

Cultural Studies PhD 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.

Research Areas

Research topics and methods in Cultural Studies are only limited by student ambition and preparation, and the combination of faculty members they can put together to supervise their work. Geographical spaces engaged by our current PhD students include China, Turkey, Cape Breton Island, Toronto, Pakistan, Lebanon, Akwesasne Mohawk Territory, Mexico, and Ghana.

Research Areas our PhD students are currently working in include:

- Animal Studies
- Carceral Studies and Prison Abolitionism
- Creative Writing
- Critical Education Studies
- Critical Race Studies
- Curation, Museum, and Critical Heritage Studies

- Diaspora and Migration Studies
- Gender Studies
- Environmental Humanities
- Film Studies and Documentary Film
- Indigenous Arts and Politics
- Music and Critical Sound Studies
- Performance and Visual Art
- Popular Culture
- Political and Social Theory
- Queer Studies
- Radical and Independent Media
- Religious Studies
- Settler Colonial Studies
- Theatre and Theatre Studies

We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying. Visit the Cultural Studies Program website to read faculty profiles and learn more about faculty members' research areas. When you find a faculty member with similar research interests to yours, contact them and tell them about your interest in graduate work, area of research interest, and related experience. Applicants are required to secure an agreement for supervision before being accepted into the program.

Program Structure

PhD (4 years): 4 full-term courses, CUST-902 (Cultural Studies Colloquium), qualifying exam plus thesis proposal defended (comprehensive exams), and thesis or project.

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 from across the university.



Cultural Studies PhD Map

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)



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.



Knowledge & Workplace Skills
A graduate degree in Cultural Studies can equip you with valuable and versatile skills, such as:

- 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

Career Possibilities
A PhD in Cultural Studies can take your career in many directions. In Canada, less than 40% of all PhDs will work in post-secondary education – the majority will work in industry, government, or non-profits.

- Academia and teaching
- Civil Service
- Galleries
- Non-profit agencies
- Media
- Museums
- Publishing houses
- Social policy agencies

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

- Master's degree in Cultural Studies or a related discipline from a recognized university.

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, doctoral students are guaranteed minimum funding of \$25,000 per year for 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.

For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' information on awards and scholarships.

