Independent Work in Anthropology

A Guide to Writing the Junior Paper (JP) and Senior Thesis

Department of Anthropology
Princeton University
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Introduction

Anthropology is the comprehensive study of human development, culture, and change in the full range of the world’s sociocultural systems, past and present. The comprehensiveness of anthropology stems from its emphasis on context, reflected in the perspectives offered by the discipline’s four fields: sociocultural, biological, linguistic, and archaeological anthropology. The Department of Anthropology at Princeton regularly offers courses and advising in sociocultural and biological anthropology; additional instruction is available through cross-lists, cognates, and special offerings by visitors.

The characteristic methodologies of anthropology inform an understanding of human experiences and practices, illuminating their interconnectedness and interdependence. For sociocultural anthropologists, such connections are discovered mainly through long-term ethnographic research. Learning to be a good ethnographer requires learning how to observe, learning how to ask necessary and appropriate anthropological questions, and learning how to locate patterns in complex human behavior. Our unique field-based approach to human experience yields distinctive access to the connections between culture and social life. For biological anthropologists, these connections are found in both field and lab research.

The discipline of anthropology has influenced other disciplines in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, and in turn has been influenced by multidisciplinary approaches integrating these modes of inquiry. Anthropologists are often in dialogue with historians, literary critics, psychologists, sociologists, biologists, and other specialists whose scholarship engages anthropological questions. Therefore, in addition to ethnographic methods, anthropologists will sometimes employ more quantitative social science methods (such as surveys), natural science methods (such as laboratory research), and methods associated with the humanities (such as textual and visual studies).

In your independent work as an anthropology major, you will learn to practice distinctively anthropological methods of research and writing. Independent work in anthropology may involve field research and archival research as well as library, laboratory, and museum research. Rather than following faculty interests, you are encouraged to pursue research questions of your own design, according to your own interests – and to decide which methodological approaches work best to capture the evidence you need to address your topics. Junior Papers and senior theses are opportunities for you to develop your individual interests in depth outside your regular coursework, building on what you have learned about anthropological approaches.

In our department, course offerings are organized into three tracks: socio-cultural anthropology; medical anthropology; and law, politics, and economics. The socio-
cultural track (SCA) introduces students to a wide range of scholarship on cultural meaning-making and change in Western and non-Western societies. Courses in the medical anthropology track (MedAnth) focus on different cultural healing systems, different notions of health and wellbeing, global health, psychological anthropology, and science and technology studies (e.g. the culture of medicine, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and scientific knowledge production). Students in this track will also learn about the biological aspects of human adaptation and development, as well as the impact of culture and the environment on human growth, development, and disease. The law, politics, and economics track (LPE) introduces students to cross-cultural studies of customary and case law, governance, systems of exchange, and debt.

For all our majors, regardless of track, our courses are designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the discipline through courses on foundational concepts, fundamental methods, and the history of ideas. All three tracks share two core courses that are designed to support your independent work. Thus, as you develop your independent projects, you will work with complex qualitative and/or quantitative data (ANT 301) and you will explore connections between theory and evidence (ANT 300). SCA and LPE students will also contextualize these in the history of anthropological concepts and debates (ANT 390) while MedAnth students add context through concepts studied in courses pertaining to cultural systems and structures and the physical body (ANT 235, ANT 240, or ANT 340; ANT 206 or ANT 215). Electives also support your independent research engagements.

In sum, your courses offer you opportunities to work through key methodological ideas in anthropology like interpretation, reflexivity, experience, objectivity and subjectivity, participant-observation, translation, and comparison. You will learn how to develop a critical perspective on a body of anthropological literature, and to argue for a point of view using primary data and ethnographic texts. The ultimate goal of independent work in anthropology is to make a contribution to scholarship and debates in the field. This contribution can come in the form of original ethnographic research, the comparison and synthesis of data from multiple sources, and the development or critique of important anthropological concepts, among other possibilities.

Advising

Normally, each anthropology major has one faculty advisor for the junior paper and another faculty advisor for the senior thesis. In the course Ethnography, Evidence, and Experience (ANT 300, required of students regardless of track), students will learn, among many other things, what makes a question ethnographic or anthropological and what constitutes a literature review. In the course The Ethnographer’s Craft (ANT 301, also required of students in every track), students will learn the methods and ethics of ethnographic research. Throughout ANT 300-301,
students will be encouraged to apply what they are doing in the course to their independent work and to incorporate JP or senior thesis themes into course writing assignments. The senior seminar is a required, ungraded course that supports the development and writing of the senior thesis.

All students have individual faculty advisors throughout the academic year. Any faculty member can advise any student, but the Department makes every effort to match advisors with students based on the students’ interests and the faculty members’ areas of expertise. Advisors help you develop and refine your research topics, find relevant literature, conceptualize your approach, and improve your written expression. Advisors also evaluate your work. Every advising relationship is different, and good communication on a regular basis is an important part of the advising process. Some students prefer structured deadlines to motivate their work; others prefer more independence and flexibility. In all cases, independent work demands focus, initiative, and organization. It is your responsibility to schedule advising meetings and to meet each departmental benchmark on time (see below).
Independent Work for Juniors

Overview

Independent work in the junior year involves an original paper based on library research. Normally, field research is not appropriate for this paper. Fall-semester work toward the JP involves independent library research, regular consultation with an advisor, and readings aimed at developing a research proposal and an annotated bibliography. This system gives you a chance to explore your interests with faculty guidance; many anthropology majors are unsure about topics in the fall of their junior year, and need time to investigate several interesting possibilities before settling on one. By the end of the fall semester, you are expected to be making good headway on your reading and to have developed a substantive topic. Spring-semester work toward the JP involves focused writing and revising, in consultation with your advisor.

The JP in anthropology is based on a literature review. Your literature review begins with a set of texts (books, articles, essays, and other written sources) that you have consulted as you have pursued your research question. But you should go beyond a mere description or summary of this literature. The goal is to develop your own sense of problem through critical evaluation, engaging the authors’ use of evidence, methods of research, styles of interpretation, persuasiveness, and scope (among other things). An important part of your work as a JP writer is to select, assemble, and read sources in a meaningful way, in the service of a coherent, overarching perspective on the literature as a whole as it relates to your topic. You can find good models for anthropology literature reviews in the Annual Review of Anthropology. http://www.annualreviews.org/journal/anthro

Junior Paper Topic

Topics for JPs in anthropology are extremely varied; your topic should reflect your real interests. Some students use the JP as preparation for their senior thesis research; however, this is neither required nor expected. The JP is meant to be a vehicle for you to implement your developing sense of what makes an analysis anthropological, and to consider how an anthropological perspective might make sense of issues and problems you encounter outside the University, including, perhaps, domains of professional work to which you aspire. You are therefore encouraged to review and reuse sources and ideas you have encountered in your anthropology courses, as well as any other relevant courses you have taken, in developing your paper. While JP topics are completely open to your individual interests – and may even concern phenomena about which professional anthropologists have not already written – you need to find some significant set of anthropological sources as an analytical context for making sense of your topic. Your advisors can help you make these connections. JP
titles from past years can be found at: http://anthropology.princeton.edu/undergraduate-program/student-independent-work/junior-independent-research/jp-titles. You may also refer to anthropology course syllabi as valuable sources of ideas for topics, connections, and readings. You can find these posted in the Blackboard for Anthropology Concentrators, and you are encouraged to use them freely. A set of sample JPs from past years is also available to you for reference through arrangement with any departmental staff member during normal business hours.

Structure and Format

Junior papers are somewhat longer than term papers. Whereas anthropology term papers are usually 10-20 pages in length, JPs are expected to be 25-35 pages (excluding notes, bibliography, tables, illustrations, and appendices) – approximately the length of a published journal article. Subheadings may be used, as appropriate, but JPs normally do not have multiple chapters.

You should consult anthropology journals, such as American Anthropologist, for guidance on the proper style of footnotes, citations, and bibliographies. Note that the citation of sources is not usually placed in footnotes in anthropological journal articles, but rather placed parenthetically in the text itself; footnotes are reserved for clarifications and other asides. For more detailed guidelines, you can refer to The Chicago Manual of Style, used by the American Anthropological Association (AAA). For your convenience, an external URL link to the AAA’s overview of the Manual is posted on the Anthropology Concentrators’ Blackboard site.

Junior Paper Timeline

Please note that a calendar with specific dates is distributed to students at the beginning of each academic year. The timeline below indicates a standard but general schedule.

- **late September-early October**: JP advisors are assigned. Meet with your advisor as soon as possible to discuss ideas for your JP topic, mutual expectations, preferred modes of communication, and the nature and frequency of advising meetings. Schedule a mandatory consultation with the Firestone reference librarian after you have met with your advisor. Email the Departmental Representative after you have met with the reference librarian to confirm that you had the required meeting. Begin reading literature relevant to your topic.

- **late October-early November**: Submit JP progress report. This brief form asks you to indicate the extent to which you have met with your advisor, formulated your ideas, prepared a bibliography, and informed yourself about upcoming departmental benchmarks for the JP. On this progress report, you will indicate a deadline that you have set for December, in consultation
with your advisor, for you to submit a specified quantity of writing on which your advisor can provide you feedback before the winter recess begins.

- **November-December:** Prepare for the JP in consultation with your advisor. Preparation should include reading widely, developing your topic into a proposal, preparing a preliminary annotated bibliography, and writing a specified quantity of pages (or paragraphs) that will give your advisor a basis from which to give you feedback ahead of your written, final JP proposal due in January.

- **Early January:** Submit JP proposal to your advisor and to the Anthropology Department office. The proposal should be a 3-5 pp. (double-spaced) sketch of your topic and its anthropological significance, as well as your research goals. Include an annotated bibliography of your main sources and an outline of the entire JP, indicating your progress to date.

- **January-early February:** Get feedback from your advisor on your proposal and develop a plan together for benchmarks, future meetings, and review procedures.

- **February-March:** Write a full draft of your JP. Begin to write early and make use of resources such as organized group writing opportunities announced in the Princeton Undergraduate Research Calendar (PURC), The Writing Center, and self-initiated peer reviews. Consult the reference librarian as needed.

- **Late March:** Submit the first draft of your JP to your advisor. Your draft may include sections that are still in outline form, but it should be substantial enough for your advisor to review and make recommendations. Schedule a meeting with your advisor as soon as possible to discuss the draft and to plan next steps.

- **Deadline, mid-April:** Submit a hard copy and an email copy of the final JP to your advisor and to the Anthropology Department office. The e-mailed copy must be received before midnight on the deadline. Your advisor holds discretion to grant you an extension beyond this departmental deadline and up to the University deadline. A late submission without a preauthorized extension from the advisor will be subject to grade penalties.
Evaluation

Your JP counts for 10% of your departmental grade average, used to determine departmental honors. Your JP will be read and evaluated by your JP advisor, so it is vital that you discuss your advisor's criteria for evaluation well ahead of submitting the final paper. Generally, successful JPs draw from a robust and well-chosen set of sources (readings and other data), present a compelling analysis of those sources, advance an interesting and plausible argument, demonstrate the significance and originality of that argument, and employ clear prose and a logical structure. See Addendum, “Evaluating Work in Anthropology,” at the end of this Guide.
Independent Work for Seniors

Overview

All senior anthropology majors write a thesis. The department encourages innovative and multidisciplinary projects, although all anthropology theses must engage or otherwise incorporate anthropological sources and reflect anthropological studies in some way. The research and critical reading skills that you develop in writing your JP are just as crucial to writing your senior thesis. Theses take many different forms in anthropology; many styles of writing and interpretation are valid. However you approach it, your thesis should address a clear research question, explain the significance of the question, critically engage literature relevant to the question, and present an analysis of data that bear on the question. Senior theses are expected to be more complex than JPs in their treatment of research topics and therefore are usually longer.

Theses in anthropology have focused on a wide variety of subjects and have been based on field, library, laboratory, and museum research. Some theses have also included creative components – for example, a theater production, photography exhibit, dance performance, or documentary film – but such projects must be accompanied by a substantial written essay. Past anthropology theses have addressed, for example: social change and development in Brazil, France, and Nepal; the cultural ecology of salmon in the American northwest; Japanese and American business cultures; the symbolic and political dimensions of the American feminist spirituality movement; Mexican-American family history; literary and historical interpretations of Japanese gender symbolism; urban AIDS clinics; the history and recognition of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Indian tribe; the sociocultural dimensions of child abuse; the relation between fiction and anthropological writing; black theater in New York City; a Pentecostal church in New Jersey; North African immigrants in France; a comparison of primary education in China and the United States; and the interpretation of genetic and anatomical data on modern human origins. Selected titles of senior thesis projects in anthropology from past years can be found at: http://anthropology.princeton.edu/undergraduate-program/student-independent-work/senior-thesis-research/senior-theses-awards

All anthropology theses are archived in the Department, and students are welcome to come in and take a look at bound copies. In addition, within the Princeton domain, the Mudd Library has made available online reading of more recent senior theses in its collection, through Dataspace https://dataspace.princeton.edu/jspui/.

You are welcome to consult any faculty member, within or outside anthropology, in developing your thesis research. However, barring exceptional circumstances, your thesis advisor will be a member of the Anthropology Department faculty. In the first weeks of the
fall semester, you will be assigned a thesis advisor with whom you will consult regularly all year.

Senior Seminar

Anthropology majors in their senior year are required to take the senior seminar in the fall semester as part of their work toward the senior thesis. The senior seminar builds on work you have undertaken on anthropological inquiry, theory, and research methods in your core anthropology classes (ANT 300 and 301). It comprises a series of discussions and writing workshops, engaging your own research experiences and helping you with many aspects of thesis writing: choosing and refining a topic, outlining and organizing research material, compiling an annotated bibliography, writing ethnographically, presenting and analyzing evidence, developing a voice, “using” theory, drafting and revising. The format of the seminar is collaborative; students work closely with the other members of their group, helping one another to refine and revise their ideas and their writing as they move through the fall semester.

Thesis Research

A senior thesis in anthropology may be based on field or other research, grounded in anthropological literature. Doing thesis research during the summer between junior and senior years is very helpful but not required for anthropology majors. You might plan your thesis during the spring of your junior year and become fully engaged in thesis research during the summer. Or you might choose to spend your summer engaged in other endeavors, but make plans during the spring to conduct research at the end of the summer or upon your return to campus in the fall. If you plan to begin research after the summer, or plan to continue research that you have initiated during the summer, you may conduct limited fieldwork during the fall semester, winter break, or intersession.

If you have ideas for a thesis topic, the best way to begin is to discuss your ideas with your JP advisor, although other faculty members may also be consulted as appropriate to your specific project. If you are interested in conducting research during the summer between junior and senior years, you should begin planning by the start of the spring semester. Normally, ANT 301 is required as preparation for field research. Fieldwork-based thesis research requires IRB approval; you should consult with your faculty advisor or IRB staff to determine what kind of IRB application to submit. Funding applications will require written support from a faculty member, normally your JP advisor. The timing of summer research planning is partly determined by the deadlines to apply for funding (applicable to both library and field-based research), as well as approval from the IRB for research involving human subjects (applicable to fieldwork only).
Student Activities Funding Engine (SAFE) is a student portal to many University funding opportunities, including support for senior thesis research offered by departments, programs, and centers on campus. One of the funding opportunities you will find in SAFE is the Anthropology Department’s “field-based senior thesis research grant program,” from which awards are made to anthropology majors to conduct field research. The Anthropology Department’s grant program is intended primarily as support for thesis research conducted during the summer, but you may also apply in the spring for Department funding for thesis research that you plan to begin during the fall semester.

If you are considering using JP research or prior course work as the basis for your senior thesis, you will need to get approval from both your thesis advisor and your JP advisor or course instructor, as applicable. Sufficient difference between your senior thesis and your previously graded work will need to be established. If your proposed senior thesis topic appears to be a continuation of the previous work, your thesis must be adequately expansive in comparison, and written approval from advisors and/or course instructors will be required. If a student in this situation is advised by the same faculty member for the Junior Paper and the senior thesis (which happens only in rare cases), the faculty advisor will still need to write a note for the student’s file, for the record. You are solely responsible for ensuring that written permissions as described above are completed and filed before you proceed with the senior thesis project as planned.

**Structure and Format**

Anthropology theses are usually multi-part or multi-chapter projects. While length varies greatly, a typical thesis might be between 70-120 double-spaced pages (excluding notes, bibliography, illustrations, tables, and appendices) and contain three or four main sections.

You should consult anthropology journals, such as *American Anthropologist*, for guidance on the proper style of footnotes, citations, and bibliographies. Familiarizing yourself with these conventions at the start of your note-taking process can save you a great deal of woe when it comes to finalizing your references as the deadline approaches. Note that the citation of sources is not usually placed in footnotes in anthropological journal articles, but parenthetically in the text itself; footnotes are reserved for clarifications and other asides. For more detailed guidelines, you can refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, used by the American Anthropological Association (AAA). For your convenience, an external URL link to the AAA’s overview of the Manual is posted on the Anthropology Concentrators’ Blackboard site.
Senior Thesis Timeline

Please note that a calendar with specific dates is distributed to students at the beginning of each academic year. The timeline below indicates a standard but general schedule.

- **mid-September**: Thesis advisors are assigned. Meet with your advisor as soon as possible to discuss your thesis, mutual expectations, preferred modes of communication, and the nature and frequency of advising meetings. Schedule a consultation with the Firestone reference librarian after you have met with your advisor.

- **last week of October (before fall break)**: Submit senior thesis proposal. This should be a 3-5 pp. (double-spaced) sketch that describes your proposed topic, why you have chosen it, and any research you have conducted or are planning to conduct on the topic. It should also include an initial outline and a preliminary bibliography.

- **November-December**: Begin writing. Consult with your thesis advisor as needed, and at least once between fall break and winter recess, even if you feel that you are making good progress independently. Begin writing as soon as possible so that you have adequate time for revising and editing. In addition to consulting with your advisor and participating in the senior seminar, you are strongly encouraged to use resources offered by the reference librarian and The Writing Center. On the Monday of the penultimate week of fall-term classes, you will give your advisor a copy of all writing for the senior thesis that you have done so far. This may be a collection of separate parts that have yet to be connected or one continuous narrative. The purpose is for your advisor to give you some feedback before the winter break begins.

- **early to mid-January**: Submit at least one thesis chapter along with an outline of the entire thesis to your advisor. Schedule a meeting with your advisor in January-early February to discuss your work.

- **mid-February**: Submit Senior Thesis Progress Report to the Anthropology Department office. This brief form asks you to indicate the extent to which you have met with your advisor, completed and submitted writing to your advisor, participated in the senior seminar, and informed yourself about upcoming departmental benchmarks for the thesis.

- **first week of March**: Submit a full draft of your thesis to your advisor. Schedule an appointment to discuss it. Continue to write, revise, and edit throughout the next month.
• **deadline, mid-April:** Submit your thesis online through Thesis Central and also deliver two hard-bound print copies to the Anthropology Department office. Your advisor holds discretion to grant you an extension beyond this departmental deadline and up to the University deadline. A late submission in Thesis Central without a preauthorized extension from your advisor will be subject to grade penalties. Only theses submitted by the departmental deadline are eligible for prize nominations.

**Evaluation**

Your senior thesis counts for 25% of your departmental grade average, used to determine departmental honors. Each thesis in the Anthropology Department is read by two faculty members: your thesis advisor and a second reader chosen by the Departmental Representative in consultation with other faculty. The two readers confer, decide together on a grade, and compose a letter to you, outlining their review and discussing the merits and possible limitations of your project. It is vital that you discuss the criteria for evaluation with your advisor well ahead of submitting your final work. Second readers are not thesis advisors in this respect; not having worked with you, they provide an “outside” reading and a fresh perspective on the thesis as a written product. For this reason, your second reader does not expect to have an advising role in the development of your thesis. Of course, you are always welcome to consult any member of the faculty as you work on your project.

The following guidelines describe the criteria readers use to evaluate senior theses:

- **A+**  This grade is not normally given; it indicates work that meets a standard normally expected of professionals (i.e., of publishable quality).

- **A to A-**  A is normally the highest grade for independent work. A thesis in the A range shows intellectual originality beyond a review of literature or a routine use of empirical methods. It should contain an imaginative and well-rounded analytic argument. It should show the work of an innovative and critical mind. It must also be mostly free of errors in fact or logic, and it must be well written.

- **B+**  A fine critical review of a literature or a well-executed empirical study qualifies for this grade. It should organize a variety of facts and arguments in an enlightening way and be well written. A partially successful attempt at innovative research could also be graded in this category.

- **B to B-**  A thesis evincing a competent but not superior job of research may qualify for one of these grades. A well-conceived but ill-executed effort, attempting any of the goals described for higher grades, might also be in this...
range.

C+ to C Theses in this range may give evidence of substantial research but are flawed by faulty arguments or poor organization. They may be written in a mediocre style in need of editing.

C- As for courses, independent work graded at C- or below may not be counted for the major, as this grade denotes work below the Department’s standards.

D D is the minimum passing grade. The D grade will be used for theses that add nothing to an understanding of a subject beyond what might be gleaned from superficial reading in the field. This defect may be caused by pervasive faulty logic, by a lack of reference to empirical facts, by very poor presentation, by minimal effort, or by a combination of the above. Even a D thesis, however, should demonstrate that the writer has some knowledge and comprehension of the issues.

Poor grammar, style, and spelling are serious defects and will result in grade reductions. Late submissions (without approved extensions) also result in grade reductions. Excellent writing is a substantial virtue in a thesis, but the quality of the writing remains secondary to the substantive criteria described above. Above all, theses in anthropology are evaluated for the contribution they make to knowledge in the field.

The Department awards prizes to a small number of outstanding theses every year. Theses written in anthropology may also be eligible for prizes offered by other departments, programs, and centers. In recent years, anthropology theses have been recognized for awards by the Princeton Environmental Institute, the Program in Global Health and Health Policy, the Program in Latin American Studies, the Program in Judaic Studies, the Center for Human Values, and the Community-Based Learning Initiative, among others.
Additional Resources

- **JP Handbook**

  A general guide to the junior paper (Writing a J.P.: The Handbook), produced by the Princeton Writing Program, is available at the web address listed above.

- **Firestone Library**

  Many Firestone reference librarians have special expertise in particular subject areas. The reference librarian for anthropology is Wayne Bivens-Tatum. He can help you find books, journal articles, databases, and other resources relevant to your research topic, as well as materials from fields outside anthropology that might be useful. You may contact him directly by email (rbivens@princeton.edu) to set up an appointment. You can also use the online resources prepared by the Princeton University Library for anthropology:

  Anthropology Libguide
  [https://libguides.princeton.edu/anthropology](https://libguides.princeton.edu/anthropology)

  Anthropology Databases
  [https://library.princeton.edu/databases/subject/anthropology](https://library.princeton.edu/databases/subject/anthropology)

- **The Writing Center**
  [http://www.princeton.edu/writing/center/](http://www.princeton.edu/writing/center/)

  Many juniors and seniors find that, even though they have substantial experience with research papers, their independent work poses new writing challenges. You may always consult your JP or thesis advisor about this. In addition, you are strongly encouraged to make use of the Princeton Writing Center. Located in New South, The Writing Center offers student writers free, one-on-one conferences with experienced fellow writers trained to consult on assignments in any discipline. Writing Fellows can help you with any part of the writing process: brainstorming ideas, developing a thesis, structuring an argument, or revising a draft. The goal of each conference is to teach strategies that will encourage you to become an astute reader and critic of your own work. Although The Writing Center is not an editing or proofreading service, Fellows can help you learn techniques for improving sentences and checking mechanics. Writing Center conferences complement, but do not replace, the relationships you have with your teachers and advisors. To get more information or to set up an appointment, go to the web address listed above.
• Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research with Human Subjects
http://www.princeton.edu/ria/human-research-protection/committee-information/

“Above all, I will do no harm” is a pledge that all anthropologists make when starting research into human lives. Members of the Anthropology Department of Princeton University – undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty – must abide by that commitment. This requires vigilance, informed imagining of the social relationships that will make your research project possible, and sincere efforts to foresee the consequences of your research and public revelation of its content, in order to mitigate harmful effects. Careful and explicit discussion of your methods and of the expected end products of your research with everyone involved is necessary so that all participants can give genuinely well-informed consent for their participation.

To aid researchers at Princeton in avoiding harmful practices, a university committee reviews all proposed research with human subjects that is conducted in the university, whether by faculty, graduate students, or undergraduates. This committee is known as the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects (IRB). Its members are drawn from all the social sciences, together with community members and a university physician and lawyer. Approval of your project by the IRB is required before you may start on it. IRB submissions are entered using the eRIA-IRB system. Once an application is submitted, the Board may ask for further information from the applicant – a process that may take a second month to complete. You are encouraged to apply early and respond to the IRB’s questions and requests in a timely manner. To see a schedule of IRB meetings, the corresponding deadlines to submit applications, and the application forms themselves, go to the web address listed above. In the course The Ethnographer’s Craft (ANT 301), students receive guidance on making successful applications to the IRB. Step-by-step advice about IRB applications can be found in the Anthropology Department’s IRB memo on the ANT Concentrators’ Blackboard Site.

• Student Activities Funding Engine (SAFE)
https://studentfunding.princeton.edu/

Student Activities Funding Engine (SAFE) is a student portal to all University funding opportunities, including support for senior thesis research offered by departments, programs, and centers on campus.

• Office of Undergraduate Research
https://undergraduateresearch.princeton.edu

This website provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive list of University resources for conducting research at Princeton, including student-authored research advice, independent work guides, funding, and the central calendar for upcoming events and deadlines.
Addenda: Departmental Policies

Evaluating Work in Anthropology

Course offerings in anthropology emphasize the study of cultural meaning-making and change in Western and non-Western societies, the core of contemporary socio-cultural anthropology. Our bioanthropology courses emphasize the biological aspects of human adaptation and development, as well as the biological implications of social life. The major is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the discipline through courses on foundational concepts, methods, and the history of ideas. Special topics courses offer students significant opportunities to craft individualized programs in consultation with their advisers. Anthropology courses range from large lecture courses to small seminars, with correspondingly diverse emphases for course work: from discussion and writing to collaboration on group projects to the development of research and lab skills. The following standards for evaluating student work in anthropology are relevant to all these (and other) forms of course work.

Communication

Syllabi for courses in anthropology are made available to students on or before the first day of class. Course instructors include in their syllabi a description of the kinds of course work students will be asked to complete, as well as the portion of the total course grade each assignment represents. Attendance and participation in class discussions may be counted as important components of the total course grade.

Evaluation of student work in anthropology is more than a means of recognizing work of high quality; it is also a means of communicating basic norms of scholarship in anthropology, and clarifying pathways for students’ improvement. Communication between instructors and students is an essential part of the evaluation process. Faculty and preceptors convey their evaluation of student work beyond a letter grade in a number of ways, including grading rubrics, written comments, and discussion in office hours. Instructors are expected to return evaluated work to students in a timely manner.

Standards of evaluation

Standards of evaluation for independent work in Anthropology (i.e., junior papers and senior theses) are specified in the Guide to Independent Work in Anthropology, available on the Blackboard site for anthropology majors and the website of the Office of Undergraduate Research (under “Independent Work”). Like independent work, all written work for anthropology courses is evaluated in accordance with departmental
guidelines. Written work includes research papers, essays, and written exams, which may be letter-graded or graded pass/fail. The following guidelines describe the criteria faculty and preceptors use to assign letter grades to written work:

A+ This grade is not normally given; it indicates work of publishable quality.

A to A- A is normally the highest grade for written work. A paper in the A range shows intellectual originality beyond a review of literature or a routine use of empirical methods. It should contain an imaginative and well-rounded analytic argument. It should show the work of an innovative and critical mind. It must also be mostly free of errors in fact or logic, and it must be well written.

B+ A paper that demonstrates persuasive analysis and interpretation of relevant literature, or a well-executed empirical study, would qualify for this grade. Such work should organize a variety of facts and arguments in an enlightening way and be well written. A partially successful attempt at innovative research could also be graded in this category.

B to B- A paper evincing a competent but not superior job may qualify for one of these grades. A well-conceived but ill-executed effort, attempting any of the goals described for higher grades, might also be in this range.

C+ to C Papers in this range may give evidence of substantial work but are flawed by faulty arguments or poor organization. They may be written in a mediocre style in need of editing.

C- A C- grade denotes work below the Department’s standards. Courses for which students receive a total course grade of C- or below may not be counted for the major.

D The D grade is used for papers that add nothing to an understanding of a subject beyond what might be gleaned from superficial reading in the field. This defect may be caused by pervasive faulty logic, by a lack of reference to empirical facts, by very poor presentation, by minimal effort, or by a combination of the above. Even a D paper, however, should demonstrate that the writer has some knowledge and comprehension of the issues. Lacking this, a paper will be graded as Failing.

Poor grammar, style, and spelling are serious defects and will result in grade reductions. Late submissions (without approved extensions) will also result in grade reductions. The standard penalty for late submissions is one-third of a letter grade per day past the deadline (e.g., A- to B+, B+ to B).
In addition to written work, other forms of course work in anthropology are also evaluated in accordance with departmental guidelines, as appropriate to the nature of each assignment. Such work includes oral presentations, reading synopses and responses, journal entries, field notes, media projects, lab reports, blogs, performance pieces, and other projects. Instructors are expected to explain their standards of evaluation for such alternative forms of course work in advance of their submission by students. Likewise, the basis for grading class participation should also be made explicit, especially if it accounts for a substantial portion of the grade.
Departmental Policy on
Extensions for Senior Theses

The discretion for granting extensions rests with faculty advisors. The Departmental Representative is not involved in granting extensions unless a student misses not only the departmental deadline but also the later university deadline, which would affect the student's eligibility to graduate.

Students who do not submit their theses by the departmental deadline are not eligible for departmental or external thesis prizes. This policy ensures equity of opportunity for all students. It also offers adequate lead-time to members of the Prize Committee to read all eligible theses in order to determine departmental awards as well as external prize nominations, most of which must be made on or immediately after the university deadline for senior theses in early May.