

Unit 2 of the provided material focuses on the sub-fields of anthropology

1. Anthropology is divided into four major subfields:

**physical/biological anthropology**

**archeology**

**linguistic anthropology, and**

**socio-cultural anthropology**

### **Sub-fields of Anthropology**

- **Archaeological Anthropology:** This subfield focuses on studying the human past through the excavation and analysis of material remains<sup>34</sup>.
- **Linguistic Anthropology:** This area studies human language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice in its social and cultural context, across space and time<sup>56</sup>. It explores language variation, structure, and its relation to culture<sup>7</sup>.
  - Linguistic anthropology includes structural/descriptive linguistics, historical linguistics, ethno-linguistics, and socio-linguistics<sup>89</sup>.
- **Socio-Cultural Anthropology:** This field studies the social and cultural lives of contemporary human societies<sup>1011</sup>. It is concerned with the human relations, symbolic/non-material and material lives of living peoples<sup>11</sup>.
  - Socio-cultural anthropology includes ethnography (fieldwork-based study of a particular community) and ethnology (cross-cultural comparison of different societies)<sup>11</sup>.
- **Physical/Biological Anthropology:** This branch focuses on the biological aspects of human beings, including human evolution and modern human variation<sup>1213</sup>.
  - It includes sub-fields such as paleoanthropology, primatology, and human genetics<sup>1415</sup>.
  - Research in this subfield also examines the origins of humankind and how human populations have adapted to their varying environments, including an examination of the concept of race<sup>1416</sup>.

### **Key Topics in Physical/Biological Anthropology**

- **Human Evolution:** This involves the study of the gradual processes of simple forms into more differentiated structures in hominids, using fossil records and studies of primates to understand the origins and development of human species<sup>1517</sup>.
  - The fossil record preserves evidence of past life on Earth, tracing a progression of simple one-celled organisms to increasingly diverse forms<sup>18</sup>.
  - The theory of evolution by natural selection is an important concept, involving replication, variation, and selection<sup>1819</sup>.

● **Human physical variation:** Physical anthropologists study the origins and meaning of human diversity<sup>16</sup>.

○ This involves the study of human adaptation to different environments, including the role of skin color as an adaptation to sunlight and vitamin D production<sup>2021</sup>.

○ Physical anthropologists explore the concept of race and have found that there are geographical based genetic differences within the human species, but that these differences are not biologically significant. The term "ancestry" is often preferred to "race" in contemporary physical anthropology<sup>2223</sup>.

**Interdisciplinary nature:** The four sub-disciplines bridge the natural sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences and they touch virtually every aspect of human existence<sup>2425</sup>.

**Humanity:** Anthropology is called "a mirror of humanity"<sup>26</sup>. It explores the commonalities and variations among humans<sup>2627</sup>. The concept of "humanity" refers to the human species (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) and it is understood in light of both biological and cultural factors and evolution