

3 REASONS TO NETWORK AS AN ANTHROPOLOGY PHD STUDENT

#1

The people who will hire you when you graduate won't be from your department.

#2

There are more peers relevant to your research outside your department than in it.

#3

Opportunities are more plentiful when you have connections who think of you.

Conferences are about PEOPLE not research.

Conferences are one of the only places you can mingle with anthropologists outside of your department. **It is ok to prioritize socializing over attending panels.** It is a rookie mistake to just shuffle from panel to panel. Instead, go to events, meet people for coffee, go to parties, loiter in the hotel lobby during off times, and go to panels in between social obligations.

CONFERENCES

	Big Conferences	Small Conferences
Try to attend a mix of big and small conferences.	<i>Attendees</i> More attendees with diverse interests.	Fewer attendees with similar interests.
Check previous years' schedule to see who attends or check CVs to see where people tend to go.	<i>Schedule</i> More free-time. More off venue events. Fewer people attend panels.	Less free time. More full conference events. People attend panels.
Follow the social media and listservs of associations and sections relevant to you.	<i>Cost</i> Usually more expensive due to travel and duration.	Usually less expensive due to shorter durations and travel for regional conferences.

INTRODUCTIONS

Your Name Here

Title, Department, Institution

Email | Website | Twitter

Something Memorable

Always take business cards. You don't want to be the person scribbling your email on scraps of paper when you meet someone interesting.

Your business cards should have the name that you go by in publications and online, public contact information, and something memorable (e.g. research interests, presentation title and time, or catchy tag line).

#ProTip : Staples will print 100 cards for ~\$10.

Memorize a two sentence statement to introduce you and your research.

MEETING PEOPLE



SHAKE HANDS



HAVE COFFEE

Who

People too busy to have coffee with you or people who you want to know your name, but not have a long conversation with.

Preparations

Figure out what they look like. Make flashcards to memorize names and faces. This makes it easier to find them and introduce yourself. It also eliminates the awkwardness of asking “Are you [name here]?”

Find out where they will likely be. The easiest way is to use the program to find their presentations. For the AAA Meeting, you can also use CVs to find out if there are any open business meetings or events they may attend (e.g. Wenner-Gren recipients usually go to the Wenner-Gren party, members of interest groups usually go to those business meetings). Otherwise, loitering in the hotel lobby and going to the parties with free drinks are good places to run into people.

Prepare a question not a compliment. Everyone likes a compliment. However, it is difficult to respond to, can embarrass them, and gives them no information about you. Having a question prepared starts a conversation, tells them something about why you are talking to them, and shows your interest (which is flattering all on its own).

If you are nervous about meeting someone or they are not someone you can easily approach, consider finding one of their students and meeting them instead. Chances are they like their advisor for the same reason you do. So, you already have something in common.

Shaking Hands

Be bold. Confidence is key to making a good first impression. If you are feeling timid, try practicing your introduction before the conference and memorize a script to fall back on if your nerves get to you.

Respect their time. Since you haven’t scheduled time to meet, respect that they may have things to do. Introduce yourself quickly and succinctly with who you are, what you research, and why you are interested in them. Give them a business card.

Post-Conference

Try and connect with them in a casual way online (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, or ResearchGate). Avoid more formal connections like LinkedIn until you have a more solid rapport.

If you want to know them better, consider moving them to the “Get Coffee” column for the next conference.

Who

Anyone who has research strongly aligned with yours. (Especially new faculty, PhD candidates, postdocs, and other graduate students.)

Preparations

Email them a month before the conference. Tell them (1) who you are, (2) what you do, and (3) how their work is relevant to you in 3-4 sentences. Ask if you could meet up for coffee or drinks during the conference.

Follow up with an email a week before the conference. Say something brief and informal that reminds them of your meeting. (e.g. “I look forward to meeting you next week...”) This is also a good chance to set final plans. Making plans on the spot can be difficult and eat up your time with them. Pick a place to meet and a place to go ahead of time.

Do your homework (especially for meeting established scholars). You should know what they look like, what their research is on, how their research is relevant to yours, and have read their latest publication.

Coffee

Do not pay for them. You are not obligated to buy them food or drinks. Sure it is nice, but you are a graduate student and everyone understands that.

Prepare 3-4 questions for the meeting. You asked for the meeting so you will be responsible for setting the agenda. Conversations may lead you to unexpected places. But, you should always be prepared with something to talk about if there is silence.

Ask for recommendations for events and panels to attend. People usually know about parties, business meetings or other events relevant to their work. This is a good way to find out about off-program events.

Be thankful, but don’t over do it. Being too flattering or too ingratiating can cause embarrassment or otherwise put distance between you.

Post-Conference

Within 24-hours email a thank you. It can be helpful to write a sentence or two reminding them what you talked about. (e.g. “I look forward to reading that book you suggested.” or “Your insights on ___ were helpful.”) Then, connect with them on social media.

Within one month, write a second email with an ask. Staying in contact is difficult and out of the blue emails with no asks are difficult to respond to. But, if you ask for something small (e.g. reading a draft introduction, answering a question) you can build your relationship over time.