

Anthropology Open Day 2023

Dr Sally Street



Overview

- What is anthropology?
- Anthropology at Durham
- Inclusive learning & teaching
- Why study anthropology?
- Student experience



What is anthropology?

What is anthropology?

ánthrōpos ("human") + lógos ("study")



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

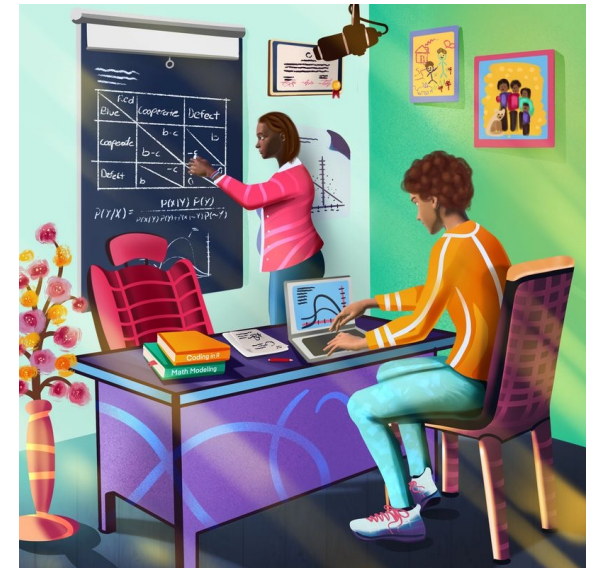
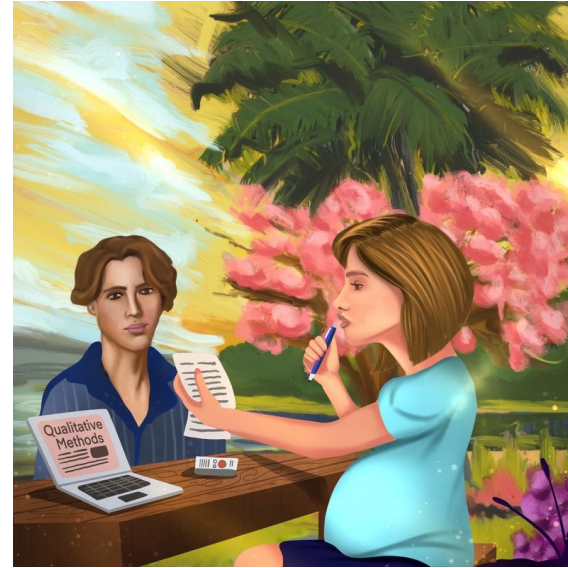
Popular image



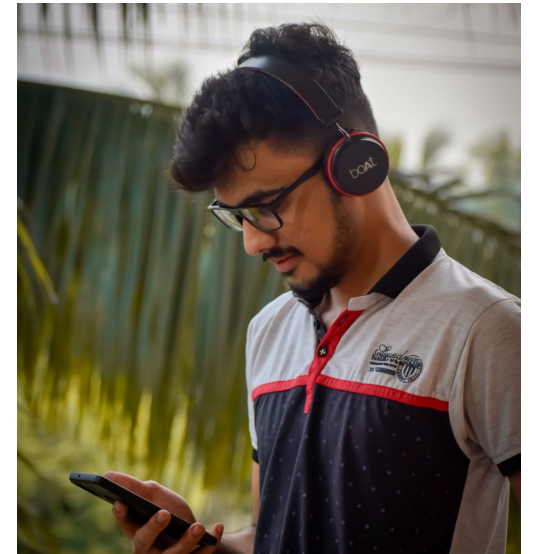
“Writer Will Millard visits the treehouse-dwelling Korowai tribe in Papua, Indonesia, to try and understand the pressures they face as they move into the modern world.”

My Year with the Tribe (BBC, 2018)

Reality



Think like an anthropologist

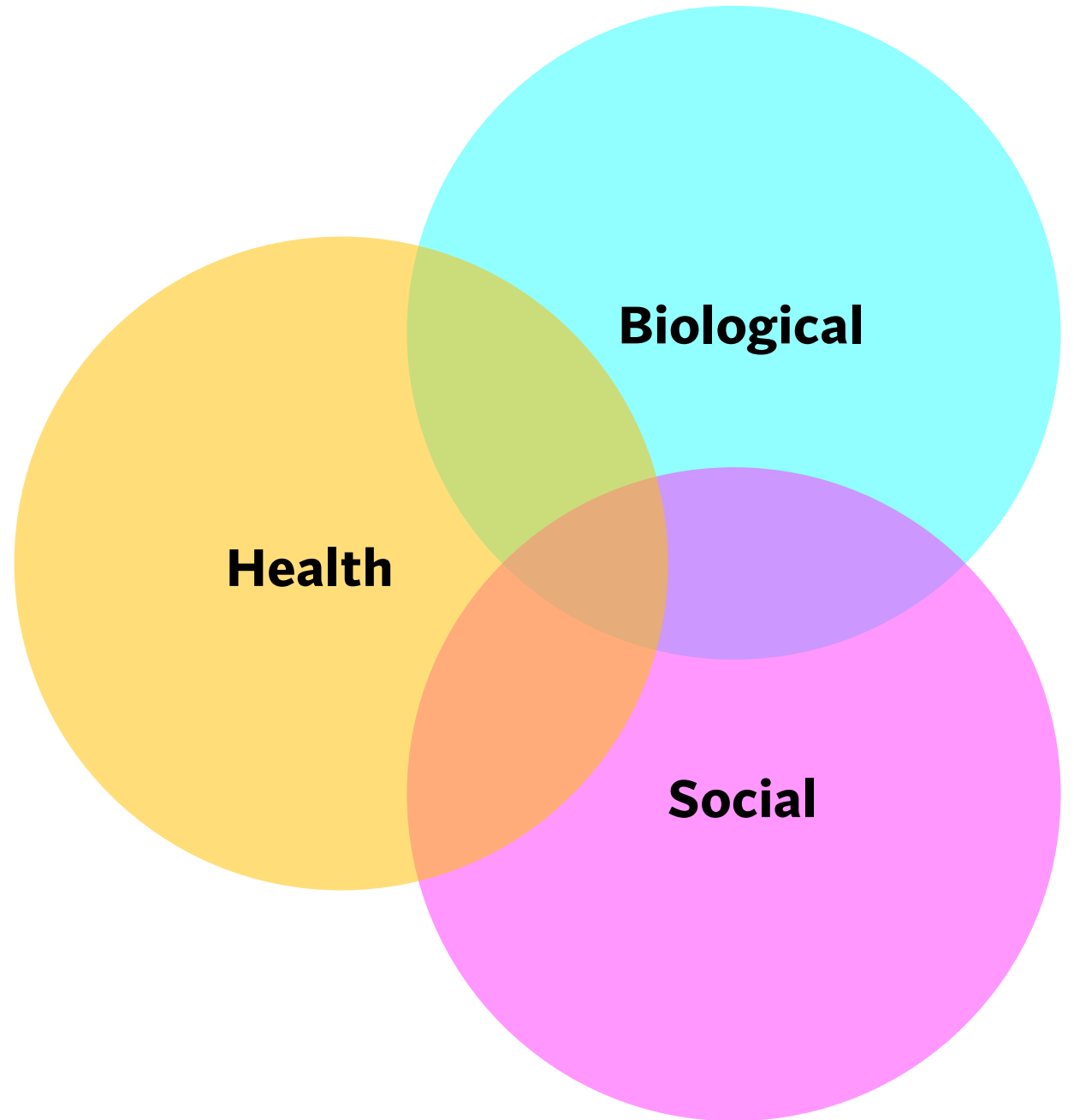


Discuss: why do we make music?

Anthropology at Durham

Anthropology at Durham

- One of the largest depts in the UK
- Distinctively broad & integrated
- One of few to span 3 key subfields

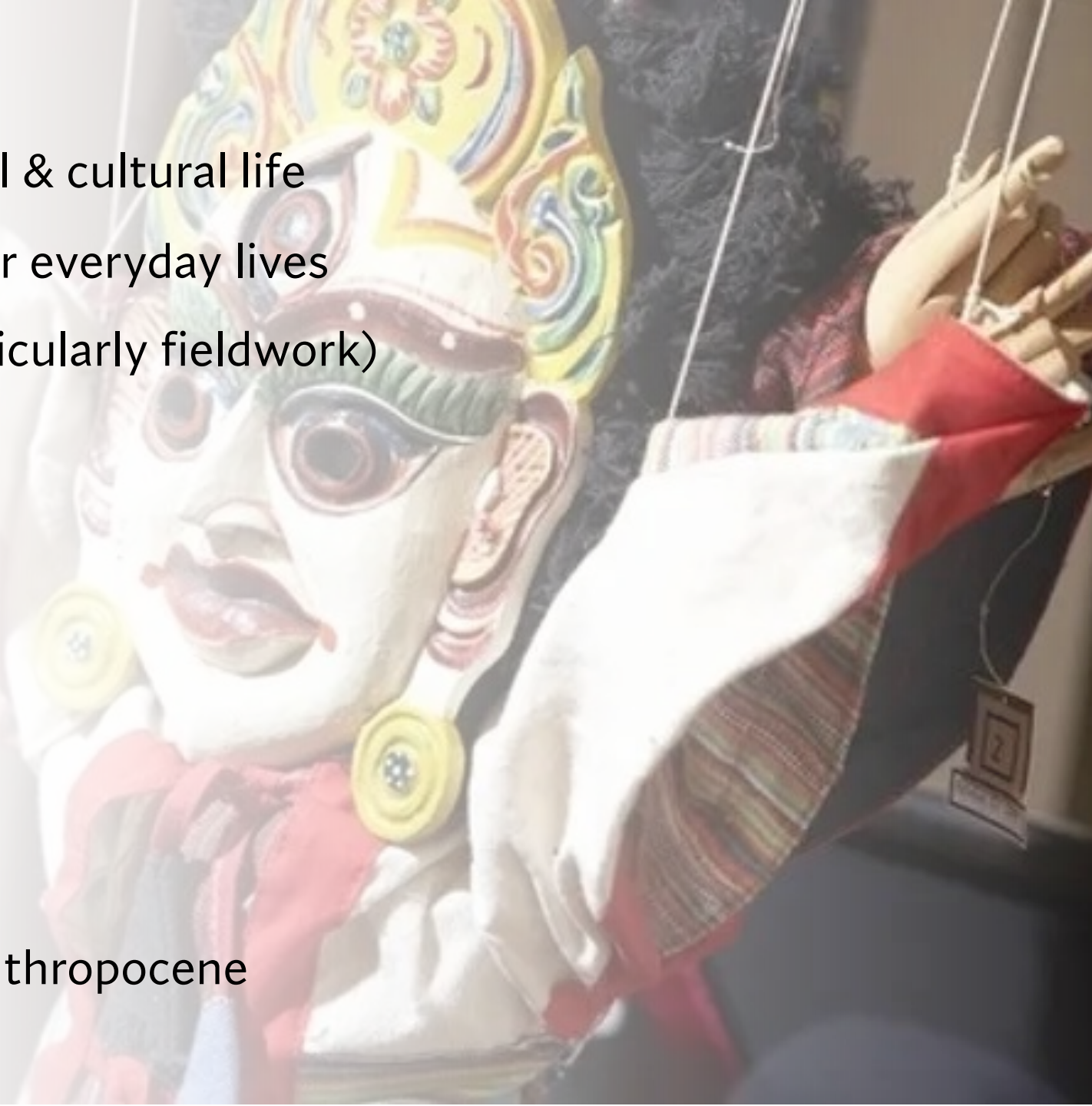


Social Anthropology

- Studies the diversity of human social & cultural life
- Studies people in the context of their everyday lives
- Based in ethnographic method (particularly fieldwork)

Example modules:

- People & Cultures
- Kinship & Religion
- Violence & Memory
- Anthropology, Art & Experience
- Poison, Pollution & the Chemical Anthropocene



Biological Anthropology

- Studies evolution & biological variation of humans, hominins & primates
- Studies behavioural & cultural diversity from evolutionary perspective
- Based in scientific method (usually quantitative research)

Example modules:

- Human Evolution & Diversity
- Our Place in Nature
- Human Reproductive Ecology
- Forensic Anthropology
- Primates in Peril



Anthropology of health

- Studies health from both biological & social perspectives
- Intersects with global/public health & evolutionary medicine
- May use quantitative, qualitative or mixed research methods

Example modules:

- Health, Illness & Society
- Global Health & Disease
- Anthropology of Tobacco
- Anthropology of Health Inequality
- Evolutionary Medicine: Maternal & Infant Health



Fieldwork module

Funded residential fieldwork module for all students (plus virtual option)*



*Small print: destinations may vary. Compulsory for SH, optional for JH + others: check prerequisites; one funded residential field course per degree

Value of fieldwork

- Fieldwork, i.e. primary data collection in ‘the real world’ essential for Anthropology
- Allows you to develop key research skills for your anthropology degree & beyond
- Group work & social activities: great chance to get to know students & staff



“It was an incredibly unique experience, one which I’ll remember for the rest of my life”

“Definitely my favourite aspect of the anthropology degree”



“AMAZING!!”

“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”

Single honours degrees

BA Anthropology, BSc Anthropology & BSc Health & Human Sciences

Year 1: introductory modules for all 3 subfields, research methods & an elective

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

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

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

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

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

Joint honours degrees

BA Anth & Archaeology, BA Anth & Sociology, BSc Anth & Psychology

- Close links with all three departments, especially large overlap between subjects
- JH with archaeology and psychology: integrated modules and dissertations
- BSc Anthropology and Psychology: BPS accredited (important for psych. careers)
- Third year Anthropology Field Course available as an optional module*



*check prerequisites; one funded residential field course only

Combined honours & broader programmes

BSc Natural Sciences, BA Liberal Arts, BA Combined Hons. in Social Sciences

- Allow for more flexibility & choice to create bespoke degree programmes
- Anthropology overlaps with many other subjects (almost any you can think of!)
- Third year Anthropology Field Course available as an optional module*



*check prerequisites; one funded residential field course only

Learning & teaching

- Diverse range of classes & assessments to cover range of skills & learning modes
- Typical 20-credit module (6/year): 1-2 lectures/week, 2-4 seminars*/term
- Staff also hold weekly drop-in hours for one-to-one guidance throughout terms
- Not only traditional essays & exams but projects, posters, podcasts, outreach...



*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
- 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*
- Examples of work placements include: conservation, fashion, online petitions...



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

Inclusive learning & teaching

Anthropology in an unequal world

- Studying human diversity in an unequal world is inherently very challenging
- The history of anthropology is inextricably entwined with colonialism & racism



Bronisław Malinowski with Trobriand islanders, 1918



Craniometry demonstration, early 1910s

Decolonising the curriculum

- *Not* about ‘erasing history’ or protecting students from ‘offensive’ ideas
- Rather facing up to colonial history and challenging its harmful legacies
- Critical reflection on how our teaching may be influenced by colonial practices

“Teaching practice is engaged, anti-racist and decolonial if it forces students, especially those comfortably in the majority, out of their comfort zones”¹

Dr Meleisa Ono-George, historian, Oxford University



1. Ono-George, M. (2019) ‘Beyond diversity: anti-racist pedagogy in British History departments’, *Women’s History Review*, DOI: 10.1080/09612025.2019.1584151

Decolonising anthropology

Our work includes:

- Department-wide decolonizing initiatives, e.g. diversifying reading lists*
- Decolonising the Curriculum Working Group (led by Dr Buck & Dr Stevenson)
- Developing an optional third year module in ‘Decolonising Anthropology’
- Encouraging all staff to attend related training and workshops (e.g. anti-racism)
- Osteobiographies of our human skeletal collections (many from ‘bone trade’)
- Student-led research projects on inclusion, diversity and decolonization
- Ultimately **empowering students** to work with us to shape the discipline

*While recognizing this is not enough by itself!

Department student support

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



“Last year 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, 2nd year Anthropology & Sociology

- **Dedicated support networks** for first-generation scholars & mature students
- **Anthropology Society:** active, student-led group (e.g. film nights, socials)
- We listen & respond to students – suggestions for new initiatives welcome!

Why study anthropology?

What can I do with an Anthropology degree from Durham?

- 80-95% in work or further study 15 months + graduation, earning £24-27k/year*
- Very wide range of options: there is no typical Durham Anthropology graduate!



International Journal of
*Environmental Research
and Public Health*



NHS
Leadership Academy

Graduate Management
Training Scheme




**Save the
Children**



Penguin
Random House
UK

*Latest available statistics from graduate outcomes survey, for more see: <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

What can I do with an Anthropology degree from Durham?

- Broader value: deeper appreciation for human uniqueness, universality & diversity



“The purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human differences”

- Ruth Benedict (Anthropologist, 1887-1948)

“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



Student perspective

Q&A