Transferable skills and employment

Studying Biological Anthropology provides a broad understanding of the relationship between biological and social variation, and helps develop a range of transferable skills in specific research methods, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, critical thinking, writing and presentation. Recent graduates have gone on to work in health and international development (NGOs), heritage management (museums), wildlife conservation, research (for both scientific and ethical investment firms), politics, journalism, the Civil Service, and both school and university teaching.

Admissions

To apply to study HSPS, you do not need to have studied any particular subject at school. Please note that A Level Biology is not required to study Biological Anthropology. A background in either science or humanities subjects, or a combination of both, will be helpful.

Further details about studying Biological Anthropology at Cambridge can be found at www.bioanth.cam.ac.uk/.

Scan this with a QR reader to find out more

Details of the HSPS course can be found at www.hspscam.ac.uk.

Details are correct at time of printing (March 2012), please refer to the website for the latest information.
Biological Anthropology explores human biology and evolution. With an emphasis on the interaction between biology and culture, it sits firmly between the social and biological sciences. As a result you will have the chance to study, in detail, the place of humans in nature and the origin and pattern of human diversity. This includes our evolutionary history, ecology, adaptations, genetics, behaviour, and human health and disease, throughout the past and among modern societies, with a particular emphasis on how these factors relate to social and behavioural change.

Biological Anthropology has been taught at Cambridge for over 30 years and we have trained professionals who are now working in the field throughout the world. Biological Anthropology is offered through the Human, Social, and Political Sciences (HSPS) course at Cambridge. HSPS offers a wide range of teaching in the complementary subjects of Archaeology, Social Anthropology, Sociology, and Politics and International Relations. This provides a flexible programme which can be tailored to your own specific interests.

Year 1
As part of the HSPS course, you take four introductory papers in your first year. As well as a paper in Biological Anthropology, you will choose three other papers from a range of topics in Archaeology (including options relating to the study of Ancient Near East), Social Anthropology, Sociology, Politics, International Relations, and Psychology. Common choices for those with an interest in Biological Anthropology include Archaeology, Social Anthropology and Psychology, although the range of subjects available opens up a wide range of possibilities.

Year 2
In the second year, there are three core papers which explore broad themes within biological anthropology: humans in a comparative perspective, human evolution, and life history and health. A fourth optional paper is chosen from a range offered in the other HSPS subjects or History and Philosophy of Science.

You can also choose to combine papers in Biological Anthropology with options in either Archaeology or Social Anthropology, as part of special joint pathways.

Year 3
The third year of study in Biological Anthropology emphasises current issues and advanced research methods within the different branches of the subject. Students can also write a dissertation based upon original research as one of their four papers. This research can be based upon laboratory research or original fieldwork.