

Department of Anthropology Open Day



Durham
University

Dr Sally Street (she/her)
Associate Professor
Dir. Recruitment & Admissions
sally.e.street@durham.ac.uk

Talk outline

- What is anthropology?
- Anthropology at Durham
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Why study anthropology?
- Student experience



What is anthropology?

What is anthropology?

Literally the study of humanity: *ánthrōpos* ("human") + *lógos* ("study")



Very broad subject: study of humans from multiple perspectives (biological & social)

What is anthropology?

Literally the study of humanity: *ánthrōpos* ("human") + *lógos* ("study")



“The most humanistic of the sciences, and the most scientific of the humanities.” -

Alfred Kroeber

Popular image

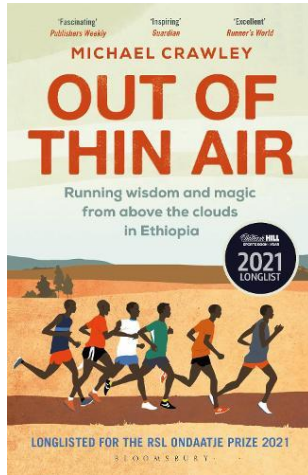


We **do** value immersive fieldwork, **but** this image of anthropology is outdated

Reality



Dr Michael Crawley



Prof Nayanika Mookherjee



Prof Jo Setchell



Prof Hannah Brown



Dr Trudi Buck



Dr Amanda Tan

Think like an anthropologist



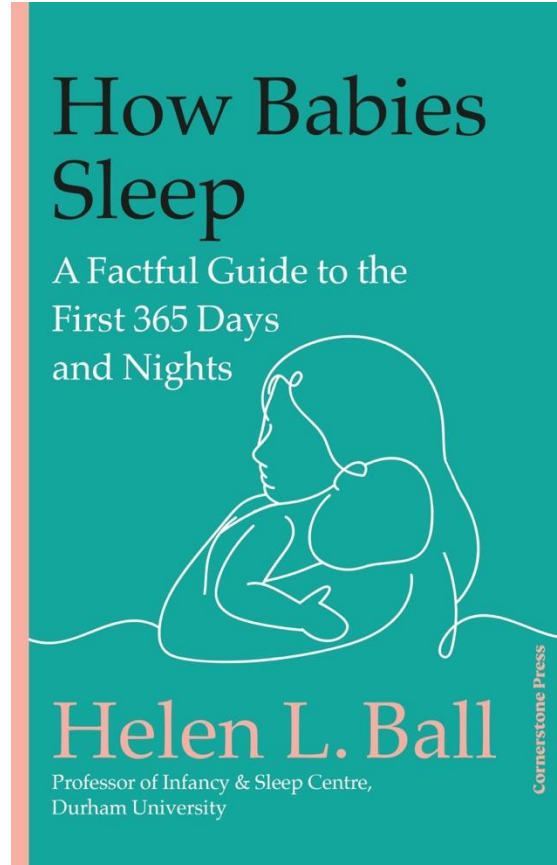
Where, when and how much should a baby sleep?

Think like an anthropologist



Queen's Anniversary Prize

Durham University was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2018 for our research and outreach on parent-infant sleep.



Where, when and how much should a baby 'normally' sleep?

Anthropology at Durham

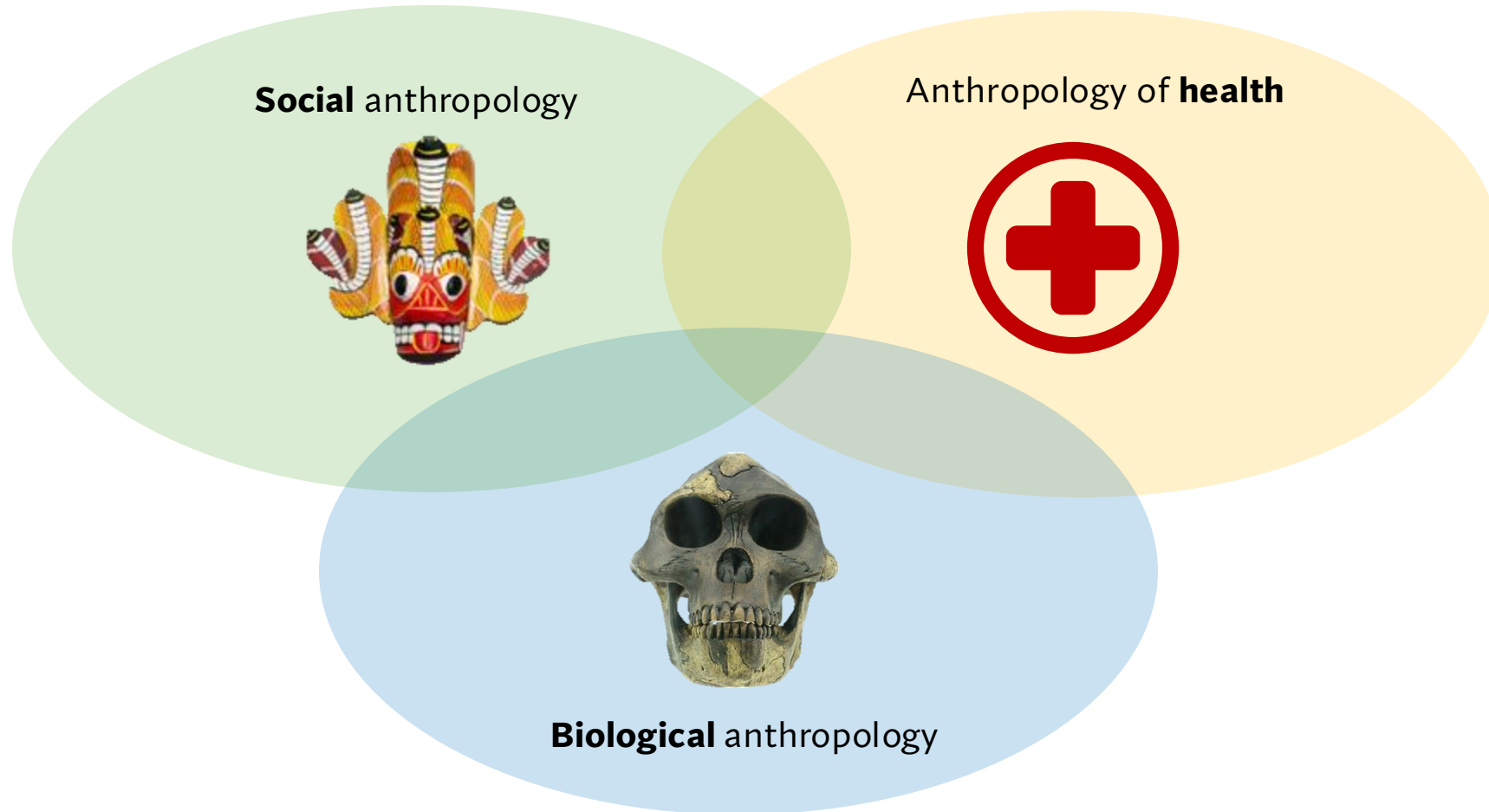
5th for Anthropology & Archaeology, **Guardian University Guide 2025**

4th for Anthropology, **Complete University Guide 2026**

29th for Anthropology, **QS World University Rankings 2025**

Anthropology at Durham

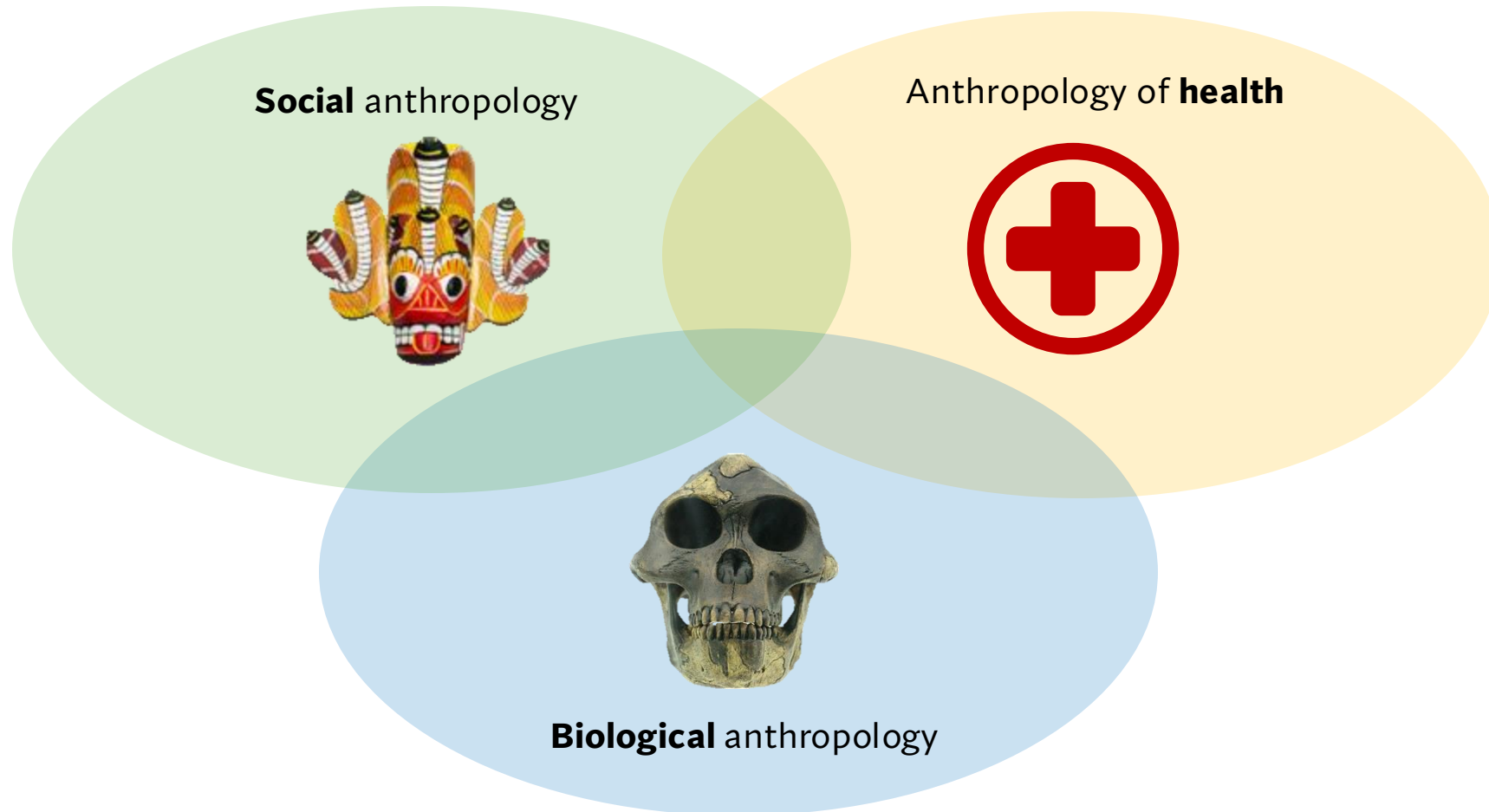
One of the largest departments in the UK & distinctively broad:



Plus growing specialism in **environmental** anthropology

Studies the diversity of human social and cultural life, usually using **ethnographic** methods

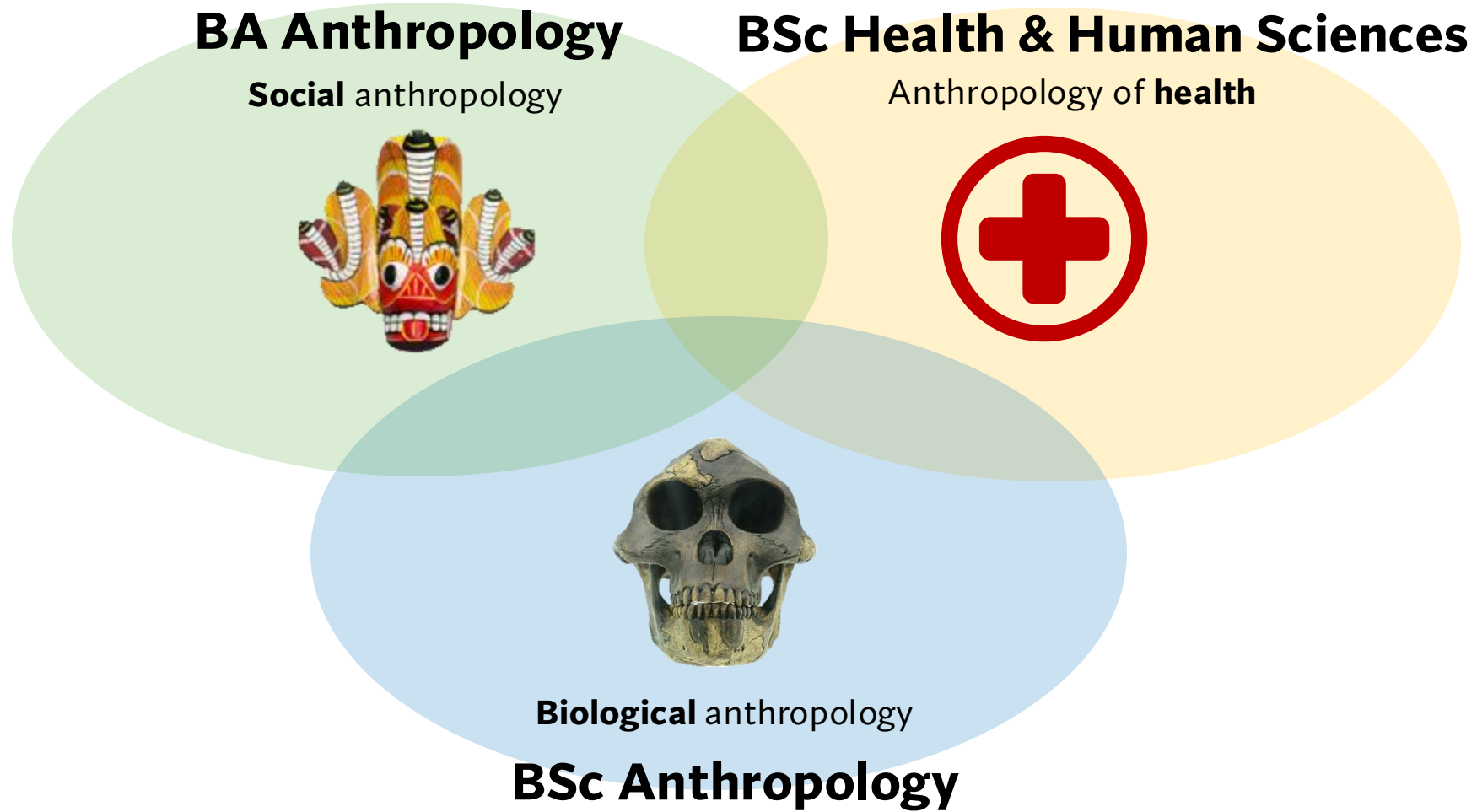
Studies health from both biological and social perspectives, overlapping with public health



Studies the evolution and biological diversity of humans, plus other hominins and primates

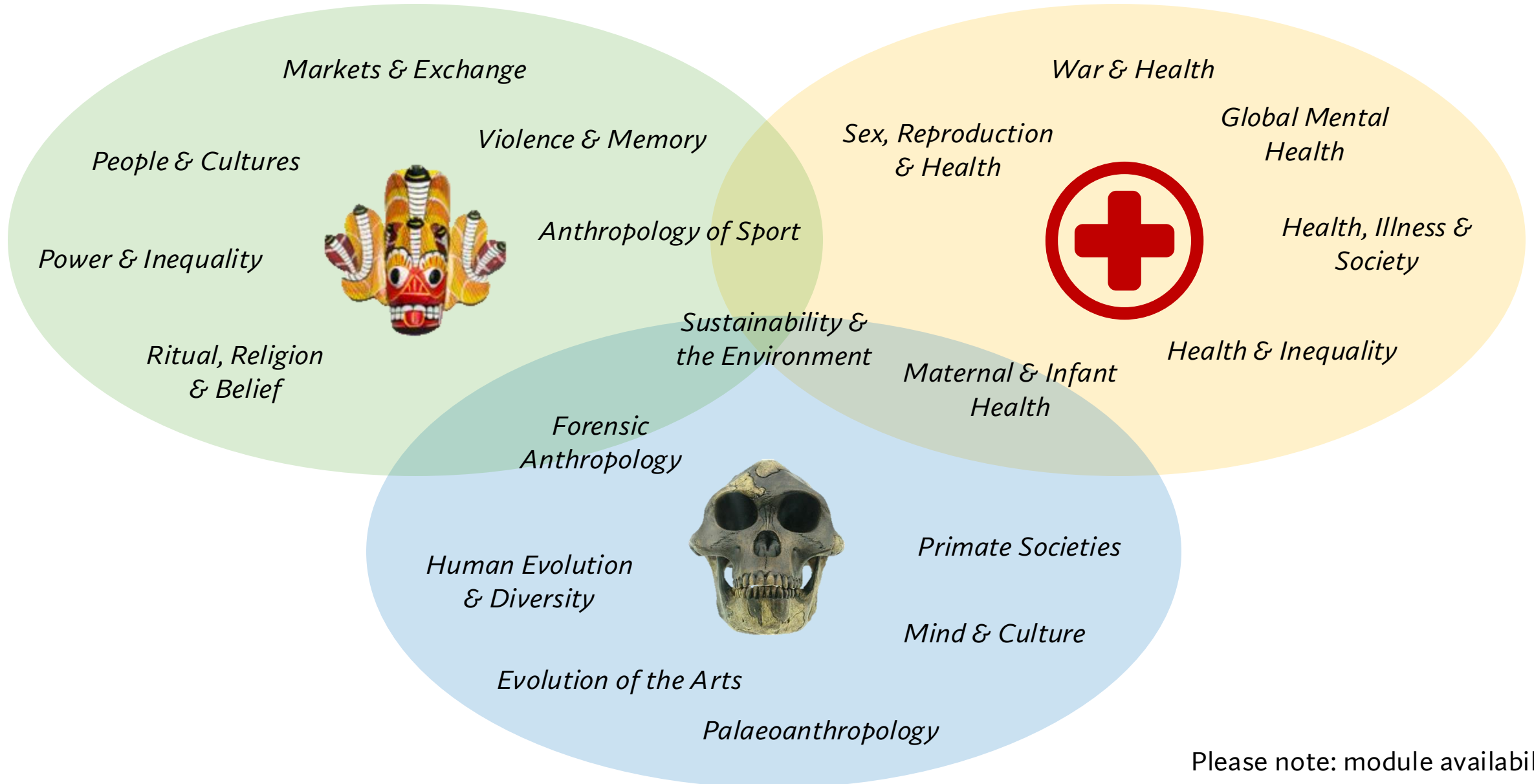
Single honours degrees

Three options specialising in social, biological or medical anthropology



All programmes broad-based, including modules in other areas

Example modules



Please note: module availability may be limited and can change

Single honours degrees

Year 1: introduction to social, bio & health, research methods & an elective

- Broad-based introduction, allows for switching between SH programmes

Year 2: core modules in chosen subfield + choice of others, further research modules

- Allows for both specialisation & integration + more advanced research training

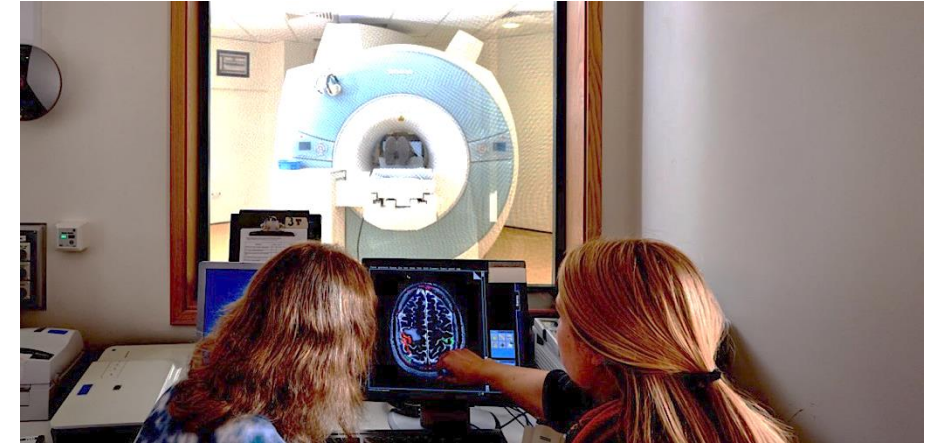
Year 3: dissertation, fieldwork module, specialised modules & an elective

- Consolidates training with advanced taught modules + chance for own research

Joint honours degrees

BSc Anthropology & Psychology

- Strong links at Durham, BPS accredited



BA Anthropology & Archaeology

- Closely allied subjects, option for prof. training



BA Anthropology & Sociology

- Complementary subjects, especially **social** anth.



Plus: anthropology with other subjects via Natural Sciences,
Liberal Arts or Combined Hons. in Social Sciences

Fieldwork

- Residential field course (7-10) days available to all students* (or virtual alternative)
- All destinations carefully chosen due to Durham connections, relevant themes, etc.
- 20-credit third year module: takes place just before the start of your final year
- Plus local field trips in second year (Anthropological Research Methods in Action)

Recent destinations include:



*Pre-requisites required for students on joint-honours/other degrees; one funded residential field course per degree

Fieldwork testimonials

"Definitely my favourite aspect of the anthropology degree"

"It has been my favourite module over the last 3 years, not only because of the experience and the context in which the course took place but also thanks to the quality of the teaching"

"I think [the virtual] field course has really allowed me to change my perspective and knowledge of indigenous issues and museum institutions!"

"AMAZING!!"

"It was an incredibly unique experience, one which I'll remember for the rest of my life"

"We got to actually experience both biological and social anthropology. It gave me an appreciation of fieldwork that you can't get by simply reading about it"

Learning & teaching

- Each 20-credit module: 1-2 lectures/week, 2-4 seminars*/term (multiply by 6!)
- Staff also hold weekly office hours for one-to-one guidance throughout terms
- Diverse range of classes/assessments beyond traditional lectures, essays & exams
- Emphasis on transferable skills e.g. research projects, outreach, exhibitions...



*or practicals, workshops, etc. as appropriate

Study abroad & work placements

- All our degree programmes allow for study abroad/work placement year
- Opportunity to gain skills & experience to complement anthropological training
- Work placements do not necessarily have to be related to your degree subject
- Takes place between 2nd and 3rd year: you can apply after you have started here
- We have agreements with partner Universities in a range of countries, e.g.
 - **Europe:** Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Iceland
 - **Globally:** Japan, Canada, USA, China, Australia*



*Some restrictions may apply, see: <https://www.durham.ac.uk/global-durham/global-opportunities/go-study-abroad/>

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Studying humans in an unequal world

Anthropology (like many other disciplines) has a troubling history



Bronisław Malinowski with Trobriand islanders, 1928



Craniometry demonstration, early 1910s

How do we face up to and avoid continuing this legacy in anthropology today?

Studying humans in an unequal world

These are not just historical issues – colonialism leaves a lasting legacy



E.g. White scholars still over-represented in Anthropology*

*Antón et al. (2018), *AJPA*, 165: 158-180, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ajpa.23382>

Current EDI activities



Prof Elisabeth Kirtsoglou



Decolonising the Curriculum

Our work on Decolonising the Curriculum is led by a working group and we currently teach a Decolonising Anthropology module for our 3rd year students.



First Generation Scholars

Our First Generation Scholars (FGS) network is run by FGS students and works to improve the experience for all FGS in Anthropology.

& much more: e.g. black history walking tours, mature students group, bronze Athena swan award, EDI action plan, virtual field course, inclusive assessments...

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/anthropology/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

First-generation scholars network

- Provides peer support, advocacy and representation for FGS (defined broadly)
- First to be established in Durham, now part of Uni-wide networks & research
- Led by FGS postgraduate students with support from department academic staff



Dr Andrea Lambell



Dr Catherine Marley



Abigail Lewis



Department student support

- **Academic advisers:** personalised academic support, guidance & signposting
- **Departmental student support officer:** pastoral & practical guidance
- **Peer mentors:** matched by degree pathway + international/mature status



“[...]by having a peer mentor I found my transition to university and to my course a little easier as I knew I had an extra person to ask for help and support.”

– Phoebe Cook, Anthropology & Sociology

Many of our initiatives are student-led - if you want to start something, ask us!

Why study anthropology?

What will I do after graduating?

- Very wide range of options: there is no typical Durham Anthropology graduate!
- 15 months after graduation: 80-89% in work/further study, earning ~25-28k/year*



International Journal of
*Environmental Research
and Public Health*



**Save the
Children**



Leadership Academy

**Graduate Management
Training Scheme**

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



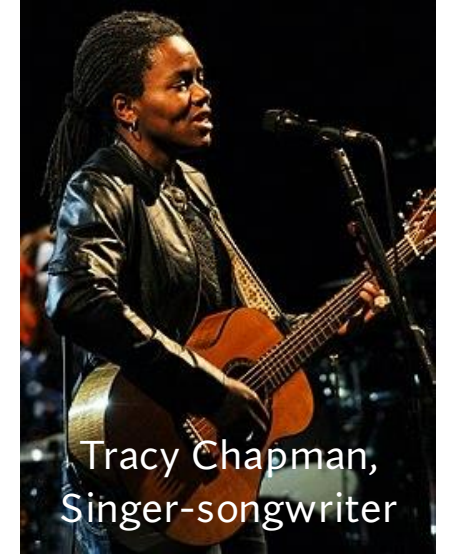
Civil Service



Penguin
Random House
UK

*Latest available data from single- and joint-honours Durham Anthropology students, see: <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

Notable anthropology graduates



“We have to try to understand how people from a very different background see the world and, even if we don't agree with them, at least have some empathy for their particular worldview. I think that is in fact the task of leaders in the world today – to spread that idea and ethic throughout the world. Anthropology in my view does that better than any other discipline.”

- Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank 2012-19



Graduate profile: Lucy

- Graduated 2024: BSc Anthropology with year studying abroad (VU Amsterdam)
- Government social researcher in the Department of Health and Social Care
- Civil Service Fast Stream (3-year training scheme across multiple departments)
- Currently working as an analyst in NHS Quality, Safety & Investigations Team



‘Studying Anthropology helped me to get where I am now because it allowed me to keep that breadth of options and keep curious. I genuinely use my degree every day at work (whether it’s research methods, analytical methods, critical skills) [...] Anthropology encourages you to interrogate the status quo and ask those questions that people are sometimes unprepared to. As a Civil Service Fast Streamer, the main thing they were assessing me on in my entrance interviews was how I think and I believe Anthropology has helped me to think outside the box and always ask “why”.’

Member of **Government Anthropology Network**

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EXPANDING WORLDS BY EXPLORING EVERYTHING HUMAN.

SPOTLIGHT

LOOK AT THE CLOCK


ESSAY / HUMAN NATURE



How Molecular Clocks Are Refining Human Evolution's Timeline

■ **BRIDGET ALEX AND PRIYA MOORJANI**
Scientists are getting better and better at using DNA to figure out when key evolutionary events happened.


ESSAY / DECODED



The Case for Rethinking the Calendar

■ **ALEXANDRA MACK**
Since the early 20th century, calendar reformers have fought to smooth global commerce and unite humanity. But can adopting a new calendar bring peace?

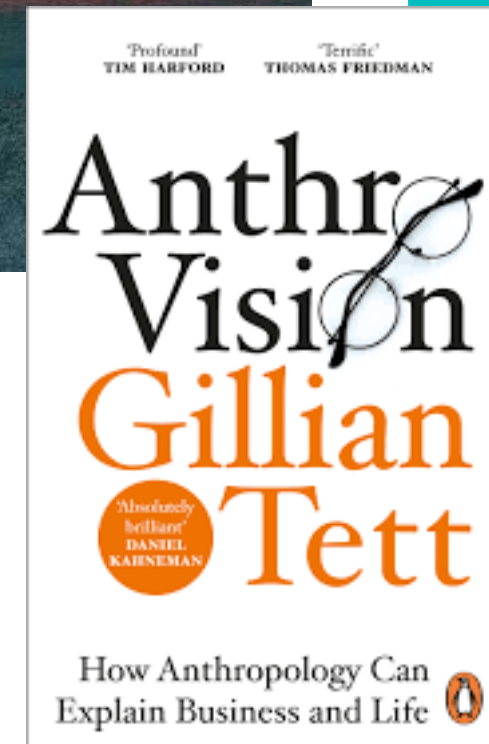
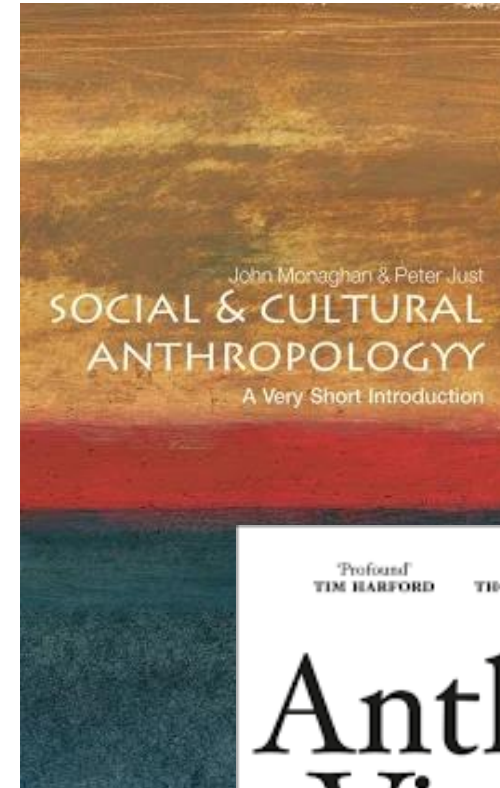
ESSAY / HUMAN NATURE



Is the Clock Ticking Toward Doomsday?

■ **DEAN FALK**
The news hints that we are getting closer to Armageddon—but some say we are more peaceful now than in the past. How do we make sense of this contradiction?

Search Archaeology Biology Culture Language



sally.e.street@durham.ac.uk

Student perspective

Q&A