CAREERS IN BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

HUMAN ORIGINS, EVOLUTIONARY HISTORY, AND HUMAN VARIATION
Study of human beings and human behavior that considers biology and culture.

Biological anthropology includes:

- primatology
- paleoanthropology
- growth and development
- genetics
- osteology
- human reproduction
- forensic science
- nutrition

Traditional opportunities are in teaching.

Emergence of nontraditional opportunities are primarily in biomedical research.
Teaching at a community college (teaching focus)

Teaching in a university (research focus)
  • Paleoanthropology
  • Primatology

Research
  • Medical, nursing, and public health schools
  • Medical genetics research
  • Government research: biomedicine and public health
  • Private industry: research for profit

Museums (collections, education, and research)

Public health and international nutrition

Kinesiology and human biology

Independent consulting

Journalism: bringing science to the public

Forensic science

Source: A Guide to Careers in Physical Anthropology

Alan S. Ryan
BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY-GENETICS

Forensics

• Analyzing crime scene DNA

Population genetics

• Analysis of ancient DNA
• Analysis using mtDNA or Y-chromosomal DNA to study human migration patterns
  • Useful for identifying when peopling of certain areas of the world occurred, such as providing a picture of how the Americas were peopled.
Approaching anthropological fieldwork from a neuroscience perspective

“Laboratory research that is ecologically and ethnographically valid... field research that draws on... cognitive science and human development.”

Mixed methods of ethnography, psychology, and neuroimaging
CURRENT “NEUROANTHROPOLOGY”

The Encultured Brain

• Greg Downey and Daniel H. Lende

Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology

• Emma Cohen
• Robin Dunbar

Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior

• Center for Culture and Health
• Center for Neurobehavioral Genetics
• Cultural Neuropsychology Initiative
THE ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION OF IDENTIFYING HUMAN REMAINS THAT ARE LARGELY SKELETAL, BADLY DECOMPOSING OR OTHERWISE UNIDENTIFIED IN THE LEGAL AND OFTEN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS USING THE SCIENCE OF BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY.

Masters Degree or Doctorate Degree
- Usually in Physical or Biological Anthropology

Academic and research institutions
Medical Examiner’s Office
Non-government organizations
- Mass graves

Usually not employed on a full-time basis
Competitive field to enter
PALEOANTHROPOLOgy

- Why become a paleoanthropologist?
- Positions: Academic to Museums
- Requirements
- From undergraduate to college professor, a case study in the difficulties of succeeding in academia.
  - Undergraduate
  - Graduate School Applications
  - Graduate School
  - Job Search
  - First Job
  - Professorship
- The Field: marketing yourself and your project (international requirements (“quirk of biogeography”), specialty positions)

Source: A Guide to Careers in Physical Anthropology
Alan S. Ryan
EPIDEMIOLOGISTS

Investigate the causes of disease and other public health problems to prevent them from spreading or from happening again.

Most positions as an epidemiologist require at least a master’s degree from an accredited institution in the area of public health. Coursework in epidemiology includes public health, biology, and biostatistics.

Many states report shortages of qualified workers for applied epidemiology positions.
“Employment opportunities in biomedicine or public health at a federal institution are an untapped resource for physical anthropologists” (Ryan, 2002).

Job growth is expected at 24%. Overall, Epidemiologists should have good job prospects. In 2010 the median pay was $63,010. (BLS.gov)

They work in health departments, offices, universities, laboratories, or in the field. They spend most of their time studying data and reports in a safe lab or office setting.