

Comments on PAR/HST objections

By: ANT Senator

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While we disagree with statements from the History and Philosophy Departments regarding the inclusion of ANT 207 in the Historical and Philosophical Approaches component of the Approaches and Perspectives University Studies curriculum, we appreciate the broader need for faculty governance of this curriculum, and are therefore, happy to enter into this dialogue. ANT 207 is uniquely positioned to address the rationale of the University Studies requirement Historical and Philosophical Approaches. Specific rationales for this section include “promotion of student understandings of change through time” “employ analytical skills using data and other evidence to explain such change” and “critically analyze theories about religious phenomena, philosophical traditions, and historical events.” ANT 207 accomplishes these goals by 1. Providing students with a broad knowledge of human response to and cultivation of cultural and environmental changes—these transcend shifts in government and social structure and deal directly with large scale issues including the impact of climate, resource availability, and landscape on human social and philosophical institutions. 2. This knowledge is achieved through the analysis of data, specifically archaeological or material remnants of human occupations. The lab section of the course, which the History and Philosophy Departments suggest disqualify ANT 207 from this category, was not submitted for University Studies because it is exclusively methodological and does not fulfill the Student Learning Outcomes. 3. ANT 207 puts students in a unique position to critically analyze theories about religious phenomena, philosophy, and events by introducing students to these facets of culture in populations that lack or had little preserved written records—these are particularly prevalent in non-Western societies. ANT 207 should, therefore, be admitted to Historical and Philosophical Approaches component of the University Studies curriculum. It fits the general requirements of the rationale and will add substantial diversity to courses currently offered within this section. Finally, the question was posed: how many thematic clusters should one course fit? The answer to that is simple: as many as the clusters can reasonably accommodate, and ANT 207 has a wide enough scope in terms of coverage that it can easily be accommodated in both categories.