Social and Cultural Anthropology

What is Social and Cultural Anthropology?
Social and Cultural Anthropology is the ultimate social science. It is the study of how societies around the world function and develop. Ask yourself:

- Are you fascinated by other cultures?
- Are you interested in the ways in which people express themselves?
- Do you ever feel that society is more complex than it first seems?
- Do you notice little details about people which others don't?

Then anthropology might be perfect for you.

In three sentences, why should I study it?
1. Learning to study another society makes you a better historian, geographer and psychologist; in fact it develops ALL your subjects
2. It allows you to study far a broader range of material than any other subject
3. It allows you to choose your field of study.

In other words....
Studying anthropology makes your progress in other subjects stronger because it teaches you to ask better questions. Anthropologists are interested in people everywhere — in factory workers in Dagenham, Goths in Berlin, communities in the Amazon, government officials in Papua New Guinea. In all these cases, anthropologists are interested in how society works, how people live, their beliefs, customs, ideas, religions, myths, prejudices and aspirations. Anthropology is unapologetically and without doubt the broadest and most global subject you can study.

Skills you will develop
We ask questions about all types of societies throughout the spectrum of complexity, from the hunter gather tribes to the busiest chatroom, anthropologists observe how societies work and repair themselves. Anthropology teaches you the skill of asking new questions — from one perspective society might seem quite structured and organised, however anthropologists ask different and often difficult questions and we often find that beneath that superficial idea of structure there are very powerful forces at work.

You will also develop the skills of presenting complex material in a variety of formats, becoming proficient in a tutorial structure, report writing and lateral thinking. These are significant skills which will make you excel at interviews and attain the highest levels in your IBDP.

Opportunities for trips and further study
Anthropologists study the world and from day one of your course, we will encourage you to develop an anthropological vision and then to undertake a time of participation-observation fieldwork. You can tie this in with The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award or CAS or something entirely different. Wherever you want to go and whatever you want to do, we will encourage you to attain your goal. We hope you will be keen to share your insights and learning with other members of the school and will enjoy the links we set up with other schools around the world.

Higher Education & Career opportunities
Social and Cultural Anthropology is a wonderful subject to study at university and to pursue a career in but it is equally enjoyable simply as your Group 3 subject choice even if you intend to study something quite different at university.

Studying anthropology teaches people to think critically about their own society — to see it in relation to the many other cultures and societies in the world and to understand how it is continually evolving. Anthropology gives people a broad knowledge about the world, about global politics, economic development, cultures and beliefs and an understanding of the realities of life in many countries. This isn’t just useful for becoming a professional anthropologist! People with anthropology degrees have gone on to work in education, in government, advertising, NGOs, charities, museums, and TV.
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IB Social and Cultural Anthropology (Higher and Standard Level)

Syllabus Part 1: What is anthropology? (SL and HL) Core terms and ideas in anthropology, the construction and use of ethnographic accounts, methods and data collection

Syllabus Part 2: Social and cultural organisation (SL and HL) e.g. conformity and nonconformity, social and group identity (ethnicity and race, nationality, class, age), ritual (for example, rites of passage), social movements (environmental movements, human and cultural rights, indigenous movements), population movement (migration, forced removal, refugees), colonialism and post-colonialism

These strands are studied through eight themes: individuals, groups and society; societies and cultures in contact; kinship as an organising principle; political organisation; economic organisation and the environment; systems of knowledge; belief systems and practices; moral systems. All eight themes are studied through the wide range of cultures we look at.

Syllabus Part 3: Observation and critique exercise (SL only). An observation and the production of a written report from field notes.

Syllabus Part 4: Contemporary theoretical perspectives in anthropology (HL only)

Syllabus Part 5: A piece of fieldwork and the production of a report (HL only). Fieldwork can be undertaken in the UK or abroad.

External Assessment
(3 hours) 80%

Paper 1, (1 hour) Three compulsory questions based on an unseen text. HL 20% SL 30%

Paper 2, (2 hours) Two of ten questions based on part 2 of the syllabus. HL 35% SL 50%

Paper 3, (1 hour) One of five questions on theoretical perspectives. HL 20%

Internal Assessment
HL 25% SL 20%

A report on fieldwork (HL) or an observation plus a report and a critique (SL).

Course Specific Objectives
The aims of all subjects in group 3, individuals and societies are to:

1. Encourage the systematic and critical study of: human experience and behaviour; physical, economic and social environments; and the history and development of social and cultural institutions
2. Develop in the student the capacity to identify, to analyse critically and to evaluate theories, concepts and arguments about the nature and activities of the individual and society
3. Enable the student to collect, describe and analyse data used in studies of society, to test hypotheses, and to interpret complex data and source materials.
4. Promote the appreciation of the way in which learning is relevant to both the culture in which the student lives, and the culture of other societies
5. Develop an awareness in the student that human attitudes and opinions are widely diverse and that a study of society requires an appreciation of such diversity
6. Enable the student to recognize that the content and methodologies of the subjects in group 3 are contestable and that their study requires the toleration of uncertainty.

The aims of the social and cultural anthropology course at SL and HL are to enable students to:

1. Explore principles of social and cultural life and characteristics of societies and cultures
2. Develop an awareness of historical, scientific and social contexts within which social and cultural anthropology has developed
3. Develop in the student a capacity to recognize preconceptions and assumptions of their own social and cultural environments
4. Develop an awareness of relationships between local, regional and global processes and issues.

How the course is taught
The course is taught by one or two teachers over nine lessons in a two week cycle. Homework is set according to the school policies and students are expected to read independently and research beyond the stated homework. Students are expected to engage fully in lessons and be resourceful and committed to intellectual enquiry. Students may complete their extended essay in social and cultural anthropology.

Preparatory Work
While there are no formal entry requirements for the subject, a small reading list will be given to students before they enter the subject, summer work is set prior to the course which will help orientate the students to the material.