. Among the topics discussed, the ethical dilemmas of conducting ethnography will be a common theme. The second half of the course will be devoted to independent individual original projects which should have a major ethnographic component. At the end of the course, students will present their projects to the seminar.

Requirements/Evaluation: full participation, major research project and paper (30 pages), class presentation; weekly short responses
Prerequisites: only senior majors in Anthropology and Sociology, or permission of instructor
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: Anthropology and Sociology majors
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)
Attributes: EXPE Experiential Education Courses

Spring 2022
SEM Section: 01    TF 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm    Antonia E. Foias

Winter Study ---------------------------------------------------------------

ANSO 12 (W) Deciphering Maya Civilization
Maya civilization is one of the most celebrated Pre-Columbian societies of Central America. Its apogee during the Classic period in the first millennium C.E. saw dozens of complex states, populous cities, hundreds of stone carved monuments and polychrome vessels painted with palace scenes recording the life of the rich and powerful elites. This Winter Study course will focus on one corpus of polychrome vessels, called the Ik’ Polychrome Style painted at the Maya center of Motul de San José in northern Guatemala. We will reconstruct what these Ik’ Style polychrome vases tell us about Classic Maya civilization, and more specifically, about the political, social, economic and religious life of Maya elites. The course will take a project-based experiential approach as each student will research an individual Ik’ Style vase from museum collections, including those at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), which we will visit at the beginning of Winter Study.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation; final 10-15 page paper on the chosen Maya polychrome vessel
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: majors in ANTH OR SOC, or students who have already taken an archaeology course
Grading: pass/fail only

Winter 2022
LEC Section: 01    WR 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm    Antonia E. Foias
ANSO 13 (W) We Stand on Mohican Lands: Tribal Historic Preservation in Practice

Students will begin with a brief survey of the history of archaeology ending with Historic Preservation laws and acts in the United States in place to protect and preserve historic places and cultural resources such as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, particularly Section 106. Through the work of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Tribal Historic Preservation Office, students will explore how compliance work allows Tribal Historic Preservation Offices ways to preserve significant religious and cultural sites, and at times how these laws fall far short of what they were designed to do. Through case studies and hands on work with archaeological artifact collections associated with actual federal and state undertakings, students will gain knowledge of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Nation Tribal history throughout its ancestral homelands along the Hudson River Valley including here in Berkshire County, from precontact to colonial periods to present day, hands on experience with different artifact types and their analyses, experimental archaeology lab experiences such as flint knapping, and how archaeology can help aid in interpretation and preservation of the Tribe's cultural heritage. Students will gain an understanding of archaeological methods and theory and how that is carried out under federal and state compliance and preservation laws by a contemporary federally recognized Tribe such as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community.

Requirements/Evaluation: 10-page paper
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 10
Enrollment Preferences: short paragraph about their interest in the course
Grading: pass/fail only

Unit Notes: Nathan Allison is Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Archaeologist for the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Nation. His primary focus is on the protection of sites of religious and cultural significance for the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. This protection is carried out through compliance obligations for federal and state undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and National Environmental Protection Act as well as state and local historic preservation

Materials/Lab Fee: $50

Winter 2022
LEC Section: 01 Cancelled

ANSO 14 (W) Epidimeology in Real Time: Epidemic Investigation, Analysis, and Control from Athens to Wuhan

Cross-listings: PHLH 14 ANSO 14

Secondary Cross-listing

Epidemiology is the basic science of public health. Unlike illness care activities, which address the health needs of individuals, public health addresses the needs of populations, and emphasizes prevention. The investigation of epidemics has contributed greatly to effective preventive strategies in human populations. The class will examine infectious disease outbreaks, as well as longer incubation, non-infectious disease epidemics generated by, for example, sports violence, specifically the relationship between concussion and sub-concussive head blows to the later development of chronic traumatic encephalopathy CTE) and other types of chronic brain damage. In the process the class will see the emergence of research methodologies that enhance hypothesis testing, and make possible reliable observational studies in etiology and the natural history of disability and disease. It was said of William Farr, an English epidemiologist of the middle 19th Century, that he had the significant power of making numbers argumentative (and politically controversial!). As the class is exposed to both descriptive and analytical data relating, for example, to the current epidemic of athletic injury, it will be clear that change can be extremely fractious. In the case of prevention, we may agree with George Bernard Shaw who wrote in the preface to the "Doctor's Dilemma" that people prefer "absolution" to "exhortation!"

Requirements/Evaluation: final project or presentation
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 12
Enrollment Preferences: based on interview
Grading: pass/fail only

Unit Notes: Dr. Wright is medical epidemiologist who first worked with maternal and child health and family planning programs in Alabama and Georgia. Later, after training as an EIS officer at the CDC, he was a resident consultant to both the Sri Lankan and Thai Ministries of Public Health. Still later, he was a faculty member in the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, in New Jersey.

Materials/Lab Fee: none

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
ANSO 99 (W) Independent Study: Anthropology & Sociology

Open to upperclass students. Students interested in doing an independent project (99) during Winter Study must make prior arrangements with a faculty sponsor. The student and professor then complete the independent study proposal form available online. The deadline is typically in late September. Proposals are reviewed by the pertinent department and the Winter Study Committee. Students will be notified if their proposal is approved prior to the Winter Study registration period.

Class Format: independent study

Grading: pass/fail only