

HUM203
Introduction to Social Anthropology Lecture Notes

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Chapter 1

What is Anthropology

Anthropology is the study of humankind everywhere throughout time, stemming from Anthro (human) + logos (science of). In a world where most people live in multicultural and multiethnic states, importance of anthropology has increased.

Anthropology asks questions like:

1. Why are humans and cultures similar? (such as most cultures having marriage rituals)
2. Why are humans and cultures different? (such as differences between these rituals)
3. How does societies and cultures change, evolve and adopt.

1.1 Fields of Anthropology

Anthropology looks at the human experience in a broad manner, encompassing different systems of humanity with its psychological, cultural, social, biological and physical aspects. It is divided into fields such as:

- Cultural Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Linguistic Anthropology
- Biological Anthropology

1.1.1 Physical (Biological) Anthropology

The systemic study of humans as biological organisms.

Primatology

Study of non-human primates. From lemurs to gorillas. They study these animals in the wild and in captivity. Primatologists analyse how animals spend their time, how they behave.

Primatologists are concerned about extinction.

Paleoanthropology

Study of human evolution, including hominids.

Contemporary Human Genetic Field

They study the contemporary human genetics and biological makeup across different cultures and population groups.

1.1.2 Archaeology

The study of past human cultures through their material remains. It has two different subfields, pre-historic and historic archeologists. Divided by the time the writing started. The pre-historical archeologists generally define themselves with broad geographic zones.

Archeology may also be subdivided with respect to the specific field they research, such as industrial archeology or such as underwater archeology.

1.1.3 Linguistic Anthropology

The study of human languages, they look at their structure, history and relation to social and cultural contexts, as well its contemporary change. Language is the primary way humans communicate with each other, forming a basis of human cultures.

1.1.4 Cultural Anthropology

The study of customary patterns, thought and feelings, it focus on humans as culture-producing and culture-reproducing creatures. Cultural anthropologists spent time in the culture they research as field work, called *Participant Observation*([?]^{*}).