

Graduate Program

The Department of Anthropology offers graduate courses and research opportunities leading to the M.A. degree. Graduate work in this field is designed to prepare students for teaching or research in anthropology, and for advanced study.

How to Apply

Applicants for admission to this degree program are expected to have completed at least 15 undergraduate semester hours in anthropology as well as a course in statistics. Students lacking this background will be required to take compensatory work during his or her graduate program. However, highly motivated students without an extensive anthropology background are *encouraged* to apply.

Applications for graduate study at Northern Illinois University may be obtained from the Graduate School (Adams Hall Rm. 102, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115-2864) or from the department's website in PDF format. Completed applications, along with the materials listed below, should be returned to the Graduate School at the above address.

1. Official transcripts from all universities or colleges attended with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (on a 4.0 scale) for the BA, BS, MA, and MS degrees.
2. Official GRE scores taken no earlier than five years prior to the application date. (NIU's Institution Code: R1559, Department & Major Field Code: 1701).
3. Two letters of recommendation sent directly to the Graduate School; preferably from academically qualified individuals who are familiar with the applicant's academic work.
4. A detailed statement of professional goals and interests (please be as thorough as possible).
5. Foreign students whose native language is not English must also submit an official copy of their TOEFL scores.

The Department of Anthropology's deadlines for receipt of a completed application, together with **all** supporting materials is **March 1st** for the following fall semester and **November 1st** for the following spring. However, interested students are encouraged to submit their application well before this deadline for full consideration.

Applying for Financial Aid

The department has several graduate assistantships (GAs), which carry a full tuition waiver and a stipend for qualified students. To apply for a GA you must complete the Application for a Graduate Assistantship form and return it directly to the Department of Anthropology **before** March 1st. This means that you must get your application in well before the March 1st admission deadline if you wish to be considered for a GA. Graduate assistantships are normally awarded beginning with the fall term.

Funding for students with a focus in Southeast Asia is available through the Center for Southeast Asian Studies. Information regarding Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships for the study of Burmese, Thai, Tagalog, or Indonesian languages and also for the Clark and Arlene Neher Graduate Fellowship in Southeast Asian Studies can be requested from the center or downloaded from the Center's website. Likewise, there is the possibility of support for students available from the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies.

Additionally, all graduate students are encouraged to apply for Federal Work Study. Work-study assistantships are awarded on the basis of financial need but qualifying does not insure receipt of an award. If you qualify for work-study your assistantship will be in the anthropology department. For further information please visit NIU's Student Employment Federal Work-Study Program website.

M.A. Degree Requirements

All students must take at least 30 semester hours of graduate work, distributed as outlined below. Students should choose their courses in consultation with their faculty adviser and/or the departmental chair.

A minimum of one course taken for graduate credit from each of the four following subfields of anthropology. (12)

1. Archaeology
2. Cultural-social anthropology (ANTH 421, ANTH 426, ANTH 427, ANTH 451, ANTH 454, ANTH 460, ANTH 463, ANTH 464, ANTH 465, ANTH 467, ANTH 525)
3. Linguistic anthropology
4. Physical anthropology

At least 18 additional semester hours of elective courses taken for graduate credit, of which at least 12 must be in anthropology. (18)

Independent study courses can be substituted for required courses only with the approval of the student's adviser and the department chair.

Each student in the master's degree program must demonstrate to the satisfaction of his or her faculty committee proficiency in either statistics or a foreign language useful for the student's research and must choose one of the following options.

Thesis/Examination Option

Students selecting this option must first complete the departmental qualifying examination, then have their thesis proposal accepted, and finally write a thesis in their major sub-field of anthropology. The qualifying examination is administered and graded by a committee of three faculty members selected by the student and the student's adviser (the adviser will usually also be a member of the committee). This written examination covers in detail the student's primary sub-field of anthropology.

The thesis proposal must be approved by the student's adviser, their program committee, and by the department's faculty before the student can formally begin work on their thesis. A student begins formally to work on their thesis when they first register in ANTH 599 (Thesis). The Thesis/Examination Option requires at least 3 semester hours of credit in ANTH 599. ***The qualifying examination must be passed, and the thesis proposal must be approved, before registration in ANTH 599.*** Please note that after registering for your first ANTH 599, you must continually (spring, summer, and fall) register for at least 1 credit hour (usually in ANTH 599) until you graduate.

Non-thesis/Examination Option

Students selecting this option are required to successfully complete the comprehensive examination in anthropology. This examination is an eight-hour written examination, covering all four sub-fields of anthropology. This exam will be written and graded by the faculty on the department's Examination Committee. Students in the non-thesis option must also take an additional 6 semester hours of graduate courses in anthropology.

Important Notes on the Graduate Program

At least 1/2 of the 30 or 36 semester hours required for the M.A. degree must be at the 500 level or above. Often topic classes at the 400 level are also available under 690, but only 9 semester hours can be taken under each 690 letter (see course description in Graduate Catalog).

After passing the comprehensive (four-field) examination, a student may shift to the thesis option and write a thesis. The additional 6 semester hours required for the non-thesis option would be dropped. After passing the qualifying (single-field) examination, a student may shift to the non-thesis option by also passing the comprehensive examination in the other three sub-disciplines of anthropology and taking the additional 6 semester hours.

The specific course requirements for the M.A. degree are minimal in order to facilitate flexibility for students in designing their graduate program. It is important that courses be selected carefully by the student and in close collaboration with the student's advisers and/or department chair. For example, a student planning to take the comprehensive (four-field) examination should plan on taking at least two courses in each sub-field of anthropology.