## Week 2 – The Four Fields of Anthropology

### Overview – Students will be introduced to the four subfields of anthropology. There are four generally recognized subfields:

* Archaeology—Archaeologists study human culture by analyzing the tools and other objects people have made/used. Archaeology can give us access to the earliest humans on up to the modern day.
* Biological anthropology—Biological anthropologists examine the relationship between the human body, the environment, and culture. Includes primatology, which helps us understand how we are similar and different compared to other animals.
* Cultural anthropology—Cultural anthropologists study how people directly by watching them, talking with them, and/or participating in the activities of a group of people. Information can be gathered directly by interacting with people, but can also be collected using questionnaires or even historical documents. Direct interaction is often considered the best way to learn about people, though.
* Linguistic anthropology—Linguistic anthropologists focus on how language is used by humans to communicate with each other. This includes the literal structure of language as well as how the use of language changes according to social context (e.g., the relationship between dialects and social status; language changes across generations).

Anthropologists also distinguish applied anthropology, which is the application of anthropology to solve real world problems. For example, anthropologists may work to improve the health of a local community by improving sanitation and boiling water, or help a community learn new farming techniques that will improve yields while also improving conservation.

## Competencies (Unit/Module objectives)

1. Be able to identify the four subfields of anthropology
2. Outline a significant case study derived from each subfield
3. Identify significant faculty members in each subfield from MU’s Anthropology Department
4. Explain the sort of knowledge and information each subfield can provide

## Path

* Attend lecture
* Read Kedia and Bennet (2005)