

ANTHROPOLOGY OPTIONAL SYLLABUS FOR UPSC CSE MAINS PDF DOWNLOAD

UPSC Anthropology Optional Syllabus

The UPSC Anthropology Syllabus 2025 comprises a comprehensive study element that emphasizes both the practical and theoretical aspects of Anthropology, on which the candidate is likely to be questioned regarding their knowledge. The syllabus is divided into two parts, each consisting of a separate paper that focuses on a distinct area. The UPSC Anthropology Paper would provide 3 hours to attempt the paper. Each paper would consist of objective answer-type questions, and there is no negative marking.

- Paper I of the Anthropology optional is essentially the foundational and theoretical aspects of the discipline. The areas discussed in Paper I are: Physical Anthropology, Anthropological theories, and Research methods.
- Paper 2 of the Anthropology optional focuses on the applied aspects and Indian context of Anthropology, including qualities of Indian Anthropology, tribal issues, and contemporary work done in Anthropology, etc.

UPSC Anthropology Paper Overview

Sl. No.	UPSC IAS Mains Papers	Subject	Mark
1	Paper VI	Optional Subject Paper-I	250
2	Paper VII	Optional Subject Paper-II	250
Total			500
Time Duration			3 hours

UPSC Anthropology Optional Syllabus: Paper 1

UPSC Anthropology Paper 1 Syllabus	
Topics	Sub-Topics/Details
Anthropology: Meaning, Scope, and Development Relationship with Other Subjects	Social Science, Behavioural Science, Life Sciences, Medical Science, Earth Science, Humanities

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Topics	Sub-Topics/Details
Anthropology: Important Branches, Their Scope and Relevance	Social-cultural Anthropology, Biological Anthropology, Archaeological Anthropology, Linguistic Anthropology
Evolution of Humans and Emergence of Man	Biological and Cultural Factors Involved in Human Evolution Theories related to Organic Evolution (Pre-Darwinian, Darwinian, Post-Darwinian) Synthetic Theory of Evolution Evolutionary Biology Terms and Concepts Doll's Rule, Cope's Rule, Gause's Rule, Parallelism, Convergence, Adaptive Radiation, Mosaic Evolution
Characteristics of Primate	Evolutionary Trend and Primate Taxonomy Primate Adaptation Arboreal, Terrestrial, Primary Behaviour Tertiary and Quaternary Fossil Primates Living Major Primates Comparative Anatomy of Man and Apes Skeletal Changes due to Improper Posture
Phylogenetic Status, Characteristics, and Geographical Distribution	Plio-Pleistocene Hominids: Australopithecines Homo erectus: Africa, Europe, Asia (Paranthropus, Heidelbergensis, Javanicus, Pekinensis) Neanderthal Man: La-Chapelle-aux-Saints, Mt Carmel Rhodesian Man Homo sapiens: Cromagnon, Grimaldi, Chancelade

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Topics	Sub-Topics/Details
The Biological Basis of Life	Cell, DNA Structure, and Replication Protein Synthesis, Genes, Mutation, Chromosomes Cell Division
Principles of Prehistoric Archaeology	Chronology: Relative and Absolute Dating Methods Cultural Evolution: Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Copper-Bronze Age, Iron Age
The Nature of Culture	Concept and Characteristics of Culture and Civilisation Ethnocentrism vs. Cultural Relativism
The Nature of Society	Concept of Society, Culture, and Society, Social Institutions Social Groups, Social Stratification
Marriage	Definition and Universality, Laws of Marriage Endogamy, Exogamy, Hypergamy, Hypogamy Incest Taboo, Types of Marriage (Monogamy, Polygamy, Polyandry, Group Marriage) Functions of Marriage, Regulations of Marriage (Preferential, Prescriptive, Proscriptive) Marriage Payments: Bride Wealth, Dowry
Family	Definition and Universality, Family, Household, Domestic Group Functions of Family, Types of Family (Structure, Blood Relation, Marriage, Residence, Succession)

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Topics	Sub-Topics/Details
Kinship	<p>Impact of Urbanisation, Industrialisation, Feminist Movements on Family</p> <p>Consanguinity and Affinity, Types and Principles of Descent</p> <p>Unilineal, Double, Bilateral, Ambilineal Descent</p> <p>Forms of Descent Groups: Lineage, Clan, Phratry, Moiety, Kindred</p> <p>Kinship Terminology (Descriptive and Classificatory)</p> <p>Descent Filiation, Complimentary Filiation, Descent, and Alliance</p>
Economic Organization	<p>Meaning, Scope, and Relevance of Economic Anthropology</p> <p>Formalist and Substantivist Debate</p> <p>Principles Governing Production, Distribution, and Exchange: Reciprocity, Redistribution, Market</p> <p>Economic Practices in Various Communities: Hunting and Gathering, Fishing, Swiddening (Slash-and-Burn), Pastoralism, Horticulture, Agriculture</p> <p>Globalisation and Indigenous Economic Systems</p>
Political Organisation and Social Control	<p>Band, Tribe, Chiefdom, Kingdom, State</p> <p>Concepts of Power, Authority, Legitimacy</p> <p>Social Control, Law, Justice in Simple Societies</p>
Religion	<p>Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion (Evolutionary, Psychological, Functional)</p> <p>Monotheism and Polytheism, Sacred and Profane</p>

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Topics	Sub-Topics/Details
Anthropological Theories	<p>Myths, Rituals, Forms of Religion in Tribal and Peasant Societies</p> <p>Animism, Animatism, Fetishism, Naturism, Totemism</p> <p>Religion, Magic, Science Distinguished</p> <p>Magico-religious Functionaries: Priest, Shaman, Medicine Man, Sorcerer, Witch</p> <p>Classical Evolutionism: Tylor, Morgan, Frazer</p> <p>Historical Particularism: Boas</p> <p>Diffusionism: British, German, American</p> <p>Functionalism: Malinowski, Structural-Functionalism: Radcliffe-Brown</p> <p>Structuralism: Levi-Strauss, E. Leach</p> <p>Culture and Personality: Benedict, Mead, Linton, Kardinar, Cora-du Bois</p> <p>Neo-Evolutionism: Childe, White, Steward, Sahlins, Service</p> <p>Cultural Materialism: Harris</p> <p>Symbolic and Interpretive Theories: Turner, Schneider, Geertz</p> <p>Cognitive Theories: Tyler, Conklin</p> <p>Postmodernism in Anthropology</p>
Culture, Language, and Communication	<p>Nature, Origin, Characteristics of Language</p> <p>Verbal and Non-verbal Communication, Social Context of Language Use</p>
Research Methods in Anthropology	<p>Fieldwork Tradition, Technique, Method, Methodology</p> <p>Tools of Data Collection: Observation, Interview, Schedules, Questionnaire, Case Study, Genealogy, Life History, Oral History</p> <p>Secondary Sources, Participatory Methods</p>

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Topics	Sub-Topics/Details
Human Genetics	<p>Analysis, Interpretation, and Presentation of Data</p> <p>Methods and Applications Pedigree Analysis, Twin Study, Foster Child, Co-twin Methods</p> <p>Cytogenetic Methods: Chromosomal, Karyotype Analysis, Biochemical Methods, Immunological Methods, DNA Technology, Recombinant Technologies</p>
Mendelian Genetics in Man-Family Study	<p>Single Factor, Multifactor, Sub-lethal, Polygenic Inheritance</p>
Concept of Genetic Polymorphism and Selection	<p>Mendelian Population, Hardy-Weinberg Law, Frequency Mutation, Isolation, Migration, Selection, Inbreeding, Genetic Drift, Consanguineous vs Non-consanguineous Mating, Genetic Load</p>
Chromosomes and Chromosomal Aberrations in Man	<p>Numerical and Structural Aberrations (Disorders)</p> <p>Sex Chromosomal Aberrations: Klinefelter (XXY), Turner (XO), Super Female (XXX), Intersex, Other Syndromic Disorders</p> <p>Autosomal Aberrations: Down Syndrome, Syndrome, Edward Syndrome, Cri-du-chat Syndrome</p> <p>Genetic Imprints in Human Disease, Genetic Screening, Genetic Counselling, Human DNA Profiling, Gene Mapping, Genome Study</p>
Race and Racism	<p>Biological Basis of Morphological Variation of Non-metric Traits</p>

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Topics	Sub-Topics/Details
Age, Sex, and Population Variation as Genetic Marker	<p>Racial Criteria, Racial Traits, Racial Classification, Racial Differentiation, Race Crossing in Man</p> <p>ABO, Rh Blood Groups, HLP Hp, Transferrin, GM, Blood Enzymes, Physiological Characteristics (Hb Level, Body Fat, Pulse Rate, Respiratory Functions, Sensory Perceptions)</p>
Concepts and Methods of Ecological Anthropology	<p>Bio-cultural Adaptations, Genetic and Non-genetic Factors</p> <p>Physiological Responses to Environmental Stresses: Hot Desert, Cold, High Altitude</p>
Epidemiological Anthropology	<p>Health and Disease, Infectious and Non-infectious Disease, Nutritional Deficiency Diseases</p>
Human Growth and Development	<p>Stages of Growth: Pre-natal, Natal, Infant, Childhood, Adolescence, Maturity, Senescence</p> <p>Factors Affecting Growth and Development: Genetic, Environmental, Biochemical, Nutritional, Cultural, Socio-economic</p> <p>Ageing and Senescence: Biological and Chronological Longevity</p> <p>Human Physique and Somatotypes, Methodologies for Growth Studies</p>
Importance of Menarche, Menopause, and Other Bioevents to Fertility	<p>Fertility Patterns and Differentials</p>
Demographic Theories	<p>Biological, Social, Cultural Theories</p>

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Topics	Sub-Topics/Details
Biological and Socio-Ecological Factors	Fecundity, Fertility, Natality, Mortality
Applications of Anthropology	Anthropology of Sports, Nutritional Anthropology Anthropology in Designing Defence and Other Equipment, Forensic Anthropology Methods and Principles of Personal Identification and Applied Human Genetics: Paternity Diagnosis, Genetic Counselling and Eugenics DNA Technology in Diseases and Medicine, Serogenetics, Cytogenetics in Reproductive Biology

UPSC Anthropology Optional Syllabus: Paper 2

Anthropology Optional Syllabus UPSC

Topics	Sub-Topics
Evolution of Indian Culture and Civilisation	Prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Neolithic-Chalcolithic) Protohistoric: Indus Civilisation Pre-Harappan, Harappan, Post-Harappan Cultures Inputs of Tribal Cultures to Indian Civilisation
Palae	Anthropological Evidences from India with Special Reference to Siwaliks and Narmada Basin Ramapithecus, Sivapithecus, Narmada Man

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Topics	Sub-Topics
Ethno-Archaeology in India	The Concept of Ethno-Archaeology Survivals and Parallels among Hunting, Foraging, Fishing, Pastoral, Peasant Communities (Including Arts and Crafts-producing Communities)
Demographic Profile of India	Ethnic and Linguistic Elements in the Indian Population and Their Distribution Indian Population: Elements Influencing Its Structure and Growth
The Structure and Nature of the Traditional Indian Social System	Varnashrama, Purushartha, Karma, Rina, Rebirth
Caste System in India	Structure and Characteristics of Varna and Caste Theories of the Origin of the Caste System Dominant Caste, Caste Mobility, Future of the Caste System Jajmani System, Tribe-Caste Continuum
Sacred Complex and Nature-Man-Spirit Complex	
Impact of Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, and Christianity on Indian Society	Emergence, Growth, and Development in India Contributions of 18th, 19th, and Early 20th Century Scholar-Administrators Contributions of Indian Anthropologists to Tribal and Caste Studies
Indian Village	Importance of Village Study in India Indian Village as a Social System

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Topics	Sub-Topics
	Traditional and Changing Patterns of Settlements and Inter-caste Relations Agrarian Relations in Indian Villages Impact of Globalization on Indian Villages
Linguistic and Religious Minorities	Social, Political, and Economic Status
Indigenous and Exogenous Processes of Socio-Cultural Change in Indian Society	Sanskritisation, Westernisation, Modernisation The Interplay of Little and Great Traditions Panchayati Raj and Social Change Media and Social Change
Tribal Situation in India	Bio-genetic Variability, Linguistic and Socio-economic Characteristics of the Tribal Populations and Their Distribution
Problems of Tribal Communities	Land Alienation, Poverty, Indebtedness, Low Literacy, Poor Education Facilities Unemployment, Under-employment, Health and Nutrition
Developmental Projects and Their Impact on Tribal Displacement	Development of Forest Policy and Tribals Influence of Urbanisation and Industrialisation on Tribal Populations
Issues of Exploitation and Deprivation of	Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes
Social Change and Contemporary Tribal Societies	Influence of Modern Democratic Institutions Development of Programmes and Welfare Measures for Tribals and Weaker Sections

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Topics	Sub-Topics
The Concept of Ethnicity	Ethnic Conflicts and Political Developments Chaos in Tribal Communities, Regionalism, Demand for Autonomy Pseudo-tribalism, Social Change among Tribes during Colonial and Post-independent India
Influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Other Religions on Tribal Societies	
Tribe and Nation-State	A Comparative Study of Tribal Communities in India and Other Countries
History of the Administration of tribal areas	Tribal Areas, Tribal Policies, Plans Programmes of Tribal Development and Their Implementation The Concept of PTGs (Primitive Tribal Groups), Their Distribution, Special Programmes for Their Development Role of NGOs in Tribal Development
Role of Anthropology in Tribal and Rural Development	
Contributions of Anthropology	Regionalism, Communalism, Ethnic and Political Movements

Anthropology has a great chance to be a high-scoring optional subject for you in the UPSC exam. With a proper plan, resources, and a little effort from your side, you can have a high score in Anthropology. You should cover the entire **UPSC Anthropology optional syllabus**, practice answer writing, and conduct thorough revision.

Engaging with this syllabus helps candidates understand the role of anthropology in the economy and prepares them for success in the civil service.