Master of Arts in Indigenous Studies

Indigenous Studies Master of Arts Program

KU’s Indigenous Studies Program serves students, Native American and Indigenous Nations and communities in Kansas, the Midwest, the U.S., and the world through our teaching, research, creative work, and service. At the core of these endeavors is our deep commitment to and engagement with the nations and communities we come from, learn from, and serve. Our aim is to contribute to the continuing projects of knowledge building, effective leadership, and infrastructure development.

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 section of the online catalog. Please consult the Departments & Programs 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. To be considered for University or departmental scholarships, the priority consideration deadline is January 15 for fall admission.

Eligibility criteria for admission to the M.A. program follow Graduate Studies’ admission policy. To be considered for admission to regular graduate status in the program, a student must hold a bachelor’s degree and have earned at least a B (3.0) grade-point average in previous academic work. A full list of the required application materials can be found on the Indigenous Studies website.

Non-native speakers of English must meet English proficiency requirements as described here.

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.

M.A. Degree Requirements

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

Core Curriculum

ISP 800 Indigenous Issues in the United States. A 3-hour graduate-level course taught by the director of the ISP with guest presentations by faculty who study indigenous peoples from various disciplinary perspectives.

18 hours of approved coursework with content relevant to the field of Indigenous studies approved by the student’s graduate committee. Courses are offered by Indigenous Studies, as well as certain departments such as Anthropology, Environmental Studies, English, History, Political Science, Religion, and Geography. A list of approved courses can be found here.

Plan A: Non-Thesis Option

- 9 hours of electives. Electives should be selected in consultation with an advisor and complement your research, body of graduate work, and future career goals.
- An M.A. examination: an oral examination in which the candidate defends his or her portfolio, which will be composed of the student’s entire body of work completed in courses counted for the degree.

Plan B: Thesis Option

- 6 hours of electives. Electives should be selected in consultation with an advisor and complement your research, body of graduate work, and future career goals.
- 3 hours of thesis on an approved subject with an oral defense.

Joint Degree with KU Law

The University of Kansas offers a joint 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.

The program "aspires to facilitate the protection and strengthening of Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and self-sufficiency" in Indigenous nations throughout the Americas.

The University of Kansas was the third institution of higher learning in the United States to offer a joint degree program relating to Indigenous peoples.