

AFRICAN AND AFRICAN DIASPORA STUDIES, PHD

Effective Fall 2025, the African and African Diaspora Studies PhD has suspended admission.

The PhD in African and African and Diaspora Studies is grounded in the axiomatic assumption that, as the imperatives of global integration significantly transform human relations, the twenty-first century will witness an exponential expansion of the institutional delivery of Africological knowledge. Across the planet today, Africa remains the only continent with a vast store of natural resources (e.g., uranium, oil, copper, nickel) that are underutilized. With the demand for energy increasing exponentially worldwide, knowledge and understanding of the cultures and political economies of African countries and societies clearly are in the self-interest of the global community. Because of this twenty-first century imperative, the Department of African and African and Diaspora Studies has designed the PhD degree around two concentrations: Political Economy and Public Policy, and Culture and Society: Africa and the African Diaspora.

The fields of concentration are the substantive core of the PhD program. Political economy entails the normative and empirical relations of political and economic phenomena in given sociocultural contexts. Public policy entails the making of binding, authoritative decisions that produce, allocate, reproduce, and reallocate societal resources. Political, economic, cultural, and social elements interact continually in every political economy, and public policy substantially frames their patterns of interaction. Through a range of research methods and techniques, the concentration in political economy and public policy grounds students in local, national, and transnational political economies and public policies. Relevant courses and seminars in such fields as economics, political science, sociology, urban planning, geography, and history will be utilized.

All cultures share in common at least eight attributes. These are species life, species being, language, religion, food, literature-art-science-technology, institutions, and transgenerational memory. Systematic comparisons of these elements of cultures in Africa and in the African Diaspora worldwide afford sound explanations of, and novel insights into, the behaviors of Africans and their descent. This concentration in comparative cultures will enable students to scrutinize rigorously exchanges, admixtures, fusions, retentions, and disappearances of cultural elements in Africa and the African Diaspora in regard to their contemporary significance. Relevant courses and seminars in English, foreign languages and literatures, history, and sociology will complement those offered in the department.

Admission Requirements

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Application Deadlines

Application deadlines vary by program, please review the application deadline chart (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/program-deadlines/>) for specific programs. Other important dates and deadlines can be found by using the One Stop calendars (<https://uwm.edu/onestop/dates-and-deadlines/>).

Admission

To be considered for admission, an applicant must meet UWM Graduate School requirements for admission plus the departmental requirements listed below. A master's degree is not a prerequisite for this Ph.D. program.

1. Possession of an overall undergraduate grade point average of 3.33 (B+)
2. Submission of three letters of recommendation from individuals who are familiar with the applicant's academic work
3. Submission of a writing sample (10-15 pages) of the applicant's written work, signaling one's aptitude for graduate study

The GRE is recommended but not required to be considered for admission to this Ph.D. program.

Normally, students are admitted only for the fall semester. However, in extraordinary circumstances, a student may be permitted to begin Ph.D. studies in the spring semester.

Admission to the graduate program is based on a careful review of the applicant's academic qualifications and is highly competitive. Successful candidates usually have a high grade point average (GPA) in their undergraduate majors, as well as overall. There are, of course, a variety of factors that come into play over the years of an applicant's studies, and so the admissions committee will consider closely a student's academic profile, as well as accomplishments that are germane to their application.

It is the policy of the Graduate Faculty that "Applicants may be admitted with specific program-defined course deficiencies provided that the deficiencies amount to no more than two courses."

The student is expected to satisfy deficiency requirements within three enrolled semesters. No course credits earned in making up deficiencies may be counted as program credits required for the degree."

Language or Mathematics/Statistics Proficiency

Students are expected to enter the Ph.D. program with proficiency in a language other than English and/or in mathematics/statistics. Students may satisfy the language requirement by passing a translation examination administered by a faculty member, or by completing, with a grade of C or better, the final course in a four-semester sequence in a language approved by the department. Native speakers of a departmentally approved language may petition the graduate advisor for an exemption to the foreign language requirement.

Proficiency in mathematics/statistics is indicated by completion of two courses at the upper-division level (numbered 300 and above or requiring junior standing) with at least a B average. Students who have not completed this requirement in the context of their undergraduate (or master's degree) studies must take courses to satisfy the requirement during their Ph.D. studies.

Credits earned in satisfying this requirement do not count toward the required credits for the Ph.D. degree. The language or mathematics/statistics proficiency requirement must be completed prior to the doctoral preliminary examinations. Students are encouraged strongly to have the proficiency requirements completed by the time they take the comprehensive examination.

Credits and Courses

The PhD degree requires completion of at least 54 graduate credits—48 credits of coursework, and 6 dissertation credits. Students may count

up to a maximum of 6 credits in dual level undergraduate/graduate courses toward the degree. Precise numbers of credits and actual course requirements will be determined after review of the applicant's previous coursework.

Required

During the first three semesters in the program, the following courses in Forms of Reasoning are required:

Code	Title	Credits
Core Courses		
AFRIC 700	Foundations and Theories in African & African Diaspora Studies	3
AFRIC 701	Theories and Methods in Empirical Research in African & African Diaspora Studies	3
AFRIC 705	Classic Works: Intellectual Production in Africa and the Diaspora I	3
AFRIC 708	Black Literary Theory and Cultural Studies	3
Area of Concentration/Electives		36
Dissertation		6
AFRIC 990	Dissertation Research	
Total Credits		54

Fields of Concentration

Following completion of the core courses, students must select one of two concentrations. The Department of African and African Diaspora Studies has been structured conceptually and empirically around two fields of concentration: Political Economy and Public Policy, and Culture and Society: Africa and the African Diaspora. Students will select one of these concentrations by the end of their comprehensive exams and will work with their faculty advisor to develop an appropriate program of study. In consultation with their faculty advisor, students may elect to take a concentration of 6 to 9 credits outside of the Department.

Additional Requirements

Major Professor as Advisor

Upon admission to the program, students are required to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies about the department's expectations of them, as well as elucidate their own expectations of the department. Soon afterward, students must secure individual advisors, drawn from the department's faculty.

Residence

The student must complete at least half of the graduate credits required for the Ph.D. in residence (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/doctoral-requirements/#residence>) at UWM in doctoral status. In addition, the student must complete at least 8 graduate credits in each of two consecutive semesters, or 6 or more graduate credits in each of three consecutive semesters, exclusive of summer sessions.

The Comprehensive Examination

Prior to the end of each entering student's third semester of enrollment, they are required to take and pass the department's graduate student comprehensive examination (written and oral) in order to continue their studies toward the Ph.D. degree. There are no exceptions to this

requirement. The comprehensive examination is administered in the spring and fall semesters of each academic year.

The examination will be administered by three (3) members of the department's faculty, who will grade the written work and conduct the orals. Members of the examination committee rotate each academic year. Students must pass the written examination to be eligible for the oral examination.

Students who pass the comprehensive examination are permitted to proceed toward the Ph.D. degree. The comprehensive examination is not repeatable. Failing the examination will result in a recommendation by the department to the Graduate School for the student's dismissal from the doctoral program, at which point the student may choose to continue in the MA track toward completion of the requirements for the MA degree in African and African Diaspora Studies.

Upon passing the exam, students continue to take courses in the concentrations in preparation for the doctoral preliminary examinations and independent research.

The Doctoral Preliminary Examinations

Students will take written and oral doctoral preliminary examinations in two of their three fields of concentration, which they will select.

To be eligible to take the preliminary examinations, which are administered in the fall and spring semesters of each academic year, students must:

- Be registered.
- Have an overall GPA of at least 3.0 (B), at the time of the examination.
- Have completed all coursework—there shall be no incompletes (Is) at the time of the examination.
- Have satisfied the foreign language or mathematics/statistics requirement.
- Have made one presentation to the department's faculty as a whole in the Departmental Faculty Colloquium Series. The purpose of the presentation is to: refine a student's knowledge of a given subject; socialize students in the rigors of making scholarly presentations on one's research before future peers; and prepare students for the demands of interviews for future jobs. A student will not be judged to either have passed or failed the presentation. Rather, they will be given constructive comments concerning the substance and style of their presentation. Generally, each colloquium will last for two (2) hours.
- Have fulfilled all residency requirements.
- Have secured, in addition to their primary departmental advisor, a secondary advisor from outside the department should they plan to use their extra-departmental field of concentration as one of the two written-examination fields.

Those who pass the written examinations with a grade of at least a B on each shall then proceed to take the oral examination. Should a student fail one of the two written examinations, they upon petition to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Committee may be permitted to retake it at the next scheduled examination cycle. Students who fail both written examinations will not be permitted to retake them.

Failure of both written examinations, or the retake of a written examination, or the oral examination, will result in a recommendation to the Graduate School

for the student's academic dismissal. Students who pass the preliminary examinations shall proceed to prepare a dissertation prospectus.

The preliminary examinations must be taken within five years of enrollment in the Ph.D. program.

A student's dissertation committee shall consist of four (4) graduate faculty members, including their major professor. At least three (3) of the four members must be from the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies.

Dissertation Prospectus (Proposal Hearing)

Prior to undertaking research for the dissertation, a student is required to prepare a dissertation prospectus, with the advice and consent of their advisor and Dissertation Committee. Acceptance of the dissertation proposal establishes an agreement between the student and the Dissertation Committee as to the nature and scope of the research to be conducted, and the procedure for completing the dissertation. Prior to the Dissertation Committee's approval of the prospectus, research involving the use of human subjects must receive the approval of the Institutional Review Board.

Dissertator Status

Specific requirements which must be completed before a doctoral student qualifies for dissertator status are described on the Graduate School Doctoral Requirements (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/doctoral-requirements/>) page.

Dissertation

The dissertation is a major piece of original research representing a substantial contribution to an existing body of knowledge. The original research findings embodied in the dissertation should be acceptable for publication in a refereed journal. The student's advisor and Dissertation Committee provide guidance in completing the dissertation. Once a student's dissertation has been approved by their advisor and Dissertation Committee, the document, in approved Graduate School format, is ready to be filed with the Graduate School.

Time Limit

It is expected that students entering the program with a baccalaureate degree should normally complete their Ph.D. degree within six (6) years. However, because circumstances beyond a student's control may prevent completion of requirements according to this timeline, students will be granted a maximum of ten years to complete the degree.