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 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.

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

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.
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.

YEAR ONE

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.

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 another 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 PDTC 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 such as Loving Soulful Joe’s Mill, etc., or involve yourself in activist, artistic, or professional projects outside the university.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding a career that suits 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.

YEAR TWO

CAREER

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC 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.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- 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 SGSPA for a Grad Chat to discuss your research interests.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- 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 QUC and FOIC.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

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

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Explore different careers of interest by using Queen's Connect on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni. Check out Career Crunch 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.
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.

Queen's University GRADUATE PROGRAM CULTURAL STUDIES

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