Thinking about graduate school in Anthropology or Sociology? Here are some basic considerations...

M.A. or Ph.D.?
- Do you have the interest to sustain you for a longer program or would you rather do a shorter one?
  - Average Ph.D. completion time is between 6 to 8 years, while an M.A. generally takes between 2 and 3 years, though job opportunities in either field are much more limited if the Master’s is the terminal degree

- How will a graduate degree help get you the career you want? Which degree is better for that career?

- Is there funding for the one you chose, or do you pay your own way?
  - M.A.s are usually difficult to fund, Ph.D.s easier
  - Are you prepared to take on student loan debt to support your graduate study?

- Know well what you’re getting yourself into, and know the different career options ahead of time.

Frame of mind is important for the Ph.D.
- Most get a Ph.D. because they have some questions they want to explore and want intellectual growth - not because it's the automatic stepping stone to an academic job they may want

- Don’t fool yourself: the academic job market has been pretty grim, and it’s not going to improve anytime soon.

- Grad school (especially at the Ph.D. level) is not a 'professional school' in the same vein as an M.B.A., J.D. or M.D. – academic independence, intellectual rigor, and a great deal of self-discipline are necessary for successful completion of a Ph.D.

Taking time between Muhlenberg and Grad School
- Will I burn-out by my second or third year? If yes, wait.

- Admissions committees are looking for intellectual and social maturity – if you are not entirely serious about sociology or anthropology, it would behoove you to wait.

- Besides “getting a job” or exploring travel, you might consider using your time between undergrad and grad to further your research goals...apply for a Fulbright grant, attend a field school, work on language skills, take non-matriculated graduate courses, or find work as a research assistant on a project.

These considerations will affect where you apply, on what you chose to work, with whom you will work and, most importantly, it will help orient you throughout the entire process. Before proceeding, you will have to make some very sobering assessments and decisions, so it is important to carefully consider why you want to go to grad school.

Adapted from http://www.uvm.edu/~lvivanco/gradsch.html