

Master of Arts in Indigenous Studies

Indigenous Studies Master of Arts Program

The ISP master's requires 30 credit hours to complete.

This degree 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 either a thesis or portfolio of your work.

Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/>) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

Indigenous Studies Admission Requirements

The Indigenous Studies program accepts applications on a rolling basis, so apply to begin your studies either in the fall or spring semester.

Eligibility criteria for admission to the M.A. program follow Graduate Studies' admission policy. To be considered for admission to the program, a student must hold a bachelor's degree. Non-native speakers of English must meet Graduate Studies' English proficiency requirements (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/english-proficiency-international-students/>).

You can find the full list of the required application materials on the Indigenous (<https://indigenous.ku.edu/how-apply/>)Studies website.

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

Students pursuing the M.A. in Indigenous Studies must successfully complete 30 graduate credit hours: a 21-hour core curriculum plus 9 hours taken according to either Plan A, B, or C.

Core Curriculum

ISP 800 Indigenous Issues in the United States. A 3-hour graduate-level course that focuses on contemporary issues relating to Indigenous peoples and nations within the United States, with particular emphasis on such issues as sovereignty, indigeneity, colonialism, and decolonization. The course will address varied disciplinary approaches to this range of issues and will consider how this discourse bears upon scholarly conversations regarding broader themes in other selected fields of study.

18 hours of approved course work with content relevant to the field of Indigenous studies approved by the student's faculty advisor in consultation with the ISP Director. Courses are offered by Indigenous Studies as well as departments such as Anthropology, Environmental Studies, English, History, Political Science, Religious Studies, and Geography. A list of approved courses can be found on the ISP website (<https://indigenous.ku.edu/approved-graduate-courses/>). Students may take courses not 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 approval may be found in the Graduate Student Handbook.

Plan A: Portfolio Option

- 9 hours of electives. Electives should be selected in consultation with a faculty advisor and complement the student's research, body of graduate work, and future career goals.
- An M.A. examination: an oral examination in which the candidate defends their portfolio, developed through coursework, research, or other creative activity, that makes a meaningful contribution to the field of Indigenous Studies.

Plan B: Thesis Option

- 6 hours of electives. Electives should be selected in consultation with a faculty advisor and complement the student's research, body of graduate work, and future career goals.
- 3 hours of ISP 899 Thesis Hours to produce a thesis on an approved subject with an oral defense that serves as the M.A. examination.

Plan C: 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.
 - An M.A. examination: The student completes a two-week take-home written comprehensive exam comprised of 3 questions created by each member of the M.A. exam committee 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.
 - The committee reviews and grades the student's responses as pass or no pass. If a majority of the committee members vote to pass the written exams, the student may schedule their oral defense of their responses which will serve as the final M.A. examination.

M.A. 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

All courses must be taken at the 500-level or above to count for graduate credit. Students pursuing an M.A. in Indigenous Studies must take 50% or more of their course work at the 700 level or above. ISP 800 and thesis hours (if applicable) count toward this requirement.

Graduate Policy

Students are 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.