

Human, Social and Political Sciences Tripos

Social Anthropology Part IIB

Guide to papers 2024-25



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Department of Social
Anthropology

How to select your papers and track

The link to register your paper choices and an overview of the paper combinations within each HSPS track are available here: www.hspcs.cam.ac.uk/track-options. We ask you to sign up by **Friday 17 May 2024**. Please ensure that you discuss your choices with your Director of Studies prior to submitting online.

Due to the number of options available on the Tripos, we cannot ensure that every option available to you will be clash-free. Whilst the Department of Social Anthropology works very hard to ensure that there are no clashes on core papers for single and joint tracks, the same is not possible for optional or borrowed papers offered outside Social Anthropology, where unavoidable clashes may occur. If you find that your choice of papers does clash, please speak to your Director of Studies for advice.

Studying Single Track Social Anthropology in Part IIB

In Part IIB, students take two core papers in advanced social anthropology and choose two other papers. For 2024-25 this includes a Social Anthropology dissertation, a SAN4 **ethnographic area paper** not yet studied in IIA, or an **optional paper** (SAN8-15). Social Anthropology single track students can also take the Paper 5 from the History and Philosophy of Sciences Tripos (HPS5) or Paper J9 from the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Tripos.

Paper one:	SAN5
Paper two:	SAN6
Paper three ⁽¹⁾ :	Choose one from: SAN8, SAN10, SAN14 <i>or</i> SAN Dissertation ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾
Paper four ⁽¹⁾ :	Choose one from: SAN4a, SAN4b, SAN4c, SAN4d, SAN8, SAN10, SAN14; POL13, POL17; SOC5-15; HPS5 <i>or</i> J9

Key to IIB single track Social Anthropology

- 1) A candidate shall not offer in any Part of the Tripos a paper that they have previously offered in another University examination.
- 2) A candidate may substitute for one paper a dissertation on a subject approved by the Head of the Department of Social Anthropology.
- 3) A candidate for Part IIB shall offer four papers, of which at least three shall be assessed by written examination, either in part or in whole.
- 4) Candidates for Part IIB who have taken Part IIA in the HSPS Tripos may not change their subject tracks between Part IIA and IIB, unless changing from a joint track to one of the single subjects within it.

Studying Social Anthropology in a Joint Track

Students currently taking a joint track degree in Social Anthropology and another subject can continue in Part IIB with either the same joint track or can specialise by switching to a single track in one of the two subjects studied so far. For those continuing with their joint track, the online system will allow you to make your choices as follows:

Social Anthropology and Politics

Paper one:	Choose one from: SAN5 <i>or</i> SAN6
Paper two ⁽¹⁾ :	Choose one from: SAN4a, SAN4b, SAN4c, SAN4d, SAN5, SAN6, SAN8, SAN10, SAN14 <i>or</i> SAN/POL Dissertation ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾
Papers three and four ⁽¹⁾ :	Choose two from: POL6, POL10-22 <i>or</i> SAN/POL Dissertation ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Key to IIB joint track Social Anthropology and Politics

- 1) A candidate shall not offer in any Part of the Tripos a paper that they have previously offered in another University examination.
- 2) A candidate may substitute for one paper a dissertation on a subject within the field of Social Anthropology or Politics approved by the Head of the relevant Department.
- 3) A candidate for Part IIB shall offer four papers, of which at least three shall be assessed by written examination, either in part or in whole.
- 4) Candidates for Part IIB who have taken Part IIA in the HSPS Tripos may not change their subject tracks between Part IIA and IIB, unless changing from a joint track to one of the single subjects within it.

Social Anthropology and Religious Studies (Modern Religion)

Paper one:	SAN5
Paper two ⁽¹⁾ :	Choose one from: SAN4a, SAN4b, SAN4c, SAN4d, SAN6, SAN8, SAN10, SAN14 <i>or</i> SAN/THEO Dissertation ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾
Paper three ⁽¹⁾ :	Choose one from: B1a, B1b, B1c, B1d, C1a, C1b, C1c, C1d, C2-12 <i>or</i> SAN/THEO Dissertation ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾
Paper four:	Choose one from: C2-26 <i>or</i> SAN/THEO Dissertation ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Key to IIB joint track Social Anthropology and Religious Studies

- 1) A candidate shall not offer in any Part of the Tripos a paper that they have previously offered in another University examination.
- 2) A candidate may substitute for one paper a dissertation on a subject within the field of Social Anthropology or Theology approved by the Head of the relevant Department.
- 3) A candidate for Part IIB shall offer four papers, of which at least three shall be assessed by written examination, either in part or in whole.
- 4) Candidates for Part IIB who have taken Part IIA in the HSPS Tripos may not change their subject tracks between Part IIA and IIB, unless changing from a joint track to one of the single subjects within it.

Sociology and Social Anthropology

Papers one and two ⁽¹⁾ :	Choose two from: SOC5-15 or SOC/SAN Dissertation ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾
Paper three:	Choose one from: SAN5 or SAN6
Paper four ⁽¹⁾ :	Choose one from: SAN4a, SAN4b, SAN4c, SAN4d, SAN5, SAN6, SAN8, SAN10, SAN14 or SOC/SAN Dissertation ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Key to IIB joint track Sociology and Social Anthropology

- 1) A candidate shall not offer in any Part of the Tripos a paper that they have previously offered in another University examination.
- 2) A candidate may substitute for one paper a dissertation on a subject within the field of Sociology or Social Anthropology approved by the Head of the relevant Department.
- 3) A candidate for Part IIB shall offer four papers, of which at least three shall be assessed by written examination, either in part or in whole.
- 4) Candidates for Part IIB who have taken Part IIA in the HSPS Tripos may not change their subject tracks between Part IIA and IIB, unless changing from a joint track to one of the single subjects within it.

Our Core IIB Papers

SAN5 Ethical life and the anthropology of the subject

Course Coordinator: Prof Joel Robbins



This paper introduces students to advanced work in anthropology, cross-cultural ethnography, and social theory, including areas of shared interest and/or of controversy between anthropology, theology, psychoanalysis and moral philosophy. The scope of this paper includes anthropological perspectives on ethics, values, and the place of ideas of the moral in anthropological theory; the anthropology of the emotions, the senses, feelings, and affect; the use of the concept of belief in cross-cultural ethnography and analysis, and the anthropology of a world religion; and anthropological approaches to the study of the self, the subject, personhood, interiority, and subjectivity.

For more information and a course guide: [SAN5](#)

SAN6 Power, economy and social transformation

Course Coordinator: Prof Uradyn Bulag



By engaging with the theories of value, property, labour, and domination so central to the Enlightenment and Marxist conceptions of political economy, the teaching for this paper focuses on anthropology's contributions in providing new perspectives on these classic concerns, as well as developing wholly new ways to understand such world-changing phenomena as ecological catastrophes and environmental justice, the collapse of 'traditional' workplace life and the rise of platform economies. Topics covered will normally include theories of the state; colonialism and decolonisation; indigeneity; nationalism and neo-nationalism; populism; the comparative study of Western and non-Western capitalisms; anti-capitalism and New Social Movements; labour migration and the workplace; precarity, new digital platform economies; and state and non-state systems of expansion, domination and resistance.

For more information and a course guide: [SAN6](#)

SAN4 Ethnographic Papers

Please note that SAN4 Ethnographic Area papers are all seminar taught and are capped to enable the best possible learning environment for the whole seminar group. If more students opt for an Ethnographic area than can be accommodated, a lottery will be held after the paper registration deadline has passed. You will be contacted by a member of the admin team in due course and asked to register your choice for a second paper for your track.

SAN4a: Africa

Course Coordinators: Prof Harri Englund and Dr Michael Degani

This is a paper on the anthropology of and from Africa, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa. Through a series of seminars, we will examine and critically discuss a range of themes, such as: the relationship between African anthropology and colonialism; race and the 'invention' of Africa; diasporas and migration; Christianity and Islam; healing and medicine; politics and human rights; economic reforms and their effects; popular culture and youth; gender and sexuality; land; violence and memory; cities and infrastructure; energy and climate. We will explore both historical sources as well as contemporary research.

For more information and a course guide: [SAN4a](#)



SAN4b: South America

Course Coordinator: Dr Natalia Buitron



The course covers material from urban Latin America, the Andes and Amazonia. We will draw on South American ethnographies to explore broad anthropological themes such as ontological difference, nature and culture, post- and de-coloniality of knowledge and politics, activist anthropology, resource extraction, race, precarity and urban life.

One of the most distinctive features of South America as a region is its highly politicized nature, so much of the paper situates itself within political anthropology, covering ethnographic material from across the region. In student-led seminars we examine politics viewed 'from below', namely from the perspective of indigenous people and peoples, women, peasants, the working classes and the poor. We ask how and on what basis people organise to contest dominant

political narratives and deal with themes such as the nature of democracy and citizenship; the role of violence and terror in the political imaginary and people's lives; urbanism and the city under neoliberalism; religion and gender. In a series of seminars on Amazonia, we will explore questions of human-nature relations, the environment, extractivism, indigeneity, the body, kinship, and shamanism.

Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to view and discuss a series of contemporary films from the region and relate them to their reading of the ethnographic material.

For more information and a course guide: [SAN4b](#)

SAN4c: Middle East

Course Coordinator: Prof Yael Navaro

This is a paper on the historical anthropology of the Middle East with a focus, primarily, on post-Ottoman and post-colonial Syria, Lebanon, Palestine/Israel, Iraq, Turkey, Jordan and Egypt. Through a series of lectures and seminars, we examine, study and critically discuss historical and anthropological works on the following themes: Orientalism and cultures of representing the Middle East; colonial and post-colonial state practices; nation-building and contested geographies; gender, sexuality and intimacy; cultures of 'modernity'; political cultures and subjectivities; Islam, secularism and the governmentalization of religion; pious communities, 'ordinary Islam', and Islamist movements; political violence and memory; minorities and minoritization practices; inter-communal relations and 'sectarianism'; and media, popular culture and literature, among others. Lectures and seminars will be based on ethnographic and historical sources, including visual materials.



For more information and a course guide: [SAN4c](#)

SAN4d: South Asia

Course Coordinator: Dr Perveez Mody



This paper acquaints students with the richness and diversity of the anthropological study of South Asia, focusing on the Indian sub-continent and the countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. It explores both the historically well-developed anthropology of the region and much contemporary research. Its concerns include an understanding of the history of the region, theories of caste; pilgrimage, devotional experience in Hinduism; popular and politicised religion and religious nationalism; Sufism and Islam, syncretism and religious reform; also gender, sexuality and kinship; the significance and legacy of key social and political thinkers such as Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar; social movements among 'tribal' and 'subaltern' groups;

democracy, governance, communal and religious conflict; class, consumption and the individual and the South Asian diaspora. The paper is taught through seminars and some lectures and film screenings, in a single integrated series of seminars running through all three terms.

For more information and a course guide: [SAN4d](#)

IIB Optional Papers

SAN8: Environment, development and indigeneity

Course Coordinators: Dr Liana Chua and Dr Natalia Buitron

This paper explores the entanglements between development, the environment and indigeneity. It explores how development in multiple guises physically, politically and imaginatively (re)shapes environments, what its more-than-human effects are, and how different parties experience and respond to such transformations.

Key themes include: the political-economic and discursive context for development; inequality; the politics of land and dispossession; property relations; 'resourcification'; 'the Anthropocene'; biodiversity loss; climate change; environmentalism and conservation; more-than-human/multispecies worlds; indigenous rights; resistance and collaboration; justice; energy ethics and politics; climate change mitigation.

For more information and a course guide: [SAN8](#)



SAN10 The Anthropology of Post-Socialist Societies

Course Coordinator: Prof David Sneath



The paper explores current transformations in a variety of contexts including the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Mongolia, Tanzania, Guinea, and Ethiopia. Although the majority of these countries and regions have abandoned socialism for different political and economic paths, China has embraced a market economy while remaining a party-state. This paper explores current transformations as well as the relation between change and continuity in a number of late-socialist and post-socialist societies. It draws upon case studies from a range of contexts that offer a rich field for ethnographic and theoretical exploration of the complexities of change, memory, identity, and nationhood.

For more information and a course guide: [SAN10](#)

SAN14 The Anthropology of History, Memory and Time

Course Coordinator: Prof Yael Navaro

This paper will trace anthropological ways of addressing questions about historicity, temporality, and memory. We will explore distinctively anthropological methods in the study of the past. Is 'history' the right rubric for ethnographic queries into people's engagements with their past? Such a framing question in the paper will go hand-in-hand with an in-depth survey of the anthropology of time. What kind of a repertoire have anthropologists produced in their study of people's distinctive and diverse temporalities, and how can anthropological concepts of time be put into critical engagement with those taken for granted by academic historians? The paper will include distinctive ethnographies from across the world that imaginatively expose the place of 'memory' in people's engagements with their past. Anthropological ways of approaching 'archives' will be a component of the course, as well, including emergent archival theory which expands more conventional approaches to 'the archive.'



For more information and a course guide: [SAN14](#)

Social Anthropology Dissertation

Dissertation Coordinator: Dr Liana Chua



Students may offer a dissertation of up to 10,000 words in place of a paper; they choose a topic and discuss supervision, a supervisor and fieldwork issues with their Director of Studies. For many students the opportunity to study a topic of their choosing in depth is the most rewarding part of the Tripos. Students are advised to start considering a topic and supervisor for their dissertation in the Easter term of their second year; Directors of Studies can help with these decisions. Many students do research for their dissertations over the summer vacation before the start of the third year. Students doing a Social Anthropology dissertation must submit in early Easter term a dissertation fieldwork form (FORM1) which needs to be signed and approved by both the Directors of Studies and Dissertation Supervisor. For other topics please follow the guidelines on the other Department's

websites. Titles are required to be submitted before the division of Michaelmas term in IIB. A precise date for dissertation titles submission will be set and communicated to students ahead of the start of Michaelmas. In addition to individual supervision, workshops will be provided to assist students with the planning of their dissertation which is submitted in the first week of Easter term.

The Social Anthropology dissertation process is clearly set out on the [Dissertation](#) webpage.

List of IIB Papers available in 2024-25

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

SAN5	Ethical life & the anthropology of the subject	Prof Joel Robbins
SAN6	Power, economy & social transformation	Prof Uradyn Bulag
SAN4	The anthropology of an ethnographic area: SAN4a Africa SAN4b South America SAN4c Middle East SAN4d South Asia	Prof Englund & Dr Degani Dr Natalia Buitron Prof Yael Navaro Dr Perveez Mody
Part II Optional Papers:		
SAN8	Environment, development and indigeneity	Dr Chua & Dr Buitron
SAN10	Post-socialism	Prof David Sneath
SAN14	The Anthropology of history, memory and time	Prof Yael Navaro
Dissertation	Up to 10,000 words on a topic chosen by the student and approved by the Head of Department	Dr Liana Chua

POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

POL6	Statistics and Methods in Politics and International Relations
POL10	The History of Political Thought from c.1700-1890
POL11	Political Philosophy and the History of Political Thought since c.1890
POL12	Politics of Conflict and Peace
POL13	British and European Politics
POL14	International Security
POL15	The Politics of Africa
POL16	The Politics of China
POL17	Politics and Religion
POL18	Politics of the International Economy
POL19	Themes and issues in Politics and International Relations
POL20	Politics of Latin America
POL21	Politics of the Future
POL22	Politics and Public Policy

SOCIOLOGY

SOC5	Statistics and methods
SOC6	Advanced social theory
SOC7	Media, culture and society
SOC8	Revolution, empire and exile
SOC9	Global capitalism
SOC10	Gender
SOC11	Racism, race and ethnicity

SOC12	Empire, colonialism, imperialism
SOC13	Health, medicine and society
SOC15	Criminology, sentencing, and the penal system

THEOLOGY

B1a	Intermediate Hebrew
B1b	Intermediate New Testament Greek
B1c	Intermediate Sanskrit
B1d	Intermediate Qur'anic Arabic
C1a	Advanced Hebrew
C1b	Advanced New Testament Greek
C1c	Advanced Sanskrit
C1d	Advanced Qur'anic Arabic
C2	The Five Scrolls
C3	New Testament Christology
C4	Topic in the History of Christianity
C5	Topic in Christian Theology: Charity
C8	The Jewish Tradition and Christianity: from Antiquity to Modernity
C9	Islam II
C10	Hinduism and Buddhism II
C11	Truth, God and Metaphysics
C12	Theology and the Natural Sciences: God and Creatures
C13	Judaism in the Persian Period
C14	Christianity, Hellenism and Empire
C15	Contemporary Christian Theology
C16	The Holy Spirit and the Christian Experience
C19	Self and Salvation in Indian and Western Thought
C20	A Topic in the History of Christianity: Councils in Context
C21	The end of the world: Anthropological Case Studies
C22	Philosophy, Ethics and the Other
C24	World Christianities: Decolonising Christendom: the Complex Legacies of Global Christianity
C26	The Play of Imagination

HSPS Administration

Administrators

If you have any queries about a particular subject, or need to notify us of any changes, please contact the administrator:

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