

Social Anthropology: 5 Things to Know

1. What is Social Anthropology?

Social anthropology explores how people and groups shape and are shaped by broad forces of culture, history, and social and political structures. It is unique in its global and comparative approach to cultural diversity in the contemporary world.

2. What do anthropologists do?

Often living with communities of people for an extended period of time, anthropologists generate first-hand accounts of everyday life to see the world through their eyes. Using research methods like observation, interviews, archival research, and media analysis, we challenge common assumptions about cultural difference and the variety of human experience.

3. Sounds good, but what use are these insights?

The perspectives anthropologists gain through long-term fieldwork prepare us to engage with people different from ourselves in this increasingly globalized world. Social anthropology provides important data for community groups, development agencies, and policy-makers and demonstrates that other ways of life are not only possible, but already exist.

4. What kinds of jobs do anthropologists have?

Because anthropologists love learning from and about people, they are good at all kinds of jobs that need “people skills”! Anthropologists work in **development and community agencies, health, government, journalism, research, human resources, and social work, among other fields.** Businesses look for the kinds of insights that anthropological training can supply, too. For example, according to Business Insider (2014), “what customers want from a product and what companies think they want can be totally different, but it can take an anthropological lens to learn why.”

5. Where to start?

Register for our first-year course:

SOSA 1002 – People and Culture:
Introduction to Social Anthropology

Have a question? Email: sosa@dal.ca

Learn more: dal.ca/SOSA



Sociology: 5 Things to Know

1. What is Sociology?

Sociology investigates the processes that are fundamental to how societies work, but that are often invisible or misunderstood. It focuses on how relationships among people shape their experiences.

2. What do sociologists do?

Sociologists unpack and challenge often taken-for-granted ideas about pressing social issues such as the environment, health, crime, inequality, immigration, identity, technology, religion and social change. We conduct research by doing interviews, comparing historical sources, conducting surveys and even analyzing big data.

3. Sounds good, but what use are these insights?

Any attempt to change society, through policy, protest or personal choices, will fail if it doesn't grasp the social relations, patterns and processes that make society what it is. Sociological research produces a crucial evidence base for policy makers and community organizations. Sociological perspectives can be applied to understand social contexts at scales from the global level all the way down to everyday interactions. Because the discipline challenges commonly held assumptions, sociologists are often on the cutting edge of contemporary debates.

4. What kinds of jobs do Sociologists have?

Training in the concepts and research methods of sociology opens up a wide range of career paths. Sociologists work in the fields of **policy analysis, government, health, justice, social services, consulting, marketing, community planning, human resources, and social work, among others**. In many job ads, governmental agencies, research institutes, and business firms list "sociology" as a preferred disciplinary background.

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