Biological Anthropology at ANU

ANU has an international reputation and is ranked 7th in the world for anthropology.\(^1\) It is the only Australian university offering a specialised Biological Anthropology program and has the largest number of dedicated biological anthropology academic staff in Australia. As a result, you will be trained by individuals who have specific expertise in the fields encompassed within this broad-ranging discipline.

Current biological anthropology research at ANU seeks to understand the evolutionary context in which humans evolved. Research focuses on primate conservation and disaster ecology, the evolution of human reproductive strategies, reconstructing aspects of social behaviour in extinct human species, understanding skeletal growth and metabolism in humans and developing new forensic anthropology techniques.

Biological Anthropology offers two majors: Biological Anthropology and Human Evolutionary Biology. Both majors will give you the opportunity to learn about human origins and the fossil evidence of our extinct hominin ancestors over the last seven to eight million years, and examine human behaviour in the context of the behaviour of our closest living primate relatives (chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans). You can learn about how evolutionary theory can help us to understand modern human social and reproductive behaviour. You can also study the skeletal biology of modern humans in an adaptive context through studying their anatomy to reconstruct past behaviour, and learn about the techniques used in forensic anthropology.

While the Human Evolutionary Biology major focuses on courses from Biology and Biological Anthropology, the Biological Anthropology major offers an extensive range of courses, allowing you to tailor your degree to your own interests, choosing courses from the disciplines of biology, anthropology, psychology and archaeology. The major will allow you to form your own insights and conclusions about the conditions in which humans evolved.

\(^1\) QS World University Rankings by Subject 2018.
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understand the behaviour of humans in the context of our living primate relatives and learn about the culture, behavioural ecology and skeletal biology of humans inhabiting the planet today. Biological Anthropology students will be given the opportunity to:

- Understand the context in which humans and primates evolved and understand the scope of biological anthropology within the wider anthropological discipline
- Critically evaluate contemporary and historical research in at least four biological anthropology subfields
- Experience laboratory based direct hands-on learning using our extensive skeletal and cast collections
- Undertake field schools studying primates in the wild or conducting skeletal excavations
- Apply evolutionary concepts to understanding modern human and primate behavioural diversity
- Reconstruct the behavioural innovations and morphological changes throughout human evolution.

Career opportunities

Graduates of both the Biological Anthropology and Human Evolutionary Biology majors develop the skills necessary to work in a range of careers, depending on the courses taken. Career opportunities may include working in research, museum curation or science communication. Graduates who have undertaken courses specialising in non-human primates can pursue careers in primate conservation and welfare, and graduates who have pursued a more human focus may go on to work in health policy and professions relating to human demography and forensic anthropology.

Flexible Double Degree

The Bachelor of Arts can be combined with degrees in Law, Business or Science as part of the ANU Flexible Double Degree program. For a full list of degree combinations see anu.edu.au/study/study-options/flexible-double

Grace

Bachelor of Arts (Honours in Biological Anthropology)

Majors in Biological Anthropology and Archaeology

As a child, I was convinced I would grow up to be a vet. I was fascinated by animals, particularly my dog. Then I discovered psychology and thought that human behaviour, particularly cognitive development, was the very thing for me. It wasn’t until I was searching through potential universities that I discovered Biological Anthropology at ANU, and a whole new world opened up. Through the courses ANU provided, I could combine all my interests by exploring humanity and its evolution. I could indulge in many intriguing subjects, from forensics to ancient medicine. The scope of Biological Anthropology is wide, and while I sometimes felt out of my depth, the staff and students were always approachable and accommodating. A student run society from the school of Archeology and Anthropology (ABACUS) was a huge help. Through them I connected with visiting lecturers, and attended many social and academic events.

During my undergraduate in Biological Anthropology I found my true passion, Primatology. I was given an opportunity to do a field school in Cambodia, observing actual wild apes. This is a treasured experience and I will take what I learned with me through my career.

Further information

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