AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE, PH.D.

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. 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. For those learning to teach African languages, it offers a terminal master of arts degree with an emphasis on pedagogy. Its students come from all over the world, including many African countries.

FUNDING

Prospective students should see the program website (http://african.wisc.edu) for funding information.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

54 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

45 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

Half of degree coursework (26 credits out of 51 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 (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

No credits from graduate work from other institutions may count toward the degree.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

No credits from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

No credits from a UW–Madison University Special student career are allowed to count toward the degree.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED

Two graduate seminars. Two additional courses to be chosen in consultation with the director of graduate studies and the candidate’s advisor/supervisor.

DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS

All doctoral students are required to complete a minor.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT

3.00 GPA required

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS

Ph.D. 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.

PROBATION POLICY

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

All students are required to conduct a yearly progress report meeting with their thesis committee after passing the preliminary examination.

ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Doctoral students must pass a preliminary examination, a dissertation proposal defense, and the defense of the completed dissertation.

TIME CONSTRAINTS

A student may not hold an assistantship for more than five years. A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may be required to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

1. Ph.D. students must complete one year of a major African language taught in this department beyond second year level

2. Reading proficiency in one non-African language other than English. The language must be chosen in consultation with the Department.

ADMISSIONS

Applicants should have a minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (out of a possible 4.0), though special cases may be considered for probationary admission. In addition to the online application, the department requires transcripts of all previous
university studies, a statement of research interests showing how these relate to the department’s areas of expertise, and three letters of recommendation. Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores are needed for fellowship applicants, but are not otherwise required for admission. There is no application deadline, but it is recommended that materials be submitted as early as possible before the intended date of entry.

The deadline to apply and be considered for funding is November 15.

Admitted applicants who are judged by the department to have insufficient background in African cultural studies may be assigned course work in addition to the regular required coursework.

Admission to the Ph.D. program is determined after successful defense of the M.A. thesis or an M.A. waiver. For those completing an M.A. in the department, admission to the Ph.D. program is determined by the M.A. committee upon successful defense of the M.A. thesis, and with consideration of performance in M.A. course work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

CONTENT

- Students will be able to identify canonical authors and texts, historical forms, genres, and structures, as well as aesthetic and cultural concerns in Africa and its diasporas.
- Students will develop in-depth knowledge in a subfield of specialization within African cultural studies.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of major theories, approaches, concepts, and current and classical research findings in African and diaspora literary and cultural studies.
- Students will develop a level of proficiency in the different "ways of knowing" Africa and the diaspora through language, literatures, and cultures.
- Students will understand the main trends in foreign language teaching, and the specific challenges involved in teaching African languages.
- Students will develop knowledge of a secondary field of research from outside the Department of African Languages and Literature.

RESEARCH SKILLS

- Students will 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.
- Students will effectively retrieve and comprehend primary sources in English and African languages, and secondary sources from a range of disciplines.
- Students will gain firm knowledge of existing research in their area of specialization and its gaps.
- Students will be able to read materials relevant to African cultural studies (primary and secondary) in a non-African language other than English.
- Students will have an understanding of professional and ethical responsibility with regard to producing original research and working with human subjects.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Students will develop or improve speaking, listening, writing, reading skills in an African language, and integrate these skills to communicate effectively.
- Students will communicate effectively through essays, oral presentations, and discussion, so they may share their knowledge, wisdom, and values with others across social and professional settings.
- Students will demonstrate their ability to organize a book-length project into logical smaller components, so that it can be addressed in depth in a multi-chapter piece of writing.
- Students will be able to design and carry out a communicative lesson plan in an African language.
- Students will be able to design a syllabus for courses in African cultural studies.

ANALYTIC SKILLS

- Students will discuss cultural texts from various theoretical and critical perspectives, formulate ideas and make connections between literary/cultural concepts and themes.
- Students will demonstrate command of the terminology and methodology of cultural studies, construct complex arguments, and use primary and secondary sources to support arguments.
- Students will articulate the place of their own research in relation to existing research on related topics.
- Students will observe and evaluate the teaching practice of a foreign language instructor and provide constructive feedback.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- Students will recognize, apply, and foster principles of ethical and professional conduct in teaching, research, and writing.

PEOPLE

Professors Cowell (Arabic language, linguistics, literature, and culture), Fair (media studies, popular culture, conflict and post-conflict studies), Olaniyan (African and African diaspora literature, literary theory, popular culture), Radano (U.S. and global black music, African musical diaspora, cultural theory), Schatzberg (African popular culture, African soccer, African political thought), Songolo (African Francophone literatures, African and Francophone cinema, literary theory); Associate Professors El-Nossery (North African Middle Eastern Literatures, women’s writing, visual studies), Thompson (linguistic and literary ethnography, critical discourse analysis, less commonly taught language pedagogy); Assistant Professors Brown (African screen media, African literature, literary theory), England (Classical Arabic poetry and prose, Modern Arabic literature), Nimis (Francophone Africa, Lingala language and popular music, the Global South), Sajnani (Global HipHop studies, Africana critical theory, socio-political thought and social justice).

For more information about faculty research interests, see their website (https://african.wisc.edu/people).