

# Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Arts (MA) in African American and African Studies

## *Partnering Departmental AAAS Graduate Studies "Sub-Disciplinary Concentration Descriptions"*

AAAS conducts its degree curriculum through a combined interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary graduate education model. The program delivers its Black Studies core curriculum in collaboration with several different departmental disciplinary majors with departments in the Colleges of Arts & Letters, Social Sciences and Natural/Medical Sciences. Our graduate students choose one of these departments/programs to conduct their AAAS 'sub-disciplinary areas of concentration' (hence known as either the sub-discipline or the concentration). The AAAS core curriculum (**see AAAS core curriculum**) guides the sub-disciplinary concentration study in directions toward the main themes and intellectual trajectories in Black Studies disciplinary research, scholarly inquiry and teaching & learning (see AAAS Black Studies core curriculum). Currently, most of AAAS' graduate students conduct their Black Studies research in collaboration with one of the departmental majors below. AAAS refers to these majors as 'sub-disciplinary concentrations'. AAAS graduate applicants are required to declare their specialization interest on their academic interest statement. Graduate students are required to take 15 graduate credits (including a 3 credit methods course) in at least one of these sub-disciplinary concentrations. Review popular AAAS 'specialization' descriptions below: Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, English, History, Education, Geography, Philosophy, Writing Rhetoric and American Culture (WRAC), and African Studies.

For more information, in addition to reviewing the descriptions below, you may access AAAS 'sub-disciplinary concentrations' departments/programs in two ways –

AAAS Website Faculty Page – see here <https://www.msu.edu/~aaas/Faculty.html>

AAAS Funding Page – see here <https://www.msu.edu/~aaas/Funding.html>

## **Anthropology**

The Anthropology Department Faculty and graduate students are active in field work and research programs in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asian Studies Center, Africa, and Europe. Because of the Department's international and interdisciplinary focus, it maintains close ties to several area and thematic studies centers on campus. In addition, the research interests of faculty and students have led to Department links with the School of Criminal Justice, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, the MSU Museum, and other units. The Consortium for Archaeological Research integrates archaeologists from the Departments of

Anthropology, History, and Art History. The Department of Anthropology is also a cornerstone unit in the Center for Great Lakes Culture.

## **African Studies**

### **The Graduate Certificate in African Studies (Ph.D. level)**

This program is designed to certify the advanced training in African Studies received by Ph.D. candidates. Requirements include at least 17 credits of upper-division Africa-related course work or African language course work. Courses must be completed in at least three different academic departments and must include at least one graduate seminar. Students also must complete a significant piece of research concerning Africa. Upon completion of the requirements, the student will receive a Certificate from the African Studies Center.

### **The Graduate Concentration in African Studies (Master's level)**

This program is designed for students in an MSU masters program or who are special students. Students must complete at least 10 credits from the African Studies Core Curriculum with courses from at least two different academic departments.

## **Education**

The College of Education is made up of four departments: Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education; Educational Administration; Kinesiology; and Teacher Education.

### **Academic Program List**

- Curriculum, Instruction and Teacher Education (CITE)
- Educational Policy
- Educational Psychology and Educational Technology (EPET)
- Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education (HALE)
- K-12 Educational Administration
- Kinesiology
- Mathematics Education
- Measurement and Quantitative Methods (MQM)
- Rehabilitation Counselor Education
- School Psychology
- Special Education

### **Doctoral specialization in the Economics of Education**

The interdisciplinary specialization in Economics of Education at Michigan State University helps students focus on learning the best quantitative methods to answer policy questions in education. Doctoral candidates from four College of Education

programs – Educational Policy, K-12 Educational Administration, Measurement and Quantitative Methods, and Curriculum, Instruction and Teacher Education – are eligible for the fellowship program, which includes a graduate assistantship and an annual \$30,000 stipend.

## English

The English Department offers M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English. The M.A. degree program provides multiple perspectives and broad background in the advanced study of literature and critical theory. The Ph.D. program offers advanced study at the doctoral level in interdisciplinary, cross-field areas of emphasis, including:

- African American Literature and Culture
- Feminisms, Genders, Sexualities
- Film and Visual Culture
- History and Theory of Narrative
- Literature of the Americas
- Medieval/Early Modern Literature and Culture
- Postcolonial and Diaspora Studies
- Transatlantic Modernities

## Geography

### General Graduate Degree Information

The Department of Geography offers M.S., MSGISci and Ph.D. graduate degrees with concentrations in spatial technology, physical geography, people-environment interactions, and urban-economic geography. When viewed in its totality, the Department of Geography at MSU provides a unique environment for graduate work. The combination of course offerings and faculty expertise present innovative and stimulating opportunities for graduate students.

### Nature-Society Studies

This area of specialization in the department emphasizes the study of regional, national, and international dimensions of development and change in regions or countries in which faculty have particular expertise and experience. Specific foci of concern include resource analysis, rural development and land use and cover change. Regional emphases include North America, Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East.

### Urban-Economic Geography

Urban-economic geography emphasizes the study of the underlying theories of location and spatial interaction of human activities in their economic, social, and policy contexts. This program stresses the analysis of spatial systems related to economic, urban, and

transportation geography, location analysis, and regional science. Study and research in this area generally involve the use of mathematical models and quantitative techniques.

## History

MSU's History faculty prides itself for being at the forefront of a movement currently challenging the traditional boundaries of the historical discipline. In our teaching and writing, we recognize that new insights can be gained from trans-regional and interdisciplinary approaches to the past.

We have structured our graduate program accordingly. Students enter the program as members of particular fields, but they take a wide range of courses that give them the tools they need to construct studies that reach across oceans and national borders and that apply innovative methods and theories borrowed from other disciplines. To reify our connections to one another, faculty and graduate students in African, African-American, East Asian, Latin American and Caribbean, Russian, Eastern European, Western European, and US history recently joined together to create exciting new graduate fields in Atlantic World, International Labor and Working Class History, Migration Studies, Women and Gender, Science, Technology and Medicine, and World History. Further, we sponsor an ongoing History of Sport Seminar Group. Comprised of over fifty full-time, actively publishing faculty, ours is a large and diverse department that has long been recognized for having strengths in a variety of areas.

## Political Science

The primary goal of the doctoral program of the Department of Political Science is to produce graduates who become scholars and teachers at leading research institutions. To reach this goal several specific objectives must be achieved.

First, the doctoral student must develop expertise in the subject matter of one of the major and one of the minor fields of political science covered by the Department. The Department offers a major field of study in American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Thought, and a minor field of study in American Politics, Comparative Politics, Public Policy, International Relations, Political Thought, Positive Political Theory, and Research Methods.

## Philosophy

Graduate students may enroll for credit in 400 (senior) level courses as well as graduate level courses and seminars. Department courses cover the history of philosophy and main topics in contemporary philosophy as conceived by different theoretical approaches. All graduate students may take some courses outside the Department, and doctoral students have the option of taking an interdisciplinary Minor Field.

At the 400 level, the following courses are given: Plato, Aristotle, Continental Rationalism, British Empiricism, Kant, Hegel, 19th Century Philosophy, Topics in 20th-

Century Analytical Philosophy, Topics in 20th-Century Continental Philosophy, Topics in European Philosophy, Topics in Philosophy of Logic and Language, Central Issues in Ethics, Philosophical Issues in Biomedicine, Liberal Theory and Its Critics, Philosophy and the Black Experience, Topics in Feminist Philosophy, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind, Introduction to Cognitive Science, Aesthetic Theory and Modernism, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Biological Science, Philosophy of Social Science, Philosophy of Mathematics. The opportunity for independent study is also available.

Usually three graduate seminars are offered per term. Seminars are given either on particular philosophical topics or on particular authors. Faculty has an opportunity to teach seminars on a rotating basis, and as much as possible the seminar offerings in any one semester will cover three of the four traditional areas of philosophy. Seminars in recent years have included such topics as pragmatism, mental representation, aesthetics and modernism, evolutionary theory, and democratic theory. Among the many authors that have been studied are Plato, Spinoza, Husserl, Wittgenstein, Quine, Kripke, Rawls, Heidegger, Habermas, Foucault, and Rorty.

## **Sociology**

### **Urban, Race and Migration**

Urban Sociology at MSU emphasizes global transformation as central to shaping urban and metropolitan regions where an ever-enlarging portion of the world's population resides. Urban life is not confined to the traditional tenements, factories, and skyscrapers of the past century but incorporates suburban and exurban areas, now containing greater populations than central cities. The Urban, Race and Migration sub-theme also focuses on race and ethnicity for studying the social structure, conflict, cooperation, social meanings, and consequences of race and ethnicity, which provide significant bases of social organization, stratification, identity, and life chances. Key foci include relations between race and ethnicity and other bases of social inequality, solidarity, and identity such as gender, sexuality, nationality, religion, generation, language, and spatial location. The third component of this sub-theme is the sociology of migration, which studies the unparalleled migration arising from both long-term and recent social, political, economic, cultural, and technological transformations. It addresses the exit, reception, and incorporation of labor migrants, refugees, trans-nationals, and sojourners in distinct international, national, regional, and local political, economic, and cultural contexts. The three foci of urban, race and migration come together in the Department's long-term emphasis on African and Asian diasporas.

## Writing, Rhetoric and American Culture (WRAC)

The MA in Critical Studies in Literacy Pedagogy (CSLP) prepares teachers and researchers in the fields of English Education and Composition and Rhetoric. CSLP emphasizes the teaching and learning of language and literacy in multiple contexts and multiple modes, including print, digital, and visual, as well as research in these areas. Central to the program's emphasis is the critical examination of ethnicity and multiculturalism as they apply to the teaching of literacy; the democratization of the classroom; the role of language and schooling in society at-large; and the politics of language, literacy, and culture. The PhD curriculum prepares students to study writing as situated practice and to research, develop, and administer a variety of academic, workplace, civic, government, nonprofit, publishing, and digital writing projects. WRAC PhD concentrations useful for AAAS graduate students are:

**Community Literacies** - designed for students who want to study language and literacy in settings outside of schools and universities (e.g., workplaces, neighborhood organizations, non-profits, after-school programs, etc.). Theories of and research on democratic participation, phronesis, outreach, and activism are explored in light of everyday lives and literacy practices.

**Cultural Rhetoric** -- places rhetoric at the epistemological center of inquiries into specific cultural, economic and historical contexts. This concentration is distinctive both in its emphasis on located practices and in its methodological flexibility, it requires students to receive formal training in rhetorical methodologies (ranging from critical textual analysis to phenomenological and naturalistic studies of rhetorical practices) and it encourages students to develop a specific cultural focus through consultation with their guidance committees.