

# Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology and Education (Ph.D.)

## Brief Program Description

The Ph.D. program in Anthropology and Education offers a disciplinary approach that carefully explores and contributes to the analysis and understanding of educational processes in schools and classrooms, in families, community centers, in churches and in all settings where education may proceed. The department houses the largest group of anthropologists of education to be found in any university in the world.

## General Program Requirements<sup>†</sup>

### *Minimum point requirement*

Each student develops, in collaboration with his or her advisors, a program of study in anthropology designed to establish a high level of competency. A minimum of 75 points of acceptable graduate credit is required for the Ph.D. These credits may be earned by course work, through independent study, and through guided research.

### *Transfer credit evaluation*

Of the 75 points required for the degree, a maximum of 45 points can be completed through another faculty of Columbia University, or a maximum of 30 points may be transferred or earned in graduate courses from other recognized graduate schools.

### *Examination Credit*

Of the 75 graduate points required for the degree, a minimum of 45 must be taken for evaluative letter grade. With the advisor's approval, course credit not exceeding 9 points may be earned by attendance credit (R grade).

### *Major Courses (45 points)*

These courses prepare students with the requisite knowledge of the epistemological, theoretical, methodological, ethnographic, and substantive areas of anthropology. These courses also aim to develop competency in the discipline while addressing the specific intellectual interests of the student. At least 39 of these points must be in anthropology courses.

At least 15 points of the anthropology requirements must be taken within the program. A minimum of 25 points of the 39 points of the anthropology course requirements must be taken at Teachers College or in other faculties of Columbia University. Up to 15 points in anthropology courses may be taken at other graduate institutions who are members of the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium, to satisfy the major course requirements.

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<sup>†</sup>Note that all students are expected to make themselves familiar with the general requirements from Teachers College and Columbia University regarding their status. They must check that they are in good administrative standing regularly with the Office of Doctoral Studies.

Within the major course requirements, 30 points in required courses must be taken: the four-semester sequence of colloquiums and summer field research, which represents the core training module of the program; two additional research methods courses outside of the first year colloquium (6 points); two area courses, one within and one outside of one's focus (6 points); and two sub-discipline courses outside of sociocultural anthropology (6 points), in linguistics or sociolinguistics.

#### *Foreign Language Requirement*

Both programs in Anthropology and Education and Applied Anthropology require a high level of proficiency in one language other than English.

### Specific Requirements and Typical Course of Study

#### *Specifically required of all students*

- ❑ ITSF 5610 (First Year Colloquium in Applied Anthropology)  
Two-semester sequence to be taken during the student's first year.
- ❑ Ten to twelve weeks of summer field research to be carried out at the end of the student's first year. Up to 6 points in ITSF 6910 Studies in Anthropology and Education may be earned for this research.
- ❑ ITSF 5611 (Second Year Colloquium in Anthropological Method)  
Two-semester sequence to be taken during the student's second year.

#### *Other requirements*

- ❑ *Two area courses:* One ethnography or other course should relate to the regional/cultural focus of the student's dissertation research. The other course should be taken with a regional/cultural focus that complements the previous course but is somewhat different (e.g., highlands focus vs. lowlands focus; different racialized populations; different parts of the same region).
- ❑ *Research Methods courses:* Six points besides the colloquium sequence. These courses should be chosen to provide a thorough grounding in anthropological research methods, such as Introductory Methods of Ethnography and Participant Observation and statistical analysis (can be outside the department):
  - Introduction to Statistical Analysis
  - Probability and Statistical Inference
  - Quantitative Methods

- *Subfield courses*: Two courses in linguistic anthropology or sociolinguistics. Some possible courses include:
  - Language, Cultural Politics, and Education
  - Communication and Culture
  - Language and Its Limits (GSAS)

*Language*: Both programs in Anthropology and Education and Applied Anthropology require a high level of proficiency in one language other than English. This may be demonstrated by fourth-year level course work or by equivalent examination. The programs are committed to the fundamental importance of language skills for anthropological research, whether for gaining access to secondary literatures in a foreign language, to utilize works in other intellectual traditions, or in primary research. Evidence of appropriate language training is now required by granting agencies, and advanced language skills are a requisite for making contributions to many fields of anthropological inquiry. Language training should be considered central to a student's program of graduate training. Language courses are not generally calculated as part of the regular course load, and they do not satisfy the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences requirements for graded courses. First- and second-year students should seek advice from the faculty about gaining advanced proficiency in a principal research language so as to satisfy the program requirement. Thereafter, the dissertation sponsor should be consulted.

- *Electives (30 points)*: These courses can be taken in fields and disciplines that are complementary to the student's academic interests. For example, these courses can be from fields foundational to anthropology (economics, history, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology). Additional courses can be taken to increase competence in comparative, regional, or international studies, or to enhance technical skills. Courses presented in satisfaction of this requirement must be taken for examination credit.

## Advisement and dissertation sponsorship

The programs do not assign an advisor at the time of admissions. Each student meets with the assembled faculty two or three times a year—at registration and at the ends of the first and second years. Students are expected to talk about their interests and plans with all members of the faculty.

By the second year, or after they have completed a third of the total required courses, students are required to ask one of the faculty members to advise them on the organization of their examinations, on the preparation of their proposal, and other matters related to the dissertation process. Normally this faculty member becomes the sponsor of the dissertation. The faculty member

should be chosen on the basis of his or her theoretical, methodological, or area expertise.

As their interests change, students may decide to ask a different faculty member to serve as advisor. This process is relatively informal in the initial stages. By the time the proposal has been accepted and a sponsor has signed on the dissertation, changing this sponsor requires that a formal request be made to the Program Coordinator and the Office of Doctoral Studies so that all involved are made aware of the change.

## Certification as doctoral student, dissertation and completion of program

All students are required to go through the following steps:

### *Comprehensive examinations*

Certification is the means of indicating that the student has attained the expected competencies outlined in the course requirements. The purpose of these examinations is to test the student's ability to deal with basic concepts and issues, and to allow the demonstration of mastery of basic professional literature in the chosen area of specialization. The Advanced Certification Exam consists of three written examinations set by the major advisor who has agreed to work with the student. These examinations generally include applied anthropology, the student's theoretical area, and an ethnographic region of relevance. When these examinations have been deemed satisfactory, the student's proposal is discussed at a meeting that is also an oral examination.

### *Dissertation Proposal*

This oral examination is administered by a committee of two to three members of the faculty and is typically held at the same hearing as the oral component of the certification examinations. Membership on the committee is determined by the sponsor. The semester when the hearing is held, students are required to register for ITSF 7500: Dissertation Seminar in Anthropology. The approval of the dissertation proposal is made official when the student has met the proposal committee members' approval, received their signature on the "Dissertation Proposal Hearing Report" form, and submitted this form to the Program Office and the Office of Doctoral Studies along with a final copy of their proposal, and the IRB approval letter.

### *Other requirements*

Along with the faculty report of the examination and proposal, students are required to file a "Program Plan" with the Office of Doctoral Studies, and establish that they have satisfied the language requirement. Upon administrative review by ODS, the student receives a Master of Philosophy,

which signals a change of status, particularly as it relates to the student's relationship to Columbia University.

*Continuous registration*

The student becomes obligated to register for continuous dissertation advisement (ITSF 8900) until the dissertation has received final approval. The fees can be waived through a variety of means for at least four semesters (e.g. by registering for ITSF 6200: Fieldwork Outside the United States; leaves of absence; etc.)

*Dissertation Field Research*

One to two years of anthropological field research is required for the collection of original field data based on the dissertation research proposal.

*Dissertation*

After completing a period of field research, the student starts writing. This is best done in close contact with the sponsor who determines when drafts are ready to be circulated to other members of the committee. When the sponsor and at least one other committee member deem the dissertation ready, a defense is set. The membership of the final committee is discussed in consultation with the sponsor.