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Biological Anthropology ^[1]

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Biological anthropology is one of the four main fields of anthropology. Biological anthropology—also called physical anthropology—includes human evolution, non-primateology, and biological adaptations to the environment.

Biological anthropology is a popular area of study within anthropology. It is the combination of both the biological and social sciences to answer questions about human adaptability and evolution. As far as research methods go, biological anthropologists tend to include more traditionally scientific research, including lab work, data analysis, and other scientific techniques.

Subfields of Biological Anthropology

There are several subfields within biological anthropology that anthropologists can choose to focus on.

Primatology

Primatology ^[3] is one of the best-known areas of anthropology and biological anthropology. Largely popularized by Jane Goodall, primatologists study the lives and biology of our non-human ancestors—primates. These animals include apes, monkeys, gibbons, orangutans, and others. Primatologists believe that a better understanding of the evolution, biology, and sociocultural lives of primates will allow us to have a better understanding of human evolution.

Forensic Anthropology

Forensic anthropology is another well-known area of study in biological anthropology. This is a field of applied anthropology, and involves the application of anthropological and archaeological methods to forensics. This helps researchers and investigators identify and determine the circumstances surrounding the death of an individual, and determine if a criminal component was involved.

Besides these main sub-fields of biological anthropology, biological anthropologists conduct a wide variety of research. For example, biological anthropologists often look at the biology of human remains, including past diets and the prevalence of ancient diseases. Fossils, bones, and other remains provide enormous clues regarding the lives of ancient peoples and how they interacted with their environments.

Biological anthropology is often an interdisciplinary field. For example, biological anthropology can intersect with biology, psychology, sociology, paleontology, medicine, and many more.

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