

Deciding Where to Firm

We know how daunting it can be trying to decide where to 'firm' as your first choice of university. The truth is that there's no right or wrong decision – you have to choose the place that seems right to you – but there *are* better or worse reasons for making that decision. So here are a few pointers to help you decide whether the LSE really is the right place for you.

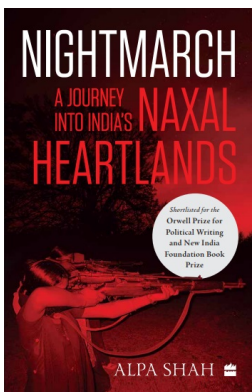
Course content: what will I be learning?

For most applicants, this should be the most important factor of all. After all, this might be your last experience of formal education. Even if it's not, it will play a major role in shaping your outlook on life and the way you think about important issues. It's crucial to make sure you choose **somewhere that addresses the questions that really matter to you**: questions that you will enjoy spending three years of your life engaging with.



The late Professor David Graeber speaks to Occupy TV on how the concept of 'capitalism' moved from being an object of critique to a source of hope

You need to look closely at the course details here, since each anthropology course is subtly different. At the LSE, for example, we place a great emphasis on making sure that all our students have **a thorough grounding in debates over the key determinants of human social life**: political and legal systems, belief systems, economic systems, kinship and gender systems, and how these all relate to cognitive and emotional development. We're also committed to examining **how anthropology can contribute to social justice**, for example in our optional paper on the anthropology of development (which runs annually) and our new papers on public anthropology and the anthropology of health and welfare.



However, these areas of anthropology might not all be covered in other courses for which you have offers – especially if they include biological as well as social anthropology... (After all, something has to be left out to make room for all that extra biology!) On the other hand, those courses might cover topics like primatology and human evolution, which our course doesn't – although you can borrow them as outside options in your second and third year. (Note also that we do teach anthropology that is grounded in evolutionary psychology and cognitive science, and have elements of medical anthropology, visual anthropology, and material culture threaded through our courses).

Read more about the book and listen to a podcast [here](#)

Top tips for making a decision

- Remember that at the LSE you can still apply to take option courses from Goldsmiths, SOAS and UCL if you have an interest in a particular area that our course doesn't cover. You can also pursue these areas in your fieldwork projects and in your dissertation.
- Look at what each core course does and doesn't include, and think carefully about what matters to you the most. Then you should arrive at the right decision

Who will be teaching me?

At the LSE, it will be world leading thinkers. Pure and simple. Our department was ranked **the very best in the UK** for the quality of its research publications in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, and our staff are internationally recognised names in their various fields of expertise.

What's more, we aren't just 'star professors' who occasionally turn up to lecture and leave the bulk of our teaching to graduate teaching assistants. We teach most of our classes ourselves, and really prize the opportunity to interact with our students. Fortunately our fantastic student:staff ratio – at 7:1, the lowest of any anthropology department in the UK – means that **every student gets to be individually known**. That's supported further via our tutorial system, in which you can get individualised feedback on how to develop and refine your arguments from a personal academic advisor. It means our programme combines the strengths of an 'Oxbridge' style supervision system with the benefits that come from consolidating your knowledge of difficult texts in seminars of 10-15 people, where you can also share your ideas and experiences with your peers.

What about the social life?



Anthropology Professor Deborah James on bass guitar and vocals at our end of term party

The LSE can sometimes have a reputation as being very 'corporate' and competitive, but the anthropology department couldn't be more different – it's **an incredibly warm and friendly environment**, and much closer to the other LSE stereotype: of students committed to social justice, taking part in radical movements, and discussing cutting-edge theory and philosophy in cafes overlooking the Thames.

There are **a huge number of societies** to join on campus – and our students have made firm friendships not just through their course, but through their involvement in the Athletics Union, the Dance Society, the Drama Society, the Marxist Society, the Debating Society, the Feminist Society, and countless more. You name it, we've got it – and if we don't, you can always set one up yourself!

Remember also that as an LSE student, **your social life is not just confined to the LSE campus**. You're also a member of the University of London, and so can get involved with all the activities run by Student Central, and even live in intercollegiate halls. Plus you can become an Associate or Visiting Member of the Students' Unions at other London colleges, allowing you to get involved in everything their clubs and societies have to offer. In other words, you get to enjoy the benefits of the LSE course whilst also being **part of the largest community of students in the UK**. Moreover, you'll have loads of opportunities to explore exhibitions, talks and cultural scenes directly linked to what you are studying. There's no better opportunity than studying in London to find a circle of like-minded people who will become your friends for life.

How employable will I be after completing the course?

The statistics bode well: of our most recent 5 cohorts of leavers, 92% were in employment, further study, or planned time out 6 months after graduation, and their **average starting salary was £22,000**.

What helps our students become so employable? Firstly, our fantastic careers service, which offers you **exclusive opportunities for internships and placements**, as well as **one-to-one careers counselling**. And secondly, our degree. It's designed to stretch you by exploring the various dimensions of human social life in such depth that you will graduate with superior analytical and critical thinking skills that can be put to use in any and all fields of work.

We really do hope that you'll decide to join us. But wherever you choose to firm, thank you for making us one of your choices, and we wish you the very best of luck for your future studies!

