

# Anthropology: What is it?

**Anthropology defined:** The study of human nature, human society, and the human past.

Study of human species and its immediate ancestors

**Anthropology confronts basic questions of human existence and survival**

How we originated

How we have changed

How we are changing still

## **Anthropological Perspective:**

Anthropology is

1. holistic
2. comparative
3. field based
4. evolutionary

**Humans are among the world's most adaptable animals**

Adaptation Variation and Change

## **The Subfields**

1. Biological – includes primatologists, paleoanthropologists, forensics and medical (which crosses into cultural anthropology)
2. Cultural Anthropology – sets of learned behaviors and ideas that human beings acquire as members of society

Understanding other cultures and people while putting one's life in better perspective

Important elements of Cultural Anthropology:

Fieldwork which incorporates a variety of field methods such as:

1. participant-observation (This method can be split in two)

2. interviews
3. surveys
4. audio/video

The ethnography plays an important role in the study of another culture.

The ethnology compares two or more cultures.

3. Linguistic Anthropology – the study of human language
4. Archaeology – the study and analysis of material remains of earlier human societies
5. Applied Anthropology – application of anthropological data, perspectives, theory, and methods to identify, assess, and solve contemporary social problems

### **Is Anthropology a Science?**

We are all the same: objective knowledge through the five senses (Positivism)

Building better lives: Modernism

Hey modernism, I don't think you are quite right and let's skip the stereotypes: Postmodernism

### **Reflexive Anthropology**

Dealing with real humans and relationships in the field

Harry Potter is not loaning his invisibility clock to the ethnographer

The roll of technology (are cellphones good or bad or just right?)

I guess I don't know it all and props to my informants

### **Moral Anthropology**

Is it a matter of right or wrong and if so who is right?

View of human rights or anthropologist working with the military

**Let's getting a moving!**

