

Writing a Statement of Purpose

One of the most important tasks in applying to graduate school is that of writing a clear, detailed, and problem-oriented letter of application.

You should think about several things when developing your application letter.

1. You need to outline the anthropological problem, evolutionary question, or behavioral subject that you are interested in studying while in graduate school. These interests should be broadly defined, not narrowly methodological or descriptive.
2. You must offer some ideas for how you might address this question, learn more about this problem, or shed light on current debates. We want to hear what you want to do to advance our understanding of this question.
3. You should outline how you became interested in the questions or themes you identified, and illustrate how your background provides a foundation for addressing these broader questions.
4. You need to describe how your thematic research interests fit with the research and teaching skill sets in the Anthropology department: which full-time Anthropology faculty members would be able to mentor you and supervise your research? In a brief statement you should identify between 2-3 full-time Anthropology faculty members, in order of importance to your project, who you see as being able to supervise your graduate work.