

Medical Anthropology

Overview

The Department of Anthropology at UC Berkeley and the Graduate Group in Anthropology at the University of California, San Francisco currently offer a joint PhD in medical anthropology. Students may apply to enter the program through either the Berkeley or the San Francisco campus, but not to both. The point of entry determines the student's home base during the program. Financial aid, primary advising, and other routine services are provided by the campus through which the student enters the program. All students, however, benefit by taking required course work on both campuses and by the participation of the faculty on both sides of the program on all qualifying examinations and on the doctoral dissertation committees. The degree is the same and bears the name of both campuses.

Medical anthropology entails the exploration of humans as simultaneously physical and symbolic beings in both contemporary and evolutionary contexts. As such, medical anthropology participates in anthropology as a whole, encompassing theory and practice from sociocultural, psychological, biological, biocultural, symbolic, and linguistic anthropology. It is concerned with questions of both theoretical and applied significance, and with research that is of relevance to the social sciences, as well as to medicine and the biological sciences. Courses in bioevolutionary dimensions of disease are accompanied by seminars that explore pain, suffering, madness, and other human afflictions as a social language speaking to the critically sensitive or contradictory aspects of culture and social relations. Anthropological epidemiology asks the questions, "*Who* gets sick with what ailments?" (differential risks, forms of medical knowledge, and medical systems) and "*Why*?" (what social arrangements, cultural features, and biotechno-environmental forces account for these risks). Medical anthropology interprets individuals as actively constructing their medical realities and not simply adjusting to or coping with them.

Given the broad definition of medical anthropology, the joint graduate program at Berkeley-UCSF is extremely flexible, allowing for the individual needs and interests of each student. During the first year of training, students are required to take core courses in both sociocultural and biological aspects of medical anthropology, taught at both campuses. After the first year and successful completion of the preliminary qualifying examination, medical anthropology students develop a more specialized and individually tailored program under the supervision and guidance of their adviser.

For students entering Berkeley with a BA, the doctoral program is estimated to take between five and six years: three years of course work, one to two years of dissertation research, and one to two years of writing the dissertation.

For a complete list of faculty, consult the Medical Anthropology brochure available at the Program Office in 232 Anthropology and Art Practice Building, Berkeley, CA 94720-3710, the Anthropology website (<https://anthropology.berkeley.edu/people/>), or the UCSF catalogs.

Applications to all graduate programs are considered once each year for admission the following fall semester. The application period opens in early September, and the deadline for receipt of both department and Graduate Division applications is early December. Applications are screened by the anthropology faculty; selections are made on the basis

of academic excellence, letters of recommendation, relevant experience, and a strong statement of intellectual and professional purpose.

The minimum requirement for admission to the Berkeley doctoral program in anthropology and in medical anthropology is a BA. The UCSF program in medical anthropology requires a master's degree in anthropology or a related discipline, or a postbaccalaureate professional degree.

Undergraduate Program

While there is no undergraduate major or minor in Medical Anthropology, undergraduate courses in the field of Medical Anthropology are regularly offered by the faculty. See the course catalogue for details.

Graduate Program

Medical Anthropology (<https://guide.berkeley.edu/archive/2024-25/graduate/degree-programs/medical-anthropology/>): PhD