AFRICAN CULTURAL STUDIES, M.A.

The mission of the Department of African Cultural Studies is to provide research and teaching in the languages and expressive cultures of Africa and Africans around the world.

The department is the only one of its kind in the United States. It offers curricula leading to both the master of arts degree and the doctor of philosophy degree. Its students come from all over the world, including many African countries.

ADMISSIONS

PREREQUISITES

Admission to the graduate program requires a bachelor’s degree with substantial coursework related to the expressive cultures of Africa. Admitted students with an insufficient background in African cultural studies may be asked to complete additional coursework beyond the regular degree requirements. Applicants should have a minimum 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 grading scale or equivalent academic performance on other scales. The department will consider special cases, however, for probationary admission. If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact the graduate coordinator.

Admission into the Ph.D. program requires a master of arts in a closely related field (with the thesis or other substantive piece of graduate-level writing submitted as a writing sample).

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All applicants to the program must apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply) by 15 November. Please note, the $75 application fee is due at the time of application (an additional $6 will be charged to international students to cover processing). The department cannot review an applicant who has not met all Graduate School admissions requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/requirements). Carefully review the instructions and other information the Graduate School provides; most of the admissions questions we receive relate to the Graduate School's requirements and are answered in their documentation.

As part of the online application process, you will be asked supplemental questions regarding your language and teaching experience and expected to upload the information listed below:

- University Transcripts
  
  You must upload transcripts or academic records from each institution attended. You may upload unofficial copies for department review. If you are offered admission to the program, the Graduate School will request that you provide official copies of transcripts or academic records from each institution you have attended. These must be issued directly by the institutions with all official seals, stamps, and signatures. International academic records must be in the original languages and records in languages other than English accompanied by an official English translation. An accepted student may not matriculate or enroll for courses until the Graduate School has documented official transcript(s) matching or updating the application transcript(s).

- TOEFL or IELTS Scores (international applicants)
  
  If your undergraduate institution did not conduct courses in English, you must complete either the Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System exam (IELTS). The online application allows you to self-report scores, but we cannot consider your application until the Graduate School receives your official score report directly from the examination organization. Students who do not meet Graduate School guidelines for English proficiency (https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/requirements) may be considered for admission, but will be required to complete assigned English language courses during their first year of study.

- Purpose Statement
  
  Your statement of purpose should make clear that you understand the kinds of courses we offer (http://african.wisc.edu/courses) and the research interests of our faculty and substantiate how your own interests intersect with our faculty expertise (http://african.wisc.edu/people/faculty). Give a detailed account of the reasons and circumstances that led to your decision to undertake graduate work in the Department of African Cultural Studies. Include references to your academic work, your short-term and long-term goals, your personal relationship to or interests in the fields we study, and your knowledge of any African languages.
  
  If your transcripts reflect any negative episodes in your academic career, e.g., a poor grade or a dropped course, you may explain them here.
  
  We look for evidence of your developing research interests and how they relate to the research interests of our faculty.
  
  The department will make secondary use of your purpose statement to assess the quality of your writing. We recommend a length of 500-1000 words. The scope of your discussion and the level of detail that you choose to provide will be part of our assessment.

- CV or Résumé
  
  Curriculum vitae or résumé listing language experience, awards, honors, or publications. For more information on CV or résumé writing, please consult these resources:
  
  - Letters of Recommendation (3)
    
    We require three letters of recommendation, submitted directly by the referees. You must submit your requests to all three of your references as part of the online application. Recommenders will receive a notice via email and will submit their letters accordingly. We do accept letters by post and email (submit directly to the graduate coordinator). We do not accept letters sent by the candidate unless they are sealed and the seal is proofed in some form (e.g., with the letter writer’s signature over the seal).
    
    Recommendation letters should discuss your overall scholarly ability. Please ask your referees to include specific examples of your academic achievements; your independent thinking, analytical and critical thinking skills; papers and presentations given in their courses; and your merits relative to other students. For international applicants, the letters should also address English proficiency. If recommenders submit their letters via the Graduate School’s online application system, they will be asked to compare you to other students with whom they have worked; if they do not submit their letters through this system, they should include this information in the letter itself.
    
    Strong letters of recommendation will provide the department with evidence that you will succeed in the study of African languages and expressive cultures at the graduate level. While we will accept letters
from faculty in any discipline, we will give greater weight to letters from faculty whose scholarship is related to the fields we study.

*All letters must be received by the 15 November deadline in order for us to consider your application.*

**AFTER THE APPLICATION**

Following your application, the Graduate School will provide you with a link and a UW–Madison NetID and account. Use the information to track the progress of your application. Please keep in mind that materials sent by post may take some time to appear on this progress report.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic degree programs and the Graduate School. Applicants must meet requirements of both the program(s) and the Graduate School. Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions).

**FUNDING**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES**

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and processes related to funding.

**PROGRAM RESOURCES**

The department automatically considers all applicants for support through teaching assistantships and various UW–Madison fellowships. Eligibility varies by program. The process is very competitive, and we are unable to provide support for all students qualified to pursue degrees in our graduate program. However, the majority of our students do receive about five years of funding, mostly in the form of teaching assistantships. Our top domestic minority students are typically nominated for, and often receive, Advanced Opportunity Fellowships (https://grad.wisc.edu/diversity/oeid). All domestic students are encouraged to apply for Foreign Language Area Studies fellowships (https://flas.wisc.edu) (FLAS) fellowships. Many of our graduate students also pursue outside funding as their career progresses. Details are listed below.

**TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

The department regularly funds teaching assistantships for both our language and literature/culture courses. Opportunities and assignments vary by semester. All continuing graduate students in good academic standing must apply by 15 November to be considered for positions for the following academic year. All new applicants are automatically considered. Teaching assistants earn tuition remission, a stipend, and benefits.

Please consult our website (https://african.wisc.edu/programs/teaching-assistantships) for the most up-to-date information regarding teaching assistantships.

**EBRAHIM HUSSEIN FELLOWSHIP**

The Ebrahim Hussein Endowment for research in African literature was established in the College of Letters & Science in 2003 thanks to the generosity of Robert M. Philipson, alumnus of the College of Letters & Science (Ph.D 1989). The College will award $7500 each year to one or more full-time graduate students in L&S to carry out research on African literature in Africa and/or archives outside of the United States. The research must lead to a Ph.D. dissertation, an M.A. thesis, or a publishable-quality paper. Doctoral students may receive up to $7500 each; M.A.-level students may receive up to $3,750 each.

*Applications are due in late November for award dispersal the following year.*

The application must include the following materials:

- 
  - An application letter, describing the need for funding, the proposed research, and its role in the student’s career. (1–2 pages.)
- 
  - The student’s academic transcript.
- 
  - A 5-page research proposal.
- 
  - Two letters of recommendation, discussing the overall excellence of the student’s work, the nature of the student’s research, and the contribution that the work will make both to the student’s major discipline and to the humanities generally.
- 
  - Description of any other funding received or applied for.

Finalists from the application process may be interviewed by the fund committee before the final determination of the award.

**Selection Criteria**

- 
  - Excellence of research proposal. Proposals should include a research timeline, description of contacts overseas, if any, and a budget. Proposals giving attention to one or more African languages will receive priority.
- 
  - Demonstrated commitment to African literature.
- 
  - General academic record.
- 
  - Letters of recommendation.

**OTHER FUNDING RESOURCES**

The Graduate School provides additional information helpful to graduate students in need of funding.

Find information about:

- 
  - Types of funding available (https://grad.wisc.edu/studentfunding/types)
- 
  - How to search for funding (https://grad.wisc.edu/studentfunding/steps)
- 
  - Funding for international students (https://iss.wisc.edu/students/new-students/funding-scholarships)

General funding resources on campus (https://grad.wisc.edu/studentfunding/resources)

- 
  - African Studies Graduate Student Summer Fieldwork Award (http://africa.wisc.edu/?page_id=12507)
- 
  - Dana-Allen Dissertation Fellowship (https://irh.wisc.edu/fellowships/dissertation)
- 
  - Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowships (https://flas.wisc.edu)
- 
  - Scott Kloeck-Jenson Fellowship (https://irh.wisc.edu/fellowships/students/skj)
- 
  - IRIS Graduate Student Summer Fieldwork Award (http://iris.wisc.edu/funding/students/summer-fieldwork-award)

External funding options (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/fellowships) (near bottom of the page)
• American Association of University Women (http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards)
• American Council of Learned Societies (http://www.acls.org/programs/comps)
• Gorgias Press (https://www.gorgiaspress.com/awards)
• Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program (https://www2.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits) (US Dept of Ed)
• Aga Kahn International Education Programme (http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-foundation/international-scholarship-programme)
• Margaret McNamara Education Grants (http://www.mmeg.org/programs)
• Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies (http://woodrow.org/fellowships/womens-studies)

Research travel awards (https://grad.wisc.edu/studentfunding/grantscomp/research)

• American Council of Learned Societies (http://www.acls.org/programs/comps)
• Chateaubriand Fellowship (https://www.chateaubriand-fellowship.org)
• German Academic Exchange Service (https://www.daad.org/en/find-funding) (DAAD)
• Harvard Society of Fellows (https://socfell.fas.harvard.edu/about)
• Royal Historical Society (http://royalhistsoc.org/grants/research-expenses-research-expenses-for-overseas-students-guidelines)

Conference presentation funds (https://grad.wisc.edu/studentfunding/grantscomp/conference)

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Evening/Weekend: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

Online: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.

Hybrid: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

Accelerated: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Credit Requirement</th>
<th>30 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Residence Credit Requirement</td>
<td>24 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement</td>
<td>Half of degree coursework (15 credits out of 30 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university's Course Guide (<a href="https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/">https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Graduate GPA Requirement</td>
<td>3.00 GPA required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grade Requirements</td>
<td>M.A. candidates should maintain a 3.5 GPA in all core curriculum courses and may not have any more than two Incompletes on their record at any one time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments and Examinations M.A. research track: By the beginning of the fourth semester (e.g. the end of January), the candidate will complete a Qualifying Paper (QP) in the form, length, and quality of a publishable article. The QP may be based on a paper written for a departmental seminar, revised based on the instructor's feedback, and then read by two faculty members who agree to serve this role. Acting as if they are reviewers for a journal determining whether the QP is publishable, the two faculty members will deem the QP &quot;publishable,&quot; suggest additional revisions, or reject it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A. pedagogy track: Candidates will enroll in a teaching portfolio preparation course with the director of the African Languages Program no later than the fourth semester after the candidate first enrolls in the program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The portfolio review committee will write exam questions to which the candidate will respond in writing in form of a take-home exam.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A final oral defense addressing both the teaching portfolio and the written exam is required. The candidate must provide the initial teaching portfolio at least two weeks prior to the oral defense scheduled with the teaching portfolio committee, which will review both the written exam and the teaching portfolio.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language and Culture

Two years study of African language are required. Students may petition for an exemption if they have received comparable African language training or have intermediate or higher proficiency in an African language.

**REQUIRED COURSES**

**M.A., Research Track**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRICAN 700</td>
<td>Reading and Writing African Cultural Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRICAN 803</td>
<td>Theories of African Cultural Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two departmental seminars at the 900-level</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six departmental elective courses chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These tracks are internal to the program and represent different pathways a student can follow to earn this degree. Track names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

**M.A., Pedagogy Track**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 318</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRICAN 703</td>
<td>Topics in Teaching African Languages</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRICAN 705</td>
<td>Teaching Portfolio</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One graduate-level culture-focused course in the department with emphasis in final paper on culture in language pedagogy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A graduate-level language studies-focused course in the department, chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six additional courses related to African languages and cultures and/or second language acquisition, of which at least two must be Department of African Cultural Studies courses. Two of these may be additional language courses</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses taken outside the department should be chosen from the approved list; other courses may be counted with consent of graduate advisor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTHRO/LINGUIS 430</td>
<td>Language and Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM ARTS 560</td>
<td>Communication Theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRIC 673</td>
<td>Learning Second Language and Literacies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 414</td>
<td>Global Spread of English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 416</td>
<td>English in Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRENCH/ITALIAN 821</td>
<td>Issues in Methods of Teaching French and Italian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicies) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

**MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES**

GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

A Graduate Program Handbook containing all of the program’s policies and requirements is forthcoming from the program.

**PRIOR COURSEWORK**

**Graduate Work from Other Institutions**

Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**UW–Madison Undergraduate**

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 6 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree.

**UW–Madison University Special**

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 15 credits of coursework numbered 400 or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special student. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**PROBATION**

A semester GPA below 3.0 will result in the student being placed on academic probation. If a semester GPA of 3.0 is not attained during the subsequent semester of full time enrollment (or 12 credits of enrollment if enrolled part-time) the student may be dismissed from the program or allowed to continue for one additional semester based on advisor appeal to the Graduate School.

**ADVISOR / COMMITTEE**

**M.A. research track**: Candidates are required to meet with the director of graduate studies every semester prior to enrolling for the next semester. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a hold on the student’s enrollment.

**M.A. pedagogy track**: Candidates are required to meet with the director of graduate studies every semester prior to enrolling for the next semester. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a hold on the student’s enrollment. Pedagogy candidates must establish
a *portfolio review committee*, in consultation with the director of the the African Languages Program, consisting of no fewer than two faculty members of the Department of African Cultural Studies and one additional faculty member.

**CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED**

15 credits

**TIME CONSTRAINTS**

**M.A. research track**: Students who have not produced a “publishable” (passing) QP by the beginning of the fourth semester (e.g. the end of January) must write a brief request for an extension to the end of the fourth semester, to be presented by their advisor for approval by the faculty. No more than one such extension will be granted.

Students who have not produced a “publishable” (passing) QP by the end of their fourth semester will leave the program with a terminal MA. Those who produce a “publishable” QP by the end of their fourth semester will be considered for admission to the PhD program. A decision regarding admission to the Ph.D. will be taken at a faculty meeting, based on a recommendation by the QP readers and input from other faculty members.

**M.A. pedagogy track**: candidates must complete the *take-home exam* and *oral defense* no later than the fourth semester.

**OTHER**

n/a

1 These tracks are internal to the program and represent different pathways a student can follow to earn this degree. Track names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES**

Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources ([https://grad.wisc.edu/pd](https://grad.wisc.edu/pd)) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. *(Content)* Recognize canonical authors and texts, historical forms, genres, and structures, and recognize aesthetic and cultural concerns in Africa and its diasporas.

2. *(Content)* Develop in-depth knowledge in a sub-field of specialization within African cultural studies.

3. *(Content)* Demonstrate their understanding of major theories, approaches, concepts, and current and classical research findings in African and diaspora literary and cultural studies.

4. *(Content)* Develop a level of proficiency in the different “ways of knowing” Africa and the diaspora through language, literatures, and cultures.

5. *(Research Skills)* Understand their own learning processes and possess the capacity to intentionally seek, evaluate, and learn from information, and recognize and reduce bias in their thinking.

6. *(Research Skills)* Effectively retrieve and comprehend primary sources in English and African languages, and secondary sources from a range of disciplines.

7. *(Research Skills)* Gain firm knowledge of existing research in their area of specialization and its gaps.

8. *(Communication Skills)* Develop or improve speaking, listening, writing, reading skills in an African language, and integrate these skills to communicate effectively.

9. *(Communication Skills)* Communicate effectively through essays, oral presentations, and discussion, so they may share their knowledge, wisdom, and values with others across social and professional settings.

10. *(Communication Skills)* Show knowledge of conventional rhetorical strategies, and integrate research by other authors while distinguishing between their own ideas and those of others.

11. *(Communication Skills)* Write and speak across disciplinary boundaries with regard to existing research about Africa and the diaspora in the humanities and social sciences.

12. *(Communication Skills)* Demonstrate their ability to organize a larger project into logical smaller components, so that it can be addressed in depth in a multi-chapter piece of writing.

13. *(Analytical Skills)* Discuss cultural texts from various theoretical and critical perspectives, formulate ideas and make connections between literary/cultural concepts and themes.

14. *(Analytical Skills)* Demonstrate command of the terminology and methodology of cultural studies, construct complex arguments, and use primary and secondary sources to support arguments.

15. *(Analytical Skills)* Articulate the place of their own research in relation to existing research on related topics.

**PEOPLE**

**FACULTY**

To view full faculty profiles, visit our website ([https://african.wisc.edu/people/faculty](https://african.wisc.edu/people/faculty)).

**Matthew H. Brown**: African screen media (particularly “Nollywood”), oral traditions, literature

**Vlad Dima**: French New Wave cinema, Francophone cinemas, film theory, television studies

**Aineh Edoro**: Form, theory, and history of the African novel

**Névine El Nossery**: Francophone & Middle Eastern literature and culture, postcolonial studies

**Samuel England**: Classical Arabic poetry and prose, modern Arabic literature

**Colleen Hamilton**: Second language acquisition

**Luis Madureira**: Colonial and postcolonial studies, modernism, theater and performance

**Mustafa Mustafa**: Arabic

**Tejumola Olaniyan**: African, African American, and Caribbean literature and culture
Ronald Radano: Ethnomusicology, US Black music and its transnational circulation
Damon Sajnani: Africana cultural studies, social and political theory, HipHop studies
Katrina Daly Thompson: African discourse, linguistic ethnography, language pedagogy

EMERITUS FACULTY
Patrick Bennett
Dustin Cowell
Jo Ellen Fair
Magdalena Hauner
Linda Hunter
Edris Makward
Michael Schatzberg
Harold Scheub
Aliko Songolo

ACADEMIC STAFF
Bill Bach, Department Administrator
Toni Landis, Academic Advisor/Student Services Coordinator