# AFRICAN CULTURAL STUDIES, MA

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. Our faculty specialize in literature, music, film, critical applied linguistics, drama, critical theory, diaspora studies, and new media.

The department is the only one of its kind in the United States. For those learning to conduct research in African expressive cultures, it offers curricula leading to both the master of arts degree and the doctor of philosophy degree.  Our students come from all over the world, including many African countries.

## ADMISSIONS

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Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

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

| Requirements | Detail |
| --- | --- |
| Fall Deadline | December 15 |
| Spring Deadline | This program does not admit in the spring. |
| Summer Deadline | This program does not admit in the summer. |
| GRE (Graduate Record Examinations) | Not required. |
| English Proficiency Test | Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/). |
| Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT) | n/a |
| Letters of Recommendation Required | 3 |

## PREREQUISITES

Admission to the graduate program requires a bachelor's degree with substantial coursework related to the expressive cultures of Africa. Admitted applicants 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.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All applicants to the program must apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/) by the fall deadline. 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 offered admission to the program, the Graduate School will request official transcripts from undergraduate institutions. 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.

### English Proficiency Requirement (International Applicants)
International degree-seeking applicants will need to prove English proficiency using the Graduate School's requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/). 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.

### Purpose Statement
Your statement of purpose should make clear that you understand the kinds of courses we offer (http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/african/) and the research interests of our faculty and substantiate how your own interests intersect with our faculty expertise (https://african.wisc.edu/people/faculty-and-staff/). 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:

UW-Madison Writing Center: CV Tips (https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/cv/)

## Letters of Recommendation (3)

Recommenders will receive a notice via email and will submit their letters accordingly. 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.

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 fall deadline in order for us to consider your application.

## AFTER THE APPLICATION

Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an email with a link to set up a UW-Madison NetID. Use the information to track the progress of your application.

## FUNDING

# 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 restrictions related to funding.

## PROGRAM RESOURCES

The department automatically considers all applicants for support through teaching assistantships and various UW–Madison fellowships. **All admitted students are guaranteed five years of funding, typically in the form of TAships, as long as they are making satisfactory progress.**

Our top domestic minority students are typically nominated for, and often receive, Advanced Opportunity Fellowships (https://grad.wisc.edu/diversity/oeid/) (AOF). Read more about Graduate School diversity and inclusion efforts (https://grad.wisc.edu/diversity/).

All domestic students are also encouraged to apply for Foreign Language Area Studies (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 December 15 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/graduate-programs/funding/) for the most up-to-date information regarding teaching assistantships.

### Ebrahim Hussein Fellowship

The Ebrahim Hussein Endowment for research in African expressive cultures 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 (PhD 1989). The college will award $7,500 each year to one or more full-time graduate students in L&S to carry out research on African expressive cultures in Africa and/or archives outside of the United States. The research must lead to a PhD dissertation, an MA thesis, or a publishable-quality paper. Doctoral students may receive up to $7,500 each; MA level students may receive up to $3,750 each.

#### Selection Criteria:

- Excellence of research proposal
- Demonstrated commitment to researching African expressive cultures
- General academic record
- Strong recommendations from faculty
- Timing of the proposed research in relation to degree requirements

### 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/)

Funding for international students (https://iss.wisc.edu/students/new-students/funding-scholarships/)

- African Studies Graduate Student Summer Fieldwork Award (http://africa.wisc.edu/?page_id=12507)
- Dana-Allen Dissertation Fellowship (https://irh.wisc.edu/staff-type/dana-allen-dissertation-fellowships/)
- Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowships (https://flas.wisc.edu/)
- Scott Kloeck-Jenson Fellowship (http://iris.wisc.edu/funding/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/)

- 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/) (U.S. 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/)
  - M (http://royalhistsoc.org/grants/marshall-centenary-fellowships/)arshall & Centenary Fellowships (http://royalhistsoc.org/grants/marshall-centenary-fellowships/)

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

## 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

| Face to Face | Evening/Weekend | Online | Hybrid | Accelerated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | No | No | No | No |

### Mode of Instruction Definitions
**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

## CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

| Requirement | Detail |
|---|---|
| Minimum Credit Requirement | 30 credits |
| Minimum Residence Credit Requirement | 24 credits |
| Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement | 15 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/). |
| Overall Graduate GPA Requirement | 3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/). |
| Other Grade Requirements | MA candidates should maintain a 3.5 GPA in all AFRICAN department courses and may not have any more than two Incompletes on their record at any one time. |
| Assessments and Examinations | 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. One faculty member will be the student's primary MA advisor (by mutual agreement); the second will be assigned by the Department Chair or DGS. Acting as if they are reviewers for a journal determining whether the QP is publishable, the two faculty members will deem the QP "publishable," suggest additional revisions, or reject it. |
| Language Requirements | Two years study of an 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

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---|---|---|
| Two years study of an African language. | | |
| AFRICAN 700 | Reading and Writing African Cultural Studies | 3 |
| AFRICAN 803 | Theories of African Cultural Studies | 3 |
| Two AFRICAN department seminars numbered 900 to 999 | | 6 |
| Six AFRICAN department elective courses chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor | | 18 |
| **Total Credits** | | **30** |

## POLICIES

## GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) 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
## PRIOR COURSEWORK
### Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions
With program permission, students are allowed to transfer no more than 6 credits of coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

### Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW–Madison
With program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 6 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree.

### Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)
Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/) policy.

### Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW–Madison
Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/) policy.

## 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
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.

## CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED
15 credits

## TIME LIMITS
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 PhD will be taken at a faculty meeting, based on a recommendation by the QP readers and input from other faculty members.

## GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS
These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/)
    - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/)
- Employee Assistance (http://www.eao.wisc.edu/) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (https://grad.wisc.edu/) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (https://compliance.wisc.edu/) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (https://osas.wisc.edu/) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/) (for concerns about discrimination)

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances. They may also contact the L&S Academic Divisional Associate Deans, the L&S Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning Administration, or the L&S Director of Human Resources.

## OTHER
n/a

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
## GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES
Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

## DEPARTMENT EFFORTS
We fully support and encourage our students to attend and participate in any professional development events hosted by the Graduate School. These may include everything from writing workshops to exploring careers outside of academia. We also regularly offer opportunities for professional development specific to our field, often based on student feedback. In addition, we encourage students to seek out and participate in conferences and offer funding to support these endeavors.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

# 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. (Analytical Skills) Discuss cultural texts from various theoretical and critical perspectives, formulate ideas and make connections between literary/cultural concepts and themes.
13. (Analytical Skills) Demonstrate command of the terminology and methodology of cultural studies, construct complex arguments, and use primary and secondary sources to support arguments.
14. (Analytical Skills) Articulate the place of their own research in relation to existing research on related topics.

## PEOPLE

# PEOPLE

Please visit the African Cultural Studies website (https://african.wisc.edu/people/faculty-and-staff/) for a complete list of faculty, instructional, and academic staff.