

Retreat Report July 21, 2008
Department of Anthropology

Chair Elliot Fratkin

Retreat Date January 24, 2008

Location: White Horse Farm Conway MA (residence of Don Joralemon and Phoebe Porter)

Departmental faculty in attendance:

Fernando Armstrong-Fumero, Ruchi Chaturvedi, Elliot Fratkin, Suzanne Gottschang, Donald Joralemon.

Outside guests(s)/speaker(s) in attendance:

None

Goals for the retreat:

1. Curriculum:
 - Review and revise requirements for majors.
 - New course ideas acknowledging two new hires and two senior retirements.
2. Faculty-Student relations: Anthropology Club, student interactions; build anthropology alumnae list for contacts and networks.
3. Faculty-faculty interactions: seminar series, collaboration with area studies and other programs.

Outcomes

Revised requirements for majors to include a) 200 level theory course, b) a new colloquium on anthropological thinking and methodology, and c) the requirement of foreign language or quantitative competency for majors.

Plans to achieve outcomes: Proposal to CAP (see addendum below).

How do your plans advance departmental goals as outline in midterm or decennial reports? Improved integration of theory and methods, developed thinking on study abroad opportunities, building network for post-graduate contacts. We have also gained a .5 FTE in Latin American Archeology as a shared Five Colleges position.

How does the departmental/program plan tot integrate the list of intellectual capacities into the major: For instance, are specific capacities such as writing, speaking or quantitative skills developed in particular courses, or a series of courses?

Proposed new colloquium on Anthropological Thinking and Methods, and a 200 level theory course.

Of the specific curricular goals identified by the faculty which would be furthered within the Major (see page 8 of the Smith catalog for further examples_

- **Develop the ability to thin critically and analytically and to convey knowledge and understand**
- **Develop historical and comparative perspectives**

- **Become and informed global citizen**

All of the above.

Has the department integrated the development of student research abilities in the structure of the major? For instance, is there an information literacy program in place for students who major in the department? Is there a research methods course recommended for your majors (either in your department or another one)? If so, when in the student's career does she take this course?

The Department already has a requirement for seniors to take a research focused seminar. We also discussed Honors thesis and research included in other courses, which are well established.

Are the pathways through the major clear for prospective majors? Is the department satisfied with the level of advance work accomplished by its majors? (It may be useful to review the transcripts of graduating majors, or to examine the course taken patterns of several recent groups of senior majors.)

We have had in place a 100-200-300 trajectory. We are implementing a 200 level Theory requirement and 200 level colloquium embracing research methodologies.

What are the culminating or capstone experiences for students in your major?

A 300 level research seminar which must be taken at Smith is required for majors.

Please attach a summary of any proposed changes to be considered by the department and any associated timeline for changes to be submitted to CAP.

To: Members of the Committee on Academic Priorities
From: The Department of Anthropology, Elliot Fratkin (Chair)
RE: Proposal to change Requirements for Anthropology major and minor.
Date: February 18, 2008

Following our department retreat on January 24, 2008, the Department of Anthropology proposes the following changes to our requirements for the major. Our justification follows the new description of requirements

The Major in Anthropology

Current Requirements:

1) Eight (8) courses in anthropology including:

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (ANT 130), one course designated or approved as “theory intensive” (TI), one course designated or approved as “methods intensive” (MI), and a Smith anthropology seminar.

2) Three (3) that may be in anthropology or in related fields.

3) In addition, students are strongly encouraged to study a language spoken in the geographic region of her interest.

No changes to the following:

Students majoring in anthropology are encouraged to consider an academic program abroad during their junior year. In the past, majors have spent a term or year in India, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Scotland, Ecuador, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Nepal. Students planning to spend the junior year abroad should take at least one but preferably two courses in anthropology during the sophomore year. Students should discuss their study abroad plans with advisers, particularly if they wish to do a special studies or senior thesis upon their return.

Majors interested in archaeology or physical anthropology may take advantage of the excellent resources in these two areas at the University of Massachusetts or enroll in a fieldwork program at a training university during their junior year.

Proposed Requirements:

- 1) Eight (8) courses in anthropology including: “Introduction to Cultural Anthropology” (130), “History of Anthropology Theory” (233), “Colloquium in Anthropology” (200) preferably taken in the sophomore year, and a Smith anthropology seminar (300 level).
- 2) Three (3) courses that may be in anthropology, in related fields, language, mathematical, or science courses.
- 3) Students must show either a) competency in a foreign language through four semesters of college or equivalent, or b) two courses in a mathematical (M) and/or natural science (N) category above the 100 level, chosen in consultation with the student’s advisor. A

maximum of two language courses or quantitative/science courses may count towards the three related courses category for the major.

The Minor in Anthropology

Current Requirements: Six (6) courses in anthropology, including 130, and a Smith anthropology seminar. Minors are encouraged to include either a theory or methods intensive course.

Proposed Requirements:

Six (6) courses in anthropology including “Introduction to Cultural Anthropology” (130).

Justification for changes:

The Anthropology Department believes that the 100, 200, and 300 sequence of courses is a strong model for our majors, with ANT 130 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology providing a basis to the major, and a required seminar (300 level) offering a capstone experience focusing on independent research. In response to initiatives at the college and changes in the staffing of our department, we wish to make several changes to our major and minor programs.

1) We will no longer offer or require ‘Theory-Intensive’ (TI) and ‘Methods Intensive’ (MI) courses. Our new requirement will include ANT 233 History of Anthropological Theory, and a proposed 200-level “Colloquium in Anthropological Analysis and Practice.” Both courses will be offered every year.

2) The “Colloquium in Anthropology Analysis and Practice” will be open only to majors and will preferably be taken in the sophomore year. This course will focus on critical reading and writing skills, research skills and methods.

3) Because anthropology engages critically with the study of cultures and human populations throughout the world, we are introducing a set of two requirement tracks that contribute to the practice of our discipline in the larger world. The first option (a) is second year college level proficiency in a foreign language. This requirement serves to encourage students to study and work in foreign language speaking communities, both in undergraduate and post-graduate contexts. The second track (b) is intended for those students who wish to concentrate in biological anthropology or archeology, and requires two courses above the 100 level that carry the liberal arts designation of M (Mathematics and Analytic Philosophy) or N (Natural Science) in the Smith Catalogue. These courses could include statistics, mathematical economics, chemistry, geology, or biological sciences, and would substitute for foreign language proficiency. The fulfillment of these requirements would be made in consultation with a student’s faculty advisor. Both language courses and M/N courses taken in college would count towards the category of “three (3) related courses.”

We believe these changes will better guide our students through the major. It assists them in developing knowledge of the discipline through such requirements as History of Anthropological Theory, research and writing skills in the proposed Colloquium, deeper engagement with other cultures through language study and/or quantitative skills. Further, the sequence of courses, from Introduction to Cultural Anthropology in the first or second year, the colloquium on research

skills in the second year, and language requirement will better prepare the significant numbers of our majors who study abroad during their junior year.