

# CULTURAL STUDIES, PHD

**Banner Code:** LA-PHD-CULT

## Academic Advising

Email: [cultural@gmu.edu](mailto:cultural@gmu.edu)

Website: [culturalstudies.gmu.edu/programs/la-phd-cult](https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/programs/la-phd-cult)

The Cultural Studies PhD program grounds the study of cultural objects (e.g. texts, institutions, media, events, everyday practices) in an analysis of the particular political, economic, and social conditions in which cultural meanings are produced, circulated, received, and contested. It joins faculty and students in an intellectual community of advanced study, with the aim of educating academics and professionals to understand the constitution of both past and present social formations in the interests of a more humane and equitable future. The program traffics with a broad range of scholarship and theory that examines the relation of cultural objects to their conditions of existence, e.g., Marxism, the Frankfurt School, the Birmingham School, French structuralism and poststructuralism, and ongoing attempts to understand various modes of subjugation (labor, gender, sexuality, race) within changing political-economic conditions. Our aim is to produce graduates who are fully apprised of the theoretical debates that have preceded them, who have a solid grasp of the relevant history as well as of contemporary scholarly developments, and who are thus equipped to engage with the key issues of our time.

This PhD trains students for scholarship and teaching. The core curriculum includes an introduction to cultural studies and a methods course, as well as courses on political economy, gender and sexuality, critical race studies, science and technology, social institutions, and visual and performance culture. All students develop field specializations in two areas of cultural studies. The particular strengths of the program are visual culture, media, and new media studies; political economy and globalization; and gender and sexuality studies.

## Undergraduate Program

Cultural studies does not have an undergraduate program, but supports the interdisciplinary undergraduate program in global affairs as well as a special topics course in cultural studies. CULT 320 Globalization and Culture (Mason Core) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>) is a core requirement for students majoring in global affairs. CULT 390 Topics in Cultural Studies is a course whose content will change from offering to offering and may be of special interest to global affairs majors.

## Faculty

### Professors

Denise Albanese (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/people/dalbanes/>)  
 Roger Lancaster (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/people/rlancast/>)  
 Alison Landsberg (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/people/alandsb1/>)  
 Paul Smith (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/people/psmith5/>)

### Associate Professors

Tim Gibson (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/people/tgibson1/>)  
 Alexander Monea (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/people/amonea/>)  
 Christy Pichichero (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/people/cpichich/>)

Lisa Rabin (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/people/lrabin/>)

## Admissions & Policies

### Admissions

Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>). Applicants must already have earned a master's degree in a relevant field. For further information specific to the PhD in Cultural Studies, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (<https://culturalstudies.gmu.edu/programs/la-phd-cult/application/>).

### Policies

For policies governing all graduate degrees, see Graduate Policies (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>).

### Required Master's Degree

Applicants must have earned a master's degree in a relevant field before being admitted to the PhD. The PhD requires 78 credits. Up to 30 credits may be transferred from the required master's degree. More information can be found in [AP6.5.2 Transfer of Credit](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-5-2) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-5-2>).

### Academic Performance Standards

Students are required to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.33 for all coursework, with no unsatisfactory grades. Students who fail to meet this standard at any point will be given a warning and one semester to raise their GPA to the 3.33 minimum. Students who fail to meet this minimum standard for two consecutive or non-consecutive semesters will be terminated from the program.

## Requirements

### Degree Requirements

Total credits: 78-81

Students should be aware of the specific policies associated with this program, located on the Admissions & Policies (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/humanities-social-sciences/cultural-studies/cultural-studies-phd/#admissionspolicies>) tab.

### Doctoral Coursework

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Core Courses</b>		
CULT 802	Histories of Cultural Studies	3
CULT 804	Histories of Cultural Studies II	3
CULT 806	Research Seminar in Cultural Studies	3
CULT 808	Student/Faculty Colloquium in Cultural Studies <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>Theory</b>		
Select a minimum of one course from the following:		3
CULT 810	Culture and Political Economy	
CULT 814	Social Construction of identity	

CULT 820	After Colonialism	
CULT 822	Race and Culture	
<b>Topic</b>		
Select a minimum of one course from the following:		3
CULT 812	Visual Culture	
CULT 816	Science/Technology	
CULT 818	Social Institutions	
CULT 824	Internet Cultures	
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>18</b>

<sup>1</sup> Students must take CULT 808 Student/Faculty Colloquium in Cultural Studies a minimum of 3 times

## Field Requirements

Under the guidance of faculty advisory committees, students define two fields that point topically and theoretically toward teaching interests, dissertation research, and related forms of professional development. If doctoral level coursework is not available in a given area, students may take one independent study (CULT 870 Independent Study) to support the development of the field.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Field One</b>		
CULT 880	Field Concentration <sup>1</sup>	3
Two relevant courses from theory or topic courses not used to fulfill the previous requirements or from special topics courses.		6
<b>Field Two</b>		
CULT 880	Field Concentration <sup>1</sup>	3
Two relevant courses from theory or topic courses not used to fulfill the previous requirements or from special topics courses.		6
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>18</b>

<sup>1</sup> Must be taught by that field's primary advisor.

## Field Statements

Students demonstrate competence in each of their two chosen fields by producing and orally defending a field statement that consists of a comprehensive, critical literature review.

The field statements and the defense constitute the candidacy exam for the PhD.

## Methodology

Code	Title	Credits
Students must take one course in a relevant methodology in which they are not already trained		3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>3</b>

Students choose the specific course from program or departmental graduate offerings (600 level or above) under the guidance of their faculty advisory committee.

A course chosen to fulfill the credits for a field requirement, if relevant, may be used to meet the methodology requirement with permission of the faculty advisory committee. Students who do not take a relevant and approved methodology course in partial fulfillment of a field requirement

need to take a methodology course (3 credits) to fulfill this requirement. They will have a degree total of 81 credits.

## Proficiency in a Foreign Language

Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in at least one foreign language before being permitted to defend the doctoral dissertation proposal.

## Electives

Code	Title	Credits
Students can complete the 78 credit requirement through credits of additional coursework chosen in consultation with an advisor		0-30
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>0-30</b>

## Advancement to Candidacy

To advance to candidacy, students must successfully complete all coursework required on their approved program of study and demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language. Students must also successfully complete two written field statements and pass an oral comprehensive exam based on them.

## Dissertation

Once enrolled in CULT 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal, students in this degree program must maintain continuous registration in CULT 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal or CULT 999 Doctoral Dissertation each semester (excluding summers) until the dissertation is submitted to and accepted by the University Libraries. Once enrolled in CULT 999 Doctoral Dissertation, students must follow the university's continuous registration policy. Students who defend in the summer must be registered for at least 1 credit of CULT 999 Doctoral Dissertation.

Students must complete a minimum of 3 credits of CULT 999 Doctoral Dissertation. They may apply a maximum of 12 dissertation credits (CULT 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal and CULT 999 Doctoral Dissertation combined) to the degree.

Code	Title	Credits
Dissertation Research		12
CULT 998	Doctoral Dissertation Proposal	
CULT 999	Doctoral Dissertation (minimum of 3 credits)	
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>12</b>