"I was apprehensive about starting a course that wasn’t purely scientific after the last two years of Medicine, but I am glad that I took the leap of faith as I am loving the diversity and enthusiasm of the lecturers, and the development of my way of thinking; critically and creatively."

"In order to treat a person you need to understand their culture, beliefs and background. It is essential as a good doctor to gain trust from your patients so that they are more likely to comply and to feel involved in their treatment. Studying Medical Anthropology as an IBSc has allowed me to immerse myself into different cultures and relate to aspects of health in a holistic manner. It has helped me to consider the political, social, economic climates of health care in different environments and practical dimensions."

"Already in term one, the IBSc in Medical Anthropology has given me a different perspective on Western biomedicine and social life itself. Studying anthropology is completely different from studying preclinical medicine as you are actively encouraged to formulate your own opinions and you are taught to take a critical approach to everything you read. This new way of learning and thinking about different, previously untouched concepts has been quite a challenge but has made me use my brain in a whole new way, and this new way of anthropological thinking is something I hope to carry with me through the rest of my medical career."

There are no prerequisites other than successful completion of years 1 and 2 of the MBBS programme. No previous academic knowledge of social anthropology is required, though an interest in experiencing ways of thinking beyond scientific biomedicine may be an advantage.

For further enquiries

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www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/studying/ibsc
Do you want to prepare yourself for working in the real world as a medical practitioner in diverse cultural contexts and with different patient populations?

How about exploring a wide range of healing practices that include everything from shamanism and witchcraft to reproductive technologies and maternal health?

Would you like to have a chance to pursue a dissertation research project of your choice?

Want to immerse yourself in a different world of knowledge and understanding?

Then come and study the IBSc in Medical Anthropology and take a journey of discovery to look at medical training and what it means to be a doctor with fresh eyes.

About the Programme

The Integrated Bachelor of Science is uniquely designed to provide medical students with techniques for gaining cross-cultural understanding through specially designed courses including ‘Clinical Ethnography’ and ‘Anthropology for Medical Students’ to provide them with lifelong learning skills that they can use throughout their medical career. Students will be taught key concepts in Medical Anthropology to examine how health and well being are socially and culturally constituted in contexts of cultural diversity.

We examine issues such as gender and the body, ritual and religion, new health technologies, global health politics, and barriers and obstacles to health and healing. Beyond this core syllabus, students are able to select from across the full range of disciplinary options in the topic, ranging from social and cultural anthropology, evolutionary anthropology and human ecology.

Medical Anthropology at UCL provides a comprehensive and innovative teaching, learning and research environment with an active student society. The department offers one of the best and most exciting programmes of broad-based anthropology for graduate and undergraduate study in the UK. We are committed to developing medical anthropology at the intersection of, and in dialogue with, clinical practice, primary care, public health, psychiatry, demography, genomic science and technology.

Aims & Objectives

To examine the social and cultural context of health, well being and a variety of diverse medical practices from a cross-cultural perspective.

To investigate the political, social, economic and practical dimensions of health care in clinical and non-clinical settings.

To explore health care delivery in international environments through critical examination of NGO work and health policy.

To consider the barriers and obstacles to health in a comparative way in order to understand illness and disease experiences in the context of healing and curing, especially in circumstances of cultural diversity.

To introduce students to relevant theories and methods within anthropology, including gender, class, kinship, the body, agency, risk, subjectivity and personhood.

To support student development of skills in critical evaluation of evidence and to encourage oral and written expressions of informed opinions about health as understood from both biomedical and nonbiomedical perspectives.

Programme Structure

2.0 units of compulsory subjects and a further 2.0 units of the student’s choice.

The course ANTH3036, “Anthropology for Medical Students”, is exclusive to the intercalated students taking IBSc Medical Anthropology. It is designed as a ‘link course’ to the other anthropology options and focuses on those issues of particular interest to medical students. It is assessed through a dissertation on a subject of the student’s choice. Most other courses are assessed by examination and/or essays.

Compulsory Courses

Medical Anthropology ANTH3007
Anthropology for Medical Students ANTH3036
Introduction to Social Anthropology ANTH1005A

Further information about the programme and optional courses is available through our website:

www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/studying/ibsc