

URBAN STUDIES AND ANTHROPOLOGY (BA)

Department Website (<https://as.nyu.edu/sca.html>)

NYSED: 43980 HEGIS: 2214.00 CIP: 45.1201

Program Description

Urban studies is an established and interdisciplinary area of inquiry—focusing on cities and their regions, urban social life, cultures, the built and natural environment, economics, politics, and policy—that is strengthened when students are strongly grounded in a traditional academic discipline. Anthropology, meanwhile, is the study of human societies and cultures, including their built environments, and a rich vein of anthropological thought has engaged the city, its institutions, and everyday urban livelihoods. Its central method of inquiry, ethnography, is also regularly deployed within urban studies as an important means of accessing urban worlds. Archeology, a pillar of anthropology, also allows us to understand past urban histories and societies. The joint major in Urban Studies and Anthropology introduces students to different approaches to the study of cities, metropolitan areas, and human societies and cultures and provides an overview of the diversity of social scientific and humanistic theories that inform much research on the city, human settlements, and societies.

The major takes full advantage of NYU's location and builds on the University's long-standing relationships with key urban institutions, both public and private, ranging from planning agencies to urban arts and culture institutions.

This program of study trains students in geographic information systems (GIS), a powerful mapping tool that many will find useful in their future careers. The major prepares students for careers in urban policy and planning; community organization and advocacy; civic affairs; urban arts and culture; immigration policy and social justice; housing and real estate; scholarly research in urban humanities, urban archaeology, and social science; and careers in teaching and academia.

Students should consult with advisers in both the Department of Anthropology and the Program in Urban Studies.

Honors Program

This major program of study does not currently offer an honors track.

Admissions

New York University's Office of Undergraduate Admissions supports the application process for all undergraduate programs at NYU. For additional information about undergraduate admissions, including application requirements, see How to Apply (<https://www.nyu.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/how-to-apply.html>).

Program Requirements

Program Requirements

The joint major requires twelve courses (48 credits) completed with a grade of C or better (courses graded Pass/Fail do not count). It comprises six courses in urban studies (24 credits) and six in anthropology (24 credits) as outlined below. All major electives must be chosen from a list of approved courses and/or in consultation with a major adviser.

Course	Title	Credits
General Education Requirements		
First-Year Seminar		4
EXPOS-UA 1	Writing as Inquiry	4
Foreign Language ¹		16
Quantitative Reasoning		4
Physical Science		4
Texts and Ideas		4
Cultures and Contexts		4
Expressive Culture		4
Major Requirements		
<i>Urban Studies Requirements</i>		
URBS-UA 101	Social and Cultural Analysis 101	4
URBS-UA 102	The City ²	4
URBS-UA 201	Geographic Information Systems ³	4
URBS-UA 301	Urban Lab ⁴	4
<i>Urban Studies Major Electives</i>		
Select two designated urban studies electives ⁵		8
<i>Anthropology Requirements</i>		
ANTH-UA 1	Introduction to Cultural Anthropology ⁶	4
ANTH-UA 2	Introduction to Biological Anthropology ⁷	4
ANTH-UA 3	Introduction to Archaeology	4
ANTH-UA 4	Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology ⁸	4
<i>Anthropology Major Electives</i>		
Select two designated anthropology electives		8
Electives		
Other Elective Credits		36
Total Credits		128

¹ The foreign language requirement is satisfied upon successful completion through the Intermediate level of a language. This may be accomplished in fewer than 16 credits, but those credits must then be completed as elective credit.

² Formerly Approaches to Metropolitan Studies (SCA-UA 601).

³ Identical to UPADM-GP 283.

⁴ Prerequisite: URBS-UA 102.

⁵ One of the two electives must focus on global (i.e., non-US) content.

⁶ Formerly Culture, Power, Society.

⁷ Formerly Human Evolution.

⁸ Formerly Language, Culture, and Society (ANTH-UA 17).

Sample Plan of Study

Course	Title	Credits
1st Semester/Term		
URBS-UA 102	The City	4
Foreign Language I		4
EXPOS-UA 1	Writing as Inquiry	4
Texts and Ideas		4
Credits		16
2nd Semester/Term		
URBS-UA 101	Social and Cultural Analysis 101	4
Foreign Language II		4
Cultures and Contexts		4
First-Year Seminar		4
Credits		16

3rd Semester/Term		
ANTH-UA 1	Introduction to Cultural Anthropology	4
Urban Studies Major elective (#1 of 2) ¹		4
Foreign Language III		4
Expressive Culture		4
Credits		16
4th Semester/Term		
URBS-UA 201	Geographic Information Systems	4
ANTH-UA 2	Introduction to Biological Anthropology	4
Quantitative Reasoning		4
Foreign Language IV		4
Credits		16
5th Semester/Term		
ANTH-UA 3	Introduction to Archaeology	4
Urban Studies Major elective (#2 of 2) ¹		4
Physical Science		4
Other Elective Credits		4
Credits		16
6th Semester/Term		
ANTH-UA 4	Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology	4
Other Elective Credits		4
Other Elective Credits		4
Other Elective Credits		4
Credits		16
7th Semester/Term		
URBS-UA 301	Urban Lab	4
Anthropology Major Elective (#1 of 2)		4
Other Elective Credits		4
Other Elective Credits		4
Credits		16
8th Semester/Term		
Anthropology Major Elective (#2 of 2)		4
Other Elective Credits		4
Other Elective Credits		4
Other Elective Credits		4
Credits		16
Total Credits		128

¹ Chosen from a list of approved departmental courses; one of the two must be non-U.S. in content.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of program requirements, students are expected to have acquired:

1. Broad knowledge of the development over time of cities, metropolitan areas, human settlements, and cultures.
2. Familiarity with the diversity of social scientific and humanistic theories that inform urban ethnographic research.
3. An understanding of the relationship of urban life to human cultures, race and gender, kinship, and social reproduction—all topics central to both anthropology and the study of the city.
4. The ability to conduct research on urban topics using anthropological theory and research methods, such as urban ethnography and urban archaeology.

Policies

Program Policies

Double Counting of Courses

Majors may share (double count) two courses with a second major (or a minor) with permission from the other department/program.

Restrictions on Declaring Other Majors and Minors

Students majoring in Urban Studies and Anthropology cannot declare a second major and/or a minor in Africana Studies, American Studies, Asian/Pacific/American Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Metropolitan Studies (replaced by the joint Urban Studies majors as of fall 2025), Latino Studies, Social and Cultural Analysis, Anthropology, or any joint majors with the Department of Anthropology (such as Anthropology and Linguistics or Global Public Health and Anthropology). Declaring the minor in Archaeology may be allowed on a case-by case basis; students must consult with the Department of Anthropology.

Advanced Standing Credit by Examination

Credits from Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and any other similar examinations cannot count toward the requirements of this major.

Transfer Students

In accordance with College of Arts and Science policy, transfer students must complete at least one-half of this major while in residence at New York University. In addition, at least half of the urban studies courses and four of the six anthropology courses for this major must be completed at NYU. Transfer students may petition the Department of Anthropology and/or the Program in Urban Studies (as appropriate) with syllabi and reading lists to count specific transfer courses toward the major. Note that no more than two transfer courses (8 credits) may be applied to the anthropology requirements of this major.

Note that all transfer students (whether internal or external) must satisfy a residency requirement of 64 credits in College of Arts and Science (-UA) coursework to earn their NYU baccalaureate degree. Although this major may allow (with advisement) some courses in other NYU schools (and at NYU portal campuses) to count as urban studies major electives, transfer students cannot count them toward the 64-credit -UA requirement.

College of Arts and Science Policies

A full list of relevant academic policies can be found on the CAS Academic Policies page (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/undergraduate/arts-science/academic-policies/>).

NYU Policies

University-wide policies can be found on the New York University Policy pages (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/nyu/policies/>).