

Handbook for the Doctoral Program in the Department of Anthropology

Fall 2021 edition

1. Welcome!

Welcome to the Anthropology doctoral program in the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences (Dornsife). This handbook is intended to give you context for the Department of Anthropology and related University communities, of which you are now an important member. It also provides you with a general orientation to your experience as an Anthropology doctoral student.

Information about the Department of Anthropology, including key administrative and leadership roles, can be found on our website at <https://dornsifelive.usc.edu/anth/>.

For specific information about matters such as benefits, policies, University holidays and schedules, or University systems, please see our Office Manager, Olivia Ale.

1.1. Experimental ethnography track

For those students interested in working across genres and media, the program includes an experimental ethnography track, which is conceived both as a field of study and as a creative mode of ethnographic research and output. Experimental ethnography encompasses investigations into bodily praxis, material culture and the affective dimensions of human and multispecies existence, as well as creative audiovisual, material and written expressions of this work. The track in experimental ethnography supports innovative research in film, video, sound and written ethnography that furthers the significance of this emerging subfield while contributing to the discipline of anthropology and cognate fields in the humanities, social sciences and the arts.

Students on this track are part of a general cohort and fulfill the curricular requirements of the Anthropology PhD. Students work with their committees to design a course of study that enables them to develop an appropriate framework for their dissertation. Students are rigorously trained in contemporary theories of anthropology, but are otherwise free to pursue specialized training across campus in support of their research. The program is practice-led and students are encouraged to foster relationships with organizations in the Los Angeles vicinity, or at their field site, through structured practicums. By the end of third year, students are expected to produce substantive research articles, creative media pieces, curatorial programs or public exhibitions in

response to their coursework and practicums. The PhD track in experimental ethnography culminates in a dissertation in which practice and theory should be evidently mutually constitutive.

As with other doctoral students, it is expected that the PhD track in experimental ethnography be completed in five years. Given this time frame, applicants to the program should already have strong ties to their proposed field site, relevant language training, and, typically, a completed M.A., M.F.A. or other professional degree at the time of application, or equivalent established media arts practices and a strong connection to a research site, topic, related field of inquiry or form of engagement.

2. PhD Program Requirements

The Anthropology Department's PhD program offers students a strong foundation in the history, theory and practice of anthropology, while enabling them to develop formally innovative dissertations.

Before being admitted to PhD candidacy, the student must fulfill the language requirement, present a portfolio and pass the qualifying examination. Having completed this work, the student will conduct fieldwork and write the doctoral dissertation.

2.1. Coursework requirements

The student's coursework must total at least 60 units. No more than 8 units of 794 Doctoral Dissertation may count toward the 60 units.

The following courses are required for the PhD in Anthropology:

- ANTH 501 History and Foundations of Anthropology, Units: 4
- ANTH 502 Contemporary Theory in Anthropology, Units: 4
- ANTH 562 The Practice of Ethnography, Units: 4
- ANTH 603 Experiments in Ethnography, Units: 4, or equivalent
- ANTH 593 Practicum for Teaching in Anthropology, 2 units
- At least 6 additional graduate courses, to be selected in consultation with the faculty committee (24 units)

Research and dissertation:

- ANTH 790 Research, Units: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (minimum 8 units required)
- ANTH 794a Doctoral Dissertation, Units: 2
- ANTH 794b Doctoral Dissertation, Units: 2

2.2. Language Requirement

Students are required to demonstrate competence in foreign languages, to be selected in consultation with faculty including members of the student's qualifying exam committee. At a minimum, this includes any field language required for ethnographic field research, and reading knowledge of a relevant literary, analytic or scholarly language. The requirements in this category must be met before submission of the field project required for admission to candidacy.

For languages not taught at USC, providing evidence of proficiency such as by completing an informal examination conducted by a qualified expert, such as a scholar or language instructor, or completion of language courses taken at other universities or programs may fulfill this requirement.

2.3. Practical Training Requirement

In addition to specific coursework, PhD students are expected to engage in relevant practical training, ideally by completing 2 or more units of ANTH 596 Internship for Curricular Practical Training or equivalent. Students are also encouraged to make use of all resources available through the Dornsife PhD Academy (see 6.2 below)

2.4. Methods Requirement

Students are required to establish competency in ethnographic research methods, plus additional research methods appropriate to the dissertation project. In addition to required ethnographic methods coursework (ANTH 562), additional coursework or practice-based training may be selected in consultation with the faculty committee.

2.5. Portfolio Review Requirement

Each student is required to complete a portfolio, which could take a variety of forms. It could include research papers which have been submitted for graduate courses (of appropriate length to be submitted to a journal in the discipline) or a substantial edited documentary, installation or other writings or projects that are approved by members of the student's qualifying exam committee. Portfolio elements should provide evidence of ethnographic research and analysis. In addition, the file should include research proposals submitted for external research funding., along with a dissertation prospectus.

For additional detail on the portfolio review, see 3.4 Portfolio Review and Qualifying Examination (3rd year).

2.6. Qualifying Examination Requirement

In the third year, students are required to take a written and oral examination in designated areas of expertise, selected in consultation with the qualifying examination committee and usually encompassing topical, regional and theoretical foci. If the written examination is passed, the oral part of the examination can be devoted to a discussion of the dissertation prospectus. When these are completed successfully, the student is advanced to PhD candidacy.

For additional detail on the examination process, 3.4 Portfolio Review and Qualifying Examination (3rd year).

3. Advisement and Annual Academic Review

Advisement: Students will meet each Spring semester with the Director of Graduate Studies, to informally discuss progress and plan course registration.

Annual Academic Review: In addition, performance of every doctoral student is formally assessed by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and the student's adviser at least once each year based upon faculty input, course work and research progress, as well as any teaching assignments the student has held. During the annual review members of the faculty will review transcripts and consult with colleagues, including those who are advising each student at different steps in advancing to candidacy and completing the dissertation.

Based on the annual review, the DGS will communicate to each student by a letter whether he or she is making satisfactory progress in the program. If a student is told that they are not making satisfactory progress, the letter may include some frank assessments and directives that are intended to help the student to meet standards. If a student has fallen out of good standing, an academic warning letter may also be issued that outlines corrective action on the part of the student, where the failure to remedy the identified deficiencies could result in termination from the program.

Unsatisfactory progress toward the degree requires either remedy of the deficiencies or termination of the student's graduate program.

3.1. The first-year review

The first-year review assessment is completed at the start of the Fall semester of year 2, and focuses on performance of completed coursework and feedback received from instructors. After successfully passing the first-year review assessment, in consultation with the academic advisor and prospective committee members, the student will draft a portfolio plan, outlining specific research, writing, or production objectives looking ahead at least 2 semesters. Each student will also be encouraged to establish the core members of a five-member qualifying exam committee.

This committee needs to include at least one outside member, which is defined at USC as a senior faculty member tenured in another department at USC.

3.2. The second-year review

The second-year review will be conducted at the end of the Spring semester of the 2nd year, and before a student has completed 24 units toward the degree. In particular, it will include a review of qualifying portfolio materials completed according to the portfolio plan, and will also look at the courses completed to make sure that requirements have been met. In consultation with the academic advisor and prospective committee members, the student will also revise and update the portfolio plan, toward the student's research and dissertation objectives.

3.3. The third-year review

Prior to the start of the third year (i.e., at the end of the second year) student progress will be evaluated and each student will formally establish the members of their examination committee. This committee is made up of at least five faculty members, one of them within USC but outside the department. The examination committee must include at least three Anthropology faculty, usually drawn from faculty the student has worked with during the first two years.

A consultation with this qualifying examination committee will take place directly after the second year to identify remaining deficiencies in a student's training and identify solutions before the qualifying examination process begins.

3.4. Portfolio Review and Qualifying Examination (3rd year)

Students are required to form a PhD qualifying committee at the end of the second year as described above. The examination committee will direct the student toward their portfolio and qualifying examination, to be completed during the third year.

Portfolio review: Upon completion of 16 units of coursework, the student will submit for review a selection of works that best demonstrate readiness to undertake dissertation research based on independent scholarship. The examination committee approves the contents of the portfolio, which should be representative of the student's graduate training and scholarship in their interdisciplinary focus as well as anthropology (see 2.5).

Qualifying Examination: Within 6 weeks of passing the portfolio review, the student must sit for a written qualifying examination. Students prepare for the exam by developing reading lists in collaboration with their qualifying exam committee, as described in 2.6. The student is also required to prepare and submit a dissertation prospectus.

3.5. Dissertation Progress Reviews (4th and 5th years)

Once the portfolio and qualifying exam requirements have been met, every graduate student is required to schedule a meeting with at least three members of their qualifying committee every year in the Fall semester. The meeting is designed to make sure that the committee is informed about their progress and to allow committee members to offer advice and suggestions.

A memo from the committee chair is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies each year, including the student's updated CV, a short dissertation abstract (no more than 150 words) and a longer dissertation description or outline, along with any updates to their biographical sketch and public profile.

4. Research

As part of the PHD, most students will complete one or several significant periods of fieldwork as a part of their dissertation research. Each student is also expected to seek outside funding for this research.

5. Dissertation

After the qualifying examination and portfolio has been passed, a dissertation committee of at least three faculty members (usually drawn from the examination committee) must approve a dissertation prospectus before full-time research commences. Only at this point is a student admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree and will thereafter concentrate on the dissertation. After students become candidates for the PhD degree, they must register for 794 Doctoral Dissertation each semester thereafter until the dissertation is completed.

The final state of the program is the submission of a dissertation that makes an original and substantial contribution to its field of study. The final copy of the dissertation must conform to the regulations of the Graduate School.

5.1. Oral defense of the dissertation

Upon the approval of the entire committee, the student will schedule a formal defense of the dissertation. The first part of the defense, open to the University community, will consist of the student making a presentation of their research and key findings, followed by an open discussion. The committee chair will then convene a closed meeting consisting solely of the committee. Upon its conclusion the candidate will be notified of the outcome and further discussion may ensue.

Students can invite fellow students, faculty, friends, and family to observe the presentation and participate in the open discussion. However, the presentation and discussion should be treated as serious academic engagements with the candidate's work.

6. Citizenship and scholarly life at Dornsife anthropology

All students are expected to participate in the intellectual life of the university. Each year, there are many opportunities for scholarly and professional development. Students are asked to attend public lectures and events, consistent with fulfilling academic and teaching assignments.

Announcements about events will be circulated and posted by the Department.

6.1. Anthropology Talks and Seminars

Anthropology colloquia and research seminars are typically scheduled for midday Mondays or Wednesdays, but may be scheduled for other times as well. In addition to these presentations, postdoctoral scholars and department affiliates, including doctoral students may be invited to present their work at various points. Students should plan to attend these events, consistent with other course and assignment obligations.

6.2. Professional Development

In addition to professionalization and guidance opportunities offered through USC's PHD Academy (<https://dornsife.usc.edu/phd-academy/>), additional events may be organized throughout the year in consultation with faculty and graduate students in Anthropology. Topics that may be covered include: qualifying exam preparation, job interviewing, prospectus writing, publishing, the Institutional Review Board and human subjects research, meetings of professional associations, and grants. Students are expected to participate in all professional development events organized in affiliation with Anthropology.

6.3. Pedagogy meetings

In addition to completing the required course ANTH 593 Practicum for Teaching in Anthropology, students who are actively teaching, or preparing to teach, are expected to attend any additional departmental meetings regarding pedagogy. The Director of Undergraduate Studies for Anthropology typically coordinates these meetings.

6.4. Doctoral Student Website Profiles

All Anthropology doctoral students may have a profile on the departmental website. For assistance updating and making changes to your bio and/or photo, please contact the Department's Media Technology Specialist, Travis Levasseur (tlevasse@usc.edu) and other administrative staff.

6.5. Academic Integrity

The School of Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity Code, outlined in the *SCampus Student Guidebook*.¹ It is the policy of the Department of Anthropology to report all violations of the code. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the doctoral program.

Because of their special status as role models for undergraduate students and as future professors whose degrees and reputations will be based on their capacity to conduct their own scholarly research, doctoral students are held to the highest standards of academic integrity. It is particularly important that they be aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but themselves.

Direct questions about any of these practices to a faculty member and/or the Anthropology Director of Graduate Studies, Janet Hoskins. More information can be found at the following links:

<https://sjacs.usc.edu/students/academic-integrity/>

<https://sjacs.usc.edu/files/2015/03/GradIntegrity.pdf>

6.6. Office Security

The Office Manager, Olivia Ale, manages access to the Anthropology offices and other departmental spaces. Both the building and the suite front doors are normally unlocked during regular business hours.

¹ <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/>

6.7. Emergency Preparedness

The University Department of Public Safety (DPS) recommends including in your cell phone contacts their emergency number: (213) 740-4321; and registering your contact information with the University's TrojansAlert system to receive texts for emergencies on or near campus. USC Dornsife maintains a business continuity plan.

6.8. Office Common Spaces

The Department controls a conference room (KAP 352A). Administrative scheduling takes precedence over all other requests. Please confirm with our office staff about the availability of the conference rooms before committing a meeting to those spaces. Anthropology office staff maintain an inventory of supplies and equipment. Please dispose of any food related waste in the covered trashcans in the kitchen area.

6.9. Budget and Purchasing

The University operates on a fiscal year from July 1 to June 30. We typically do not know what our modest operational budget will be for the upcoming fiscal year until that fiscal year is about to begin in late June, or after the new fiscal year has begun in early July. Outside of individual research accounts, no one in the Anthropology Department, faculty or staff, can commit the Department to any financial obligation, expense, or reimbursement, except those with express budget authority. Please contact Anthropology Department Office Manager Olivia Ale or the Department Chair, Peter Redfield, with any questions.

6.10. Office Support

A copier and scanner are available for use in the main office. Please consult with administrative staff about any individual research or teaching needs that involve office materials or support. Please understand that our student workers and other administrative staff have work projects and deadlines, and that they are often operating on multiple, concurrent deadlines.

6.11. Campus Resources

- Dornsife College: Campus Resources (a collection of campus resources that includes the office of professionalism and ethics and also well-being and crisis intervention)
- The Graduate School: Please see their FAQs.
- The USC Graduate Student Government provides a Resource Guide.

- For housing options, please see the USC Housing website and the USC Off-Campus Housing Listing website.
- For information about public transportation, please see the USC Transportation website.
- Undergraduate academic integrity issues are handled by the Office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS) and graduate student academic integrity issues at SSI are handled by the Dornsife Dean.
- Center for Excellence in Teaching provides workshops, seminars, conferences, and other resources, including an annual Academic Careers Week.
- SCampus is the University Student Guidebook published each year that provides guidance on the policies and procedures that govern the relationship of students with the University. It is available online.
- For performances and events on campus and around town, check out the calendars for USC Events, USC Ticket Office, USC Visions and Voices, and Ground Zero Performance Café.