

Dear Prospective Student,

Thank you for your interest in graduate-level training in global health through the School of Human Evolution and Social Change at Arizona State University. ASU is a particularly strong place to pursue advanced training in this area, with at least 75 nationally recognized health, social, life and applied science faculty participating in the degree programs; state of the art research facilities; and a vast array of elective courses allowing students to gain highly individualized and flexible training. The research of global health faculty at ASU – and thus the training they provide – tends to be theoretically and methodologically varied and transdisciplinary in its orientation. This is because our focus is on identifying the best ways to use social, cultural, ecological, biological and historical insights to solve contemporary health problems rather than on the promotion of singular approaches or modes of enquiry.

Some areas of faculty expertise at ASU, in which we can provide particularly strong graduate-level training, include:

- the links between culture and health;
- social justice and the relationships between disease and social/environmental inequality;
- health in the Americas (especially the Southwest U.S. and borderlands, Mexico and tropical South America, where many of our faculty do fieldwork);
- community-based health research that values the movement from theory to practice;
- indigenous and minority health; children's and women's health; immigrant health
- nutrition/nutritional anthropology;
- epidemiological approaches to social science and life science questions about health;
- urban and environmental health;
- formal social science methodologies for culturally and socially oriented health research (such as ethnography, text analysis, social survey, social network analysis, spatial analysis, participatory action research, demography and mathematical and computer-based modeling)
- bio-cultural and life history approaches to contemporary health;
- medical anthropology and medical sociology;
- health in the past (such as seen through approaches from history, genetics and bioarchaeology).

With the recent addition of applied mathematics for the life and social sciences degrees in our school, we are also able to offer world-class training in mathematical epidemiology. We are most interested in graduate students who wish to work in these areas in particular.

The School of Human Evolution and Social Change offers two relevant graduate degrees at the Ph.D. level: the Ph.D. in anthropology and the Ph.D. in social science and health. The Ph.D. in anthropology is managed entirely within the School of Human Evolution and Social Change. It is suited to those planning to enter more traditional medical anthropology careers, and requires students to write a dissertation that focuses to some extent on disciplinary problems related to health and/or disease (i.e., those defined as anthropologically relevant). This degree is managed entirely within the school, and students wishing this more classic degree in medical anthropology apply to the anthropology Ph.D., selecting an approach within the school with which they will align (e.g., sociocultural anthropology, physical anthropology, bioarchaeology or the cross-cutting ETS).

The Ph.D. in social science and health is also administered by the School of Human Evolution and Social Change. Plans are for this degree to undergo a name change in the coming year to "Ph.D. in Global Health." While it leverages the strength in medical anthropology at ASU (including the 15 or so medical anthropologists on campus), it thus also takes advantage of a much wider set of skills offered by such fields as medical sociology, demography, human geography and epidemiology. It is designed to train those who anticipate working in transdisciplinary academic settings, medical schools or non-academic health settings, such as governmental agencies, NGOs and the commercial sector. While elective courses are the same for this degree as for students training in medical anthropology in the anthropology Ph.D. (and there is a very long list of options), the emphasis of the training and thus the core requirements are different. For the social science and health Ph.D., graduates are expected to have competency in health-relevant social science methodologies, such as epidemiology, GIS, ethnography, statistics and survey techniques. The major professor need not be in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change but can be any of the involved faculty from across ASU's many units (see: <http://shesc.asu.edu/node/318>). From 2010, it is anticipated we will offer five specific concentrations in the Ph.D. in global health: culture and health; evolutionary global health sciences; global health governance; theoretical, mathematical and computational epidemiology; and urbanism.

*What qualifications should I have for entry into the social science and health/global health Ph.D. degree program?*

You can enter either doctoral program with either a master's degree in a relevant field or with a bachelor's degree. However, we generally recommend that people have a master's degree in a relevant field (e.g., M.P.H., M.A.) before they join the program, and this is looked upon favorably in the selection process. Students entering without any background in health usually find the transition easier than those entering without a strong background in the social sciences. For those with no social science background, we highly recommend taking some key social sciences courses (e.g., human geography, medical sociology or medical anthropology) at the graduate level before you apply, and to have completed a master's degree program. From the perspective of the faculty, we are looking for students that we *know* will succeed and prosper intellectually in a fast-paced and rigorous environment, and we judge that based on a consistent and clear academic track-record, professional experiences (e.g., employment, publications), established skill set (e.g., statistics, languages, field methods), GRE scores, a clear and compelling statement of purpose and the letters of recommendation. It is also important that any accepted student has a faculty mentor willing to direct him or her. This is why it very much helps your application to contact faculty that might make suitable major professors and identify them by name on your application.

*What career is this social science and health Ph.D. degree suited for?*

About 70 percent of the students in the program are intending academic careers, mostly as professors in transdisciplinary programs, just like this one, in which they will be doing research and teaching university students. Other students plan to use the degree to move into leadership positions in NGOs, government agencies and research positions in health fields. Essentially, the application of the degree is similar to any social science Ph.D.

*How many students are accepted?*

ASU's Ph.D. in anthropology program is one of the highest ranked in the country, and thus the very excellence of our school's programs is well established, and we get many applicants from all over the world. Currently, we are only accepting the number of students for whom we can reasonably hope to be able to supply at least some funding and for whom we have faculty

willing to serve as mentors. The competition is stiff, quality of accepted students is very high, and we expect to accept no more than one-quarter of applicants *at the very most*.

*What will increase my chance of being accepted?*

The most competitive applications have a compelling statement of purpose that shows exactly why our program is the ideal fit for the student's career goals and talents, high undergrad GPA, very high graduate GPA, strong GREs in all areas, a background in the social sciences, evidence of professional and scholarly success (e.g., publications, awards) and have identified specific faculty mentors who share interests with them. Also important are strong letters of recommendation from prior professors familiar with the student's capabilities. We recognize everyone has a different path to graduate school, though, and at the end of the day the people we are looking for are those showing clear evidence they will truly succeed in graduate school and beyond and fit well within our particular program strengths and faculty interests.

*Is there funding available?*

Many accepted students receive substantive funding in support of their studies. There are competitive scholarship packages available to the very strongest applicants. The large number of health-related externally funded research projects managed by our faculty allows many more students to be supported as research assistants, where they gain valuable professional training and experience while working half time with our faculty. Other students are supported through half-time teaching assistantships. Funding decisions tend to come late in the year, well after acceptances, and some patience is required.

*How long will it take me to complete the degree?*

Full-time students entering with a master's degree should complete the degree in 3.5 to 4 years; 5 or so if they work as a TA or RA. Students entering with a bachelor's degree should take no more than 6 years.

*Can I do a master's degree?*

Currently, we only accept students directly into the Ph.D. program. However, we have a plan to begin to offer a terminal M.A. in global health as an alternative to (not as an entry for) the Ph.D. in global health. We will have more information about this later in fall 2009.

*I have a full-time job and want to work while I am pursuing the degree. Is that ok?*

Generally speaking, it is very difficult to work full time and complete this degree. The program is demanding, and to make the most of the myriad of opportunities we offer you need available time. We recommend people commit to full-time graduate school, or work as half-time RAs or TAs where their work directly supports their academic career building.

*Is this the right degree for me?*

In this degree we *train and professionalize* not just supervise students. If you like to do things your own way or singularly, or are really focused more on the health part than the social science part, then this is probably not the program for you. ASU is a very fast-paced, dynamic, demanding environment. So, if you like a lot of hand-holding, this also is probably not the best fit. If you want to develop a top-notch professional social science skill set, are driven, open-minded and willing to work as part of a collaborative team with the faculty and other students, this is definitely the right place for you.

*How do I apply?*

Applications for both Ph.D. programs are managed through the School of Human Evolution and Social Change. The school's graduate coordinator is Dr. Georgianna Miller

(Georgianna.Miller@asu.edu). Actual application is made online through the graduate college Web page: <http://graduate.asu.edu/>. Please start by reading all the materials on the Graduate College Web site before you proceed. Applications are due at the end of each academic year for start the following fall. We do not accept applications at any other time of the year.

*Can I get more information?*

If you have questions about the online application itself, contact the Graduate College. If you have questions about supplemental materials, contact our school. Consult the Web site for information about faculty and their interests, courses and graduate study at ASU. The university has an interactive course search tool to provide information on courses to give you some ideas: <https://www.asu.edu/go/classsearch/>

*Can I talk to someone about the program?*

Yes! The first step is to talk to Dr. Miller (Georgianna.Miller@asu.edu), who can walk you through the process and provide guidance as to who you need to talk with next. You can call her at (480) 965-6215 and set up an appointment time. Potential applicants from out of town with questions are also encouraged to contact her first. We encourage out of town visits: If you are coming in from out of town, Dr. Miller will be happy to coordinate meetings with relevant faculty and existing graduate students. The very best time of year to visit is January, when admission decisions are being made and the weather is just fantastic.

09/2009