

Guide To Honours in Anthropology

2020

Welcome

Welcome to Honours. We trust that you will find the year enjoyable but more importantly *valuable* in terms of its contribution to your further postgraduate studies and/or your career. Honours is a tough but ultimately an extremely rewarding year, where for the first time you will be doing “real” anthropology. As long as you immerse yourself in reading extensively around your chosen topic of study, and in experiencing and systematically recording your relationships with a range of people within your fieldsite, you will look back on the year as one in which you grew exponentially on both a personal and academic level. You will have learnt how to reflect on your research data and to draw out analytic themes emerging from them. In applying yourself to creating a sustained and coherent piece of writing around your research you will have been initiated into what it is that anthropologists do and why anthropology is exciting.

Guide to Honours

Your Guide to Honours should be read in conjunction with the General Guide to Anthropology at Rhodes. These, along with course outlines, will also be available on the Facebook Page – RU Anthropology 2019.

Additional course outlines

In addition to this Guide for Honours, every student will receive a course outline at the beginning of each of the four teams.

Course Coordinator

Your Honours Course Coordinator for 2020 is Michelle Cocks. The Honours coordinator provides the link between your lecturers. If you have any problem with your course that is not specific to the current module and that cannot be dealt with by your lecturer, take it to the Honours Coordinator in the first instance. Michelle Cocks is contactable via email at m.cocks@ru.ac.za.

Meetings and Times

In the first and second semester two seminar sessions will be organised per week. The venue, day and time for each seminar will be given to you by the lecturer/s delivering the module.

HONS PROGRAM

1. Coursework

Coursework consists of three modules. One coursework module is carried out in term 1, 2 and 3.

2. Research Project/Thesis

In conjunction with your coursework you will be expected to carry out a research project.

By the end of the first term you need to have completed your research proposal together with your selected and or appointed supervisor. You will defend your proposed research in front of Departmental Research Committee the last week of the first term.

Ethical clearance for your proposed research will need to be obtained from Rhodes University Ethics Committee. Fieldwork for your research project will be carried out during the June/July vacation period.

Analysis and write-up of your thesis will take place in the 4th term. Submission of completed theses is due at the end of the 4th term, 18th of October.

3. Anthropology seminar and research series and writing and reading group seminars

You will be expected, as part of your honours DP requirement, to attend the Anthropology seminar and research series and writing and reading group seminars. The Anthropology seminar and research series will be held every alternate week for the second and third term. These will be held in the Anthro 3 lecture venue on Thursday afternoons from 2:15 – 3:15pm. The writing and reading groups series will be held during lunch hour from 12.30 to 2 p.m. on the last Wednesday of the month.

The anthropology seminar and research series will allow students to see the current research of the department and its senior students as well as other professionals within the discipline. The writing and reading seminars will expose you to academic writing and seminal readings within a range of topics in the field of Anthropology.

4. The program at a glance

Semester	Term	Module	Starts	Ends	Topic	Lecturer(s)	Assessment %
1 st	1	1	10 th Feb	27 th March	Wellness and wellbeing: Transcultural perspectives		13%
	2	2	14th April	22nd May	Anthropology of Gender	Janet Hayward	13%
	Anthropology seminar and research series and writing and reading group seminars						Compulsory
2nd	3	3	31st of August	16th October	Anthropology of Performance	Patti Henderson	14%
	Anthropology seminar and research series and writing and reading group seminars						Compulsory
	4	Write up of research thesis					Thesis – 60%

5. Organisation of coursework

Coursework consists of two weekly seminar meetings. The organisation of each module – including weekly topics, readings and delivery of essays or presentations – is fully described in the respective course outlines.

6. The Research Project

Your research project counts the equivalent of one coursework paper. Expected length for your honours thesis is 40-60 typed pages.

The research processes requires a number of key milestones to be meet. See the Table below outlining these to monitor your progress. Each of these represent a DP requirement.

Term	Key milestones	Dates
Term 1	Completion of literature review Presentation of proposal Completion of research proposal Completion of ethnic clearance	28 th of February 24 th March 14 th April 14 th April
Term 2	Preparing for fieldwork with your supervisor(s)	April-May
Vac	Fieldwork	June/July
Term 3	Analysis Presentation of analyse	July/Aug 18 th of August
Term 4	Write up Submission of first draft thesis Presentation ASnA Conference Submission of completed thesis Presentation at Departmental Show Case Presentation of research to external examiner	September - October 20 th of September 22 September 26 th – 28 th September 18 th October 18 th October 28 th November

A number of collectively tasks and workshops have been designed around key deliverables of your research processes. These have been designed collectively to enhance the learning experience for all. Workshops include: 1) techniques in sourcing of literature for your chosen topic; 2) defining research objective and questions, 3) selecting research participants and research methods, and 4) data analysis. Table below for the timing of these across the year.

Term	Workshops	Dates
Term 1	1) techniques in sourcing of literature for your chosen topic; 2) defining research objective and questions, 3) selection of research participants and proposed research methods,	13 th of Feb 26 th of Feb 10 th March
Term 3	Analysis	21 st of July

In the fourth term a collective writing seminars will be arranged and these will be facilitated by various staff members. A program outlining how the seminars and writing workshops will be shared with you closer to the time.

During the course of the year also work consistently with your supervisor(s). They will assist and guide you through the research process. Each student needs to complete an agreement of understanding together with their chosen supervisor. Please find a copy of the letter in Appendix 1.

There are examples of completed honours theses in the department for you to familiarise yourself with what is expected. You can access copies of completed these from Des Bekker

See Appendix 2 for details on proposal outline

See Appendix 3 for outline for your thesis.

The first draft of the thesis has to be handed in no later than *20th of September* to your supervisor. S/he will comment on your thesis within *ten days*. Thereafter, based on your supervisor's comments and your reworking of the thesis you must hand in the final copy of the thesis on the *18th October* (please note that you have to hand in *two* copies).

Your thesis will be examined by two members of staff (not your supervisor) and an external examiner

7. Supervision

Supervision is an important part of the post-graduate experience. While we encourage self-starters and independent thought, research practise and the production of a thesis is hard and specialised work – work that you are not fully familiar with.

While your supervisor doesn't write your thesis, s/he has had years of experience in fieldwork praxis, and the creation of written arguments and the substantiation thereof with ethnographic data/evidence. The supervisor therefore mentors you through the entire research process. You are encouraged to engage regarding research practise, the fieldwork process, analysing data and the write-up process.

Please note that if you do not comply with reasonable requests, whether for supervision meetings, or editing of your thesis, your supervisor can suggest that your thesis should *not be examined*, until it meets the standards of the department. It is therefore in your interest to meet regularly, and follow suggestions made by your supervisor.

It is to be noted further that while we make every attempt to assist you in the writing of the thesis the task is your sole responsibility. Your supervisor will not write the thesis for you, nor will s/he have any input in the final assessment of your work.

8. Anthropology Southern African Conference (ASnA)

Students will be encouraged to join the Anthropology South Africa Organisation. ASnA is an organisation which represents the interests of anthropologists and the discipline in southern Africa see their website for details <https://asnahome.org/about-the-asna/welcome>.

You will also be encouraged to attend and present your research findings at the annually held ASnA conference, held in September each year, dependent on funding. Attempts will be made by the Department to source the necessary funds.

Appendix 1.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT

The relationship between supervisor and a candidate for a research degree is one of mentorship and support.

A supervisor's role in this process is to offer advice and analytical comment in relation to: a) defining and designing the proposed research, b) carrying out fieldwork; c) the analysis process, and d) on draft chapters/sections submitted by the candidate.

The supervisor will also direct the candidate to relevant resource materials and offer emotional support where necessary.

It is the candidate's responsibility to lead the process, ensure that the requirements are met and that the work presented is their own.

It is not the supervisors' responsibility to correct language errors. A student may, if necessary, at his/her own cost, employ a copy editor to proofread the thesis and correct errors of expression or style.

COMMITMENTS OF SUPERVISOR AND CANDIDATE

How often do the supervisor and the candidate expect to meet?
For example, weekly, monthly, every two months, etc.

How often will the candidate present written work? E.g. monthly, quarterly, etc.

Approximately how soon after submission of written work may the candidate expect comments from the supervisor?

To meet expected deadlines:

a) Projected date for the submission of the research proposal

b) Projected date of submission of final thesis

Any other special provisions agreed on:

Candidate Supervisor

.....
Signed

Signed

.....
Full Name: (print) Full Name: (print)

.....
Student number:

.....

Date:

Date

NOTE:
The supervisor's consent is required in order to submit the completed dissertation or thesis for examination. The supervisor must see the final version of the thesis before submission. A candidate may, if he/she wishes, insist on submission without the supervisor's consent, but this will be noted in the supervisor's report.

Appendix 2: Proposal outline

Your proposal should not be less than three or more than five pages long at 1.5 spaces (excluding cover page and references). It should include the following:

- Cover page, with your course, name and student number, and draft title or at least topic of research
- The topic/field of study (elaboration on the title, and as much background as you already have on your subject).
- Research problem (i.e. motivation for the research – why it is worth doing – its relevance to contemporary anthropology. This task is best done with reference to the literature of the field in which your research is set; thus your project may be seen as a critique of elements of the literature, the filling of a gap, a local application, and so on).
- Your reading of the relevant literature should also suggest a potential *theoretical framework* for the project.
- Next, your general *objective*, specific *aims* and research question(s). These make the bridge from theoretical approach to the actual project.
- Methods and Techniques – remember there is more to methodology than simply a list of research methods: it includes the *justification* (in theoretical as well as practical terms) for using these particular methods.
- Ethics – all anthropologists are bound by a Code of Ethics. For South African anthropologists we refer to the Code of Ethics produced by the professional association Anthropology Southern Africa (view at <http://www.socanth.uct.ac.za/research/research-ethics>). We also use the American Anthropological Association's Code of Ethics as a reference point (view at <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>). Therefore you would have to ensure that your research is ethical prior to, during, and after fieldwork (the write-up phase of your research).
- Timetable – when you intend doing the fieldwork, and for how long; the timing of the various phases of the research project, up to handing in.
- Provisional chapter outline (if you can see that far ahead, but it is never too soon to plan a thesis).
- References in text and at the end have to conform to the Harvard Referencing Style).

Each of you will have an opportunity to present your proposal at a *Scope and Method Seminar* in the first term. The entire department, including available staff and postgraduate students, will provide you with feedback on this occasion. You will be given an opportunity to incorporate this feedback into your proposal. Final submission of your proposals is the 15th of April. Your proposal will be assessed by two members of staff within the department; you will receive an average mark of the two marks received.

Appendix 3: Thesis outline (rough guide)

What follows is a brief outline of what is expected from an Honours thesis. However, you are encouraged to search online for further information on the construction of a thesis. A general and more detailed guide to Honours that includes information on thesis writing can be found at https://academicskills.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/booklets/ASLC_Honours_Booklet_PRINT.pdf.

Presentation

Your thesis should be in a plain font, Arial or Calibri, 1.5 spaces, and very carefully proofread. Note that this is *not* your supervisor's job, so a friend or professional can assist you with proofreading. However they cannot rewrite the thesis for you. A cover page should include the title, your name and student number, the department, the degree for which it is submitted and a plagiarism declaration. You must submit two copies, neither of which is returned (so keep either a hard or electronic version for yourself).

Length

A mini-thesis is just that: not a full thesis. Yours should *not be less* than 40 or *more than* 60 pages. To make each page count, avoid repetition and unnecessary preliminaries. You certainly are being assessed on your scholarship, including knowledge of the literature; but your handling of ethnography and capacity to apply and critique theory in the light of your findings is crucial – leave plenty of space for that task, and only review literature that you are likely to return to in your analysis or Conclusion.

Preface and/or Acknowledgements

Anthropologists depend on others at every stage, and it is simply good manners to acknowledge their assistance. In the case of research subjects, this has to be somehow done without breaking any confidentiality agreements that have been made. Don't forget to thank your supervisor!

The Introduction

This could include:

- Problem statement
- Literature survey (try to incorporate the literature throughout the thesis)
- Theoretical framework
- Research questions
- Research methodology
- Ethical issues encountered and how you dealt with them
- Chapter summary

These tasks do not have to be separated or undertaken in this order: Some writers prefer to let everything else flow from the literature survey (following a very brief statement of what the research is about and where it takes place). Discuss the organisation of your material with your supervisor.

Background

Anthropology usually involves going to places or studying groups with whom most readers (including, most importantly, the External Examiner) will not be familiar, so the first chapter following the Introduction usually provides everything *descriptive* that you need to know about the subjects and their setting – history, geography, demographics and other distinguishing features. You should provide just enough background for the reader to make sense of what follows in the ethnographic chapters. Essentially this chapter provides the context for your research process.

Research findings and analysis

These two tasks should ideally be combined in an anthropology dissertation, where the analysis is like a running commentary. However, where the data consists of case studies or life histories, there may be more of a division between description and analysis.

This task is the substantive heart of the thesis and may **consume two or more distinct chapters**. The quality of the ethnography is crucial to a positive assessment. You should not write it all up in reported speech (for e.g. She explained that life in the Karoo was hard), but let your informants' own 'voices' be heard (for e.g. Katrina a long-term resident of the Karoo said "Life in this old Karoo is hard. It's not for the faint-hearted."); you must link their opinions to the social contexts of their utterances and their positions in their community. You must appreciate that it is absurd to do statistical breakdowns on findings from a handful of informants. Nonetheless, your assessment will also depend on the ethnographic detail – including quantitative detail – which you can generate.

Conclusion

This should begin with a summary of the main points emerging from the thesis and then revisit the literature survey in light of your empirical findings and analysis. Highlight and remind the reader of the main findings of your research. If yours was a more 'applied' study, it could include some recommendations. **A Conclusion is not the place for the presentation of any new data.**

Footnotes or Endnotes

It is possible to write academically without using footnotes or endnotes at all, but it requires great skill to generate the necessary commentary and ancillary detail without overloading the text, so most of us resort to notes. Whether you use footnotes or endnotes is a matter of taste, but because busy people hate to waste time paging back and forth footnotes are more likely to be read.

Illustrations

Illustrations are to be incorporated into the body of your thesis; they provide appreciated breaks in the thesis narrative.

Illustrations include material, such as maps, sketches, photographs and even tables and figures. Most Honours students seem to be incapable of including anything except for one downloadable map and a few photos. This is a mistake: sketches by yourself or informants of the lay-out of settlements and tables or figures of anything

that can be counted break up the text and provide information at a glance. However, be careful that photographs and maps do not unintentionally betray your respondents' anonymity. Get permission to use people's photographs before putting photographs of people in your thesis.

References, Bibliography

If you were a History major, you might prefer to use notes for references, but social scientists usually employ the Harvard method (minor references – author surname, date, chapter or page number – in brackets) supported by a full bibliography. If you remain confused about referencing, check the advice contained in your General Guide to Anthropology at Rhodes. (Hint: The External Examiner reduces marks substantially for sloppy referencing!)

Appendices

These are places for material that is ancillary to your main theme or so voluminous that it would interrupt the flow of the main body of writing. Examples of material that is normally placed in appendices include: copies of relevant legislation or policy documents; copies of any questionnaire schedules you may have employed and the complete statistical breakdowns derived from them; complete narratives obtained in the field. Having such material in the appendices does not prevent you from selecting passages or tables from it for inclusion in the body of the thesis as it becomes relevant. Since Appendices are not included in the word-count, it is also a way of keeping your thesis to the required length.

Further Resources

It has become clear over the past few years that students have concerns about how to structure a thesis. It is a daunting task, and we'd like to assist you as much as possible with it. However, you are expected to take responsibility for the writing thereof. To assist you in the writing endeavour, and in writing anthropologically, you are encouraged to read ethnographies more closely for hints regarding style of writing and anthropological interpretation and analysis. Further you are welcome to turn to other source material that details 'how to write a thesis'. A number of possible reference texts follow:

Anderson, J. and Poole, M. 2001. *Assignment and Thesis Writing*. Wiley: New York

Bolker, J. 1998. *Writing your dissertation in fifteen minutes a day: a guide to starting, revising and finishing your doctoral thesis*. Holt: New York (although this is a guide for doctoral dissertations there are a number of hints that are useful for thesis writing in general)