

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Subject Brief

Individuals and societies:

Social and cultural anthropology – Higher level

First assessments 2010 – Last assessments 2017

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.

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) experimental 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, action, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.

These IB DP subject briefs illustrate four key course components.

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

- III. Assessment model
- IV. Sample questions



I. Course description and aims

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.

The aims of the social and cultural anthropology higher level courses are to:

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

II. Curriculum model overview

Component	Recommended teaching hours
Part 1: What is anthropology? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core terms and ideas in anthropology • The construction and use of ethnographic accounts • Methods and data collection 	240
Part 2: Social and cultural organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals, groups and society • Societies and cultures in contact • Kinship as an organizing principle • Political organization • Economic organization and the environment • Systems of knowledge • Belief systems and practices • Moral systems 	
Part 3: Theoretical perspectives in anthropology	
Part 4: Fieldwork	

III. Assessment model

Having followed the social and cultural anthropology higher level course, students will be expected to demonstrate the following.

Knowledge and understanding

- 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
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theoretical perspectives in anthropology and theory related to these theoretical perspectives.

Application and interpretation

- 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
- Use anthropological theory or theoretical perspectives to formulate an argument.

Synthesis and evaluation

- Compare and contrast characteristics of specific societies and cultures
- Demonstrate anthropological insight and imagination
- Recognize theoretical perspectives or theories in anthropological materials and use these to evaluate the materials.

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

- 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.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)	Weighting of final grade (%)
External			75
Paper 1	Three compulsory questions based on an unseen text, covering aspects drawn from the whole syllabus	1	20
Paper 2	Ten questions based on part 2 of the syllabus. Students choose two questions to be answered in essay form	2	35
Paper 3	Five questions based on theoretical perspectives in anthropology. Students choose one question to be answered in essay form	1	20
Internal			25
Written commentary	A report of fieldwork conducted by the student		25

IV. Sample questions

- Using one or more theoretical perspectives explain how the Toba's beliefs about death and disease were an expression of their work conditions.
- Show how one ritual may be understood in a variety of ways.
- Choose one anthropologist and discuss how his/her theoretical perspective(s) informs his/her ethnography.

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