
PhD General Anthropology

The aim of the Study Programme is a broad-based (general) anthropological study of the nature of human behaviour, conduct and cognition in both their biological (genetic) dimension as well as evolutionary, culturally, socially or environmentally conditioned variability. The starting point is the (Anglo-Saxon) concept of integral, general anthropology as a discipline studying both the biological as well as sociocultural aspects of people's lives as complex organisms, gifted with language, thinking and culture (gifted with semiotic, symbolic representation). This starting point is then extended by some elements (German and French) of philosophical and historical anthropology. Thus conceived (general) anthropology takes into account both the diversity of human cultures as well as the general characteristics of humanity (both partial developmental processes as well as general characteristics of biological and cultural evolution of human). It is, in its own way, synthetic (interconnecting different, relatively autonomous approaches) and comparative, both analytically critical and reflexive.

Within the framework of thus conceived (general) anthropology, empirical (or statistical) methods of life sciences (or biomedical sciences, empirical psychology or demography) are applied, as well as interpretative approaches of sociocultural anthropology (or ethnography) and historical or finally analytical-reflexive approaches to philosophical and hermeneutic anthropology (depending on the specialisation – see below). The culture theory (as a social learning of the transmitted, semiotic system) is a significant interpretation link of the Study Programme, whether it is used in predominantly culturally constructivist interpretations, in interpretations relying on the coevolution of genes and cultures or in the study of cultural conditionality of the frequency of biological or neuropsychological manifestations.

The Study Programme can be studied in four specialisations:

1. **Philosophical anthropology** is an area of philosophical research devoted primarily to the traditional philosophical concepts of a human and the role of these concepts in the formation of human self-understanding. It is based on the tradition of classical German philosophy, from the methodological and paradigmatic plans of W. Dilthey, E. Cassirer, M. Scheler, K. Jaspers, and also from the French philosophy of Ricoeur, Foucault and Deleuze. Philosophical anthropology is not unambiguously defined in the methodology, it utilizes in particular hermeneutical, but also phenomenological methods and also Anglo-Saxon intellectual history and contextual reading. The philosophical anthropology puts the concrete forms of thematization of humanity in individual philosophies into the historical context, at the same time it attempts to formulate the claim, the normative meaning and the effect of such a concept on the formation of an individual person, or recipient, reader of this philosophy.
2. The **Historical anthropology** specialisation is based on its currently most common definition in the Anglo-Saxon, French and German environments. It is thus partly based on an effort to apply interpretation methods based on cultural anthropology (condensed description, interpretation from the perspective of the participant) on historical cultures and on text and artefact source material. It is also based on an effort to compare historical world cultures according to basic functional equivalents related to behaviour, conduct and experience of the world of historical participants (e.g. the forms of piety, limitation of sacred and profane, manifestations of ethnicity and ways of articulation of national or confessional identities, the forms of childhood, family structures, widowhood, sensory perception and its thematisation, etc.). As well as the perception and interpretation of past forms of culture as manifestations of "foreign" cultures (transferring cultural and anthropological perspectives: my own – foreign) and the thematisation of subcultures and countercultures within the wider cultural formations of the past.
3. **Cultural and social anthropology** involves several perspectives that are interconnected. It primarily emphasizes interdisciplinarity, and continues in the one-hundred-year approach of North American cultural anthropology as represented by Franz Boas and some of his pupils. In this context, it seeks inspiration from such theoreticians and field empiricists as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Clifford Geertz, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Bruno Latour, Tim Ingold, etc., whose works go beyond the boundaries of a single discipline. What distinguishes cultural and social anthropology from other specialisations is, above all, its methodology. The focus of all specialisations is a human, society and culture, however, a key component of the cultural and social anthropology approach is systematic ethnographic research in the most diverse terrains and environments, and a reflexive (participant) approach to research of various socio-cultural phenomena.
4. **Psychological anthropology** and human ethology focuses on the multidisciplinary study of human behaviour and cognitive processes. On the one hand, it is based on evolutionary theory and comparative perspectives emphasizing the adaptive significance and universality of human psyche and behaviour, on the other hand it deals with the study

of the sources of variability in them. Biological factors as well as evolutionary and cultural factors participate in individual diversity. The study of the mutual coexistence and synergy of the influences of culture, education and the environment and the biological conditionality of human behaviour, thinking or experiencing are at the centre of interest of this specialisation. Within this paradigm, topics such as partner selection and partner cohabitation, sexual behaviour, sensation and perception, cognitive abilities, laterality, nonverbal manifestations in various social contexts, and psychopathological phenomena are studied. The specialisation further includes the study of behaviour and cognition of extinct human ancestors and closely related animal species.

Links and contacts

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