

What is Anthropology?

-the study of humans

Anthropos= human

Logos= word or study of

The study of human kind in all places and across all times

- A holistic approach to understanding human biology, behavior and culture

Very broad anything and everything to do with human and how do they interact with culture, gender and behavior

What does it mean to be human?

- Describes humanness
- How are we different/same as other species
- Make generalizations
- Describes and explains variation

Language, symbolic expression, geological, cultural, tools, biology are all examples of what can make up a culture.

Subfields of Anthropology

- Linguistics
- Archeology
- Biological

Cultural Anthropology- the study of contemplating cultures. (Believes and behaviors)

Methods

- Participant observation
- Ethnographies
- Ethnologies

Archaeology- the study of past human societies

- Material remains and artifacts
- Prehistoric and historic archaeology (historic is written documentation)

Linguistic Anthropology- the study of how language is structured and used by humans

- Origins and acquisition
- Language and culture
- Variation

Biological Anthropology- the study of all aspects of human biology, past and present

Applied Anthropology- using anthropological approaches to solve practical problems

- Health, business, law, cultural resource management, development
- Medical, developmental and urban anthropology

What characteristics distinguish anthropology from other disciplines?

- Expansive and inclusive view of humans (comparative)
 - Cross-cultural and long-term
- Holistic
 - Interested in all aspects of the human condition (bicultural)
- Field-based
- Evolutionary

Culture, holism, relativism and evolution

Significant Concepts in the Discipline:

1) Culture

There is no single definition for the word "culture"

Key Features:

Learned

Enculturation

How?

- Exposure, communication, observation and participation

Widely shared

What is shared?

- Knowledge
- Norms
- Values
- Symbols
- Worldview
- Ways of Acting

To What Degree are these things shared?

- Ideal vs. actual

Dynamic

- What are some agents of change?

Survival mechanism

But...is every aspect of culture beneficial for every member?

Culture is **learned**, **shared** ways of thinking and behaving, **dynamic**, important or **survival**

2) Holism- understanding parts in the context of the whole

a. How do they interact?

3) Relativism- look at beliefs/behaviors within THEIR cultural context (vs. ethnocentrism)

BUT: uneasiness about both