Independent Work in Anthropology

A Guide to Writing the Junior Paper (JP) and Senior Thesis
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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 under faculty adviser guidance 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: sociocultural anthropology; medical anthropology; and law, politics, and economics. The sociocultural track (SCA) introduces students to a wide range of scholarship on cultural meaning-making and change in Human 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 evolution 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 foundational medical anthropology courses and biological anthropology courses. 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 adviser for the junior paper and another faculty adviser 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 themes from their own independent work 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 advisers throughout the academic year. Any faculty
member can advise any student, but the Department makes every effort to match advisers with students based on the students’ interests and the faculty members’ areas of expertise. Advisers help you develop and refine your research topics, find relevant literature, conceptualize your approach, and improve your written expression. Advisers 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).

**Grading Standards**

In an addendum to this document is a statement of departmental standards for evaluating work by students.

In the separate sections of this Guide on independent work for juniors and seniors, subsections on the timeline for each include information on the consequences of late work, including grade penalties.

In the Department of Anthropology, in order to count towards satisfaction of the major, a departmental requirement must be taken for a letter grade and the final grade earned must be “C” or higher. This applies to independent work (junior paper and senior thesis) as well as departmental courses and the senior departmental exam.

ANT concentrators who chose PDF grading for certain departmental courses or independent work during Spring 2020 and/or academic year 2020-2021, please note that those Pass grades will count towards satisfaction of departmental requirements.

In 2021-2022, the Department of Anthropology returns to its longstanding requirement for concentrators to take departmental courses with a letter grade (A-F). Junior independent work and senior theses are also evaluated with letter grading.
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 adviser, 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 in writing. Spring-semester work toward the JP involves focused writing and revising, in consultation with your adviser.

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 at http://www.annualreviews.org/journal/anthro in the Annual Review of Anthropology.

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 advisers can help you make these connections. At http://anthropology.princeton.edu/undergraduate-program/student-independent-work/junior-independent-research/jp-titles you will find JP titles from past years. 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 Canvas 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 beginning in the latter part of the fall term.

**Structure and Format**

The junior paper should be approached as a version of an academic article in its length and scope. As such, junior papers are longer than term papers. Whereas anthropology term papers usually vary from 1,500 to 4,000 words in length, the Anthropology JP is a literature review between 4000-8000 words, not including footnotes, bibliography, tables, illustrations, and appendices (if applicable) that could add another 500-1000 words. Based on past experience, the strongest junior papers had citations from at least 25 texts, or 60 percent of their bibliographic citations were anthropological texts. Authoritative anthropological texts include peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and/or books by reputable publishers. Overall, the department’s expectation is that students will use at least 2-3 academic monographs and 5-7 academic articles in their literature review. 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). See the Princeton University Library’s homepage for Anthropology at [https://libguides.princeton.edu/anthropology](https://libguides.princeton.edu/anthropology) for a direct link to the current AAA Publishing Style Guide.

The above guidelines notwithstanding, your best source of information on the recommended length and format of your JP is your assigned faculty adviser.

**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.

- **early September**: Attend a mandatory majors’ meeting to get information about your timeline for the academic year and to learn about available resources.

- **mid September-early October**: JP advisers are assigned. Meet with your adviser 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. Ask your adviser about expectations regarding the form and length of an acceptable junior paper. Schedule a mandatory consultation with the Firestone reference librarian after you have met with your adviser. Begin reading literature relevant to your topic.

- **mid October-early November:** Submit to the department a JP progress report. This brief form asks you to indicate the extent to which you have met with your adviser, formulated your ideas, prepared a bibliography, and informed yourself about upcoming departmental benchmarks for the JP.

- **November-December:** Prepare for the JP in consultation with your adviser. Preparation should include reading widely, developing your topic into a proposal, preparing a preliminary annotated bibliography, outlining, and starting a first early draft. In late November to early December, you must demonstrate progress on your JP proposal by submitting about 750-1250 words of a rough draft. This deadline is necessary so that you receive adviser feedback on your written work before the winter recess begins. Consult your adviser for guidance on content and the number of pages required for this draft.

- **early January:** Submit JP proposal to your adviser and to the department. The proposal may be a 750-1250 word description of your topic and its anthropological significance, as well as your research goals. Ask your adviser for guidance. Include an annotated bibliography of your main sources and an outline of the entire JP, indicating your progress to date. If further along, you are encouraged to submit additional writing at this time. It is also normal for outlines at this stage to be revised later as writing progresses.

- **January-early February:** Get feedback from your adviser on your proposal and writing to date and develop a plan together for benchmarks, future meetings, and review procedures. Discuss concretely the expected form and length of your JP, now that your proposal is completed.

- **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 writing partner or groups with peer review. Refer to the department’s sample Anthropology JPs if you haven’t already done so.

- **early to mid March:** Submit the first draft of your JP to your adviser. Your draft may include sections that are still in outline form, but it should be substantial enough for your adviser to review and make recommendations. Being late with this draft can affect your final grade. The due date for this draft is set to give your
adviser time to provide you with feedback for your revisions on the final version. To ensure that independent work is original, meaning not purchased or plagiarized, every student is required to submit at least one rough draft, and receive feedback, before handing in a final draft (due in April). If you miss this draft due date, you must still hand in a draft of your JP at least two weeks before the final JP deadline. A JP will not be accepted as final without the submission of a prior draft. Instead, the submitted paper will be accepted as a rough draft, a new deadline will be determined by the adviser and advisee, and the final grade will be significantly marked down should the final JP end up being late as a result of the department’s requirement for a two-week interval between submission of a required first draft and acceptance of the final paper (see details below). Schedule a meeting with your adviser as soon as possible to discuss your draft and to plan next steps.

- **Deadline, April vs. Dean’s Date:** In the context of independent work, Dean’s Date refers to the dean’s deadline for independent work, not the dean’s deadline for course work. Submit your final JP by email to your adviser with a copy also uploaded in Canvas. Also give your adviser a printed copy if requested. The e-mailed copy and the upload to Canvas must be completed before midnight on the deadline. As explained above, a JP submitted on or before any deadline without an earlier draft having been submitted at least two weeks prior to the date of submission will not be accepted as the student’s final submission. In other words, a JP that is submitted on or within two weeks of the department’s April deadline for final JPs will be deemed late if it is the first draft that the student has submitted to the adviser. In such case, the student will be subject to the grade penalties explained under “Department Deadline” below.

- **Department Deadline:** It is expected that you submit the final draft of your JP on or before the department deadline. Students who have demonstrated consistent effort throughout the year may ask their adviser for a short extension if they experience something profoundly disruptive in their lives. Students who have not met JP deadlines throughout the year and have not met regularly with their advisers are unlikely to receive an extension for their JP. A JP submitted after the department deadline, without a preauthorized extension from the adviser, will be subject to a grade penalty of 1/3 reduction per day (for example A to A-). If the JP is handed in so late that the grade falls to a C- or lower, the student will have to submit a second JP (for example, after 7 days an A JP grade falls to a C-). If the first JP is good except for the late penalty, the student can simply resubmit the original JP. Both grades, however, will be recorded on the student’s transcript. If a student fails to hand in a JP, and is not granted an extension, the student will receive an F as their “first” JP grade on their transcript. In order to continue in the major, with a dean’s approval the student will be given an opportunity to submit a “second” JP
by early June at the latest. If a student does not submit a JP by this deadline they will likely be forced to take a leave of absence from the University. (See “Failure to complete JP according to schedule” below.)

- **Dean’s Date Deadline:** If you submit any required written work past Dean’s Date, you must receive prior approval from a dean. If a student fails to get a formal dean’s extension for work submitted after Dean’s Date, then without exception this work will receive an F. This applies for all class and independent work.

- **Two JP Grades:** Students who receive a C- or lower grade for poor or late independent work must set a new due date for a resubmitted JP in consultation with their advisers, director of undergraduate studies, and residential college dean. The department requires this new due date to be no later than early June. Once the resubmitted JP is graded, transcripts will include the first grade (C- to F) and the new grade. When a student receives two JP grades, the first grade will be recorded as ANT 981 and the second grade as ANT 987.

- **Failure to complete JP according to schedule:** A student who has failed to meet the department’s standards for a passing JP grade will not be allowed by University rules to continue to senior year until a passing JP grade is earned through submission to the department of a new or resubmitted JP. Students should be cognizant that the department is unavailable for advising and grading between the end of June and the beginning of the following academic year. June 15th is the deadline for students to submit or resubmit a JP for a passing grade by the department. If a student misses this deadline and needs to complete the JP requirement while unenrolled, the student will be able to work remotely with an assigned adviser to complete the JP only during a period when an academic term is in session.

**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 adviser, 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 written in 2019 or earlier are archived in the Department, and students are welcome to come in and take a look at the bound copies. In addition, within the Princeton domain, the Mudd Library has made available online reading of most senior theses written since 2014 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 adviser will be a member of the Anthropology Department faculty. Every student will be
assigned a thesis adviser early in the fall term of senior 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.

Anthropology seniors meet with a senior seminar instructor on six dates during the fall semester. The specific seminar dates are listed on the calendar distributed to seniors at the beginning of the academic year. Attendance will be taken at senior seminar meetings; unexcused absences will be reported to thesis advisers and may negatively affect a student’s senior thesis grade. As the final assignment in the senior seminar, students share their completed senior thesis proposals for peer review. This exercise prepares students to draft the pages of writing that they will submit to their senior thesis advisers before the end of the fall semester in order to receive feedback from their advisers before the winter recess.

**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 wintersession.

If you have ideas for a thesis topic during junior year, the best way to begin is to discuss your ideas with your JP adviser, although other faculty members may also be consulted as appropriate to your specific project. If you are interested in conducting summer research
between junior and senior years, you should begin planning no later than the start of the spring semester, consulting your JP adviser for advice. You should plan adequate time to prepare for and to conduct the research (usually a minimum of four continuous weeks for field-based research, possibly longer, depending on the project). Your JP adviser will be asked to evaluate any application that you submit for senior thesis research funding. Fieldwork-based thesis research requires IRB approval. If you have concrete summer research plans, you may be assigned a senior thesis adviser after your research proposal has been completed and approved by your JP adviser, and the assigned thesis adviser will serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) on your IRB protocol for summer research. Alternatively, the director of undergraduate studies will arrange for a faculty member who will not become your senior thesis adviser to stand in temporarily as the PI for your IRB protocol, with the understanding that you will notify the IRB at the beginning of the fall term of your senior year, after you have received your thesis adviser assignment, that the PI for your research protocol has changed. You should attend the IRB bootcamp organized by the Anthropology Department in April of each spring and consult with your faculty adviser or IRB staff regarding your application. The schedule for planning summer research is dictated by the application deadlines for funding (applicable to both library and field-based research) as well as IRB approval (applicable to fieldwork only). These application deadlines usually overlap with dates for coursework, independent work, and extracurricular activities. It is important to plan early to manage these conflicting deadlines.

Students are required to take ANT 301 before starting field research except in rare circumstances. For an exception to this requirement, you must be recommended by your JP adviser and approved by the director of undergraduate studies. If you study abroad during junior spring when most juniors take ANT 301 and you did not take ANT 301 earlier in anticipation of being away, the director of undergraduate studies may choose to approve a substitute course in place of ANT 301, if an appropriate course is available.

The 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,” through which awards are made to anthropology majors to conduct “long term” field research, defined in this grant as a duration of at least four continuous weeks. 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, for example, weekly or other periodic research to be conducted in New York, Philadelphia, or other nearby sites over the course of the fall semester. The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) and a few other university departments also accept applications in SAFE for senior thesis research funding during the fall semester of senior year.

Some academic units invite juniors to apply to participate in selective programs that offer support and funding for senior thesis research. Examples of these opportunities include
the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS), the Program in Global Health (GHP), and the Center for the Study of Religion.

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 adviser and your JP adviser 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 advisers and/or course instructors will be required. 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 18,000 and 25,000 words (footnotes, bibliography, illustrations, tables, and appendices excluded) and contain three or four main sections. The length and structure of each senior thesis is determined by discussion between student and adviser. In the case of senior theses with creative components, the length of the written component may vary from the typical length suggested above.

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). See the Princeton University Library’s homepage for Anthropology at [https://libguides.princeton.edu/anthropology](https://libguides.princeton.edu/anthropology) for a direct link to the current AAA Publishing Style Guide.

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. Students should refer to the specific calendar for the timeline for the current year, but policies explained in the general schedule are active and applicable.
• **early September**: Attend a mandatory majors’ meeting to get information about your timeline for the academic year and to review available resources.

• **September**: Thesis advisers are assigned. Meet with your adviser as soon as possible to discuss your thesis, mutual expectations, preferred modes of communication, and the nature and frequency of advising meetings. Begin to ascertain your adviser’s expectations regarding the form and length of an acceptable senior thesis. Schedule a consultation with the Firestone reference librarian after you have met with your adviser. Mark every scheduled senior seminar meeting on your personal calendar and plan to participate actively in all six meetings spanning Sept-Nov.

  **last week of senior seminar**: Submit senior thesis proposal. This may be a 750-1250 word (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. Ask your adviser for guidance. This submission should also include an initial outline and a preliminary bibliography.

• **November-December**: Write, write, write. Consult with your thesis adviser for feedback even if you feel that you are making good progress independently. Use resources offered by the reference librarian and The Writing Center. In late November/early December, you will give your adviser some pages of writing for your senior thesis. This may be a collection of separate parts that have yet to be connected or one continuous narrative. The purpose is for your adviser to give you some feedback before the winter break begins.

• **mid January**: Submit to your adviser at least one thesis chapter along with your current outline for the rest of your thesis. Schedule to meet with your adviser in January-early February to discuss your work.

• **January-February**: Develop your thesis further using your adviser’s feedback. Revisit expectations for the form and length of your senior thesis. Consider participating in a senior thesis writing group.

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

• **early March**: Submit a full draft of your thesis to your adviser. Being late with this draft can affect your final grade. The due date for this draft is set to give your adviser
time to provide you with feedback for your revisions on the final version. To ensure that your senior thesis is original, meaning not purchased or plagiarized, every student is required to submit at least one rough draft, and receive feedback, before handing in a final draft (due in April). If you miss this due date, you must still hand in a thesis draft at least two weeks before the final thesis deadline. A senior thesis will not be accepted as final without the submission of a prior draft. Instead, the submitted thesis will be accepted as a rough draft, a new deadline will be determined by the adviser and advisee, and the final grade will be significantly marked down (see details below) should the final thesis end up being late as a result of the department’s requirement for a two-week interval between submission of a required first draft and acceptance of the final thesis. Schedule an appointment to discuss the draft with your adviser. Continue to write, revise, and edit throughout the month.

- **Deadline, April vs. Dean’s Date:** In the context of independent work, Dean’s Date refers to the dean’s deadline for independent work, not the dean’s deadline for course work. Submit your thesis online through Thesis Central. Instructions for formatting can be found in the Canvas for Anthropology Concentrators. Your adviser holds discretion to grant you an extension beyond this departmental deadline and up to the University deadline. You should be cognizant that any extension granted will need to adhere to the requirement for a minimum two-week interval between draft and final submission. A late submission in Thesis Central without a preauthorized extension from your adviser will be subject to grade penalties. Only theses submitted by the departmental deadline are eligible to be nominated for the department’s Senior Thesis Prize in Anthropology.

  - Department Deadline: A senior thesis submitted after the department deadline, without a preauthorized extension from the adviser, will be subject to a grade penalty of 1/3 reduction per day (for example A to A-). If the thesis is handed in a week late, then even an A thesis will fall below the department’s minimum standard of a C grade. Students are strongly advised to communicate with their advisers throughout the year and to request an authorized extension, if necessary, before it becomes too late.

  - Dean’s Date Deadline: If you submit any required written work past Dean’s Date, you must receive prior approval from a dean. If a student fails to get a formal dean’s extension for work submitted after Dean’s Date, then without exception this work will receive an F. This applies for all class and independent work.

  - Two Thesis Grades: Students who receive a C- or lower grade for a poor or late senior thesis must set a new due date in consultation with their advisers, director of undergraduate studies, and residential college dean. In order to graduate with their class, this new deadline will be tight. Once the late or resubmitted thesis is graded, transcripts will include the first grade (C- to F) and the new grade.
• **Before graduation**: If an open IRB protocol still exists for a student’s senior thesis that has already been accepted by the department, the student must take steps to contact the IRB and the adviser (the PI) to close the research protocol.

### 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 adviser and a second reader chosen by the director of undergraduate studies 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 adviser well ahead of submitting your final work. Second readers are not thesis advisers 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.

**Senior Thesis Prize**

The Department awards the Senior Thesis Prize in Anthropology to a small number of outstanding theses every year. To be eligible for a departmental prize, a senior thesis must be submitted on or before the departmental deadline. 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 with awards from the High Meadows Environmental Institute or its predecessor PEI, 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 Program for Community Engaged Scholarship, among others.
Additional Resources

• **Anthropology@Princeton website** - [https://anthropology.princeton.edu/](https://anthropology.princeton.edu/)

• **Canvas for Anthropology Concentrators**
  Repository for calendars and other information for junior and senior majors, Anthropology course syllabi, IRB memos, and lots of other information. Collection vehicle for independent work proposals, progress reports, and final JPs. Concentrators should refer to this resource regularly.

• **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 URL links provided below to 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)
  
  • **Library Research Methods**
  
  • **Anthropology JP Research Quick Guide**
    [https://libguides.princeton.edu/anthropology/jpquickguide](https://libguides.princeton.edu/anthropology/jpquickguide)

• **The Writing Center**
  [https://writing.princeton.edu/center](https://writing.princeton.edu/center)
  Many juniors and seniors find that, even though they have substantial experience with research papers, their independent work poses new writing challenges. In addition to consulting your adviser, 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 advisers. To get more information or to set up an appointment, go to the web address listed above.
The McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning
https://mcgraw.princeton.edu/undergraduates
Programs and services currently offered include academic strategies workshops, learning strategies consultations, academic consultations, group study hall and individual tutoring, virtual learning blogs, peer educators, digital learning lab, and more.

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), with members 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. The eRIA-IRB system is used for IRB submissions. 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 should apply early and respond to the IRB’s questions and requests in a timely manner. For details, go to the web address listed above.

Resources available to help students with IRB applications (besides direct consultation with the IRB):
- In the course The Ethnographer’s Craft (ANT 301), students receive guidance on making successful applications to the IRB.
- Each spring the Anthropology department organizes an IRB boot camp for concentrators who need to submit IRB applications.
- Step-by-step advice about IRB applications can be found in the Anthropology Department’s IRB memo on the ANT Concentrators’ Canvas Site.

Student Activities Funding Engine (SAFE)
https://studentfunding.princeton.edu/
The 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 (OUR)
https://undergraduateresearch.princeton.edu
OUR provides the most comprehensive list of University resources for conducting research at Princeton, including independent work guides and PURC, the central calendar for funding, 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 standards.
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 advisers. The director of undergraduate studies 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 a departmental thesis prize. 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. For external prizes limited to one nomination per department, students who do not submit their theses by the departmental deadline will be ineligible for nomination unless there is no other departmental thesis eligible. Most nominations must be made on or immediately after the university deadline for senior theses at the end of April.
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