

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Subject Brief

Individuals and societies: Social and cultural anthropology

First assessments 2019



The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous, academically challenging and balanced programme of education designed to prepare students aged 16 to 19 for success at university and life beyond. The DP aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable, inquiring, caring and compassionate, and to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness and the attitudes necessary to respect and evaluate a range of viewpoints. Approaches to teaching and learning (ATL) are deliberate strategies, skills and attitudes that permeate the teaching and learning environment. In the DP students develop skills from five ATL categories: thinking, research, social, self-management and communication.

To ensure both breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, students must choose at least one subject from five groups: 1) their best language, 2) additional language(s), 3) social sciences, 4) sciences, and 5) mathematics. Students may choose either an arts subject from group 6, or a second subject from groups 1 to 5. At least three and not more than four subjects are taken at higher level (240 recommended teaching hours), while the remaining are taken at standard level (150 recommended teaching hours). In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, activity, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.

These IB DP subject briefs illustrate the following key course components..

- I. Course description and aims
- II. Curriculum model overview

- III. Assessment model
- IV. Sample questions



I. Course description and aims

Social and cultural anthropology is the comparative study of culture and human societies and the exploration of the general principles of social and cultural life. The course places emphasis on comparative perspectives that make cultural assumptions explicit, and contributes to an understanding of contemporary real-world issues such as war and conflict, the environment, poverty, injustice, and human rights.

Social and cultural anthropology is distinct from other social sciences in its research tradition of participant observation and in-depth, empirical study of social groups. Areas of anthropological inquiry in this course are: belonging; classifying the world; communication, expression and technology; conflict; development; health, illness and healing; movement, time and space; production, exchange and consumption; and the body. These areas are explored through the key anthropological concepts of belief and knowledge, change, culture, identity, materiality, power, social relations, society, and symbolism.

The course engages students with the concepts, methods, language and theories of the discipline. At the heart is the practice of anthropologists, and the insights they produce in the form of ethnographic material. Through authentic anthropological practice, students engage with anthropological approaches and develop critical, reflexive knowledge. It contributes a distinctive approach to intercultural awareness and understanding, which embodies the essence of an IB education, and fosters the development of globally aware, internationally minded, and ethically sensitive citizens.

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

1. explore the characteristics and complexities of social and cultural life
2. develop new ways of thinking about the world that demonstrate the interconnectedness of local, regional and global processes and issues
3. foster an awareness of how cultural and social contexts inform the production of anthropological knowledge

4. develop as critical thinkers who are open-minded, reflective and ethically sensitive
5. apply anthropological understanding in order to reflect on their own lives and experiences, as well as those of others, transforming their actions in the world.

II. Curriculum model overview

Syllabus component	Teaching hours	
	SL	HL
Engaging with anthropology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language of anthropology • The practice of anthropology • Anthropological thinking Plus HL extension areas	30	45
Engaging with ethnography <p>SL: one from each of the following three groups. HL: one from each of the following three groups and a fourth from any group.</p> Group 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classifying the world • Health, illness and healing • The body Group 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging • Communication, expression and technology • Movement, time and space Group 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict • Development • Production, exchange and consumption 	90	135

Internal assessment Engaging in anthropological practice SL: Limited fieldwork (observation, second data collection and critical reflection) HL: Fieldwork	30	60
Total teaching hours	150	240

III. Assessment model

Having followed the course at SL or at HL, students will be expected to do the following.

1. Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
 - anthropological concepts and theories
 - anthropological research methods and ethics
 - a range of appropriately identified ethnographic materials
 - specified areas of inquiry

2. Application and analysis

- Recognize anthropological concepts in ethnographic materials
- Use ethnographic examples and anthropological concepts to formulate an argument
- Apply anthropological knowledge and understanding to reflect on the “big” anthropological questions
- Analyse ethnographic materials in terms of the viewpoint of the anthropologist, research methods, concepts and ethics
- Use anthropological theories to formulate an argument
- In the **internal assessment** task, engage in the practice of anthropology, including recognition of the position of the observer; select appropriate methods; interpret methods; interpret data; consider ethical issues

3. Synthesis and evaluation

- Compare and contrast characteristics of specific cultures and societies
- Discuss a range of ethnographic materials and critically evaluate them utilizing appropriate conceptual frameworks
- In the **internal assessment** task, justify methodological choices and critically reflect on the practice of anthropology
- At **HL only**, to demonstrate understanding and use of anthropological theories to evaluate ethnographic materials.

4. Selection and use of a variety of skills

- Identify an appropriate context, anthropological concept and research question for investigation
- Select and demonstrate the use of methods and skills, appropriate to a specific anthropological research question, to gather, present, analyse, interpret and reflect on ethnographic data

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)		Weighting of final grade (%)	
		SL	HL	SL	HL
External		3	4.5	80	75
Paper 1 (Engaging with anthropology)	Three questions based on unseen text. One question from 6 “big questions” HL: One question on anthropological ethics based on one of two stimuli	1.5	2	40	30
Paper 2 (Engaging with ethnography)	One question requiring students to connect a key concept, area of inquiry and real-world issue. SL: One question from one area of inquiry other than the one used in section A. HL: Two questions from two areas of inquiry other than the one used in section A.	1.5	2.5	40	45
Internal		30	60	20	25
Field work	SL: 1. Observation report; 2. Extension of initial fieldwork 3. Second fieldwork data collection and analysis; 4. Critical reflection HL: 1. Proposal form; 2. Critical reflection; 3. Research report and reflection	30	60	20	25

IV. Sample questions

Paper one SL/HL: How are we the same as and different from each other? Discuss with references to at least two sources of ethnographic material and examples from the passage.

Paper two, section A SL/HL: With reference to ethnographic material from one area of inquiry you have studied, discuss how either symbolism or materiality or society helps you to understand one of the following issues that is grounded in a contemporary, real-world example.

- Inequality
- Violence
- Poverty
- Mobility
- Environment

Paper two, section B SL/HL: Discuss how the body is constructed through either symbolism or social relations.

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For more on how the DP prepares students for success at university, visit: www.ibo.org/recognition or email: recognition@ibo.org.