

Cultural Studies MA Map

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in CULTURAL STUDIES?

Cultural Studies is an emphatically interdisciplinary area of inquiry that intersects the humanities, science studies, social sciences, and the arts. Its researchers theorize the forces that shape the lived reality of people in the 21st century.

What distinguishes Cultural Studies from other approaches to the study of culture is its recognition that no single disciplinary approach can address the complexity of cultural and social forms and experiences. Cultural Studies researchers investigate values, beliefs and belongings, cultural processes and cultural objects, economic and social relations, institutions, and identities. Cultural Studies therefore draws on a range of methods and critical theories and strives to do so self-reflexively. We aim to break down conventional divisions not only among academic disciplines but also between academia and activism, and between theoretical analysis and cultural production. It is our expectation that analyses of class, race, and gender, alongside other axes of social difference and inequality, will pervade all teaching and research conducted in our program. Our students produce work in a variety of media and formats, from the monograph thesis to visual arts and community-engaged projects.

Why QUEEN'S?

Comprising over 100 distinguished faculty from over 20 disciplines, and more than 100 students, Cultural Studies is the largest graduate program in Arts and Science at Queen's. We are committed to a diversity of students and faculty and grateful for the experience, expertise, creativity, and commitment that they bring to our program. Our goal is to create an intellectual environment that combines a high level of academic scholarship and ongoing meaningful engagement with local and global communities. Cultural Studies students may write their thesis in French with the permission of their supervisor. Students and staff participate with faculty in program governance. In



GRAD MAP FOR MA STUDENTS 

the first year, all students attend the Cultural Studies Colloquium and take the core course, Cultural Studies Past and Present; other courses are the choice of the student. Students have opportunities to work as research assistants on grant-funded faculty research, and to teach in departments across the university. Opportunities for practicums and volunteer work abound: many of our students are associated with local galleries and arts organizations, heritage projects, activist groups, and environmental and social justice projects.

Program STRUCTURE

Cultural Studies offers 2 options for the masters degree:

2-year, thesis based MA: four full-term courses, CUST-802 (Cultural Studies Colloquium), plus a 20,000-25,000 word thesis OR a major project (CUST-899).

1-year, course based MA: four full-term courses, CUST-802 (Cultural Studies Colloquium), plus completion of the Professional Development Certificate and Capstone Course (CUST 850).

Cultural Studies offers a range of theory, methodology and topics courses (see Courses of Instruction section for descriptions). Students are required to complete CUST-803 (Cultural Studies Past & Present) plus one additional Cultural Studies course. Students choose the remaining two courses from available courses in CUST and other units.

RESEARCH Areas

Students who do a 2-year MA choose their own research topic and methods for a thesis or project. Research areas are only limited by student ambition and preparation, and the combination of faculty members they can put together to supervise their work.

Research areas of our current 2-year MA students include:

- Black Studies
- Fashion Design
- Film and Media
- Indigenous Studies
- Music and Critical Sound Studies
- Popular Culture
- Refugee Studies
- Settler Colonial Studies
- Theatre Studies



GRADUATE STUDIES AND
POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS

Cultural Studies MA Map

MASTER OF ARTS (MA)



YEAR ONE

YEAR TWO

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Take CUST 803 (Cultural Studies Past and Present) + three other 3.0 credit courses, and CUST 802 (weekly colloquium).
- Attend guest lectures on related topics from across campus - be curious, and learn what others are thinking.
- If doing a 1-year MA: Complete Professional Development Module, complete the Capstone Course, CUST 850.
- If planning to continue to 2-year MA or PhD: Apply for funding (fall), contact potential supervisors and prepare application (winter)
- Find your way through the academic process with help from departmental and [School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development](#) workshops, the department Grad Chair, and the [SGSPA website](#).

- Meet with supervisor early in the summer to get to know each other, discuss additional committee member.
- Write proposal and have it approved.
- Get GREB approval if necessary.
- Apply for external funding if planning to continue to PhD
- Complete and defend your thesis or project.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as [UnDisciplined](#), the Cultural Studies graduate symposium.
- Explore paid or volunteer media work with the Queen's Journal, [Kingstonist](#), CFRC, blogs, etc.

- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as [UnDisciplined](#), the Cultural Studies graduate symposium.
- Expand your research audience through social media, writing a blog post, or writing an article for The Conversation or another public outlet.
- Set up a meeting with the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs for a [Grad Chat](#) to discuss your research interests.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Serve on the [Cultural Studies Steering Committee](#), one of our Standing Committees, or other university committees. Talk to the student caucus for tips on getting involved
- Serve as a Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant and reflect on what skills this engages or develops.
- For help with teaching, get support from the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#). Enrol in SGS902 or the PUTL Certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

- Develop an eportfolio of your skills, experiences, and competencies.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by QUIC and FDISC.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Participate in the [Cultural Studies Student Caucus](#) or Queen's spaces and initiatives such as [Four Directions](#), [Yellow House](#), etc..
- Volunteer with a community organization such as [Loving Spoonful](#), [Joe's MILL](#), etc., or involve yourself in activist, artistic, or professional projects outside the university.

- Pursue community and professional relationships with an eye to future activities and aspirations.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Get help by taking a [Career Services workshop](#) or meeting with a career educator and coach. Check out the [Career Resource Area](#) for advice on various career options.

- Explore different careers of interest by using [Queens Connects](#) on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni. Check out [Career Cruising](#) for more information.
- If you are considering a PhD, explore programs of interest, reach out to faculty, and apply to PhD programs and external scholarships.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

A graduate degree in Cultural Studies can equip you with:

- **Knowledge and technical skills**
- Effective **communication skills** in multiple forms for diverse audiences
- **Information management:** prioritize, organize and synthesize large amounts of information
- **Time management:** Meet deadlines and manage responsibilities despite competing demands
- **Project management:** develop ideas, gather information, analyze, critically appraise findings, draw and act on conclusions
- **Creativity and innovation**
- **Perseverance**
- **Independence** and experience as a **collaborative worker**
- **Awareness**, an understanding of sound **ethical practices**, **social responsibility**, responsible research and **cultural sensitivity**
- **Professionalism** in all aspects of work, research, and interactions
- **Leadership:** initiative and vision leading people and discussion

WHERE CAN I GO?

A Master's degree in Cultural Studies can take your career in many directions. Many of our MA students choose to continue their academic inquiry with a PhD. But our Master's students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers in:

- Academia and teaching
- Civil Service
- Galleries
- Non-profit agencies
- Media
- Museums
- Publishing houses
- Social policy agencies
- University or College administrative positions

Taking time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

How to use this map

Use the 5 rows of the map to explore possibilities and plan for success in the five overlapping areas of career and academics. The map just offers suggestions – you don't have to do it all! To make your own custom map, use the [My Grad Map](#) tool.

Graduate Studies FAQs

How do I make the most of my time at Queen's?

Use the Grad Map to plan for success in five overlapping areas of your career and academic life. Everyone's journey is different - the ideas on the maps are just suggestions to help you explore possibilities. For more support with your professional development, take advantage of the SGSPA professional development framework and the new [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) process to set customized goals to help you get career ready when you graduate.

Where can I get help?

Queen's provides you with a broad range of support services from your first point of contact with the university through to graduation. Ranging from help with academics and careers, to physical, emotional, or spiritual resources - our welcoming environment offers the programs and services you need to be successful, both academically and personally. Check out the [SGSPA website](#) for available resources.

What is the community like?

At Queen's, graduate students from all disciplines learn and discover in a close-knit intellectual community. You will find friends, peers and support among the graduate students enrolled in Queen's more than 130 graduate programs within 50+ departments & research centres. With the world's best scholars, prize-winning professional development opportunities, excellent funding packages and life in the affordable, historic waterfront city of Kingston, Queen's offers a wonderful environment for graduate studies. Queen's is an integral part of the Kingston community, with the campus nestled in the core of the city, only a 10-minute walk to downtown with its shopping, dining and waterfront. For more about Kingston's history and culture, see Queen's University's [Discover Kingston](#) page.

Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- An academic average of at least B+ in the last two years of the BA is generally expected for admission to our MA program. We welcome applications from students with a wide range of undergraduate experience, from social sciences and humanities disciplines as well as the arts and even the sciences. And please note that Cultural Studies is committed to recognizing diverse measures of accomplishment, knowledge, and aptitude, and we encourage you to indicate those in your application materials, even or especially if they come from experience outside academe.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Writing sample.
- Statement of Interest.
- Video documentation of relevant work (if applicable).
- C.V.
- If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the [English language proficiency requirements](#) in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The following minimum scores are required: (1) TOEFL iBT: Writing (24/30); Speaking (22/30); Reading (22/30); Listening (20/30). Applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score, or (2) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score and a 7.0 for each test band), or (3) PTE Academics: 65, or (4) CAEL CE -70 (minimum overall score).

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- Application due: January 31st to qualify for funding.
- Notification of acceptance: March 31st.

Before you start your application, please review the [Graduate studies application process](#).

What about FUNDING?

The minimum funding guarantee for Cultural Studies PhD students is \$20,000 per year, throughout years 1-4. The funding package may be comprised of Queen's Graduate Awards, Teaching Assistantships, and named internal Fellowships.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC, and other sources. Queen's will automatically issue a one time \$10,000 award to incoming PhD students who have won federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' information on [awards and scholarships](#).

