

MA in Applied Anthropology Proposal Review #1

General

To bolster even further the case made in the proposal for offering training that will involve students in public scholarship and help make anthropology more relevant to local and international debates in education, public policy, and so on, reference might be made to the recent discussion in the *American Anthropologist* about the need for a more publicly engaged anthropology (Vol. 110, No. 1, March 2008, Bunzl, and Besteman and Gusterson). So, this program will be cutting edge.

Mention could be made that such a program is very timely, given the increasing difficulty of landing a job with a BA in Anthro...?

Overall, there seems to be some tension in the proposal in seeking to highlight how the MA program in Applied Anthro will ground students in important issues and organizations in the Indianapolis area, and how they will also be poised to take advantage of and contribute to international research and work initiatives. I'm not sure how this tension (it doesn't have to be a tension or contradiction, but at present it feels like one) can be smoothed out, but I think it does need to be addressed. Overall I get the sense that students will be required to focus their studies and internship/thesis on a local issue, and I'm not sure this is justified, given the huge scope of anthro in general, and the expertise of the IUPUI faculty, in particular.

Admissions and Clientele

I appreciate that there seems to be some flexibility in the admissions criteria--there are preferred test scores and GPA requirements, as well as some expectations about applicants' background in anthropology, but also wiggle room for assessing applicants based on other criteria (such as, I assume, work experience, life experience, other strengths). This is good.

But, can more explanation be made about what it would mean to "be admitted conditionally and/or required to take foundation courses in Anthropology?" Would the same criteria be applied in all cases?

Will the Anthro Dept. Graduate Committee be a rotating committee? Will all faculty involved in the MA program have a chance to give input regarding each year's applicants?

RE: enrollments--how many students per year might be expected to pursue admission through the combined 5-year BA/MA program? If enrollment is limited to 6-8 students per year, one wonders how many of these would be undergrads continuing for the MA, versus direct admits.

I'm not sure it's true that IU Bloomington does not offer a terminal MA. Also, it is not entirely the case that, as stated on p. 18, "at IU Bloomington....most of the core courses in the Anthro PhD program are cross-listed for both undergraduates and graduate students." Many elective courses are ("variable topics courses," especially), but the three courses that are the true "core" (required) courses for the PhD are exclusive to graduate students (in socio-cultural, anyway)--

H500 (History of Anthro Thought), Anthro Methods (E606, I believe), and Contemp. Anthro Theory (E500).

Program Description

I think more details on the proposed course offerings are needed. Specifically, some examples of “elective” courses should be listed, either by attaching course descriptions of courses already offered, or those proposed. What are some examples of the “variable topics?” What is meant by “Issues in the Contemporary US” as an area of concentration? (I didn’t get an appendix with course listings, which may be where this info could be found.)

p. 8 where the “well-developed network of organizations and agencies...” is mentioned, refer readers to the list on pp. 14-15.

Thesis Option focus: on the one hand, it makes sense that students would focus their research exercise on Indy and surroundings. On the other hand, should they be limited to this focus? What if students are more interested in other places/topics? Would there be flexibility here, and furthermore, might there be opportunities for students to do summer research, for example, abroad? (this comes up later on p. 15)

This question seems particularly pertinent given the number of faculty whose research concentrates outside of Indiana/the U.S., so this issue may need clarification. Same applies for the next paragraph on Evidence of Publishable and Prof. Research.

I did not find the “sample curricula below” promised on p. 9. This would help clarify some of the above curriculum questions I had.

Faculty Advising

Mention is made in passing about students and their “faculty advisors,” but this is not explained in any detail. What expectations will be made of faculty advisors, how will students get assigned to/chosen by them, etc.?

Program Implementation and Evaluation

The “evaluation” issue is neglected--the “assessment plan” needs some introduction and explanation.