

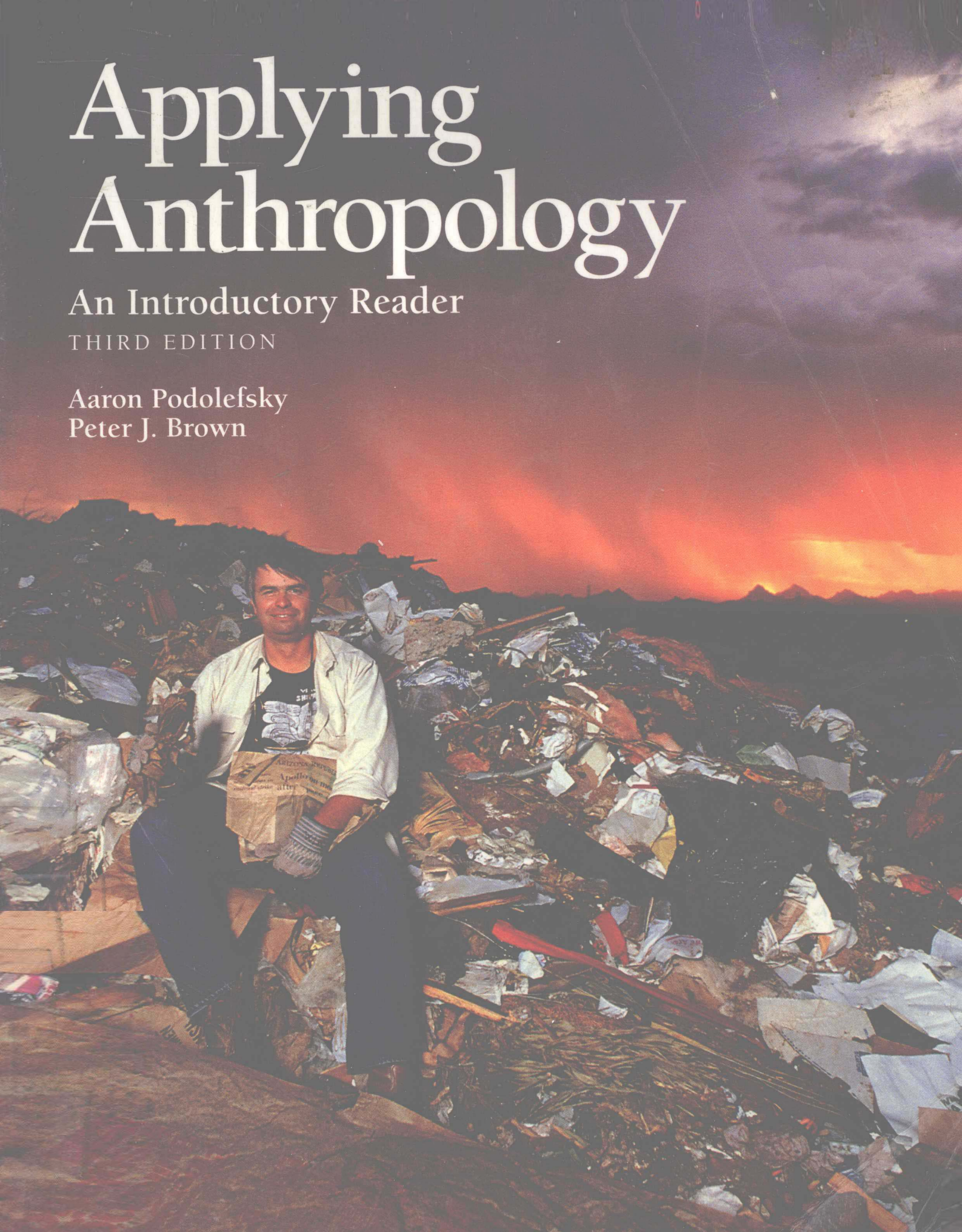
# Applying Anthropology

An Introductory Reader

THIRD EDITION

Aaron Podolefsky

Peter J. Brown



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# Applying Anthropology

## An Introductory Reader

Third Edition

*Aaron Podolefsky*

University of Northern Iowa

*Peter J. Brown*

Emory University



Mayfield Publishing Company  
Mountain View, California  
London • Toronto

*To our wives,  
Betsy and Ronnie,  
whom we appreciate every day.*

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# To the Student

An introductory course in any discipline is chock-full of new terminology, concepts, and facts. Sometimes students forget that these new ideas and vocabulary are actually intellectual tools that can be put to work for analyzing and solving problems. In preparing this book, we have selected readings that will show you how anthropological concepts, discoveries, and methods can be applied in today's world.

The study of anthropology can help you view the world in a completely different way than you ever had before. You can come to appreciate the great diversity of human cultures and the interrelatedness of economic, sociopolitical, and religious systems. Anthropology can give you a broad perspective on humanity and help you understand other people's beliefs and customs. In doing so, it can help you become a better citizen in an increasingly global society.

The fascinating side of anthropology seems obvious to most educated people, but there is also a lesser known practical side of the discipline. The readings we have selected demonstrate that practical, applied side. Many of the articles are examples of anthropological ideas and research methods in action—as they are used to understand and solve practical problems. We have included career profiles of anthropologists working outside the academic setting to show how they are applying anthropology. We believe that the fundamental lessons of anthropology can be applied to many careers and all areas of human endeavor.

To benefit from the study of anthropology, you need to study effectively. Over the years, we have found that students often read assignments without planning, and this actually makes studying less efficient. Before you read a selection, spend a few moments skimming it to get an idea of what it is about, where it is going, and what you should look for. This kind of preliminary reading is a poor idea for mystery novels but is essential for academic assignments. With-

out this preparation, the article may become a hodgepodge of facts and figures; details may be meaningless because you have missed the big picture. By planning your reading, you can see how the details are relevant to the central themes of an article.

To help you plan your reading, at the beginning of each article we have included questions and a list of glossary terms. By studying these questions in advance, you may gain an idea of what is to come and why the article is important. This will help make the time you spend reading more fruitful. Most of the questions highlight the central themes of the selection or draw your attention to interesting details. Some of the questions, however, do not have straightforward answers—they are food for thought and topics for discussion.

These articles have been selected with you, the student, in mind. We hope they convey our excitement about the anthropological adventure, and we expect that you will find them both enjoyable and thought-provoking.

If you are interested in further reading in applied anthropology, there are several excellent books available, such as *Applied Anthropology: A Practical Guide*, by Erve Chambers; *Applied Anthropology: An Introduction*, by John van Willigen; *Anthropological Praxis: Translating Knowledge into Action*, by Robert M. Wulff and Shirley J. Fiske; *Applied Anthropology in America*, by Elizabeth M. Eddy and William L. Partridge; and *Making Our Research Useful*, by John van Willigen, Barbara Rylko-Bauer, and Anne McElroy. You might also want to look at the journals *Human Organization* and *Practicing Anthropology*, both of which are published by the Society for Applied Anthropology. The National Association of Practicing Anthropologists (NAPA) has also published interesting works on specific fields such as Medical Anthropology.

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# To the Instructor

Introductory anthropology has become an established part of the college curriculum, and through this course our profession communicates with a large and diverse undergraduate audience. Members of that audience differ in experience, academic concentration, and career aspirations. For those students considering anthropology as a major, we need to provide (among other things) a vision of the future, a view of anthropological work to be done in the public domain as well as within academia. For them, we need to provide some answers to the question “What can I do with a degree in anthropology?” For students majoring in other areas, such as business, engineering, or psychology, we need to address the question “How can anthropological insights or research methods help me understand and solve human problems?” If we can provide such a service, we increase the likelihood that students will find creative solutions to the professional problems that await them, and we brighten the future for our anthropology majors by underscoring the usefulness of an anthropological perspective in attempts to solve the practical problems of today’s world.

Over the years, we have found that most introductory texts have done little more than include a chapter on applied anthropology at the end of the book. This suggests, at least to students, that most of anthropology has no relevance to their lives. Such treatment also implies that the application of anthropological knowledge is a tangent or afterthought—at best, an additional subject area, such as kinship or politics.

We disagree. We believe that the applications of anthropology cut across and infuse all the discipline’s subfields. This reader is a collection of articles that provide examples of both basic and *applied* research in biological anthropology, archaeology, cultural anthropology, and anthropological linguistics.

One of our primary goals is to demonstrate some of the ways our discipline is used outside the academic

arena. We want anthropology to be seen as a field that is interesting as well as relevant to the real world. Like the public at large, students seem well aware that the subject matter of anthropology is fascinating, but they seem unaware of both the fundamental questions of humanity addressed by anthropologists and the practical applications of the field.

Although people distinguish between basic and applied research, much of anthropology falls into a gray area, having elements of both. Many selections in this reader fall into that gray zone—they are brief ethnographic accounts that contain important implications for understanding and resolving problems. We could have included a large number of articles exemplifying strictly applied research—an evaluation report of agency performance, for example. Although this sort of research is fascinating and challenging to do, it is usually not exciting for students to read. We have selected articles that we believe are fascinating for students and convey the dual nature (basic/applied) of social science research.

Any student who completes an introductory course in anthropology should learn that anthropological work, in its broadest sense, may include (or at least contribute to) international business, epidemiology, program evaluation, social impact studies, conflict resolution, organizational analysis, market research, and nutrition research, even though their introductory anthropology texts make no mention of those fields. The selections in this book should help students understand why anthropology is important in today’s world, and also make the course more memorable and meaningful.

## FEATURES OF THIS EDITION

- We chose the readings in this book to complement the typical course in introductory anthro-

pology. The sequence of articles follows the organization of standard anthropology textbooks, grouped under traditional headings such as kinship and marriage, rather than headings based on the applied areas such as medical anthropology or the anthropology of development. As in most contemporary textbooks, anthropological linguistics is included under culture and communication. Had we meant this book to be a reader on applied anthropology, our organization would have been different. Although this book could be used in courses on applied anthropology (an earlier edition has been), this was not our intended audience. Also, for this reason, we have not provided extensive discussion of the history or definition of applied anthropology. For students interested in this, there are a number of fine books on the subject. These include *Applied Anthropology: A Practical Guide*, by Erve Chambers; *Applied Anthropology: An Introduction*, by John van Willigen; *Anthropological Praxis: Translating Knowledge into Action*, by Robert M. Wulff and Shirley J. Fiske; *Applied Anthropology in America*, by Elizabeth M. Eddy and William L. Partridge; and *Making Our Research Useful*, by John van Willigen, Barbara Rylko-Bauer, and Anne McElroy.

- To emphasize how anthropology can be put to work in different settings, we have included a number of profiles of anthropologists whose careers involve applying anthropology outside the university setting.
- To help students better understand the subject matter, we have included a number of pedagogical aids: introductions, a list of glossary terms, and guiding questions for each article; a world map that pinpoints the locations of places and peoples discussed in the articles; and, for easy reference, an extensive glossary and index.
- To help busy instructors, we have provided an instructor's manual that includes for each article a brief summary, glossary terms, and test questions.
- Among the 16 new articles in this edition are several that pertain to gender issues. Included are "Women in Evolution: Innovation and Selection in Human Origins," an alternative interpretation of the "male-as-hunter" explanation for the success of humans in the evolutionary story; "Family Planning, Amazon Style," which examines the interconnection between eco-

nomic change, new ideas about appropriate marriage patterns, and the rise in population growth; "Law, Custom, and Crimes Against Women: The Problem of Dowry Death in India," which examines the current upsurge of a serious and perplexing problem; and "A Cultural Approach to Male–Female Miscommunication," a glimpse at subcultural rules about speech and conversation.

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- 5 Women in Evolution: Innovation and Selection in Human Origins 36**  
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- 6 Ancient Genes and Modern Health 46**  
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- 8 Racial Odyssey 57**  
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- 9 A Reasonable Sleep 64**  
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- 10 PROFILE OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST Anthropometry, Assassinations, and Aircraft Disasters: A Career in Forensic Anthropology 69**  
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- 11 The Oklahoma City Child Disappearances: Forensic Anthropology in the Identification of Skeletal Remains 72**  
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- 21 Loading the Bases: How Our Tribe Projects Its Own Image into the National Pastime 126**  
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- 26 Problems in Pocatello: A Study in Linguistic Misunderstanding 160**  
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- 30 The Domestication of Wood in Haiti: A Case Study in Applied Evolution 189**  
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- 32 Eating Christmas in the Kalahari 207**  
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- 34 If Only They Would Listen: The Anthropology of Business and the Business of Anthropology 220**  
*S. Brian Burkhalter (Practicing Anthropology, 1986)*  
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- 35 Society and Sex Roles 226**  
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- 36 Child Care in China 232**  
*Bruce Dollar (Saturday Review of Education, 1973)*  
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- 37 American Schoolrooms: Learning the Nightmare 237**  
*Jules Henry (Columbia University Forum, 1963)*  
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#### KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

- 38 Family Planning, Amazon Style 244**  
*Warren M. Hern (Natural History, 1992)*  
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results in new ideas about appropriate marriage patterns, and an untoward consequence has been rapid population growth.

**39 When Brothers Share a Wife 249**

*Melvyn C. Goldstein (Natural History, 1987)*

Fraternal polyandry, a rare form of plural marriage, has both benefits and costs for the people of Tibet. Given the economy and ecology of this area, the practice of polyandry has adaptive functions.

**40 Law, Custom, and Crimes Against Women:  
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*John van Willigen and V. C. Channa (Human Organization, 1991)*

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**42 Contemporary Warfare in the New Guinea Highlands 273**

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**43 Flaming Crosses and Body Snatchers 282**

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**45 The Integration of Modern and Traditional Health Sectors in Swaziland 295**

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- 49      Advertising and Global Culture      325**  
*Noreene Janus (Cultural Survival, 1983)*  
The expansion of the world economic system depends on the creation of new consumer demands through advertising. Do developing countries have the right to reject mass advertising for products that their citizens cannot afford?
- 50      The Price of Progress      329**  
*John H. Bodley (Victims of Progress, 1990)*  
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# Introduction:

## Understanding Humans and Human Problems

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To the uninitiated, the term *anthropology* conjures up images of mummies' tombs, Indiana Jones, and treks through steaming jungles or over high alpine peaks. Anthropologists agree that their chosen field is exciting, that they have been places and seen things that few experience firsthand, and that they have been deeply and emotionally involved in understanding the human condition. At the same time, however, the vision of anthropology presented by Hollywood has probably done more to obscure the true nature of the profession than it has to enlighten the public about what we really do.

Providing an accurate image of anthropology and anthropological work is both simple and complex. Essentially, anthropology is the study of people, or more properly, of humankind. But, you may say, many disciplines study people: psychology, sociology, history, biology, medicine, and so on. True, but anthropology is different in that it seeks to integrate these separate and narrow views of humanity. To understand ourselves, we need to join these disparate views into a single framework, a process that begins with our biological and evolutionary roots, explores the development of culture through the prehistoric and historical periods, probes the uniquely human ability to develop culture through communication, and examines the diversity of recent and present-day cultures that inhabit the globe.

From this conception of the *holistic* and *comparative* study of humankind emerge what are termed the four fields of anthropology: biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, anthropological linguistics, and cultural anthropology. Some universities offer an introductory course that covers all four of these subfields. Other schools cover the subfields in two or three

separate introductory courses. Each approach has its advantage. The former may more fully integrate the biocultural and historical dimensions of humanity; the latter allows students to explore each subfield in greater depth. This book introduces you to the four fields of anthropology and how they are used in today's world.

Another way to divide the discipline—in fact almost any discipline—is into *basic* and *applied* research. These categories are important in this reader because we would like students to appreciate both the basic and the applied sides of anthropology.

A survey of natural and social scientists and engineers conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the National Science Foundation used the following definitions of these fundamental concepts: *Basic research* is study directed toward gaining scientific knowledge primarily for its own sake. *Applied research* is study directed toward gaining scientific knowledge in an effort to meet a recognized need.

Anthropology is a discipline concerned primarily with basic research. It asks “big” questions concerning the origins of humankind, the roots of human nature, the development of civilization, and the functions of our major social institutions (such as marriage or religion). Nevertheless, anthropologists have put the methods and skills developed in basic research to use in solving human problems and fulfilling the needs of society. Anthropologists have, for example, worked with medical examiners in the identification of skeletal remains. They have also helped communities preserve their cultural heritage and businesses and government agencies understand the social impacts of programs or development projects.

Although the application of anthropology has a

long history, it has, until recent years, remained in the shadows of “pure” or basic research. The last 20 years have seen a change. Anthropologists have moved beyond their traditional roles in universities and museums and now work in a broad range of settings. They are employed in many government agencies, in the private sector, and in a variety of nonresearch capacities (such as administrator, evaluator, or policy analyst).

In response to the growing opportunities for anthropologists outside academia and to the demands of students, an increasing number of master’s degree and doctoral programs provide training specifically in the applications of anthropology. This is not to say that the classified ads list jobs titled “anthropologist.” Rather, for those interested in anthropology, there are increasing opportunities to find careers that draw on anthropological training and skills. Profiles of people in nonacademic careers (consumer marketing, high-tech industry, and school administration) can be found in this reader. At the same time, studies have shown that there will be increasing job opportunities for anthropologists in universities and colleges during the 1990s and beyond.

Applications of anthropology are found in all four fields. Anthropological work includes the identification of skeletal remains (forensics); the study of size and fit for the design of clothing, furniture, or airplane cockpits (ergonomics); exploration of the patterns and causes of disease (epidemiology); evaluation of the effectiveness of programs (from Third World development to crime prevention); assessment of community needs; prediction of the social impact of change; analysis of organizations such as businesses or government agencies; market research; and research into health and nutrition, to name but a few.

School administrators, engineers, business leaders, lawyers, medical researchers, and government officials have become aware that the substantive knowledge, the unique perspective, and the research skills of anthropologists are applicable to practical problems—in the United States as well as other countries.

As we explore anthropology, keep in mind the interplay between and interdependence of basic cultural research and the applications of anthropological knowledge and research methods to the solution of human problems.