

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 draws from the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts. It asks practitioners to understand and contend with the paths, places, and people they come from, and to position themselves towards just and imaginative futures.

Cultural Studies researchers investigate cultural processes and objects, technologies, economic and social relations, institutions and identities. The methods and modes of presentation of any given Cultural Studies project are developed to match its goals and to reach the audiences who need to hear it. Thus Cultural Studies scholars produce work in a variety of media and modes, from the monograph thesis to visual art projects, musical and theatrical productions, and community-engaged collaborations.

Why Queen's?

Established in 2009 and comprising over 100 distinguished faculty from over 20 disciplines, Cultural Studies at Queen's is committed to a diversity of students and faculty and to the global expertise that they bring to the cultural and academic fields. We are dedicated to centering antiracist, decolonial, Black, and Indigenous scholarship.

MA and PhD students take courses together in their first year, choosing CUST courses and graduate courses in other departments. Students serve as Teaching Assistants for undergraduate courses across the Faculty of Arts & Science, Research Assistants on grant-



funded faculty projects in areas related to their research, and work on curatorial or community projects throughout the university and beyond. When they graduate, our students have superior intellectual tools and practical skills that will last them a lifetime inside or outside of the university. Cultural Studies graduates work in galleries, non-profits, arts organizations, and universities across Canada and beyond.

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 a Capstone Project (CUST 850).

Cultural Studies offers a range of theory, methodology and topics courses. Students are required to complete CUST-803 (Cultural Studies Past &

Present) OR CUST-800 (Cultural Studies Theory) 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



Cultural Studies MA Map

MASTER OF ARTS (MA)

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. To make your own custom map, use the My Grad Map tool: careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps.



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 \(SGSPA\) professional development](#) workshops, the department Grad Chair, and the [SGSPA website](#).

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.

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](#). Enroll in [SGS902](#) or the [PUTL Certificate](#) for more professional development in teaching and learning.

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 [Martha's Table](#), [Joe's MILL](#), etc., or involve yourself in activist, artistic, or professional projects outside the university.

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.
- Find impactful work that aligns with your values using the [Queen's Career Guide to the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

- 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.

- 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.
- Consider being interviewed on the [SGSPA radio show Grad Chat](#) to talk about your research.

- Develop an ePortfolio of your skills, experiences, and competencies.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by [Volunteering with QUIC](#) for the English Conversation program.

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

- Explore different careers of interest by using 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.

Knowledge & Workplace Skills

A graduate degree in Cultural Studies can equip you with:

- **Knowledge and technical 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

Career Possibilities

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.

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 Professional Development Plan (PDP) 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?

Queen's offers graduate students from every discipline a close-knit intellectual community where they can learn, discover, and build lasting connections. With more than 130 graduate programs across 50+ departments and research centres, students benefit from world-class scholars, prize-winning professional development, generous funding packages, and life in the historic waterfront city of Kingston. The campus sits at the heart of Kingston, just a 10-minute walk from downtown's shops, restaurants, and waterfront, and is deeply integrated with the local community. For more on 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 first language, nor was the language of instruction in undergraduate studies, prospective students must meet English language proficiency requirements in writing, speaking, reading, and listening as part of the application process, and before final acceptance is granted, as per School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' regulations.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- **Application due:** January 31
- **Notification of acceptance:** March 31

Before you start your application, please review the Graduate studies application process. Late applications may be considered for domestic applicants until June 1. However, January 31 is the deadline to be considered for additional awards and scholarships. Please email the CUST Graduate Assistant for further information if you will be submitting an application after January 31.

What about Funding?

Currently, the minimum funding guarantee for domestic Cultural Studies MA students is \$15,000 per year. 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. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' information on awards and scholarships.

