

**The Honors Program in Anthropology  
Arizona State University  
School of Human Evolution and Social Change**

**Anthropology** is the study of humans, past and present. To understand what makes humans unique, the nature of our shared experiences, and the importance of our differences, anthropology draws on insights from diverse fields, including the social and biological sciences and the humanities. The anthropology degree programs give students an opportunity to learn how and why humans evolved, the current and long-term dynamics of social-environmental interaction, and how our evolutionary biological, social and cultural trajectories help us understand the meaning of being human in the past, present and future. Anthropology at ASU provides many exciting hands-on learning opportunities through laboratories and field-based courses, such as ethnographic field schools, paleoanthropology field schools in Africa, bioarchaeology and archaeology training in the field and laboratory, environmental and health studies in diverse communities and cultural and linguistic studies of peoples from hunter-gatherer camps to large urban areas. Areal foci include such diverse places as Southeast Asia, the South Pacific, Mexico, Latin America the Mediterranean Basin, southern Africa, and the US Southwest.

To learn more about the Anthropology degree program, including curriculum requirements, course maps and career opportunities for Anthropology majors, please visit our website at <https://shesc.asu.edu/degrees/undergrad>.

### **Honors in Anthropology**

The Anthropology faculty strongly encourages and warmly welcomes Barrett students to consider majoring in our field, given its centrality in understanding human biology, culture and society. *Any Barrett student who is considering a major in Anthropology should make an appointment as soon as possible with the Honors Faculty Advisor Professor Ian Gilby ([ian.gilby@asu.edu](mailto:ian.gilby@asu.edu)).*

### **The Honors Thesis**

The Honors thesis is an excellent opportunity to gain experience conducting original anthropological research with the help and mentorship of an ASU faculty member. The thesis provides individualized training in the research process, and allows you to explore a research question of your own choosing in great depth. It also ideally gives you mastery of the theories and methods in a research field and the ability to talk about this knowledgeably when interviewing for graduate school or future jobs.

The thesis also requires commitment and planning (see Recommended Timeline at the end of this document). To take full advantage of this opportunity, we strongly encourage honors students to begin planning their project by the Fall of their junior year. This would ideally involve meeting with the Faculty Honors Advisor to discuss your topical interests, identifying an appropriate thesis advisor and committee, and formulating a brief project proposal and plan in collaboration with your advisor. Starting early is especially important for students who would like to conduct research during the summer before their senior year.

**Thesis information session requirement.** Prior to enrolling in ASB 492 or 493 for their thesis, all students must complete a thesis/creative project information session. Students may complete this requirement by completing *one* of the following:

- o One of the Thesis Workshop Sessions periodically offered by Barrett
- o The on-line workshop offered through Barrett via ASU Blackboard.

**Thesis committee composition.** The minimum number of committee members for Anthropology theses is two members, a director and second committee member. Only the director **MUST** be an ASU lecturer or tenure-line faculty member. However, students must consult with their thesis/creative project director **BEFORE** forming a committee, as the requirements vary across fields of study and directors.

For more information about the thesis, please visit the following website:  
<http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/thesis-and-creative-project/>

**Preparation for the Thesis.** Before embarking on the thesis, we strongly recommend gaining a foundation in relevant research methods and theories from a relevant research course (e.g., ASB 452, practicum-based topics in ASB 494, ASM 414) as well as research apprenticeships with SHESC faculty.

### **Recommended Timeline for Honors Thesis**

**Freshman year:** Contact the Anthropology Faculty Honors Advisor (FHA) to discuss your research interests. The FHA can steer you to appropriate faculty with relevant interests. Before the meeting, read the profiles for Anthropology Faculty to see if there is anyone who matches your interests in either Archaeology, Bioarchaeology, Evolutionary Anthropology, or Sociocultural Anthropology (<https://shesc.asu.edu/content/anthropology-phd>).

**Sophomore year:** Review past undergraduate theses to identify the types of topics explored by Anthropology students and the methods they use to study them. Consult with the FHA and/or your Thesis Advisor about the appropriateness of any given thesis as a model for your own project (You can find completed theses at <https://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/thesis-and-creative-project/examples-and-past-projects>). Set up a meeting with appropriate faculty members to discuss your thesis ideas. The FHA can assist you by making the necessary introductions.

Sophomore year is a critical time for students to learn what opportunities are available to them to pursue thesis research in the context of on-going faculty research. In the School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Anthropology's home, the Research Apprenticeship program links students with faculty research and fulfills the Anthropology major requirement for a practicum course. Research Apprenticeships are announced at the beginning of each semester.

As soon as you enter SHESC honors, you should apply for an apprenticeship. By the end of Sophomore year, honors students will be expected to have completed a research apprenticeship or an equivalent research experience that will prepare them for their thesis work.

**Junior year (1<sup>st</sup> semester):** Choose a thesis director and set up a meeting schedule and timeline for completing your project. You should allow at least one semester for researching your thesis and one semester for writing your thesis, as you will likely write many drafts. The summer after Junior year is an ideal time to collect data for the thesis.

Write a prospectus outlining what you plan to do for your thesis. This

prospectus represents a contract between you and your committee. However, it is also a living contract, and can be modified at any time. The prospectus should:

- (1) Outline the type of research that you will conduct and the questions you hope to ask.
- (2) Specify the methods (e.g., survey, case study) you will use to answer your questions.

If gathering data, you must submit an Institutional Review Board proposal (<http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/humans>), which your thesis director must review and approve before submission. Research **CANNOT** begin without IRB approval.

**Junior year to 1<sup>st</sup> semester Senior Year:** Begin your research project. While conducting your research, be sure to meet with your thesis director on a regular, ongoing basis. It is your responsibility to make sure you are carrying your research out in a timely manner and it is your director's responsibility to guide you through this process.

**Senior Year 1<sup>st</sup> semester.** Write up your research findings. A common format for a thesis includes: a *literature review* which describes the questions you are asking and how they fit into a larger body of research, the *methods* which you used to answer your questions, *results* which are the answers provided by your methods, and a *discussion* which summarizes your findings as they relate to a larger body of research, the limitations of the findings, and the implications these findings have for future research efforts. Reviewing completed Global Health undergraduate theses can provide insight into the depth of work required for the thesis.

Submit a first draft to your thesis director for feedback and be prepared to make multiple revisions. Give yourself plenty of time to incorporate these revisions as your thesis must be completed before graduation.

**Senior Year (2<sup>nd</sup> semester).** Decide, *in consultation* with your thesis director and committee, on a date for defending your thesis. In Global Health, defenses usually consist of the student presenting a 15-20 minute overview of his/her research (PowerPoint slides are often used and handouts are usually provided to the committee members) followed by a 45-60 minute discussion during which the student is expected to be able to answer questions about his/her work.

Obtain signatures from all committee members on the Honors signature sheet (You must bring this signature page to the defense). The signature sheet is held by your Thesis Director if revisions are required. Once any revisions have been completed, your thesis and the signature sheet are handed into the Honors office.

## Honors Sections and Enrichment Contracts

For undergraduate courses in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change, the course instructor may choose to set up a formal honors section or work with students on enrichment contracts. Courses which have recently provided formal honors sections include, ASB 100, ASB 102 and ASB 222. Enrichment contracts are created on a case-by-case basis. Some courses, such as ASB 462, frequently offer enrichment contract opportunities where a group of students work on a common project designed by the students and the professor. For more information about honors enrichment contracts, please visit the following website:

<http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/honors-courses-and-contracts/honors-enrichment-contracts/>

Instructors of graduate courses at the School of Human Evolution and Social Change may permit a small number of honors students to enroll in their course. If there is a graduate course which you feel would be important for your educational trajectory, please contact the instructor of the course about the possibility of enrolling.

### **Research Opportunities**

The School of Human Evolution and Social Change offers a number of opportunities for undergraduates to get involved with faculty research, including Undergraduate Research Apprenticeships as well as Research Assistantship Awards. More information about these programs are available at: <https://shesc.asu.edu/research/undergraduate-research-opportunities>.

Barrett also organizes many opportunities for internships that can viewed here: <http://barretthonors.asu.edu/academics/internships/>