

NEW MAJOR

One of CLS' new majors — applied anthropology — engages students using scientific study of cultures to solve social problems

Cultural anthropology is the study of contemporary people and culture. What better way to learn about people than to help them solve problems?

That's what the new cultural anthropology emphasis major approved in April will challenge students to do.

Students will go to lectures and do readings, but they'll also head into the field — engaging people as locally as La Crosse's Kane Street Community Gardens to as far as overseas.

The Archaeology and Anthropology Department has been building relationships with area organizations struggling with cultural change and are interested in assistance. Students will be interviewing, surveying, applying for grants for organizations, and more, says Christine Hippert, associate professor and anthropology program coordinator.

At the core, students will learn about diverse practices in different cultures in food, medicine, language, politics, religion and more. Then, they will learn how to apply cross-cultural studies in anthropology to present-day social problems. A senior thesis will involve working on a challenging community project.

STRONG JOB DEMAND, POPULARITY AMONG STUDENTS

While cultural anthropologists can be found worldwide in education to healthcare and foreign service, it's a largely overlooked field, says Hippert.

US News & World Report ranked anthropology seventh in its Top Ten Best jobs in science in 2017. At UWL, enrollment has doubled over the last decade with a high of 85 students. That led to the cultural anthropology emphasis, approved in spring 2017. By mid summer nine students had already declared it.

UWL senior Elvia Valles was one of the first. She has always been curious about cultures and languages, and it lends to her international career goals.

Hippert is proud of Valles who is gaining worldly work experience this summer as an intern at Latin American News Digest in Washington, D.C.



UWL senior Elvia Valles is double majoring in cultural anthropology emphasis and sociology. She found out about a summer internship for Latin American News Digest from Christine Hippert, Anthropology. Hippert and Adriana Perez Candia, Global Cultures & Languages, were her references. "I owe it all to them for being great professors!" says Valles.



UWL started a new Archaeological Studies: Cultural Anthropology Emphasis in April. Christine Hippert, associate professor of anthropology, developed the new major in consultation with Chair of Archaeology and Anthropology Tim McAndrews, while working with department faculty.

OTHER NEW CLS MINORS AND PROGRAMS

- » Digital Media Studies and Design Minor
- » Hmong and Hmong American Studies Certificate
- » Leadership Development Minor

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

Students majoring in cultural anthropology are interested in pursuing careers that solve social problems, such as developing policies and programs to eliminate poverty and inequality, or providing culturally relevant health care services.

She is researching, summarizing, and translating news articles from Latin American media, including topics such as women's marches in Uruguay, the anniversary of a town massacre in Oaxaca, Mexico, and immigrants going to Mexico and Mennonites living in Mexico.

Valles likes discovering and sharing topics people don't necessarily like to talk about. "People always talk about immigrants coming from Mexico, but never mention those who are going to Mexico," she notes.

In the past, several students have used their anthropology minors to help them gain employment. Hippert anticipates the new major will offer the same.

"More and more companies and organizations are hiring anthropology students because they know how to build trust with people who are different from them; they value people's insight and see change as a process that requires input from multiple groups — those with and without power — because they know that context matters," she says.