

Q: Discuss subfields of anthropology with their modern branches.

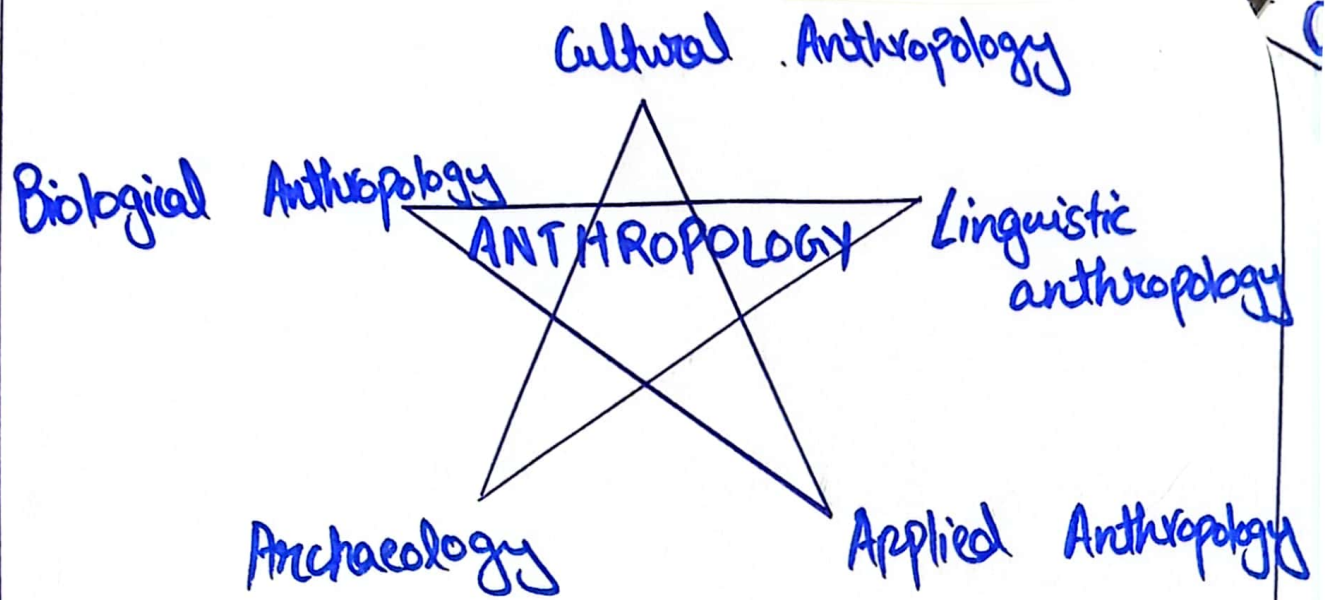
## Explicating Anthropology

Anthropology is defined as scientific study of humans, human behavior, societies and cultures. It is holistic study of human behavior and cultural evolution of human societies. It sheds light on all aspects of life. There are five modern branches of anthropology i.e. biological, cultural, linguistic, archaeology and applied anthropology which are further divided into subfields.

## Modern Branches Of Anthropology

Following are five modern branches of anthropology which help in solving all the contemporary problems of human life.

Each deals with a certain aspect of human life such as culture, language, biological conditions etc of humans.



## i. Cultural Anthropology

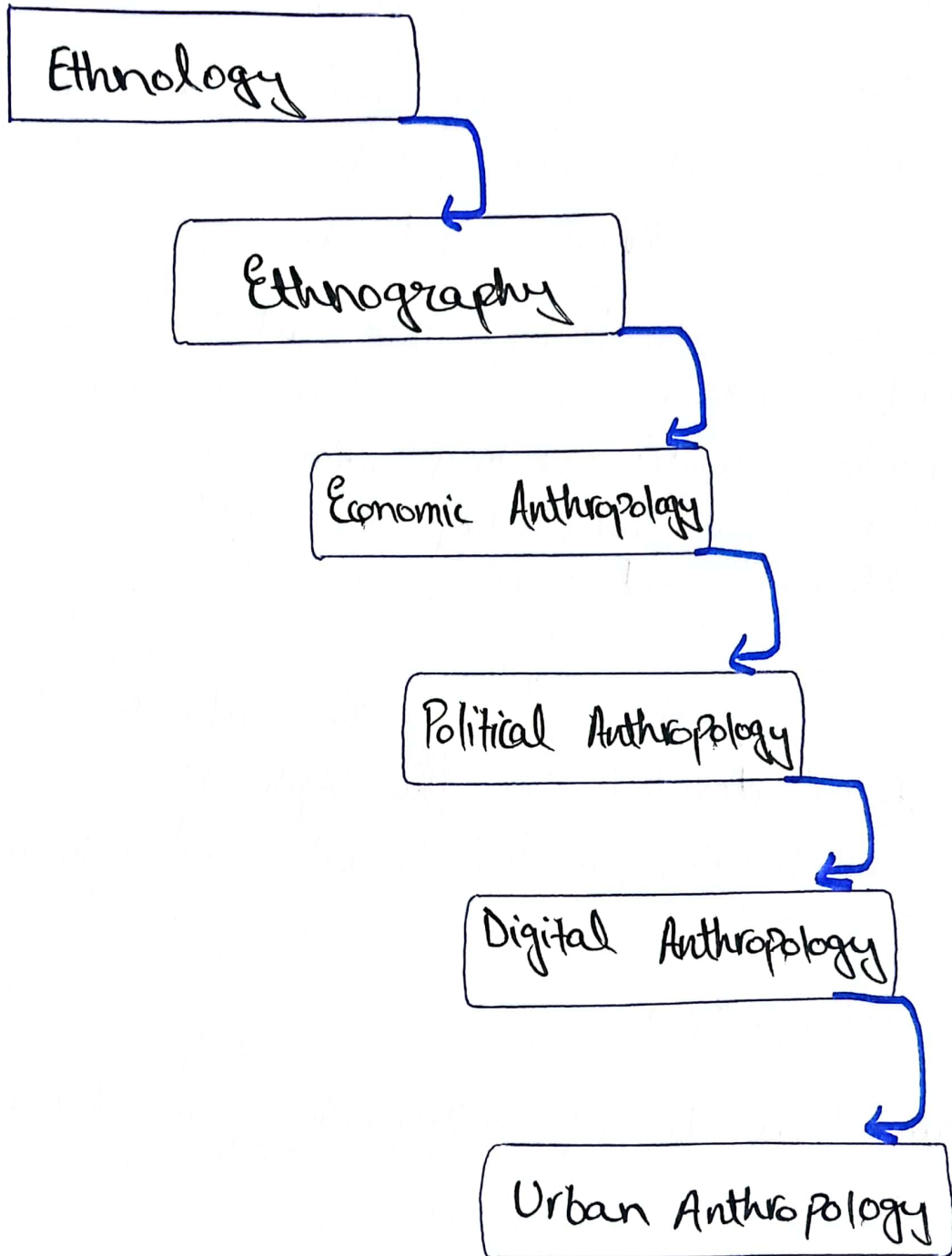
This branch is defined as:

“The branch which deals with the study of cultural variations among humans. It focuses on <sup>how</sup> humans live in different societies or cultures.”

Example: Ruth Benedict's comparative study of cultures like Zuni, Dobu, Kwakwaka'wakw <sup>is</sup> ~~and~~ a magnificent example of cultural anthropology (Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of the Culture*, 1934).

Cultural anthropology helps in promoting community engagement and social cohesion in society.

# Subfields of Cultural Anthropology



a- **Ethnology**: This subfield deals with the comparative study of different cultures.

b- **Ethnography**: This subfield involves <sup>detailed</sup> understanding of human societies and cultural practices through immersive field-work.

- c- **Economic Anthropology**: This subfield deals with understanding economic practices structured within different cultural contexts.
- d- **Political Anthropology**: This subfield deals with the study of different political organization of different cultures and societies.
- e- **Urban Anthropology**: This subfield deals with understanding life in urban settings. It also involves understanding migration issues in urban areas and impact of urbanization on cultural and social constructions.
- f- **Digital Anthropology**: This subfield deals with understanding the implications of technology on cultural practices and social interactions.

## ii. Archaeology

This branch of anthropology is defined as:

“The branch which deals with the study of past human societies and cultures using material remains.”

This branch provides deep insights about ancient human civilizations and guides

cultural evolution.

## Subfields of Archaeology

Following are the subfields of modern branch of anthropology.

- a. **Pre-historic Archaeology:** This subfield deals with the study of past human society, focussing on the period before the invention of human writing.
- b. **Historic Archaeology:** This subfield deals with the study of past human societies, focussing on the period <sup>after</sup> ~~with~~ the advent of human writing.
- c. **Classical Archaeology:** This subfield deals with the study of Mediterranean world, particularly the civilization of ancient Rome and Greece.

**Example of Archaeology:** Kristian Kristiansen's work in ~~pr~~ understanding past societies of pre-historic Europe; Sybille Haynes work in understanding Etruscan civilization are examples of archaeology (Sybille Haynes, *The Etruscan Art*, 2000)

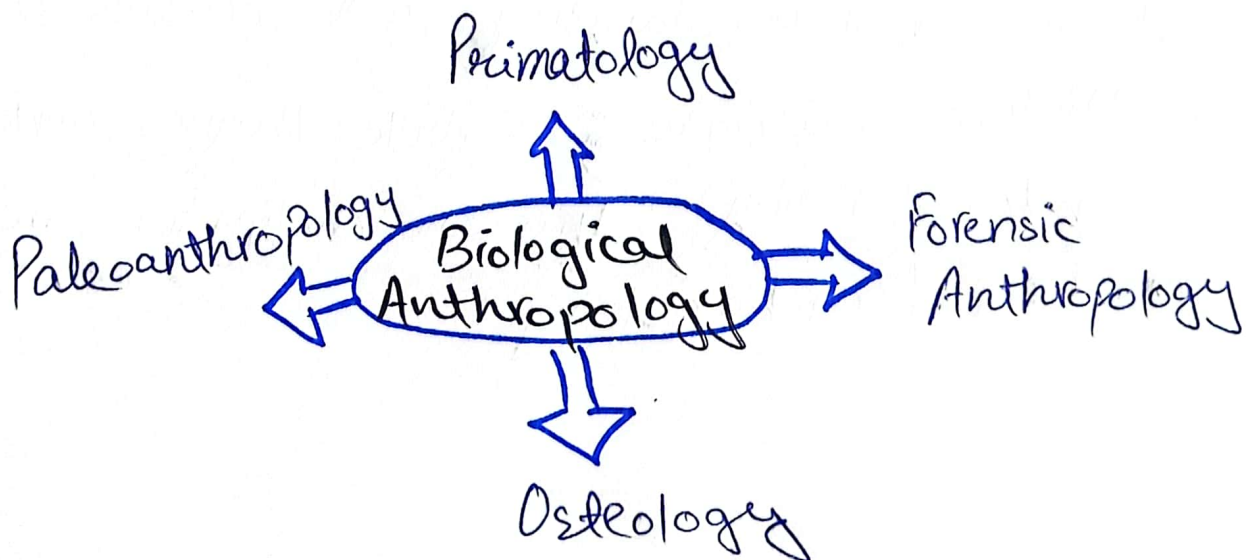
### iii- Biological Anthropology

This branch of anthropology is defined as:

“The branch of anthropology which deals with the study of humans from biological perspective, primarily focussing on the genetic and phenotypic differences among human population.”

Example: Franz Boas' work "Changes in the Bodily Form of Descendants" is a magnificent example of the biological anthropology. It challenges the fixed racial stereotypes by focussing on how environmental factors and cultural practices affect physical traits.

### Subfields of Biological Anthropology



- a- **Primatology**: This subfield deals with the study of non-human primates.
- b- **Paleoanthropology**: This subfield deals with the study of genetic and phenotypic differences among contemporary human population.
- c- **Osteology**: This subfield deals with the study of bones.
- d- **Forensic Anthropology**: This subfield deals with the study of human decomposition for criminal investigation. "Death's Acres" written by William M. Bass is a classic example of this field.

#### iv- Linguistic Anthropology

This branch of anthropology is defined as:

"The study of role of language in human life."

Following are the subfields of this modern branch of anthropology: ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics and historic linguistics.

**Example of Linguistic Anthropology:**

The "Structural Stratification of English in New York City" written by William Labov is excellent example of linguistic anthropology.

Labov's work explores relation between language variables (pronunciation) and social stratification

## Subfields of Linguistic Anthropology

- a. **Ethno-linguistics**: This subfield deals with the study of relation between language and culture.
- b. **Socio-linguistics**: This subfield deals with the social dimension of language use.
- c. **Historical linguistics**: This subfield deals with the understanding of historical development of languages.

## v. Applied Anthropology

This modern branch of anthropology is defined as:

“The branch of anthropology which deals with the application of anthropological theories and insights for addressing social issues and contemporary problems faced by human societies.”

This branch plays a key role in addressing social issues. For example; Jessica Gattelino's work in Seminole tribe of Florida is an



example of applied anthropology as Jessica uses cultural knowledge for promoting community engagement and resolving ethnic conflicts (Jessica Cattelino, Seminole Tribe of Florida, 2008).

## Subfields of Applied Anthropology

- a- **Public Anthropology:** This subfield deals with addressing social issues through outreach, activism and public discourse.
- b- **Environmental Anthropology:** This subfield involves understanding impact of cultural practices on environment, improving cultural attitude toward nature and formulating policies for environmental management.
- c- **Cultural Resource Management:** This subfield involves using cultural knowledge for preserving cultural heritage.
- d- **Medical Anthropology:** This subfield deals with understanding impact of cultural practices on human health and formulating ~~ways~~ <sup>Policies</sup> for improving public health.

## Conclusion

Anthropology is a holistic discipline that seeks to understand human societies and cultural practices. It has five modern branches which are further divided into several subfields. All are equally important in improving human health, environment and resolving tensions among societies.