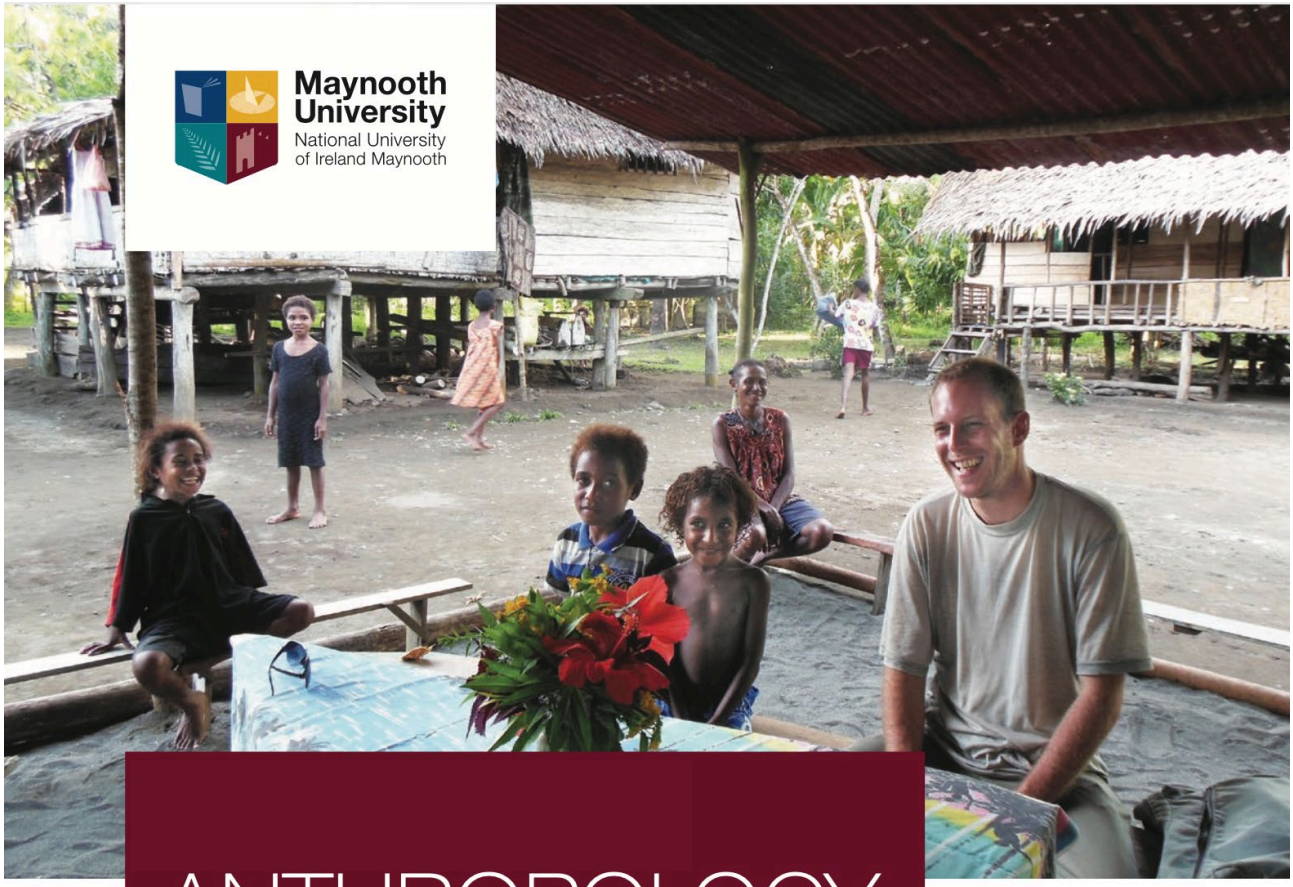

Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

ANTHROPOLOGY

Department of Anthropology
https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/anthropology
Email: anthropology.office@mu.ie
Phone: +353 (1) 708 3984

Postgraduate Programmes in Anthropology at MU

Postgraduate programmes in Anthropology are designed for students who have a curiosity about culture and about diverse forms of social life the world over. The fieldwork orientation of anthropology focuses on the links between global and local processes, between abstract theory and real behaviour, and between the various dimensions of human life: political, economic, familial, religious, technological, and more. This course prepares students to solve real-world problems by equipping them with a sophistication in social theory tempered by practical engagement with people in their lived contexts.

Careers

Anthropology complements diverse career paths. Anthropological skills are optimal in an interconnected transnational economy and global political situation, where an understanding of and empathy for cultural difference can help individuals, businesses, and countries to succeed and flourish. As anthropologists we look at human groups and practices comparatively and holistically and this skill prepares students for careers in a wide range of professions including international development, civil service and government, social work, business and finance, journalism, user experience and design research, heritage, ecology and conservation, public health, museum curation, marketing, and more.

The Department of Anthropology has 2 MA programmes and one PhD programme.

MA Programmes: MA Anthropology (1 year full-time, 2 years part-time_, MA Creole (2-year programme)

MA Anthropology: Students must take a total of 60 credits of coursework and also complete a Thesis

Module Code	Module Title	Credits
AN651	Social Thought	10
AN618	Key Concepts & Ethnographic Practice I	10
AN692	Anthropology and Development	10
AN698	Medical Anthropology	10
AN654	Privacy Today	10
AN631	Advanced Studies in Addiction, Recovery & Culture	10
AN6601	Creole Exchange 1	5
AN619	Key Concepts & Ethnographic Practice II	10
AN660	Creole Exchange 2	5
AN693	Anthropology of Digital Media	10
AN640	Who are We? Biology & Identity in the 21st Century	10
AN645	Advanced Studies in Ethnographic Filmmaking	10
AN650	Ethnography Winter School	10

In the autumn and spring semesters, students complete an intensive course of compulsory modules (10 credits each), which will introduce them to key anthropological concepts and areas of research as well as ethnographic practices and anthropological theory.

The Anthropology Seminar Series runs through both semesters and is designed as a space where students learn about the latest developments in anthropology and prepare their own MA research projects in discussion with visiting scholars and Anthropology Department academic staff. Students also have a choice of topical modules, on subjects such as development, medicine, identity, or digital media. Students develop a proposal for a research project during the taught year in consultation with a faculty advisor. In the summer, students undertake a 30-credit Thesis module, and turn in a completed thesis on their project in early Autumn. MA Creole is a two-year programme whereby students are required to spend two of the four semesters at one or more European Partner Institutions (University of Vienna, University of Barcelona, University of Lyon, University of Ljubljana, University of Bern, Adam Mickiewicz University Poznan).

POSTGRADUATE MODULES

AN651 Social Thought

This module provides an advanced foundation to key social theories, especially from the European Enlightenment tradition but also including the work of recent post-structural and postcolonial figures. Social and cultural anthropology draws influences from social theory, and advanced students of anthropology are expected to become familiar with key contributions to understanding what constitutes the human, the range of human diversity, the nature of "nature", the power of social categories, that the capacity in societies to change or develop alternatives. This module introduces key figures such as Hobbes and Rousseau, together with Marx, Foucault, and contemporary postcolonial writers. Students will be challenged to grapple with different theories, comparing and contrasting theories before developing their own analysis.

AN618 Key Concepts & Ethnographic Practice I

This module is divided into two sections (6 weeks each) – one focusing on Key Concepts and the other one on Ethnographic Practice. The Key Concepts section introduces some of anthropology's most important ideas, exploring several of the analytical approaches characteristic of ethnographic inquiry today. In this part, our ambition is to provide a short and intensive introduction to the discipline by focusing on culture as a central concept in anthropology. Tracing the place of culture and its critique and development within the discipline will enable us to engage with a number of other key categories of anthropological knowledge and knowing. The Ethnographic Practice section discusses ethnography as a core methodological tool in anthropology. In this section of the module, we will discuss key examples of different approaches to ethnography to foreshadow preparations for student research proposals. We will examine some classic and contemporary ethnographic works while considering a range of methodological problems: entry to the field, data collection, engagement and conceptualization of one's research through scholarly literature, ethical dimensions of research, and others. Student participation and peer discussion will be expected in all sessions.

AN692 Anthropology and Development

This module provides the foundations for the study of Anthropology and Development by situating the long process of the making of the contemporary Global South at the intersection of world historical and political economic flows. We will begin with a close reading of key texts in the field of historical anthropology in order to trace the emergence of mass poverty, inequality and conflict in our world today. The latter part of the module introduces current anthropological perspectives on, and engagements with, issues of sustainable international development.

AN698 Medical Anthropology

This module offers an advanced introduction to the broad field of Medical Anthropology, focusing on the classical anthropological contributions to this important subfield with a focus on global health, health care systems, care more generally, and suffering. Students will explore ethnographic work on patient-physician relationships, the social and community contexts of care provision, and the impact of bio-medicine on Western and non-Western populations.

AN654 Privacy Today

This module confronts a contradiction in the experience of social life familiar the world over: whilst evermore concerned about individual privacy in the era of the internet, people go on divulging the most private details of their lives into the vast unknown auditoria comprising the world wide web. Make it make sense. Alongside the multiplication of publics and the tacit equation of (economic, moral) value with publicness (even 'publicity'), there have arrived new types of nonpublic, perhaps anti-public, social formation, but also the contrapuntal feeling that the domain of 'the public good' has been diminished by the intrusions of 'private interest.' Appearing in public, as (a) public, may exhibit one's commitment to the constitutive role communicative reason plays in politics. However, at the same time, it may involve exposure to surveillance by either state or corporate actors. Even as 'context collapse' and 'the selfie' seem to have made private life a relentless source of 'social' content, a rich vein of monetizable value, the right to privacy is conflated with the ever-expanding expectation thereof. A quizzical mood of increasing distrust, even paranoia, accompanies

a higher incidence of that obsessional disorder we have all grown familiar with: 'posting.' Thus, we observe evolving tactics of disguise, camouflage, hiding, discretion, anonymity, and invisibility in a social ecology that seems to turn every device into an agent of the grid. That distrust indexes a constitutive irony to the liberating, novel, and unique forms of subjectivity and sociality that (counter)publics create. If display/watching defines both the communicative context of politics and the transactional context of the market, state, and corporate power (or instead the neoliberal obviation of that distinction), it pervades or tries to pervade every public. Unwanted attention is a primary 'digital risk,' and privacy is considered a source of protection. Paradoxically, insufficient attention is also a risk: what gets seen is controlled by invisible forces. Thus, when reduced to 'content,' cultural discourse — indeed social life itself — is structured by the (proprietary) algorithms that determine what surfaces in our timelines and search results. And suppose algorithms are computer codes invisibly influencing what becomes public online. In that case, online circulation further presupposes vast unseen infrastructures linking the concrete and the esoteric: content is created and broadcast through enormously complex sociotechnical systems of information and circulation, state surveillance and citizen sousveillance, product design and prosumer impulse purchase, programmer skill, and machine code. All of which makes it necessary to ask: What is happening in private? What even is 'the private' or 'privacy' today? Might we see the private something other than what is left in the shadows of our incessantly flashing ring lights? Concretely, this module explores accounts of 'surveillance capitalism,' attempts to regulate surveillance capitalism (GDPR), the fantasy of privacy, and resurgent rightwing populism worldwide.

AN631 Advanced Studies in Addiction, Recovery & Culture

This course is designed to interrogate the concepts of "addiction" and "recovery" in ethnographic and historical contexts. We examine different models of addiction, from the biological to the social. We then look at several case studies examining the use of ostensible addictive substances or the engaging in supposedly addictive behaviour. We then go on to examine varying understandings of "Recovery", that is leaving the compulsion to use a substance or engage in a behaviour, that is considered problematic. We conclude with the examination of broader questions of what addiction and recovery can yell us about being human.

AN619 Key Concepts & Ethnographic Practice II

This module is a continuation of the first-semester AN618 and is similarly divided into two sections (6 weeks each) – one focusing on Key Concepts and the other one on Ethnographic Practice. The Key Concepts section covers some of anthropology's most important ideas, exploring examples of analytical approaches characteristic of ethnographic inquiry today. The Ethnographic Practice section will focus on ethnography as a research method and interpretative framework in anthropology. We will continue to engage with high-quality examples of published ethnographies and discuss students' own research projects. Student participation and peer discussion will be expected in all sessions.

AN693 Anthropology of Digital Media

More and more of us are leading digital lives, but because the internet is a global phenomenon it can carry a series of assumptions regarding how it is used or who it is for. In this seminar we will consider digital media in diverse socio-political and cultural contexts to explore how individual, group and institutional interactions are increasingly mediated by these technologies. Are ideas and norms regarding human interaction changing? In Part One of this module we will focus on themes such as the presentation of self in online fora, ideas surrounding the internet and privacy, the encroachment of commercial interests in branding and advertising on digital media. In Part Two we will consider these topics through a close reading of ethnographic examples including Filipina migrants in the UK, hashtag activists in the United States, digital migration in urban China, display and disguise in mobile phone use amongst young Mozambicans and smartphone use among older adults in Ireland. Student and attendance and participation is required in all sessions.

AN640 Who are We? Biology and Identity in the 21st Century

We live in a technoscientific age where science and technology permeate every aspect of our daily lives. Yet, we are relatively poorly equipped with the conceptual tools and knowledge to responsibly analyze and criticize the relationships between science and technology and the society with which they are co-produced. This graduate anthropology seminar will foster a critical anthropological approach to the social, cultural, historical, and political implications of science and technology.

This seminar engages source material from contemporary developments in global science and technology, particularly biology and biotechnology. The seminar involves reading, analyzing, and critically integrating works by scholars in STS, the Anthropology of Science, the Sociology of Knowledge, and related literatures. The texts jointly address topics such as: the basis of scientific and political authority; the relation of science to the state; theories of the relationship between science and democracy; the politics of technology; and theories of state building. Overall, the readings will explore how states produce and use scientific knowledge and technologies to service the political order and how science and technology relate to social identities.

Topical content includes genomics, artificial intelligence, transhumanism, and artificial reproductive technologies, and how these technologies are in a transformative relationship with understandings of race, gender, kinship, nationality, class, profession, and other contemporary identities.

AN645 Advanced Studies in Ethnographic Filmmaking

Advanced Studies in Ethnographic Filmmaking is a practice-led module that teaches students to critically evaluate visual media and provides instruction on how to create short ethnographic films. The course is composed of a mix of filmmaking workshops in Maynooth and local fieldwork. Practical instruction will be given in filmmaking, photography, storyboarding, lighting, sound and editing. Small group film projects comprise a substantial element of this module.

AN650 Ethnography Winter School

This module is a comprehensive introduction to ethnography. 'Ethnography is more than a method': it comprises a whole style of thought encompassing forms of observation, analysis, and writing. The module therefore emphasizes analysis and theory in addition to the research practices (interviewing, participant observation, note-taking) conventionally associated with qualitative research methodology. Themes covered include: culture and difference, contexts and cases (working in NGOs, clinics, corporations), styles of representation and the politics of knowledge, research ethics and ethnographic engagement. The module is also structured as a workshop, so that ethnographers at various stages of their careers -- from students planning proposals, to dissertation writers analyzing previously collected material, to research professionals who may not be based in academia -- will be able to produce work within the module that relates to their respective career stages, locations, and goals. This work, such as a proposal draft or a stretch of ethnographic writing, forms the basis for module assessment.

AN6601/660 Creole Teacher Exchange

This is an intensive course, taught in collaboration with visiting staff from the Creole consortium, to introduce students to anthropological work on diversity, cosmopolitanism and mixing by drawing on European scholarship. Content will vary and will be determined by the lecturer.

Students can also avail of selected modules in Geography, Media Studies, and International Development.

PhD in Anthropology / Four-Year Programme

The Department of Anthropology offers a structured PhD programme, which includes theoretical and practical training in Anthropology. The PhD is an advanced research degree that requires considerable initiative on the part of the student to engage in independent, original scholarship. The objective of the PhD programme is to provide students with professional training in Anthropological research and to produce scholars capable of contributing to international networks in the discipline in an original, ethical, and effective fashion. (Open/Rolling Application Deadline, Funding Available via competitive grants and fellowships).