

Evolutionary Anthropology Society

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Graduate Programs in Evolutionary Anthropology Number 3:
University of California at Davis

This is the third column in a series on graduate programs where training can be obtained in the many theoretical approaches of interest to the members of the Evolutionary Anthropology Society. Please contact me if you have information about an appropriate graduate program or if you would like to submit a piece for the series.

UC Davis's Department of Anthropology divided amicably into two wings, Evolutionary and Sociocultural, during 2001-2002. The faculty decided to divide the department on the basis of the time scale under study, short-term for sociocultural faculty and long-term for evolutionary faculty. The resulting Evolutionary Wing is unusual in that it includes faculty who in other universities might find themselves divided along sub-disciplinary lines. In contrast, an evolutionary perspective with a strong ecological emphasis unites the Wing, whose members variously focus on the study of modern human behavior (Borgerhoff Mulder, McElreath, Winterhalder), primates (Harcourt, Isbell, Rodman), the archaeological record (Bettinger, Darwent, Eerkens), human evolution (McHenry), and genetics (Smith). Students and faculty in the Wing study such diverse topics as the transition to agriculture in China, genetic aspects of the peopling of the New World, biogeography and sexual selection among Sulawesi macaques, and marital strategies among polyandrous communities in Nepal.

Evolutionary Wing students can choose either the Archaeology or the Biological Anthropology track, but they also have other options related to Davis' highly-ranked graduate programs in ecology, evolution and behavior. "Davis is unique in the range of interdisciplinary options that it offers," says Monique Borgerhoff Mulder, Professor of Anthropology, "students can choose to study human behavioral ecology and cultural evolution in a number of different graduate programs." Options outside Anthropology include the Graduate Group in Ecology's area of emphasis in Human Ecology, the Animal Behavior Graduate Group, and the Population Biology Graduate Group. Through these programs, graduate students in Anthropology can take courses from and develop interdisciplinary projects with faculty trained in the disciplines of demography, ecology, economics, environmental science, evolution, human development, political science, and sociology.

In the Human Ecology emphasis, faculty from the departments of Anthropology, Environmental Science and Policy, and Sociology collaborate to offer students four related topical areas of concentration. The *cultural evolution* concentration focuses on the evolution of collective action in general, with special emphasis on the evolution of cooperation in human societies. Some choose to do work in the field of experimental economics. The *human behavioral ecology* concentration adopts a broad-based neo-Darwinian approach to the study of foraging, food production, cooperation, reproduction,

and family and social organization, and emphasizes the importance of both theory and fieldwork. The *cultural ecology* area seeks to extend the work of Julian Steward by empirical research on the relationship between the environment and human knowledge, culture, and institutions. Finally, the *people and conservation* area focuses on the ways in which both individual decision-making and social institutions impact the environment. Current faculty and students affiliated with the Human Ecology area of emphasis study food-sharing and market participation in the Ecuadorian Amazon, and social learning and cultural evolution in East Africa.

The Animal Behavior Graduate Group emphasizes adaptive and evolutionary aspects of animal behavior. Students in this program study a wide range of animal species using a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches. While most students in this program are biologists, anthropologists usually join it to focus on the behavior of non-human primates (resources include the California Regional Primate Research Center) or to study human behavior using methods and models which are more typically applied to non-humans. Current and former anthropology students in the Animal Behavior Group have studied subjects such as primate interactions with non-primate taxa in sub-Saharan Africa, and human dispersal patterns in relation to resource and marriage opportunities in colonial Massachusetts.

Finally, students choosing to join the Population Biology Graduate Group can specialize in many areas including population growth and dynamics, competition and predation, life-history strategies, quantitative genetics, and biogeography.

Recent Davis Ph.D.s are employed in a variety of positions, primarily in academia. Several have faculty positions at schools such as Emory U, the U of Montana, and the U of Toronto. Others have obtained postdoctoral fellowships at institutions such as Brown University's Population Studies and Training Center and UC Santa Barbara's National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis. Still others have gone on to work in their area of expertise doing, for example, ecological anthropology work for the Wildlife Conservation Society in Tanzania.

"In short," comments Borgerhoff Mulder, "we are growing fast, [and] we offer a wide range of options for study" including "enormous supporting resources in the biological sciences." More than this, however, she emphasizes that the department's "warm, integrative environment" provides an ideal place for graduate study.

Contributions to this column are welcomed and may be sent to Mary Shenk, University of Washington, Department of Anthropology, Box 353100, Seattle, WA 98195-3100 or to mshenk@u.washington.edu. Suggestions of or details on graduate programs related to the interests of the Evolutionary Anthropology Society are especially requested.