

Abstract

This study investigates the inclusion of ethics education within undergraduate anthropology programs across a stratified sample of US higher education institutions, with emphasis on archaeology's engagement with ethics education. We analyze publicly accessible anthropology course listings, program descriptions, and institutional websites to determine how programs position ethics in their curricula. We further assess how these results vary across predominantly white institutions (PWIs) and minority-serving institutions (MSIs). Our findings indicate that while just 5.8% of US programs explicitly require ethics coursework, 18.5% offered elective ethics-related courses in anthropology. However, most anthropology programs do not visibly emphasize ethics as a core component of the major or minor, according to observations of program requirements. Additional findings include differences in the inclusion of required ethics courses within anthropology programs across PWI and MSI institution types, with Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) yielding the most ethics requirements. These results highlight the need for curricular shifts—or perhaps shifts in communicating the curriculum—to promote ethics as fundamental to anthropological study, particularly given the discipline's colonial history and current societal relevance. Future directions include further qualitative studies of course syllabi and student perspectives to evaluate ethics education's impact on professional development in anthropological archaeology.

Archaeology, as a subdiscipline of anthropology in the United States, is undergoing a reckoning, questioning how to reconcile the field's origins with its values today. Archaeologists are asking how to reduce harms perpetuated in the past and continuing in the present, while seeking to build consensus around norms as a community. These conversations are occurring within and alongside the larger anthropological field. At the same time, educators face increasing pressure to accommodate a range of institutional and disciplinary priorities without concomitant professional development, resources, and other guidance to meet those demands. Among social science and STEM disciplines, scholars of ethical education are documenting the ways that students tend to see ethics as an impediment to their progress toward academic credentials, attributing this attitude to a broader societal tendency to devalue judgment in favor of the illusion of attainable objectivity, especially in the sciences (Cech 2013; Cruz and Frey 2024). Even engineering professionals and educators may perceive ethics education as “soft” or as a nonessential “add-on” (Martin et al. 2021:24). The dominant viewpoint among archaeologists anecdotally seems to be that ethics education is essential, but does that perspective manifest in the form of visible educational commitments across institutions?

In this study, we document the visibility and apparent prevalence of ethics education within anthropology programs in US higher education. We first briefly describe

the history of delineating ethical commitments in anthropology and archaeology, followed by an overview of prior research on ethics education in the discipline. We then summarize our methods and the limitations of a survey such as this one, which aims to document what is visible in public web spaces rather than what is actually taught within individual courses at specific institutions. Among our results, we report on the breakdown of visibility of ethics education for different types of postsecondary institutions and offer examples from select cases to illustrate the range of ways ethics engagement is made visible. Finally, we discuss the implications of the study for fostering a more ethically engaged and thus socially responsible anthropological archaeology.

Ethical Standards in Anthropology and Archaeology

Across the discipline, anthropologists in the United States share concerns for promoting engagement with professional ethics and for including ethics in education and training. As in other disciplines, professional ethics are considered to be the shared values and standards that have developed, and will continue to develop, in a given field of work and study. Archaeologists in the United States have been particularly active in the collective responsibility of devising and negotiating ethical principles during the last seven decades, amid shifting definitions of what constitutes an ethical discipline. In general, an ethical discipline is perceived as one that reduces harm and situates norms in moral philosophy. The notion of an ethical practice of anthropology goes back at least as far as the modern discipline, to 1919 when Franz Boas was censured for his critique of using archaeologists as tools of US imperialism (Browman 2011). Codes of ethics began to be institutionalized into professional organizations after World War II, such as the American Anthropological Association's Committee on Ethics in 1965 (Hill, n.d.). This continued in the late 1960s with Indigenous writers such as Vine Deloria Jr. (1988) advocating for more attention to ethical concerns among anthropologists.

A 1961 report from the Society for American Archaeology's (SAA) Committee on Ethics and Standards (Champe et al. 1961) outlined four guiding statements that described what was at the time considered legitimate archaeological activity (e.g., "field techniques aim at preserving all recoverable information by means of adequate descriptive records and diagrams"), as well as a statement each on ethics and on training. Regarding ethics, the statement indicated that competent archaeologists could do research, should make data available, should publish, should prevent decontextualization, and should not infringe on sites already being studied by others (137). The suggestions for training standards included recommendations for higher degrees and caution about excavating without experience (138). At that point, the focus for doing archaeology in justifiable ways centered on scientific integrity and the preservation of things. As Alfredo González-Ruibal describes, the 1980s saw interruptions from "the emergence of indigenous, decolonial, public, and forensic

archaeologies, all of which overflow academic boundaries and challenge the limited engagement of conventional archaeology with society” (2018:346). Transitions in dominant social values led academic archaeology toward greater emphasis on the people in the past and related to the past. As archaeologists have become more concerned with multivocality, epistemic diversity, collaboration, and consent of descendant communities, the discipline’s focus on defining and enacting ethical norms has grown (González-Ruibal 2018).

By 1996, the SAA had adopted its much more comprehensive Principles of Archaeological Ethics, which were updated in 2016. The initial principles included (1) stewardship, (2) accountability, (3) commercialization, (4) public education and outreach, (5) intellectual property, (6) public reporting and publication, (7) records and preservation, and (8) training and resources. Eldon Yellowhorn has noted that neither the 1961 nor the more extensive 1996 ethics codes included consultation with Indigenous populations (2021:23). In the 2016 change to the ethics code, the SAA added (9) safe educational and workplace environments, which expanded on the principles for training.

In more recent years, SAA task forces have revisited the ethics principles in consultation with members and others in the updating process, including adding a principle for diversity and inclusion for “foster[ing] an intellectually richer, more equitable, and socially cohesive archaeology” (SAA, n.d.). The current SAA Ethics Code was updated in 2024. Beyond SAA, including archaeological organizations and related groups, at least 96 other ethics documents are cataloged in the Archaeological Ethics Database (Register of Professional Archaeologists and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2024a). The American Anthropological Association (AAA) adopted its first code of ethics in 1998 (American Anthropological Association 2024a), whereas the American Association of Biological Anthropologists (AABA) did not codify its ethics principles until 2003 (Turner et al. 2018). All three organizations have updated or augmented their codes in some way over the years, as it is exceedingly difficult—and unsatisfactory—to establish a static code of ethical values (Childs et al. 2019:45; Watkins 2012).

While the concept of guiding and aspirational principles of values and conduct is not new and dates back to the mid-twentieth century, the institutionalization of codes of ethics and conduct is a fairly recent phenomenon. Yet no change will occur in terms of disciplinary norms if the codes are not used and enforced in some way. The SAA has studied how archaeologists actually engage with these codes; Pruski and colleagues found that the most common uses of the ethics principles were “for teaching or training purposes” and “to refresh or gain personal knowledge of ethics” (2021:31). Of the people in the profession who are actually consulting and applying the code of ethics, many seem to be involving them in their pedagogies. Patricia Markert has astutely observed that “one of the main functions of studying and applying ethics in archaeology,

from classrooms to professional spheres, is to expose and acknowledge the roots that anchor archaeology deeply and consequentially within the wider world” (2021:24). Markert urged archaeologists to teach ethics “early and often” (26). Going back further, Katherine Chiou and Dana Bardolph promoted the same idea, that “ethics should be at the forefront of all archaeological education” (2018:19). Chiou and Bardolph acknowledged that they were not the first to ask for more prioritization of ethics education (e.g., Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2008) and that their experiences teaching an ethics-centered archaeology showed them that students learn more effectively when they are shown how archaeology matters.

Archaeologists continue to ask ourselves and our colleagues to center ethics, particularly through curricula.

The Role of Ethics in Anthropological Archaeology Education

Although professional organizations do codify their ethical expectations, it is not clear that students in college classrooms—where most anthropologists start their careers—are being introduced to the ways ethics function in all anthropological theory and practice. It is unclear whether students are or are not receiving the implicit message from higher education institutions that ethical concerns are central to anthropological practice. Within the discipline, opportunities exist to actively engage ethical principles through debate, interrogation, and application, such as the SAA’s annual Ethics Bowl (Chiou and Bardolph 2018; Chiou and Sandweiss 2024). The Ethics Bowl uses a case study approach, in which teams of students devise actionable steps in response to ethics conundrums based on real-world examples. This active learning strategy helps students develop a sense of ownership over disciplinary norms and fosters problem-solving skills that are influenced by moral philosophy. The Ethics Bowl asks participants to look beyond “floor-level” approaches to ethical policy compliance and to instead strive toward ethical “ceilings” that exceed legalistic codes (Chiou and Sandweiss 2024:3–4). Outside the SAA’s Ethics Bowl, which is an exceptional case in the discipline, we find other venues where ethics are marginalized and even treated as something of an afterthought rather than a starting place.

As Markert has emphasized:

A start is to recognize that no situation or action within archaeology is without ethical implications. Ethics must be the starting point, not where we end up when things get tricky. Our professional responsibility is not just to know an ethical code and to abide by it appropriately, but to find ways to ensure our work and behavior remains in active, intentional dialogue with it. Not situational, but fundamental. (2021:26)

To make engagement with ethics a fundamental feature of a discipline, students need to encounter and think with ethical questions from the beginning of

their educational trajectory. While programs such as the SAA Ethics Bowl are formal, engaging, and highly successful, the Ethics Bowl primarily draws graduate student participants (Chiou and Sandweiss 2024:3). How can early postsecondary education set students and future professionals on a path toward *beginning* every question about the human past with a consideration of ethical issues? And how can educational frameworks go beyond a “cursory mention in a module of a course” (3), as Chiou and Sandweiss put it in their recent profile of the Ethics Bowl?

The problem of how to center ethics in higher education—in other words, how to professionally socialize students to care about ethics—is not unique to anthropological archaeology. Engineering educators, for example, are concerned that engineering students must grasp the complexities of their obligations to society during their training, because they will not be asked to do so or think to do so later in their careers (Martin et al. 2021). A study of 326 engineering students at four US universities found that curricula that gave more emphasis to technical education rather than professional socialization resulted in students’ disengagement from ethical concerns and public welfare considerations (Cech 2014). A subsequent study of 508 employed engineers found that those who did not receive ethics training in college were much less likely to identify and take action on ethical issues in the workplace (Cech and Finelli 2024:433). Many students who take archaeology and anthropology courses will not go on to pursue careers in the discipline, yet they would also benefit from using archaeological case studies to develop skills in discernment and weighing solutions under complex pressures. Prior research has found success in supporting ethics education for nonmajors in applied biology (Stutz 2011) and in using ethical case studies from computer science to promote interdisciplinary problem-solving (Wallach 2010). Students in computer science have moreover shown a capacity to develop as “moral agents” through a single technology ethics course (Cochran and Allman 2023). Integrating ethics into the curriculum can garner a range of favorable individual and structural impacts.

This study is a way of documenting how central and visible the engagement with ethics in anthropological education is. We wanted to see if there were some programs where students were being presented with the message that ethical principles are the beginning of anthropological inquiry. Some authors refer to this as a “pragmatic ethics,” in which ethics are not merely about static policies but rather are in negotiation and perpetually in revision (González-Ruibal 2018:355). Thus, to determine whether programs were indeed centering ethical concerns in anthropological education, we documented trends in how anthropology program goals and requirements are communicated to prospective and current students and others in digital spaces.

Archaeology and anthropology particularly require reflection on ethically engaging with the human past and present. As a scientific discipline, anthropology is rooted in its colonial past, with aftershocks enduring into present theory and practice (Allen and Jobson 2016; Blakey 2020, 2021; Gupta and Stoolman 2022; Harrison

1997). At the same time, decolonial and anticolonial praxis (theory into practice) has been the focus of much scholarly discourse (Arndt 2023; Montgomery and Supernant 2022; Oland et al. 2012; Reid et al. 2023; Schneider and Hayes 2020; Thomas and Clarke 2023), as well as calls for enhancing ethical engagement in archaeological and anthropological research (Pétursdóttir and Sørensen 2023; Riede et al. 2016; Stantis et al. 2024). Students either come into anthropology knowing—at least superficially—about these disciplinary histories or are taught them explicitly or learn to identify them between the lines of the textbook narratives. Previous research has suggested that undergraduate anthropology and archaeology courses fall short in their inclusion of the complete picture of who contributes to the reconstruction of the past and in their portrayal of the relevance of our archaeological past to the present and future (Hamilakis 2004; Hutchings and La Salle 2014; Quave et al. 2021). The discipline, especially the archaeology and biological anthropology subfields, is not made up of practitioners representing the range of human backgrounds and experiences (Antón et al. 2018; Blakey 2021; Bolnick et al. 2019; Cramb et al. 2022; Flewellen et al. 2021; Heath-Stout 2020, 2022; Heath-Stout and Hannigan 2020; Tallman et al. 2022). Eleanor King has pointed out that Black and Indigenous students in particular are unlikely to find archaeology as relevant or as a “versatile STEM science that combines a variety of methods and approaches” (2019:67); on the contrary, they may find the field to be “nonessential ‘enrichment’” (68) or even “dilettantish” (67). One method for circumventing such perceptions is to make it clear to students perusing the academic program that the field grapples with questions that cut across relevant social issues for the past, present, and future. Embedding ethical quandaries and problem-solving throughout the curriculum is a promising method for showing how archaeology is connected to many kinds of humans and not just the emblematic “‘older white men’ in khakis digging in exotic places” (King 2008:226, cited in King 2019:67).

Prior Research on Ethics in Postsecondary Anthropology Courses

As part of the SAA’s Committee on Curriculum, Kathryn Kamp (2014) published the results of a survey that documented implementation of the recommended seven core principles of archaeological education that had been developed in 1999 (Bender and Smith 2000). These included stewardship, diverse pasts, social relevance, ethics and values, written and oral communication, fundamental archaeological skills, and real-world problem-solving and had been modeled on the SAA’s Principles of Archaeological Ethics at that time. Kamp reported that the committee coded for emphasis on these seven principles among a sample of 98 syllabi that were not systematically collected. They corresponded to many types of archaeology courses, including introductory, area survey, topical, methods, theory, and field school courses. However, a major strength of the study was that all eight committee members coded most of the syllabi using an

ordinal 0–3 scale that was then averaged across committee members' scores (Kamp 2014:30–31).

What the committee found was that the least emphasized principle was stewardship, with archaeological ethics and values as the second-least emphasized. These results offer a glimpse at the landscape a decade ago, even if reviewing syllabi might offer limited insight into what is happening inside the classrooms. At the same time, however, the syllabus is a communicative document: it reifies what is most important and most worthy of documentation. Even if one cannot say for certain what was taught on average in those 98 courses, one can reasonably say that what was *emphasized at the outset* of those courses was less centered on ethics and values than on other aspects of a sound and relevant archaeological education.

Following the publication of Kamp's overview of the SAA survey, other authors published on each specific principle of archaeological education relative to the same survey. In John Seebach's 2014 analysis of the inclusion of ethics and values in the curriculum, he argued that it is not that faculty are failing to teach ethics but rather that

what we are guilty of is not making our ethical standards more explicit on syllabi and potentially in our lectures...Students leave our classrooms with only their syllabi, notes, and memories, and if we are not more open about the ethical stances we take as individuals and as a profession, we run the risk of making our values seem less important than they are. (15)

Seebach observed six major archaeology textbooks in circulation at the time and found that four included discussion of ethics in the final and/or penultimate chapter. Among the remaining two, one did not explicitly discuss ethics, though it included an introductory unit on the trade of antiquities, and the final textbook included no ethics chapter whatsoever (2014:table 2). The committee's syllabus survey had also found that ethics were reserved for the final portion of the semester, addressed in one to two class periods. According to the Open Syllabus Project (2024), the most frequently assigned archaeology text among anthropology syllabi internationally is Renfrew and Bahn's *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. The newest (8th) edition of the textbook still relegates content on ethical concerns, community archaeology, and engagement to the last two chapters (2020).

What Seebach (2014) further argued is that if faculty were teaching ethical concerns early and often, they were not signposting them as such. For example, he suggested introducing the importance of context in the archaeological record during early-term lessons on methods as a point for ethical inquiry. While it is true that preserving contexts has long been considered a core tenet of archaeological values, we argue that this example is not so compelling, as it does not leave room for negotiating, questioning, and applying. Students would not typically be asked to defend alternatives to maintaining provenance, for example. These are not the same ethical conundrums

as those covered in the final chapter of a typical textbook and are not usually treated as open questions to be pondered and prodded.

In broader scholarly work on undergraduate education, observations about what kinds of teaching are most likely to result in positive impacts on student learning are informed by the decades of research on high-impact practices by George Kuh and colleagues, which derives from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The longitudinal study of NSSE results found that there are long-term positive effects on students' well-being and ability to apply what they have learned when courses engage in "reflective" and "integrative" learning—in other words, learning that combines ideas from various courses, involves diverse perspectives, increases understanding of others' perspectives, and includes applying concepts to other courses or non-coursework activities (Kuh 2003; Kuh et al. 2017). But high-impact teaching practices must be integrated into the curriculum and not treated as add-ons; they should not be treated as epilogues to be considered only after everything else has been prioritized.

Many individual archaeology courses do structure student learning around the integration of ethical questions alongside and within the theory and method of archaeology. For example, in a recent multivocal essay, Kirby Farah and Benjamin Luley describe an upper-level field methods course at Gettysburg College that lists as its first learning objective that students will "describe the ethical principles and practices that guide archaeological research and identify the significance of positionality in guiding archaeological methods and interpretations" (Farah et al. 2024:36). In the 15-week course, ethics are highlighted in weeks 1 to 3 as part of preparation and background research before students begin excavating (37).

But if the introductory anthropology (or other subdiscipline-specific) course is sometimes the only chance students have to decide if anthropology or archaeology is for them, the tendency to tack ethics on to the end of the semester as an afterthought is leading to many missed recruitment opportunities, especially among students predisposed to think of anthropology as unethical. And for students who do continue in the discipline, they have already received the message that ethics are the last consideration in the construction of disciplinary norms.

Our Prior Research on Teaching and Learning in Anthropology

Motivation for our national survey of ethics requirements in anthropology came from our observations as students and teachers but also felt more urgent after hearing students' reflections on a particular course one of the authors had taught to undergraduates. This introductory archaeology course was revised from a focus on describing various ancient American cultures over time to an emphasis on ways of knowing the human past in that region, taking into account past and present power disparities. In other words, the course structure, learning objectives, and assessments focused on asking questions

about *how* we know what we “know” and how many different versions of the past might be legitimate and why.

However, some students were disappointed that they had taken what they called “an ethics course” when it had not been labeled as such. Curiously, the instructor had rarely uttered the term “ethics” in the written course materials or in the classroom. No textbook was assigned that ostensibly focused on ethics. The students perceived that they were doing one kind of learning (ethical learning) when the course had been conveyed to them as focusing on archaeologies of indigeneity and multivocality in the Americas. Not all students reacted this way. Others reported that the course shaped the formation of knowledge in the world and their place in it, akin to how Maria Kitchin and coauthors have written about anthropology majors at various colleges developing “their individual worldview and sense of self” (2023:60). Kitchin and colleagues describe students’ perceptions of the role of anthropology in shaping habits of mind rather than developing skills. Student interviews produced many examples of students reflecting on the way anthropology helped them question their assumptions, find their values, and become “a lot more ethically conscious” (Violet, quoted in Kitchin et al. 2023:60). These outcomes may be incidental to the culturally relative, social-(in)justice way many anthropology courses are focused. But it is also valuable to see how anthropology programs *describe* what we prioritize when the audience is prospective and current students.

This ethics survey is one phase of a long-term project led by Quave and various codirectors, including Kennedy, which seeks to understand how anthropology is taught in different contexts and how students subsequently engage with the discipline.

Quave’s larger project focuses on inclusive and antiracist, anti-oppressive pedagogies relative to norms for teaching archaeology (Amundsen-Meyer et al. 2023; Clarke et al. 2023; Hamilakis 2004; Oland 2020; Quave et al. 2021) and other anthropological subfields (Blatt 2022; Hubbard 2017; Hubbard and Monnig 2020; Zuckerman et al. 2024). In our efforts to reimagine how anthropology and archaeology are taught, we coordinated with several institutions to implement modified curricula in introductory courses that emphasize the significance of ethical thought and practices. We have designed curricular revisions that present the archaeological sciences as ways of knowing that can be problematized and contextualized. We reorient archaeology and anthropology as a multivocal scientific field where competing claims must be assessed with consideration of power differences in broader social contexts. Our archaeology courses present the human past as a model of inquiry into the human future, and one that must center marginalized perspectives on human experiences. These cocreative—driven by student-faculty collaboration—curricular revisions have thus far focused on small liberal arts colleges (SLACs).

Further, we have tracked shifts and continuities in enrollment demographics at one SLAC, observing increased interest in archaeology among women of color. We have conducted a survey and interview project with archaeology students at a second SLAC and at a Hispanic-serving community college. Concurrent with this survey of ethics requirements, we are also conducting a systematic review of syllabi across minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and predominantly white institutions (PWIs) for introductory biological anthropology and archaeology in the United States.

The overall purpose of the ongoing research on teaching in anthropology is to characterize the current state of anthropological education, to determine whether modified curricula can shift how students view and understand anthropological practice, and to identify the proportion of academic institutions that may already be implementing these modified curricula. By documenting the state of anthropological education today, we can begin to understand whether teaching is well aligned with the disciplinary conversations on ethics, equity, and inclusion.

2023–24 Survey of Ethics in Anthropology Programs

To better understand the ways in which anthropology (and archaeology, subsequently) is presented as a discipline shaped and guided by ethics and values relevant to humans, we conducted a survey of US institutions that offer anthropology degrees at the undergraduate level. The survey seeks to determine how the narrative of archaeology's and anthropology's colonial histories, and the resultant ethical conundrums, are currently being taught and communicated in academia to the next generation of anthropologists. Specifically, we ask the following questions:

1. Are US anthropology undergraduate institutions visibly emphasizing ethics in their program requirements?
2. Among US anthropology undergraduate institutions, are MSIs more frequently engaging in ethics education visibly as compared to PWIs?

Focusing on the inclusion of ethics in anthropology programs, this survey represents a first phase that can be expanded on with subsequent study on not only how programs communicate the role of ethics (or not) but also how that manifests in classroom settings across institutions. Distinguishing between institutions created for and mostly serving students from well-represented and dominant identities in the United States (i.e., PWIs) from institutions either designed for or currently serving underrepresented students is worthwhile because institutions may have historically rooted commitments to ethics education or may be pivoting to better serve particular student populations.

Methods

This study of ethics requirements for US undergraduate anthropology majors and minors is an analysis of *messaging*—of communicating priorities and norms of the discipline to prospective and actual students and others. The survey methods allowed us to see what was being projected publicly about a program's content and goals. This study is not able to show what is actually taught in a specific course, as course descriptions and learning objectives may not convey the full scope of student learning at a given institution.

We follow the lead of researchers who have studied syllabi and program and course descriptions for similar purposes of establishing what is communicated about a course or major/minor (e.g., Fuentes et al. 2021; Gin et al. 2021; Palmer et al. 2014). In technical communication, Cecilia Shelton and Sarah Warren-Riley surveyed 33 publicly available catalog descriptions for introductory courses in their discipline and found that few included phrases related to the themes of social justice and ethics that technical communication purportedly centers (2023:315–16). While they recognized that the course descriptions might not convey the entire focus of a given course, they, like us, argued that the catalog does indeed serve as an outward-facing and official record of what is supposed to be included. Mary Wright's comprehensive study of university centers of teaching and learning also relied on a "web-based methodology" for assessing centers' aims and missions; Wright (2023) asked whether missions were aligned with strategies. We, too, are interested in how well anthropology programs' descriptions of their priorities align with the discipline's broader interest in ethics concerns.

To obtain a broad sample of ethics requirements and course offerings, we undertook a stratified, randomly sampled survey of US undergraduate colleges and universities that offer anthropology majors and minors. Though we are particularly interested in the implications for archaeological education, we chose to sample US institutions teaching archaeology through a disciplinary identification within anthropology. The survey results are relevant to the national status of US undergraduate anthropology in general, but in this paper we describe the results relative to archaeology specifically.

Our sample was derived from a list of 827 US colleges and universities with undergraduate anthropology programs from the American Anthropological Association's (2024b) AnthroGuide, as observed in 2023 when we created the initial sample group. The AnthroGuide lists 827 programs offering anthropology across both undergraduate and graduate programs in the United States and Canada. From the list of 827, we extracted the 637 institutions based in the United States that included undergraduate programs (major and minor), including associate and two-year degrees and combined graduate-undergraduate institutions. From there, we classified the 637 institutions

according to their status as PWIs and MSIs, based on the categories compiled by the MSI Data Project (2024), a publicly accessible digital research initiative that aims to further advance minority-serving institutions and their unique contributions to higher education.

PWIs are institutions that have a majority white student population; many were historically segregated or otherwise exclusionary in their admission policies (Brown and Dancy 2010:523). MSIs are postsecondary colleges and universities that encompass a range of institutional histories, including colleges and universities founded to serve nonwhite student populations, as well as institutions that have a more recent history of becoming majority nonwhite. Some MSIs are mission based, established explicitly to serve particular populations; these include historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and tribally controlled colleges and universities (TCCUs). Others are enrollment based, meeting specific demographic thresholds set by federal guidelines. Enrollment-based MSIs are former PWIs and include categories such as Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) and predominantly Black institutions (PBIs).

The purpose of dividing the sample of anthropology-teaching institutions into PWIs and types of MSIs was to bring to light any differences in explicit or potential engagement with ethics at those types of institutions, whether due to historical academic priorities or due to shifting priorities coeval with demographic changes at an institution. Nevertheless, this study looks at the shape of ethics requirements in anthropology across institutions on the whole, as well as through a stratified random sample that distinguishes PVI and MSI categories.

From the 637 institutions fitting our criteria, six MSI categories were represented in the sample as of 2023: PBI/HBCU (primarily Black institutions / historically Black colleges and universities); NASNTI (Native American–serving nontribal institutions); multiple MSI categories as an institution; HSI; ANNHSI (Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian serving institutions); and AANAPISI (Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander serving institutions). We chose to combine PBI and HBCU into one category despite their differing institutional histories, as they both represent the same minority group, and we found no statistical difference between the two groups in this study when disaggregated.

We randomized the order of the institutions in the six MSI categories and selected every 10th institution from the list of PWIs and MSIs to sample. This resulted in an initial sample that skewed toward PWIs; only 21.8% of all US colleges and universities that offer anthropology degrees are MSIs, resulting in too few MSIs in each represented category. The MSI Data Project lists 11 types of MSIs; our known anthropology programs included six MSI categories, with one aggregated for institutions that hold multiple MSI designations. Faced with sampling perhaps zero or one institution in each MSI category, we instead chose to oversample MSIs and included all MSI

institutions in the sample. This resulted in a total sample of 222 institutions, an overall 35.1% of the 637 relevant institutions listed in the AnthroGuide (table 1).

We initially attempted to use the Carnegie Classification system (<https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/>) to separate institution type, but a significant number of institutions were not included on this list—primarily MSIs. Instead we used the AnthroGuide to differentiate the following categories: university, community college, grad program, HBCU, tribal college (though none are listed), and minor only. We classified institutions by PWI and MSI status independent of these categories. Of the 222 institutions in our sample, 62.6% ($n = 139$) were MSIs, and 37.4% ($n = 83$) were PWIs (table 1).

Table 1. Sampled institutions by MSI designations

Institution type	Total listed in AnthroGuide	Sampled	% of institution type sampled	% of study sample ($n = 222$)
PWI	494	83	16.8%	37.4%
HSI	76	76	100%	34.2%
Multiple MSI categories	30	30	100%	13.5%
AANAPISI	18	18	100%	8.1%
PBI/HBCU	9	9	100%	4.1%
ANNHSI	3	3	100%	1.4%
NASNTI	3	3	100%	1.4%
Total	633	222	35.1	100.0%

PWI: predominantly white; HSI: Hispanic serving; AANAPISI: Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander serving; PBI/HBCU: primarily Black / historically Black colleges and universities; ANNHSI: Alaska Native and Hawaiian Native serving; NASNTI: Native American serving nontribal

Following our sample selection, we assessed and recorded information about anthropology ethics education based on publicly available data listed on the 222 institutions' websites. We noted what undergraduate degree type was offered (associate, bachelor's), what anthropology courses were offered, whether course descriptions were listed alongside course titles, and if any listed courses were ethics-related requirements or electives.

To determine whether a program's required or elective course(s) included substantive material on ethics, we conducted a term search of available course titles and course descriptions for keywords such as *ethics*, *social justice*, and *social inequity*, which we considered in the context of how the goals and objectives of the major were described (fig. 1). Moreover, courses that appeared to focus on themes commonly associated with ethical questions in the discipline, including ethnographic methods,

ethnic/racial marginalization, or Native American / Indigenous justice and policy, were given closer examination. Ultimately we identified courses in a binary manner: they were or were not an ethics-related course.

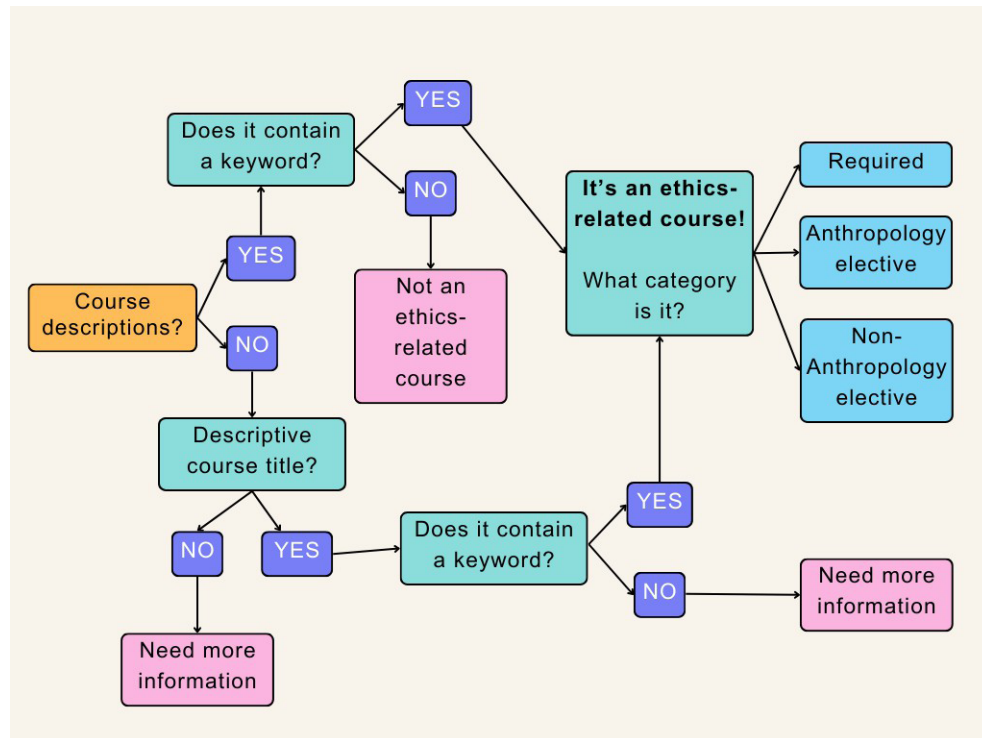


Figure 1. Flowchart of methods for identifying and characterizing ethics-related courses in the sampled academic programs

One influencing factor for whether a course was labeled “ethics related” was if a publicly available course description was accessible on the institution’s website and fit with any of the criteria we considered to be ethics related, as described earlier. Courses that lacked publicly available descriptions were judged solely on the course title, many of which were marked as ambiguous; this is a limitation of the methods employed. To determine the content of these courses, we would need to further examine descriptions and syllabi to accurately classify ethics content.

We also used program and departmental objectives to contextualize decisions about whether a course was related to ethics. Courses that were ambiguously related based on their course description, but had explicit program and department objectives that emphasized ethics, were classified as ethics related. If a department did not explicitly state its intention to educate students on ethics, then we assumed that ambiguous courses were not ethics related.

These determinations of associations with ethics education were made by the first author under the supervision of the second and third author. We intentionally chose to assess the visibility of the role of ethics in the academic program primarily from the

perspective of a student, as here we are asking about the *visibility* of engagement with, and importance of, ethics to the academic programs. Again, we were not able to determine if or how ethics content was actually taught at each institution, but only how ethics education was publicly highlighted and advertised; in other words, we could measure the rhetoric of ethics for each program's undergraduate requirements.

In addition to identifying whether or not anthropology programs offered ethics-related courses, we further categorized ethics-related courses into four subcategories: (1) anthropology ethics requirement, (2) other ethics requirement, (3) anthropology ethics elective, and (4) other ethics elective. An elective was considered nonanthropology if it was taught in a department other than anthropology, anthropology/sociology, or archaeology (in those institutional cases where archaeology is a separate academic program). These additional subcategories helped clarify the nature of how ethics was publicized for prospective students within each department.

This classification required access to course descriptions, as well as to further information regarding graduation requirements for the degree in question. Most institutions provided this information on their website; some had "suggested course plans" that outlined the type of courses eligible for each requirement.

Limitations

One limitation of sampling from institutions listed as teaching anthropology in the AnthroGuide (and subsequently verifying through a web search that the program is still functioning) is that archaeology and anthropology may be taught at some institutions but not institutionally categorized as such. For example, Howard University, which we did not include in this study, has archaeologists and other anthropologists on faculty who are teaching the discipline, but their courses are listed within sociology and criminology since the anthropology program closed in 2015 (King 2019:68). As of 2024, the AnthroGuide lists no tribal colleges with anthropology degrees or certificates. Tribal colleges, too, may have faculty teaching courses that might be considered anthropological or archaeological, but may classify those under Indigenous studies or Indigenous history (e.g., the Native American Studies Division at the Institute of American Indian Arts or the Introduction to Anthropology course taught by Native American Studies faculty at Salish Kootenai College). For the purpose of this initial study, we sampled only from institutions listed as teaching anthropology in the AnthroGuide.

Other limitations of the survey included only using publicly available institutional website data; this meant that more detailed information would be necessary to more fully assess ethics content for a number of institutions. To ensure that our study was as representative as possible, we tended toward categorizing ambiguous courses as ethics related, a practice that likely resulted in an overcounting of ethics-related courses. Ultimately this survey is a study of what is on the "front door" of programs, as shown

to current and potential students. We are not able to say *what* people are teaching but rather what the course titles and descriptions indicate they are teaching. However, we *are* able to say something about the rhetoric of the importance of ethics in the major/minor and individual required and nonrequired courses. The mere existence of an ethics course in the catalog did not necessarily mean anthropology students were required to take the course to complete their major or minor. In our survey, by classifying whether or not an institution made an ethics course a requirement—whether it was an anthropology department course or an ethics course outside the department—we are better able to understand the emphasis placed on ethics in the overall education of students at that institution.

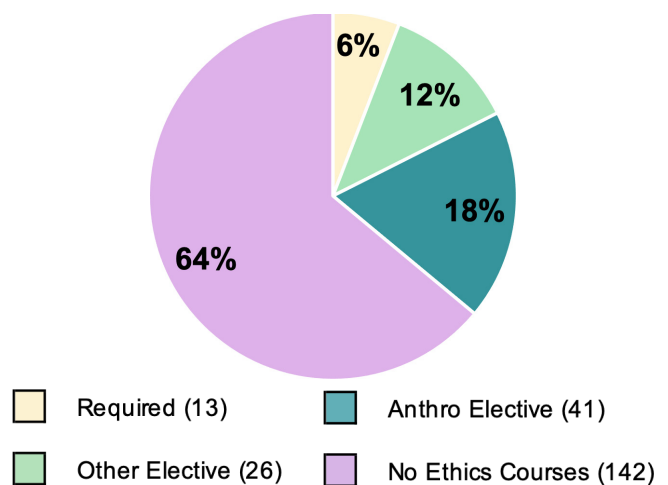
Results

Overall, we found that 63.9% ($n = 142$) of sampled institutions did not *appear* to offer any ethics courses or courses visibly ethics related within the list of major/minor requirements and electives (table 2; fig. 2). This finding potentially highlights a significant gap in the curriculum, suggesting that students from a majority of anthropology programs may graduate without formal training in ethics, an essential component of their professional development. Meanwhile, 30.2% ($n = 67$) of sampled institutions did offer elective ethics courses, though these were not required for graduation, thus potentially limiting the number of students who would engage with this critical subject matter. Only 5.8% ($n = 13$) of sampled institutions required ethics courses as part of their mandatory coursework, reflecting a minority of programs that prioritize ethics as a core competency.

Table 2. Breakdown of type of ethics-related courses offered in sampled institutions

Ethics course type	Count of institutions	Percent
Required	13	5.8
Other electives	26	11.7
Anthro electives	41	18.5
No ethics courses	142	63.9
Total	222	100.0

Figure 2. Proportion of ethics-related courses offered in sampled institutions



When analyzing required ethics-related courses by MSI and PWI categories (table 3; figs. 3, 4), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) had a noticeably higher percentage of required ethics-related courses (11.8%) compared to PWIs (4.8%). For elective courses, several MSI categories offered higher percentages of ethics-related courses than did PWIs; for instance, 22.2% of anthropology courses at PBIs/HBCUs and 33.3% of anthropology courses at NASNTIs were ethics elective courses. However, contrary to our hypothesis that MSIs would be more focused on ethics education, a larger proportion of MSIs had no ethics courses at all compared to PWIs. Specifically, 77.8% of anthropology courses at PBIs/HBCUs and 67.1% at HSIs lacked ethics components, compared to 56.6% at PWIs. These findings challenge the assumption that MSIs emphasize ethics education more than PWIs (see fig. 3), which we anticipated could be due to differences in institutional histories and student interests and priorities.

Table 3. Count of institutions offering (no) ethics courses in the major or minor, divided by PWI and MSI categories

Institution type	Required ethics	%	Ethics elective (anthro)	%	Ethics elective (non-anthro)	%	No ethics	%	Total Sampled
PWI	3	3.6	15	18.1	17	18.1	47	56.6	83
HSI	9	11.8	10	13.2	6	13.2	51	67.1	76
Multiple MSI categories	1	3.3	7	23.3	1	3.33	21	70	30
AANAPISI	-	-	3	16.7	2	16.7	13	72.2	18
PBI/HBCU	-	-	2*	22.2	-	-	7	77.8	9
ANNHSI	-	-	3	100	-	0	-	-	3
NASNTI	-	-	1	33.3	-	-	2	66.7	3
Total	13	18.7	41	18.5	26	11.7	141	63.5	222

*The two PBI/HBCU institutions with anthropology electives on ethics were both HBCUs.

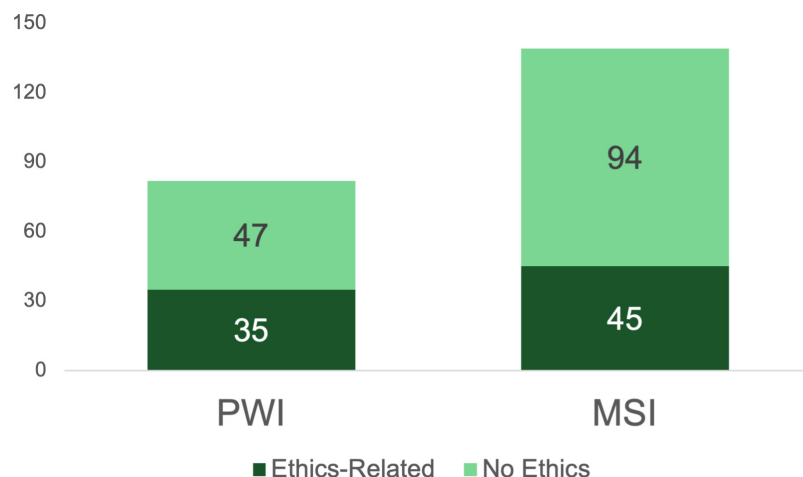


Figure 3. Counts of programs with ethics-related courses by generalized institution category (PWI vs. MSI)

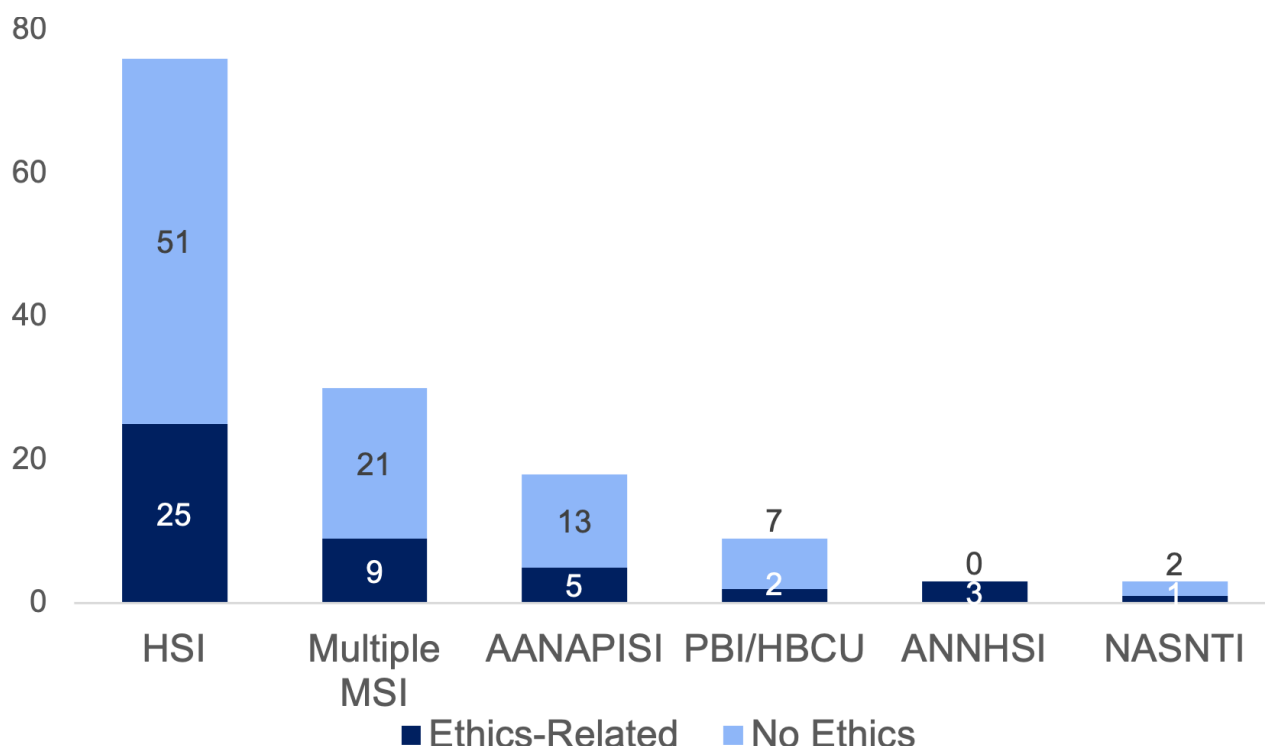


Figure 4. Counts of programs with ethics-related courses by institutional MSI category (sample sizes: HSI: n = 76; multiple MSI: n = 30; AANAPISI: n = 18; PBI/HBCU: n = 9; ANNHSI: n = 3; NASNTI: n = 3)

What Kinds of Courses Were Classified as Ethics Related?

We could not directly measure programs' commitments to teaching ethics; rather, we examined the rhetoric of their program requirements and course descriptions that are available to the broader public. We categorized courses at various institutions within the

context of their anthropology program's stated objectives, leading to a variety of courses that could be considered ethically engaged (table 4).

Table 4. Categories of ethics-related courses with example course titles and description excerpts

Required ethics course	Ethical Reasoning. "This course introduces students to major traditions of moral theory and ethical reasoning, engages students in critically examining ethical problems, and challenges students to develop rigorous personal systems of ethical reasoning. The central goals of the course are to develop students' skills in reasoning about ethical problems and encourage deep, habitual reflection on the ethical dimensions of life. This course requires a major case study analysis of some sort. Individual sections may focus on different ethical arenas or problems."
Nonrequired ethics course (anthropology)	Who Owns the Past? Contemporary Controversies and Contested Narratives. "Students learn about disagreements regarding who owns antiquities and ethnographic objects. They consider the ethical, cultural, and legal considerations of where heritage materials are housed, and whether they should be published and exhibited, and if so, by whom. Students wrestle with museums' colonial legacies and consider how decolonizing practices are transforming museums and interpretations of the past."
Nonrequired ethics course (non-anthropology)	Ethics and Public Policy. "Offers students from multiple disciplines an opportunity to obtain training in basic methodology in analytic ethics and political philosophy. Focuses on the intersection of ethical analysis and policy evaluation."
Ambiguous*	People and Cultures of the World. "A representative ethnographic survey of worldwide cultures and major concepts in cultural anthropology taught through case studies."

*Ambiguous courses were considered to be related to ethics education if they were offered in a program with a statement about the importance of ethics in its learning goals or description of the major/minor.

For instance, an ambiguous course titled Visions, Mushrooms, and Mountains: Indigenous Knowledge in the Americas explores Indigenous knowledge and may include ethical discussions about colonial contexts. This course is described as offering

a cross-cultural exploration of knowledge in indigenous America, from Canada to Argentina. Through diverse audio-visual materials (films, audio recordings, etc.) and texts (oral histories, anthropological accounts, journalist pieces, constitutions, etc.) we will examine what knowledge is, how it is produced, who produces it, and for whom. Students will gain an understanding of why some knowledge is valued over others, an appreciation for diverse ways of knowing, and an engagement with wisdom from indigenous America.

However, because the description did not contain an explicit required ethics component, we categorized the course as potentially ethics related, but not a formal

ethics course. In other words, we *did not* use it as evidence that this institution offered an anthropology elective ethics course.

Another ambiguous example, an introductory course titled People and Cultures of the World, is described as a “survey of worldwide cultures” and may have been thoroughly engaged with ethical questions, depending on teaching methods, case studies, and emphasis within the course. However, owing to its ambiguous course description and uncertainty about methods of instruction, we did not count it as an ethics course.

At one sampled PWI R1 doctoral university, students are required to take an ethics course called Museums and Public Culture to complete the anthropology major; the department also offers four distinct anthropology ethics courses as electives. The Museums and Public Culture course aims to educate students on how cultures and peoples are presented in museum settings, and examines the role of museums and anthropology in public culture. Two examples of nonrequired ethics courses come from a small PWI liberal arts institution. These include Fiction and Fraud in Archaeology and Who Owns the Past? Although these courses address ethical, cultural, and legal issues in anthropology, they are listed as electives and are not mandatory.

Many institutions recommended ethics courses in the descriptions as a part of their anthropology program objectives but did not offer them from within their anthropology department. One such example is a PWI R1 institution that recommends anthropology majors/minors take three philosophy courses listed as electives, but does not offer similar ethics education within its anthropology program. While the elective philosophy courses provide training in analytical and ethical analysis, they do not focus specifically on anthropological ethics; importantly, they are not externally visible as ethics-related courses that might otherwise signal institutional commitment to ethics education in anthropology.

The Register of Professional Archaeologists and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2024b) jointly maintain a website on archaeological ethics, including a bank of relevant course descriptions and syllabi from undergraduate and graduate programs. The website indicates that the syllabi were collected from a survey of more than 120 institutions in the United States and Canada. In the list of linked courses, one finds many with “ethics” in the title, but also others such as Bioarchaeology, Global Health, Society, and Culture: Perspectives from Medical Anthropology. Senior Seminar: The Global Health Course, for example, contains the word “ethical” in the description in reference to the interplay of ethical and other dimensions of health to be discussed in the course. Not all listed courses seem to include archaeology, and not all would obviously focus on ethical components in the estimation of a prospective student or other onlooker intending to assess the domains of anthropology to be emphasized in the major or minor program.

Their method of categorizing courses as ethics related differs from ours and does not seem to include the contextual discernment of our survey that took the whole of the program's description into account. Our method has likely overcounted the inclusion of ethics at some institutions and possibly undercounted at others, but it is a valid way of showing the signaling of ethics engagement in digital spaces.

Case Study: Carleton College

From our randomly selected sample of 181 institutions, only 6.3% ($n = 13$) visibly required an ethics course to be taken within their respective anthropology or archaeology departments (see fig. 2); one of these schools, Carleton College (a PWI small liberal arts college in the Midwest), was the institutional home of two of the authors. We analyzed Carleton using the same methodology as all other institutions, but we did not include Carleton in the data tables and figures presented in this paper (222 institutions are included, and Carleton is the 223rd). The Carleton curriculum offers a contrast between the way a program may appear using our survey study methods and what we are able to say about the inclusion of ethics in the study thanks to our insider knowledge.

If one were to evaluate Carleton on the basis of the review criteria for the survey alone, an outsider may observe that the college mandates that anthropology majors take theory and methodology courses discussing ethics and historical assumptions. Archaeology minors, at the time of this survey, were required to complete a capstone course, Archaeology: Science, Ethics, Nationalism, and Cultural Property, which includes a thorough ethical examination of the archaeology subfield. However, as this capstone is typically taken in a student's final year, the required timing drastically lowers the number of students exposed to ethics during their academic careers (i.e., students who begin but do not complete a minor may not take the course). The required methods course, Archaeology Methods and Lab, does not communicate ethics content in the course title or course description, although it *could* include a large section on ethics, depending on the instructor. The Methods course is tagged as an Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) course at Carleton, highlighting content with a specific focus on ethical community engagement and an applied final project serving community needs. The ACE tag conveys to Carleton insiders that the course has an ethically engaged component, but this would not be evident to an external audience.

Other ethics-related courses (or ACE-tagged courses) from outside departments are also required for archaeology minors. Carleton is somewhat unusual in that archaeology sits outside the Sociology/Anthropology Department. One such course is Introduction to Anthropology, which is taught with an emphasis on ethical discussion about working with and researching human subjects, collaborators, and informants.

Carleton offers other ethics-related courses, namely, in the Philosophy Department; these are not required by the Archaeology Program or by the Sociology/ Anthropology Department, are infrequently taken by anthropology and archaeology students, and would not have been visible in this ethics survey.

Beyond the listed required ethics courses, Carleton College has also integrated ethical education into introductory courses, such as Archaeology of the Americas (table 5), following curriculum changes influenced by Quave and colleagues' work on centering marginalized perspectives. This approach aims to introduce ethical discussions earlier in students' academic journeys (Quave et al. 2021) but does not explicitly bill the course as focusing on ethical problems. However, the Archaeology of the Americas course at Carleton does not appear to be an ethics-related course from an outside perspective either and would not have been considered evidence for the program having an ethics-related elective on its own. Yet this was the same course mentioned earlier as the impetus for this study, in which students offered feedback that they wanted an "archaeology course" as advertised, "not an ethics course."

Table 5. Carleton College ethics-related courses, based on an insider view beyond the surface of what requirements are visible in online catalog listings

Required ethics course	ARCN 395: Archaeology: Science, Ethics, Nationalism and Cultural Property	"This seminar course will focus on a wide range of contemporary issues in archaeology, including case studies from many continents and time periods that shed light on archaeological theory and practice. Specific course content varies. The course serves as the capstone seminar for the Archaeology Minor; enrollment is also open to non-minors."
Elective ethics-related course (anthropology)	SOAN 240: Methods of Social Research	"When sociologists and anthropologists conduct their research, how do they know which method to choose? What assumptions guide their decision? What challenges might they encounter? And, even more importantly, what are their ethical obligations? In this course we will answer these questions through examining some popular sociological and anthropological research methods (e.g., interviews, surveys, and participant observation). Specific topics include: developing feasible research questions, selecting an appropriate research method, collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, and writing up research findings. By the end of the course, students will be better equipped to design and conduct a research study."
Elective ethics course (nonanthropology)	PHIL 213: Ethics	"How should we live? This is the fundamental question for the study of ethics. This course looks at classic and contemporary answers to the fundamental question from Socrates to Kant to modern day thinkers. Along the way, we consider slightly (but only slightly) more tractable questions such as: What reason is there to be moral? Is there such a thing as moral knowledge (and if so, how do we get it)? What are the fundamental principles of right and wrong (if there are any at all)? Is morality objective?"

As explained in the methods section, a course qualifies as ethics related if its title or description contains specific keywords (fig. 1). For instance, Archaeology of the Americas is described as a class that

examines how archaeologists understand the past, focusing on North and South America. The course is organized by themes such as migration, early cities, and the environment. Remember—the past is not something natural and static waiting to be “discovered.” It changes depending on who tells the story; it is not neutral! Whose past is legitimate? Which voices are heard or ignored? In this course, you will find out!

Despite the ethical implications raised regarding power and narrative, this course would not qualify as ethics related under our criteria due to its ambiguity. However, anyone more familiar with the course would confidently assert that it is indeed ethics related. This highlights how, despite the course’s intention to educate students in ethical reasoning and practice, that purpose may not be clearly conveyed or emphasized in publicly available descriptions, meaning that students and others may not be able to perceive the centrality of ethical issues in the archaeology minor. In other words, the ethics-related nature of the courses offered within SOAN (Sociology/Anthropology) and ARCN (Archaeology) may have been invisible to an outsider researching this question at this institution.

The details of the Carleton program requirements illustrate the limitations of this study but also show examples of how to distribute ethical engagement throughout a curriculum. Other programs are likely making similar changes. Rather than offering a complete analysis of ethics in anthropological education, this survey underscores how ethics are visibly presented as a priority and as a central focus in anthropology programs across US institutions, which can reify the importance of ethics in professionalization.

Discussion

This study provides an overview of the way ethics-related courses are included in anthropology program requirements across US institutions, and of the visibility of those requirements. Using the AnthroGuide degree programs list and the MSI Data Project, we identified and classified a representative sample of institutions, ensuring an inclusive approach that characterizes trends at both MSIs and PWIs.

The low percentage of required ethics courses among US undergraduate anthropology programs suggests that ethics education may not be a standard component of most curricula. Including MSIs in our sample provided insight into the representation of ethics courses in institutions serving minoritized populations, demonstrating that there is not a substantial difference in requirements between institution types. Hispanic-serving institutions do appear to have greater frequencies of

visible ethics requirements, and PWIs are the second most frequent to visibly require ethics courses.

If our survey results give an accurate picture of the frequency of required and other ethics-related courses, they raise important questions about how prepared anthropology graduates may be to face ethical challenges in their professional lives, particularly in a field where ethical decision-making is vital. While the study did not directly address detailed ways that undergraduate students engage with ethics in specific courses, follow-up studies could define the various ways current coursework incorporates professional ethics. We hope to see more adoption of the active-learning, applied approaches that characterize the SAA Ethics Bowl, for example, which asks students to reach beyond policies and compliance to fulfill loftier goals for best practices that reduce harm within the discipline. In other disciplines, ethics education has found success when it empowers students to see themselves as actively shaping ethical norms (Alpay 2013; Cochran and Allman 2023:28; Cruz 2021; Sunderland 2019; Wallach 2010), when students are asked to apply ethical codes to current issues (Cochran and Allman 2023:29; Stutz 2011), and when disciplinary boundaries are pushed by incorporating genres such as science fiction and role-playing for ethical analysis (Berne and Schummer 2005; Loui 2009).

While this study tells us much about how ethics are communicated outwardly as a priority, further research is needed, including studying syllabi from institutions with ambiguous requirements and electives related to ethics. Moreover, surveying students before and after they enroll in particular kinds of courses could lend insight into what students are experiencing in the classroom, and how their ethical discernment develops within and beyond anthropology and archaeology. A follow-up syllabus study is under way on a subsample of the surveyed institutions. That study focuses on teaching methods within introductory archaeology and biological anthropology courses but may also be positioned to provide a more detailed analysis of ethical components in introductory courses, including course content, structure, and specific learning outcomes. These additional data will further elucidate the role of ethics education in anthropology departments and potentially inform future curriculum development.

At the time of this writing, Dr. Malorie Albee of Northern Michigan University is conducting an analysis of current practices in anthropological ethics education, according to faculty. A Qualtrics survey distributed in 2024 poses the research question “Are Anthropology undergraduate and graduate students receiving adequate education and training in ethics as part of their program curriculum?” Albee’s study is well suited to answer questions that cannot be approached using our methods; the intent of our study differs from Albee’s.

The discipline of US anthropology and the US configuration of archaeology programs are not always readily divided into university and college program silos. This

study's sampling strategy started with the AnthroGuide's listing of programs and may have missed highly visible prioritization of ethics education in programs not explicitly marked as anthropology. For example, archaeologists and other anthropologists at Howard University (an HBCU and R1/R2) teach anthropological ethics, including heritage ethics, in courses not tagged as anthropology. Tribal colleges may not demarcate anthropology programs, even if faculty might have PhDs in the field, and may also be invisible in our study.

Another challenge is to recall that merely offering an ethics course in an academic program does not necessarily mean that students are taking the course; it also does not mean that students perceive ethics to be important to their disciplinary training. A requirement can underscore the importance of ethics education, though anyone who has advised majors and minors knows that just because it is required does not mean it is appreciated and valued. The structures that academic programs build and communicate to students and other external audiences do, to some degree, shape how the discipline comes together. To center ethics education is to communicate that it is core to our practice. Carol Colaninno (2019) has recently called for more engagement with discipline-based education research in archaeology, which entails understanding how students interact with and are changed by curricular practices. This project is conceived with the same aims: to contribute to the larger project that is necessary for continuing to calibrate the goals of archaeological (and anthropological) education so that they align well with future-looking objectives related to the relevance and applicability of these disciplines.

Conclusions

Overall, our survey highlights a crucial area for improvement in anthropological education. Both anthropology writ large and the archaeology subdiscipline have historically invested in codifying ethical practices among professional organizations. If those ethical codes and values are not centered in education, the discipline's commitments are rendered invisible. Future archaeologists may then perceive the discipline to be marred by ethical failures; centering professional ethics in visible and genuine ways within a curriculum can counteract those legacies and better prepare students to navigate the complex ethical landscapes they will encounter in their careers.

Students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds in archaeology are particularly eager to see evidence that the field is working to reduce harm and make the study of the past relevant to the present. Doing so could enhance recruitment and retention of such students and meaningfully change norms and values for those already in the discipline. Incorporating ethics more intentionally throughout the curriculum, beginning on day one in an anthropology course and sustained through each semester, can demonstrate to all students—and their teachers—that archaeology matters to living people and is crucial for building a better society.

Supplementary Materials

A de-identified, sanitized copy of our survey data is available on the open-access repository Mendeley Data at <https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/dkpnsv4g5m/1>. The citation for this dataset is: Kucur, Ezra; Quave, Kylie; Kennedy, Sarah (2024), "Ethics in Archaeology Teaching Study: Survey of 2023 Anthropology Program Requirements," Mendeley Data, V1, doi:10.17632/dkpnsv4g5m.1.

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