



## Social and cultural anthropology subject outline

First examinations 2010

This document explains the major features of the course, and outlines the syllabus and assessment requirements.

More detailed information about the course can be obtained by referring to the guide for this subject, which is available on the subject page of the IB online curriculum centre (OCC) website (<http://occ.ibo.org>) and can also be purchased from the IB store (<http://store.ibo.org>).

## Nature of the subject

Social and cultural anthropology is the comparative study of culture and human societies. Anthropologists seek an understanding of humankind in all its diversity. This understanding is reached through the study of societies and cultures and the exploration of the general principles of social and cultural life. Social and cultural anthropology places special emphasis on comparative perspectives that challenge cultural assumptions. Many anthropologists explore problems and issues associated with the complexity of modern societies in local, regional and global contexts.

Although social and cultural anthropology shares much of its theory with other social sciences, it is distinct in a number of ways. These distinctions include a tradition of participant observation, and an in-depth empirical study of social groups. Topics of anthropological inquiry include social change, kinship, symbolism, exchange, belief systems, ethnicity and power relations. Social and cultural anthropology examines urban as well as rural society and modern nation states. Anthropology contributes to an understanding of contemporary issues such as war and conflict, the environment, poverty, injustice, inequality, and human and cultural rights. The study of anthropology offers critical insight into the continuities as well as the dynamics of social change and the development of societies, and challenges cultural assumptions.

The IB social and cultural anthropology course offers an opportunity for students to become acquainted with anthropological perspectives and ways of thinking, and to develop critical, reflexive knowledge. Social and cultural anthropology contributes a distinctive approach to intercultural awareness and understanding, which embodies the essence of an IB education. Anthropology fosters the development of citizens who are globally aware and ethically sensitive. The social and cultural anthropology course for both SL and HL students is designed to introduce the principles, practices and materials of the discipline.

## Prior learning

No prior study of social and cultural anthropology is expected. No particular background in terms of specific subjects studied for national or international qualifications is expected or required of students. The specific skills required by the social and cultural anthropology course are developed during the course.

## Links to the Middle Years Programme

The concepts of Middle Years Programme (MYP) humanities can provide a useful foundation for students who go on to study Diploma Programme social and cultural anthropology. An understanding, developed through the MYP humanities course, of the concepts of time, place and space, change, systems and global awareness is developed further within the social and cultural anthropology course. Analytical and investigative skills developed in the MYP humanities course are augmented and expanded through the social and cultural anthropology course.

# Aims

## Group 3 aims

The aims of all subjects in **group 3, individuals and societies** are to:

1. encourage the systematic and critical study of: human experience and behaviour; physical, economic and social environments; and the history and development of social and cultural institutions
2. develop in the student the capacity to identify, to analyse critically and to evaluate theories, concepts and arguments about the nature and activities of the individual and society
3. enable the student to collect, describe and analyse data used in studies of society, to test hypotheses, and to interpret complex data and source material
4. promote the appreciation of the way in which learning is relevant to both the culture in which the student lives, and the culture of other societies
5. develop an awareness in the student that human attitudes and opinions are widely diverse and that a study of society requires an appreciation of such diversity
6. enable the student to recognize that the content and methodologies of the subjects in group 3 are contestable and that their study requires the toleration of uncertainty.

## Social and cultural anthropology aims

The aims of the **social and cultural anthropology** course at SL and HL are to enable students to:

7. explore principles of social and cultural life and characteristics of societies and cultures
8. develop an awareness of historical, scientific and social contexts within which social and cultural anthropology has developed
9. develop in the student a capacity to recognize preconceptions and assumptions of their own social and cultural environments
10. develop an awareness of relationships between local, regional and global processes and issues.

# Assessment objectives

Having followed the social and cultural anthropology course at SL or at HL, students will be expected to demonstrate the following.

### 1. Knowledge and understanding

For example:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key terms and ideas/concepts in anthropology
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of appropriately identified ethnographic materials
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified themes in social and cultural organization
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of patterns and processes of change in society and culture
- at HL only, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theoretical perspectives in anthropology and theory related to these theoretical perspectives.

### 2. Application and interpretation

For example:

- recognize key anthropological concepts in unfamiliar anthropological materials
- recognize and analyse the viewpoint of the anthropologist/position of the observer in anthropological materials
- use ethnographic examples and anthropological concepts to formulate an argument

- analyse anthropological materials in terms of methodological, reflexive and ethical issues involved in anthropological research
- at HL only, use anthropological theory or theoretical perspectives to formulate an argument.

### 3. Synthesis and evaluation

For example:

- compare and contrast characteristics of specific societies and cultures
- demonstrate anthropological insight and imagination
- at HL only, recognize theoretical perspectives or theories in anthropological materials and use these to evaluate the materials.

### 4. Selection and use of a variety of skills appropriate to social and cultural anthropology

For example:

- identify an appropriate context, anthropological issue or question for investigation
- select and use techniques and skills, appropriate to a specific anthropological research question or issue, to gather, present, analyse and interpret ethnographic data.

# Syllabus outline

Specific teaching times are not allocated to each part of the syllabus. Teachers are expected to divide their time across the syllabus as appropriate.

Syllabus component	Teaching hours	
	SL	HL
<b>Part 1: What is anthropology?</b>		
1.1 Core terms and ideas in anthropology		
1.2 The construction and use of ethnographic accounts		
1.3 Methods and data collection		
<b>Part 2: Social and cultural organization</b>		
2.1 Individuals, groups and society		
2.2 Societies and cultures in contact		
2.3 Kinship as an organizing principle		
2.4 Political organization		
2.5 Economic organization and the environment		
2.6 Systems of knowledge		
2.7 Belief systems and practices		
2.8 Moral systems		
<b>Part 3: Observation and critique exercise (SL only)</b>		
<b>Part 4: Theoretical perspectives in anthropology (HL only)</b>		
<b>Part 5: Fieldwork (HL only)</b>		
<b>Total teaching hours</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>240</b>

## Assessment outline—SL

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Assessment component	Weighting
<b>External assessment (3 hours)</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Paper 1 (1 hour)</b> <b>Three</b> compulsory questions based on an unseen text, covering aspects drawn from the whole syllabus. (20 marks)	<b>30%</b>
<b>Paper 2 (2 hours)</b> <b>Ten</b> questions based on part 2 of the syllabus. Students choose <b>two</b> questions to be answered in essay form. (44 marks)	<b>50%</b>
<b>Internal assessment</b> <b>Two</b> compulsory activities to be internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB. (20 marks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A one-hour observation followed by a written report of 600–700 words.</li><li>• A critique of the initial report of 700–800 words.</li></ul>	<b>20%</b>

# Assessment outline—HL

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Assessment component	Weighting
<b>External assessment (4 hours)</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Paper 1 (1 hour)</b> <b>Three</b> compulsory questions based on an unseen text, covering aspects drawn from the whole syllabus. (20 marks)	<b>20%</b>
<b>Paper 2 (2 hours)</b> <b>Ten</b> questions based on part 2 of the syllabus. Students choose <b>two</b> questions to be answered in essay form. (44 marks)	<b>35%</b>
<b>Paper 3 (1 hour)</b> <b>Five</b> questions based on theoretical perspectives in anthropology. Students choose <b>one</b> question to be answered in essay form. (20 marks)	<b>20%</b>
<b>Internal assessment</b> A report of fieldwork conducted by the student to be internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB. Maximum 2,000 words (20 marks)	<b>25%</b>