

Social Anthropology
at Edinburgh

Study
Social Anthropology
at a world-leading
university.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of Social and
Political Science

Welcome to the School of Social and Political Science

The School of Social and Political Science is one of the leading schools of social science in the UK and we pride ourselves on our innovative teaching, lively community of staff and students, and pursuit of academic excellence.

Our research is world class and it informs and shapes our teaching. As one of our students, you will enjoy a challenging, rich and rewarding learning environment, as well as the opportunity to engage in the most current debates from the start of your studies.

The School of Social and Political Science brings together specialists in a wide range of disciplines and is also home to many research centres and groups.

Our school is a vibrant and intellectually stimulating place to study, which will provide you with an education enriched with insights from across the social and political sciences and beyond.

Why Edinburgh?

World-class reputation

The University of Edinburgh is one of the world's leading universities. We are consistently ranked amongst the 50 best universities in the world, which allows us to attract some of the brightest academics, and students. This means that you'll be among high-achieving individuals, experiencing the best teaching and research in the field.

Invest in your future

Choose to study at Edinburgh and you'll be investing in an education that will support you to build a successful future. We help students to develop a broad range of skills, grow in confidence and learn more about themselves

As a result, employers regard Edinburgh as an excellent training ground for high-flyers and value our graduates for their intellectual ability and the attributes they're able to develop while studying with us.

Draw upon the expertise of leading researchers

Joining one of the UK's leading centres for the study of anthropology, you'll draw upon the expertise of researchers who are international leaders in their field. Under their tutelage you'll develop a broad knowledge of the major fields of social and cultural anthropology, you'll explore social and cultural contexts, institutions, processes and ideas, and you'll develop your own practical research skills by taking the opportunity to spend up to four months on an individual research project either within the UK or abroad.

Flexibility and choice

The study of Social Anthropology offers a flexible structure which gives you the opportunity to tailor your degree to suit your own individual interests and career goals.

A supportive environment

Student support is embedded within the School and you will have a named contact to guide you through university life. There are also a number of student peer-learning opportunities in place to ensure you always feel supported.

What is Social Anthropology and who is it for?

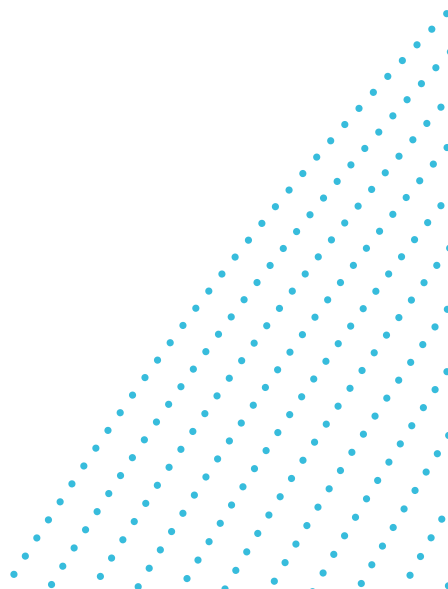
Social Anthropology is the comparative study of human conduct and thought in social contexts. Societies around the world vary enormously in their social, cultural and political forms, and their individual members display an initially overwhelming diversity of ideas and behaviour.

The systematic study of these variations, and the common humanity that underlies them and allows us to understand them, lies at the heart of Social Anthropology. The subject matter overlaps to some extent with that of Sociology, Human Geography and Development Studies, and is also closely linked to History and Philosophy.

Most students study Social Anthropology on its own as a single honours degree, but it can also be combined with the following subjects as part of a joint honours degree:

Arabic, Archaeology, Law, Linguistics, Persian, Politics, Social Policy, or Sociology.

Students can also study Social Anthropology as a pathway on the Sustainable Development programme, where they will research how sustainability relates to the natural world.





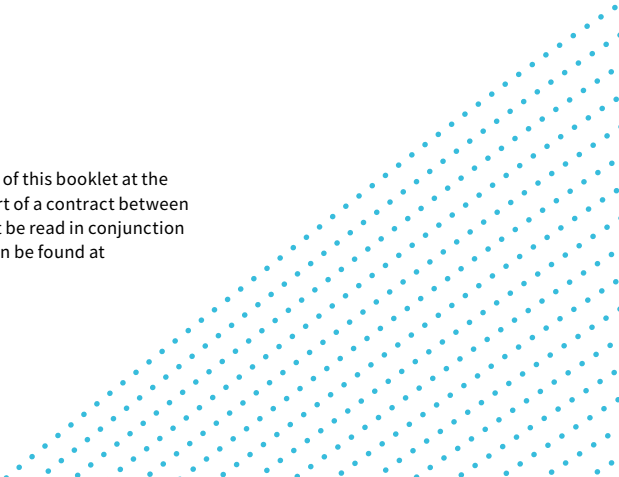
What you'll typically study

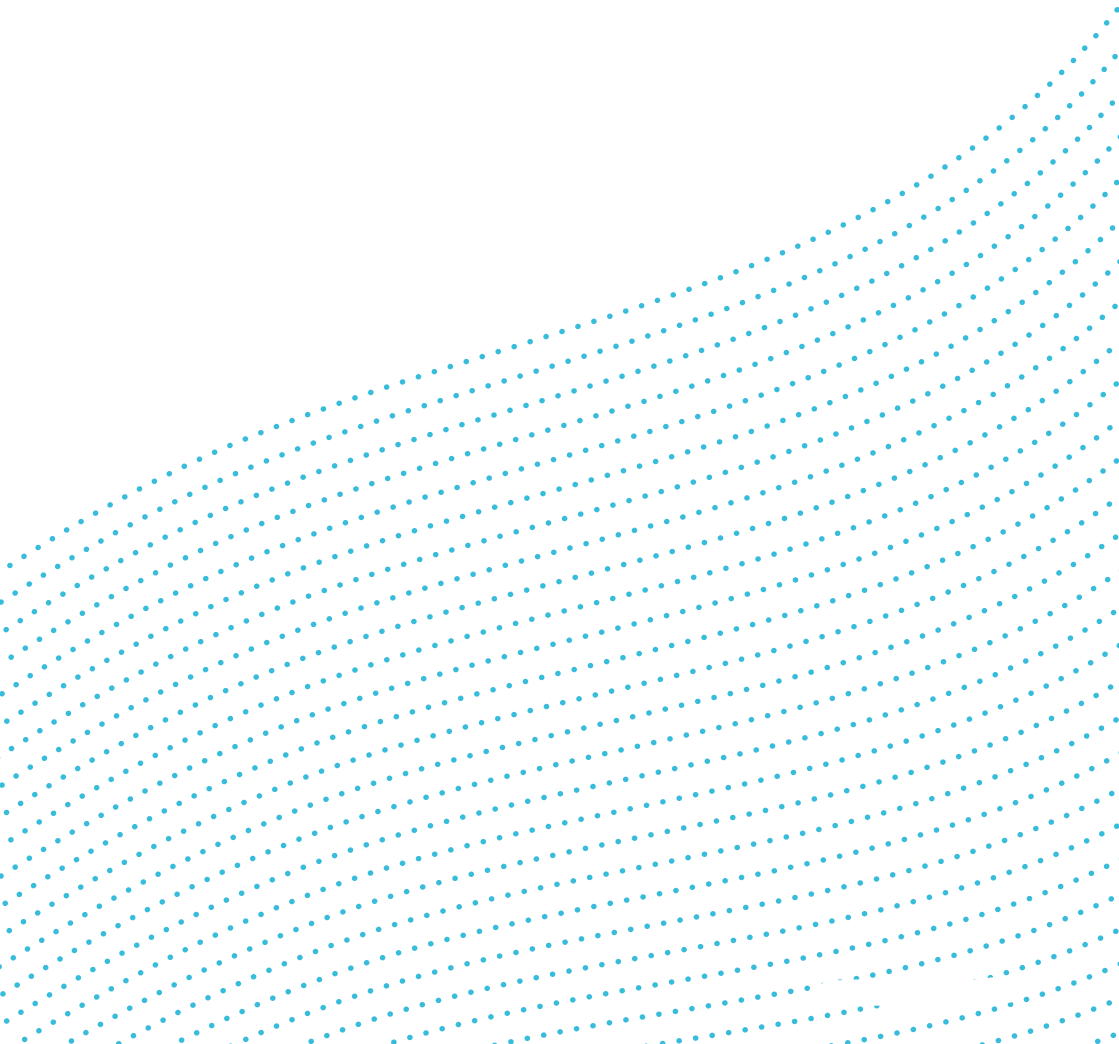
You will take a broad range of courses in years one and two and have the opportunity to specialise in your final two years. As part of your studies you will spend up to four months on an individual research project that will form the basis of your dissertation.

Our degrees are ideal for those who would like to work in roles that are international or cross-cultural in scope or which are underpinned by social values.

Fieldwork is an integral part of a Social Anthropology degree, so you'll have the opportunity to carry out your own research and fieldwork in the UK or abroad, spending up to four months on your own individual research project.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this booklet at the time of going to press. However, it will not form part of a contract between the University and a student or applicant and must be read in conjunction with the individual degree specifications, which can be found at www.drps.ed.ac.uk





MA (Hons) Social Anthropology

YEAR 1

- Social Anthropology 1a: The Life Course
- Social Anthropology 1b: Anthropology Matters
- Four further semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 2

- Social Anthropology 2: Key Concepts
- Ethnography: Theory and Practice
- Four further semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 3

- Anthropological Theory
- Consumption, Exchange, Technology
- Kinship: Structure and Process
- Ritual and Religion
- Imagining Anthropological Research (a dissertation preparation course)
- Two further semester-long courses from a list of Social Anthropology specialisation courses

YEAR 4

- Dissertation
- Culture and Power
- Three further semester-long courses from a list of Social Anthropology specialisation courses

MA (Hons) Social Anthropology and Politics

YEAR 1

- Politics and International Relations 1A
- Politics and International Relations 1B
- Political Thinkers
- Social Anthropology 1A: The Life Course
- Social Anthropology 1B: Anthropology Matters
- One further semester-long course in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 2

- Social Anthropology 2: Key Concepts
- Ethnography: Theory and Practice
- Comparative Politics in a Globalised World
- Three further semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 3

- A core Social Anthropology year three course and a core Politics year three course
- Imagining Anthropological Research (a dissertation preparation course)
- Four further semester-long courses from a list of Social Anthropology and Politics specialisation courses

YEAR 4

- Dissertation in Social Anthropology or Politics
- Four further semester-long courses

MA (Hons) Social Anthropology and Social Policy

YEAR 1

- Social Policy and Society
- Politics of the Welfare State
- Social Anthropology 1A: The Life Course
- Social Anthropology 1B: Anthropology Matters

YEAR 2

- Social Anthropology 2: Key Concepts
- Ethnography: Theory and Practice
- Comparative Social Policy: Global Perspectives
- Evidence, Politics and Policy
- Two further semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 3

- Analytical Perspectives in Social Policy
- A core Social Anthropology year three course
- Imagining Anthropological Research (a dissertation preparation course) OR a core Social Policy Research Design course
- Four further semester-long courses from a list of Social Anthropology and Social Policy courses

YEAR 4

- Dissertation in Social Anthropology or Social Policy
- Four further semester-long courses from a list of Social Anthropology and Social Policy courses

MA (Hons) Social Anthropology with Development

YEAR 1

- Social Anthropology 1A: The Life Course
- Social Anthropology 1B: Anthropology Matters
- Four further semester-long course in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 2

- Social Anthropology 2: Key Concepts
- Ethnography: Theory and Practice
- International Development, Aid and Humanitarianism
- Three further semester-long courses in outside subjects of your choice

YEAR 3

- Two semester-long Social Anthropology courses
- Social Development
- Imagining Anthropological Research (a dissertation preparation course)
- Three further semester-long courses in Social Anthropology and Development-related courses

YEAR 4

- Dissertation (with a Development-related theme)
- Culture and Power
- Two semester-long courses from a list of Social Anthropology courses
- Two semester-long courses from a list of Humanities courses

Summary of Social Anthropology courses

Social Anthropology 1A: The Life Course is intended as an introduction to Social Anthropology – taking as its central theme and organising structure the life course from birth to death, conceived in very broad terms. As well as encompassing life crisis moments and rituals of birth, marriage and death, the course includes such themes as gender, personhood, work and making a living, the house, consumption and exchange, health, and the body.

Social Anthropology 1B: Anthropology Matters examines how the subject's driving concepts and ideas can enlighten debates that are central to how societies work. Each week will include two sessions exploring a single issue and anthropological contributions to debates relating to that issue. The issues explored will vary from year to year, examples including climate change, hunger, wellbeing, body modification and human rights.

Social Anthropology 2: Key Concepts provides a historical overview of anthropological thought and will be taught through an introduction to keywords that have helped to shape the development of Social Anthropology. The thematic approach is designed to be engaging and stimulating to students and to help foster critical, conceptual and theoretical skills. It will highlight the continued significance of key concepts and oppositions over time.

Ethnography: Theory and Practice introduces students to the theory and practice of ethnographic fieldwork. At the heart of this course is a collaborative project in which students will learn about qualitative methods by putting them to the test in practical group work. Their collective ethnographies will require them to write extensive field notes, which will be assessed, and during which students will learn to write effectively in an academic manner.

Anthropological Theory aims to give a broad outline of how anthropologists use theory in their work, and how we can apply theory for ourselves to gain a better understanding of society and culture.

Consumption, Exchange, Technology discusses how goods are produced, circulated and consumed, and how these three fundamental processes of social life and reproduction are mediated by technology.

Kinship: Structure and Process examines some of the ways in which people in different societies experience and conceptualise their relationships. It shows how notions of relatedness are linked to ideas about gender, theories of procreation (which are themselves changing under the impact of new reproductive technologies), and understandings of bodily substance, as well as having profound emotional, economic, and political salience.



Ritual and Religion looks at anthropological contributions to the understanding of ritual and religion, starting and ending with moments of especially acute reflection on the place of religion in the contemporary world.

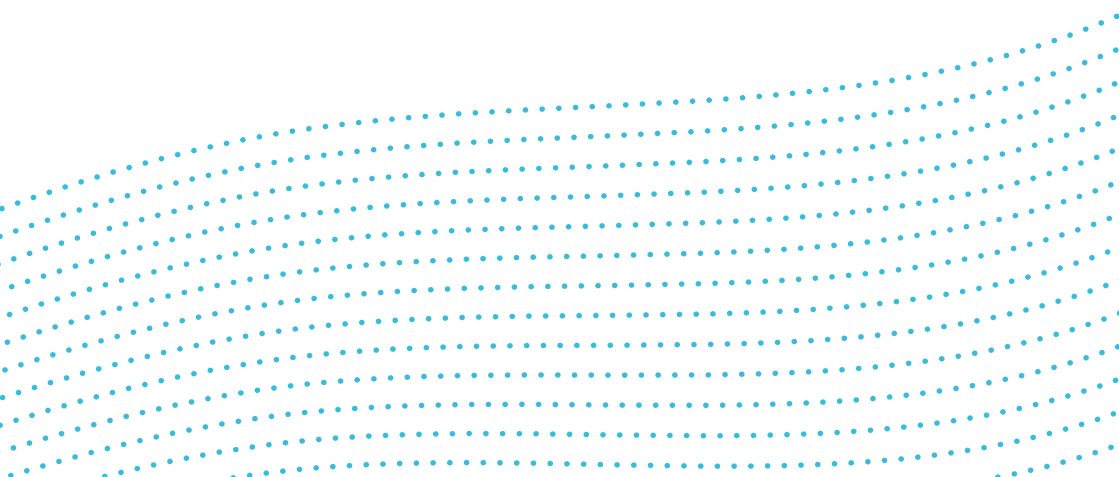
Culture and Power introduces a range of anthropological approaches to politics. It provides a detailed examination of both open and hidden forms of power and their workings at the global, state, national, community and personal level.

Imagining Anthropological Research is only intended for students who are planning to work on a dissertation in Social Anthropology. The main purpose of the course is to prepare you to write your dissertation proposal. The aim is to help you imagine what will be involved in your fieldwork or library project. To do so we shall be looking at the process of research, from the design stage, through to the methodologies and to the writing strategies, always within the context of what is possible in an undergraduate dissertation.

Additional honours options in Social Anthropology

Our honours options vary from year to year. Here are some examples of what you could study:

- Anthropology of Health and Healing
- Happiness: Cross-Cultural Perspectives
- The Anthropology of Death
- Contagion
- Latin American Anthropology
- The Anthropology of Africa
- Anthropology and Environment
- Anthropology of Violence
- Anthropology of Sex and Reproduction
- Magic, Science and Healing
- Visual Anthropology
- Anthropology of Games and Play
- Demystifying Money



Teaching

We use a variety of teaching methods including lectures, tutorials, workshops, seminars and online activities.

In years one and two teaching is principally by lectures, weekly small group tutorials and use of video material. Assessment is by a combination of course work, including project work, and a formal examination in the summer. In years three and four teaching is done through a mixture of lectures, student presentations, participatory activities of various kinds, and small group discussions.

Core courses are assessed by examinations at the end of each year, and optional courses through written essays and other course work. In years one and two class sizes tend to be large because our courses are popular across the University. In years three and four classes are smaller, ranging from 10 to 60 students.

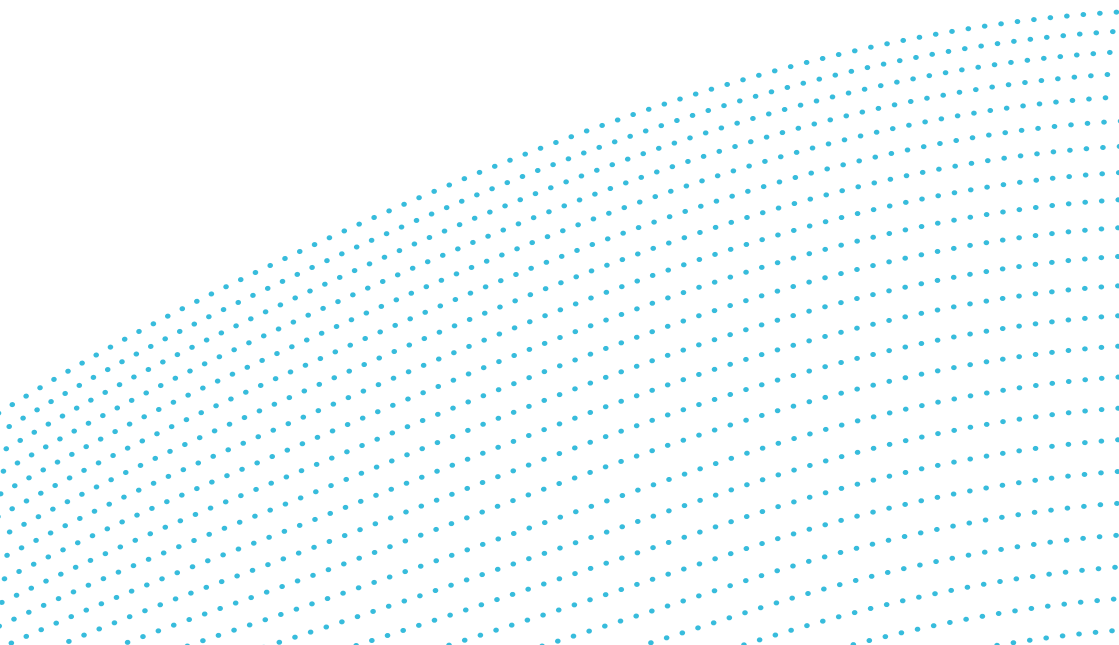
Study Abroad

The most distinctive feature of our degrees is the fieldwork research project you will be required to conduct in year three.

Students have a unique opportunity to engage in original anthropological research, which may be library based, but for most students involves fieldwork either in Britain or overseas. This takes place in the second semester of year three and the following summer vacation.

Many students find this the most rewarding aspect of their degree, and the skills acquired are invaluable assets when they look for employment after graduation.

Students can apply for a small bursary to fund fieldwork expenses.



Careers

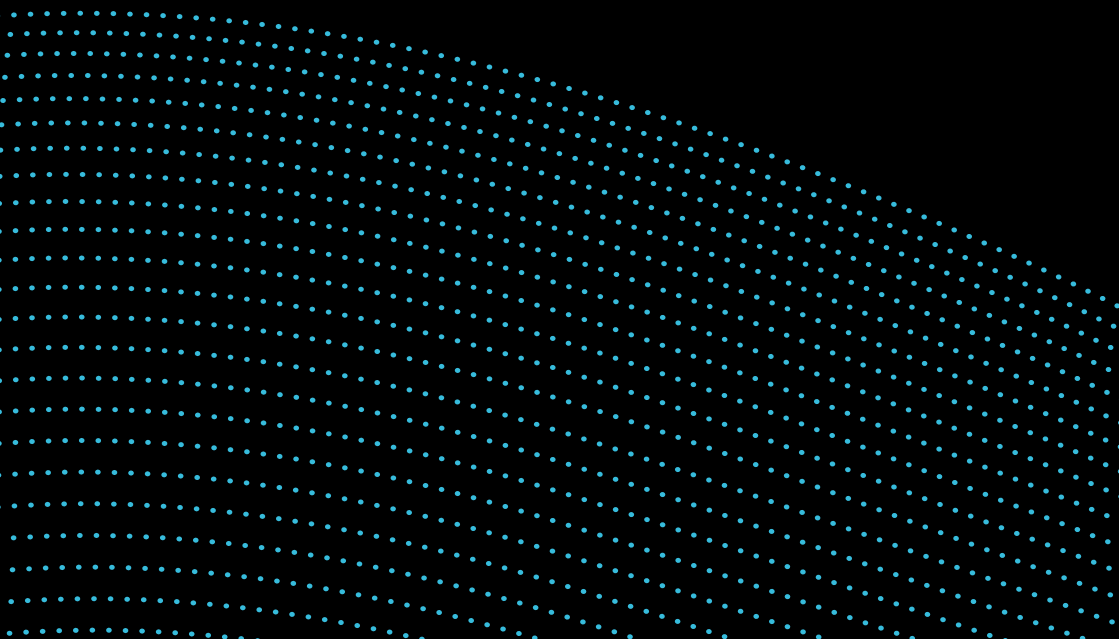
A degree in the social sciences provides the knowledge, analytical and communication skills that employers require. Our Careers Service will help you plan for the future and provide advice and guidance with the job application process.

Six months after graduating over 90 per cent of our students are in employment or postgraduate study.

Graduates in Social Anthropology will have acquired wide ranging knowledge and understanding about the contemporary world – and above all the ability to make sympathetic sense of the global diversity of social and cultural institutions, processes and ideas. They will have also developed skills in talking and writing about such issues in a range of contexts and formats.

Previous graduates have chosen careers in social development, healthcare, journalism and film. Some have gained employment with international organisations such as Oxfam.

A growing number are continuing with postgraduate study in anthropology, leading to careers as anthropological researchers with universities, public bodies like the NHS, or private sector companies.



Getting ready for Edinburgh

If you'd like to get ahead with some background reading, we recommend the following books.

For a general introduction:

Engelke, M. (2017) *Think like an Anthropologist*. London: Pelican Books/Penguin.

Erikson, T.H. (2001) *Small Place, Large Issues*. London: Pluto Press.

Some interesting specialist books:

Allison, A. (2013) *Precarious Japan*. (Chronicles of the New World Encounter). Durham: Duke University Press.

Boylston, T. (2018) *The Stranger at the Feast: Prohibition and Mediation in an Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Community*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Cassidy, R. (2002) *Sport of Kings: kinship, class and thoroughbred breeding in Newmarket*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edmonds, A. (2010) *Pretty Modern: Beauty, Sex and Plastic Surgery in Brazil*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Han, Clara. (2012) *Life in Debt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Haynes, N. (2017) *Moving by the Spirit. Pentecostal Social Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Moran-Thomas, A. (2021) *Traveling with Sugar: Chronicles of a Global Epidemic*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Segal, L. B. (2016) *No Place For Grief: Martyrs, Prisoners and Mourning in Contemporary Palestine*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Street, A. (2014) *Biomedicine in an Unstable Place: Infrastructure and Personhood in a Papua New Guinean Hospital*. Durham: Duke University Press.



Undergraduate degrees in **Social Anthropology**

- MA (Hons) in Social Anthropology
- MA (Hons) in Social Anthropology and Politics
- MA (Hons) in Social Anthropology and Social Policy
- MA (Hons) in Social Anthropology with Development

Social Anthropology is also offered as a joint honours programme with Arabic; Archaeology; Law; Linguistics; and Persian.

Please see <https://edin.ac/3Rj2lYl> for full details.

For further information on entry requirements visit: edin.ac/entry

Read more about our programmes at: edin.ac/ourdegrees

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