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:

Anthropology

ANTH 101 How to Be Human

Sociology

SOC 101 Invitation to Sociology

Joint Courses

ANSO 205 Ways of Knowing
ANSO 305 Social Theory
ANSO 402 Senior Seminar

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 Area Studies 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 or part of their junior year abroad.

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 11 (W) Introduction to Indian Cuisine

India is a diverse country. The ingredients and dishes cooked in the Northern part of India vary immensely from those cooked in the South and coastal...
regions. This course will begin with an introduction into the origin and use of spices in Indian cooking and then go into a hands-on demonstration of some popular dishes from the above regions of India. The focus will be to learn to cook healthy vegetarian food and lentils, but we will also be making the popular chicken tikka masala. The class will meet for 6 hours each week (January 7, 8, 14, 15, 28, and 29--plus compulsory field trip). There will be assigned readings and a compulsory 3-day trip to New York (January 20-22) where we visit restaurants and spice markets in the boroughs of Manhattan and Queens that will further your understanding of the diversity within the Indian cuisine. The trip will feature cooking demonstrations at various restaurants, including one with the chef from the Pierre. The course will require students to create a food blog, post photographs, and make a number of blog entries about the restaurants visited and food eaten. Final evaluation will be based on a final cooking project as well as the quality of blog entries. Adjunct Instructor Bio: Ramaa Reddy Raghavan is a freelance broadcast and print journalist who is passionate about food and travel. She is a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism. Her work has been published in Huffington Post, NBC, WHYY, BBC, NPR, and PRI's The World.

Requirements/Evaluation: final project or presentation and blog entries
Prerequisites: interest in food and cooking
Enrollment Limit: 8
Enrollment Preferences: students will be selected on a written 350 word piece as to why they want to be in the class
Grading: pass/fail only
Materials/Lab Fee: $360 and approximately $30 for books

Winter 2020
LEC Section: 01

ANSO 15  (W)  An Introduction to Spatial Science and GIS
Cross-listings: SPEC 15  ANSO 15
Primary Cross-listing

Space and place are so ubiquitous in our lived experience that we often fail to take their significance into account when directing and designing scientific research. How do spatial relations (presence/absence, proximity, preference/avoidance) shape natural and cultural phenomena? How do space and place reflect cultural perceptions and practices? How are landscapes and environments engineered to shape individual and social behavior? This intensive course explores the fundamentals of spatial theory and methods, with an emphasis on technical skill, data evaluation, and research design. Through readings, lectures, discussions, and exercises you will be encouraged to think spatially and to apply spatial thinking to your areas of interest. Priority for enrolling in this course will be given to Div II students who may need GIS (mapping & spatial analysis) for an independent study or senior thesis. Students who have not taken GEOS 214 have enrollment preference in this course; this course is not a prerequisite for GEOS 214 and students who take this course may also take GEOS 214.

Requirements/Evaluation: combination of class participation, short essays on assigned readings, successful completion of class exercises, and a 10-page research design paper
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 24
Enrollment Preferences: Priority will be given to Div II students who may need GIS (mapping & spatial analysis) for an independent study or senior thesis; students who have not taken GEOS 214 have preference in this course; this is not a prerequisite for GEOS 214
Grading: pass/fail only
Materials/Lab Fee: approximately $70 for books

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
SPEC 15 ANSO 15

Winter 2020
LEC Section: 01    TBA     Ben  Brody

ANSO 16  (W)  Jacques Ellul's The Technological Society

The work of the late French historian and sociologist Jacques Ellul (1912-1994) suffers from nothing less than a tragic paradox. On the one side, there
is arguably no one whose sociohistorical analyses have done more to explicate the relationship between technology and the most pressing issues of our day. On the other side, despite the profundity and contemporary relevance of Ellul's work, it has been widely misinterpreted, dismissed as both "pessimistic" and "technologically deterministic." This course invites students to carry out a close reading of Ellul's most (in)famous study—The Technological Society (1964). We will situate this text relative to the circumstances in which Ellul lived and worked, and in relation to his two principle influences: Karl Marx and Søren Kierkegaard. Together, we will then work our way through the text's key themes: Ellul's distinction between technology and technique and the latter's distinctly modern characteristics; technique and economy; technique and the state; and finally, human techniques (e.g. therapy, medicine, management, education, propaganda, sport). In the course of proceeding as such, students will be asked to consider, critique, and elaborate Ellul's ideas in light of contemporary technological developments.

Requirements/Evaluation: several short papers and class presentations
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: students will be asked to submit a brief statement of interest
Grading: pass/fail only
Materials/Lab Fee: approximately $14 for books

Winter 2020
LEC Section: 01    TBA     Grant Shoffstall

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

Winter 2020
IND Section: 01    TBA     James L. Nolan

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? What are the uses and limits of statistical data? What is the importance of history to sociological and anthropological research? How can one use archival and other documentary materials to enrich ethnographic research? What are the empirical limits to interpretation? What is the relationship between empirical data and the generation of social theory? How does the social organization of social research affect one's inquiry? What are the typical ethical dilemmas of fieldwork and of other kinds of social research? How do researchers' personal biographies and values shape their work? In the first half of the course, we will approach these problems concretely rather than abstractly through a series of case studies, drawing upon the field experiences of departmental faculty and guest speakers from different professional backgrounds. The second half of the course will be dedicated to a hands-on training in field methods, in which the students will design and undertake their own pilot field projects.
Class Format: seminar
Requirements/Evaluation: full-participation in the seminar, several short papers, an independent ethnographic project and a final research proposal
Prerequisites: ANTH 101 or SOC 101 or permission of instructor
Enrollment Limit: 25
Expected Class Size: 25
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)
Attributes: EVST Methods Courses  EXPE Experiential Education Courses
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.

Class Format: seminar

Requirements/Evaluation: full participation in the seminar, regular reading response memos, 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 2019

SEM Section: 01 MWF 11:00 am - 12:15 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.

Class Format: 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