

Master of Arts in Indigenous Studies

Indigenous Studies Master of Arts Program

The Indigenous Studies M.A. enables you to become an innovative and capable scholar and leader who brings Indigenous perspectives to academic settings, government and other public service, and the private sector. ISP equips you with the knowledge and skills to conduct theoretical and applied research and to develop innovative solutions to issues facing Indigenous communities.

You'll take courses from across KU to create an individualized program of study. Our affiliate faculty members teach in the humanities, social sciences, arts and professional schools.

To graduate, you'll complete a portfolio, thesis or written comprehensive exam.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Indigenous Studies Admission Requirements

Eligibility criteria for admission to the M.A. program follow Graduate Studies' admission policy (<http://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>).

Application Deadlines:

- August 1 for fall admission
- December 15 for spring admission

If August 1 or December 15 falls on a weekend, the deadline will extend to the following business day.

Required Application Materials:

- **2-page personal statement** explaining how a master's degree in Indigenous Studies will benefit you and why you will successfully complete the degree. The personal statement should answer:

- Why Indigenous Studies is the right fit for your interests.
- Who among our affiliate faculty would you like to work with on your research?
- What you would like to do with your master's degree?
- **Resume or curriculum vitae** listing your educational and employment history, any scholarships/fellowships, internships, awards, etc.
- **Writing sample of at least 10 pages**
 - Choose your best academic work. We're looking for your ability to communicate clearly, think critically and perform research.
- **Three letters of recommendation**
 - The Letter of Recommendation system works on the contact information you provide when you apply.
 - Be sure your recommenders can speak to your ability to handle the rigors of academia.
 - We suggest at least two of your recommenders come from professors you've taken courses from.
 - These letters should help us understand why Indigenous Studies fits your research and career goals.
- **Transcript(s)** from undergraduate or graduate institution(s) you have attended
 - **Current and former KU students:** Upload a copy of your KU Advising Report from the "My Progress" section of the myKU portal OR a copy of your KU academic summary, available in Enroll & Pay.
 - **Non-KU students:** You must include official transcripts from each college attended.
 - You may attach scanned versions of official transcripts. If you're admitted to ISP and accept our admissions offer, you'll be required to submit an official, final transcript that shows your degree has been conferred.
 - Instructions for submitting transcripts (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/#section366>) via mail, electronically or Certifile

If you are interested in pursuing a joint M.A./J.D. with the KU School of Law or the PSM + ISP graduate certificate, you will need to apply to both programs separately.

M.A. Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Core Course		3
ISP 800	Indigenous Issues in the United States	
M.A. Plan of Study		18
A unique plan of study comprised 18 hours of coursework with content relevant to the field of Indigenous Studies is approved by the student's faculty advisor and the Indigenous Studies Program Director. Courses are selected from the below list of options based on the student's research and professional interests. Students may take courses other than those on the approved list by demonstrating how the course will advance their understanding of Indigenous perspectives and/or methodologies. More information on the process of course approvals can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook.		
Portfolio, Thesis, or Comprehensive Exam		9
Portfolio Option: 9 hours of electives selected from the below list of courses. The portfolio consists of 3 deliverables, developed through coursework, research, and/or other creative activities that make a meaningful contribution to the field of Indigenous Studies.		

OR

Thesis Option: 6 hours of electives selected from the below list of courses plus 3 hours of ISP 899 Thesis during which the student drafts their thesis in consultation with their faculty advisor.

OR

Comprehensive Exam Option: 9 hours of ISP 806 Directed Readings (3 hours with each M.A. exam committee member) to create and cover reading lists representative of the student's areas of interest in each committee member's field. The student completes a two-week take-home written comprehensive exam comprised of 3 questions created by each committee member based on the reading lists covered during the directed readings courses. Responses to the questions are to be submitted as separate essays and each essay should not exceed 15 typed pages, with citations under separate cover.

Total Hours **30**

M.A. Oral Examination

Students defend their portfolio, thesis, or written comprehensive exam before their committee in a public forum. This is a presentation followed by questions from the committee and other individuals in attendance. Students use the oral defense to relate their portfolio, thesis, or written comprehensive exam to the broader discourse in the field of Indigenous Studies, and to thematic issues treated in the program's core courses.

Committee members assign an outcome of Honors, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory to the oral defense. A majority vote of Satisfactory is required to pass the defense.

Course-Level Requirement

Students pursuing an M.A. in Indigenous Studies must take 50% or more of their coursework at the 700 level or above.

Graduate Student Handbook and Graduate Policy

Additional information can be found in the Indigenous Studies Graduate Student Handbook (<https://indigenous.ku.edu/graduate-student-handbook/>). Students are also encouraged to review Graduate Studies' policies (<https://ogs.ku.edu/policies/>) related to master's degree programs for information about other requirements that may apply.

Dual Degree with KU Law

The University of Kansas offers a dual degree program in Law and Indigenous Studies. As part of this unique program, students may graduate with both the J.D. and an M.A. in Indigenous Studies in three to four years, making it an ideal choice for students interested in tribal law. Students must apply separately to the Law School and the Indigenous Studies graduate program.

A student must complete the first 29 credit hours of required courses in the J.D. program before beginning any ISP course work.

The master's program in ISP requires all candidates to earn 30 graduate credit hours in accordance with Option A, B, or C outlined above. The master's program will accept for credit toward the M.A. degree 12 credit hours earned from approved courses in the law school.

M.A. Plan of Study and Elective Course Options

Code	Title	Hours
ISP 504	Topics in Indigenous Studies: _____	3
ISP 530	Indigenous Food and Health	3
ISP 542	Ethnobotany	3
ISP 552	Foodways: Latin America	3
ISP 567	Native Feminisms	3
ISP 601	Indigenous Peoples of the World	3
ISP 673	Environmental Justice	3
ISP 755	Indigenous Film and Media	3
ISP 804	Special Topics: _____	1-3
ISP 805	Critical Indigenous Histories & Philosophies in Education	3
ISP 806	Directed Readings	1-3
ISP 807	Internship in Indigenous Studies	1-6
ISP 815	Leadership, Advocacy, and Action in Indigenous Education	3
ISP 820	Applied Project for Educational Leadership for Indigenous Populations	3
ISP 824	Federal Indian Law	3
ISP 830	Indigenous Food and Health	3
ISP 860	Safeguarding Native American Heritage: NAGPRA, Tribal Hist Preservtn, & Cultural Heritage Governance	3
ISP 862	Indigenous Archives and Tribal Historic Preservation	3
ISP 871	Community Health and Development	3
ANTH 506	Pre-Hispanic Mexico and Central America	3
ANTH 507	The Ancient Maya	3
ANTH 508	Ancient American Civilizations: The Central Andes	3
ANTH 561	Indigenous Development in Latin America	3
ANTH 562	Mexamerica	3
EVRN 542	Ethnobotany	3
EVRN 673	Environmental Justice	3
EVRN 701	Climate Change, Ecological Change and Social Change	3
GEOG 570	Geography of American Indians	3
GEOG 601	Indigenous Peoples of the World	3
HIST 883	Ethnohistory of the Americas	3
MUSE 699	Anthropology in Museums	3
MUSE 780	Special Topics: _____ Dependent on the topic of the course	1-3
MUSE 801	The Modern Museum: Institutions, Knowledge and Audiences	3
MUSE 802	The Museum Profession: Ethics, Standards and Cultural Awareness	3
WGSS 567	Native Feminisms	3

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Exhibit an advanced level of knowledge in Indigenous scholarship and issues relevant to the field.

- Demonstrate growth in engaging with a variety of culturally diverse perspectives, both in scholarship and practice.
- Demonstrate interdisciplinary growth by establishing scholarly connections between Indigenous Studies and other fields of interest.
- Communicate effectively through scholarly writing.
- Demonstrate an understanding of responsible and ethical practices for engaging with Indigenous communities when conducting research and scholarship.
- Produce a valuable contribution to the field of Indigenous Studies (capstone experience - thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam).