

Asian Studies

Berkeley's Asian Studies MA is an interdisciplinary degree program that provides students with access to the university's world-renowned faculty and facilities. The MA program cuts across conventional disciplinary lines, providing students interested in regions from northeast Asia to south and southeast Asia an opportunity to take courses in the humanities and interpretative social sciences, and conduct in-depth research in their specialty. Students engage in course work in multiple departments, gain reading knowledge of at least one — and often two — Asian languages, and have the flexibility to design a cross-disciplinary individual program according to their own interests and approaches. No two programs are alike, and students work closely with the Student Affairs officer and with a faculty mentor in designing their customized academic plan.

The Group in Asian Studies is housed in Berkeley's Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, under the Division of Arts and Humanities in the College of Letters and Science, and benefits from long-standing relationships with many other academic departments and programs across the campus engaged in research on Asia. Bringing together approaches from disciplines from across the humanities and the interpretative social sciences, the Asian Studies MA program offers comprehensive and advanced training in the languages and cultures of the region, and prepares students to enter a wide range of related doctoral programs, as well as professional careers in fields related to Asia.

The University of California is a lively, international renowned center of scholarship and teaching in the area of Asian Studies. Faculty from across campus engage in teaching and cutting-edge research concerning Asia. Our students take classes and work with outstanding faculty in disciplines as diverse as Anthropology, Buddhist Studies, East Asian Languages and Cultures, Film/Media Studies, Geography, History, History of Art, Journalism, Music, Philosophy, Religion, South and Southeast Asian Studies, Sociology, and others.

These resources are supplemented by extensive library facilities and by the programs of the six major area centers of the Institute of East Asian Studies that offer lecture series and conferences throughout the year. The Bay Area itself, with its diverse communities, museums, performing arts, religious institutions, and thriving financial and technological sectors provides unlimited cultural opportunities for the student interested in reaching beyond the confines of the university.

Admission to the University

Applying for Graduate Admission

Thank you for considering UC Berkeley for graduate study! UC Berkeley offers more than 120 graduate programs representing the breadth and depth of interdisciplinary scholarship. The Graduate Division hosts a complete list (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/choosing-your-program/list/>) of graduate academic programs, departments, degrees offered, and application deadlines can be found on the Graduate Division website.

Prospective students must submit an online application to be considered for admission, in addition to any supplemental materials specific to the program for which they are applying. The online application and steps to take to apply can be found on the Graduate Division website (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/steps-to-apply/>).

Admission Requirements

The minimum graduate admission requirements are:

1. A bachelor's degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. A satisfactory scholastic average, usually a minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) on a 4.0 scale; and
3. Enough undergraduate training to do graduate work in your chosen field.

For a list of requirements to complete your graduate application, please see the Graduate Division's Admissions Requirements page (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/steps-to-apply/requirements/>). It is also important to check with the program or department of interest, as they may have additional requirements specific to their program of study and degree. Department contact information can be found here (<https://guide.berkeley.edu/archive/2024-25/graduate/degree-programs/>).

Where to apply?

Visit the Berkeley Graduate Division application page (<http://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/>).

Admission to the Program

MA Program

1. **Online Application:** Fill out the graduate admissions application available on the Graduate Division website (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/>).
2. **Transcripts:** Upload unofficial transcripts with the online application for the departmental initial review. Upload a transcript from every post-secondary school you have attended, including community college. You do not need to send the department paper copies. Official transcripts of all college-level work will be required only if **admitted**. Official transcripts must be in sealed envelopes as issued by the school(s) you have attended. Request a current transcript from every post-secondary school that you have attended, including community colleges, summer sessions, and extension programs.
3. **Letters of Recommendation:** Send three letters of recommendation from three recommenders familiar with your work, preferably in an academic setting. We will accept online letters of recommendation only. Extra letters, CV/resumes, or photos will be discarded. Instructions on how to submit letters are included in the Graduate Admissions application.
4. **Academic Writing Sample:** Writing samples must be 5-7 pages in length (spacing does not matter) and in English. Examples include an essay or book review. You can upload the writing sample as part of the online application. Do not send or email writing samples to the department. Writing samples that are longer than the stated length will not be read so please modify your document accordingly.
5. **Statement of Purpose:** 1-2 single space pages in 12 point font. Please read about the SOP here (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/statement-purpose/>).
6. **Personal History Statement:** 1-2 single space pages in 12 point font. Your Personal History Statement gives you an opportunity to add some personal details and depth to the information provided in your Statement of Purpose. It can include information about who you are as a person, your family background, cultural background, socioeconomic status, educational advantages and/or experiences

growing up. It is intended to give you the opportunity to provide a narrative about your diverse personal experiences

7. **Evidence of English language proficiency:** All applicants from countries in which English is not the official language are required to submit official evidence of English language proficiency through the TOEFL exam. If you have completed at least one year of full-time academic course work with grades of B or better in residence at a US university, you do not need to take this test. For a list of countries and minimum scores, see info on this section above. Scores must be sent directly by ETS to UC Berkeley (institution code 4833). Do not send test scores directly to our department.

Profile of a successful applicant

The profile of a successful applicant admitted recently would include such attributes as:

- Two or more years of relevant Asian language preparation.
- An upper division grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher: In evaluating grade point average, particular emphasis is placed on the applicant's last two years of undergraduate study and on his or her work in the area in which he or she intends to specialize.
- A writing sample of high caliber.
- Excellent letters of recommendation from academic sources that can comment in detail on scholarly attributes.
- A concise, mature, and directed statement of purpose that fits within the interdisciplinary Asian Studies program requirements and capabilities.
- Some experience living, studying or working in Asia.

Unit Requirements

A minimum of 20 units of graduate-level or upper division undergraduate courses in one of the four regional concentrations: East Asia; Northeast Asia; South Asia; Southeast Asia. All courses must be taken for a letter grade. Courses that satisfy the 20-unit minimum will be 100-200 level courses from BUDDSTD, CHINESE, EALANG, HISTORY, JAPAN, KOREAN, SASIAN, SEASIAN, and SSEASN. To satisfy your 20-unit requirement with course titles not listed above or from another department, you must contact the Chair to request an exception.

- For the 20-unit minimum, at least 8 units must be taken in graduate seminars (200-level) in two or more departments. The rest of the units may come from undergraduate upper division courses (100-level and above), or more graduate seminars.
- The 8 units in graduate seminars must be taken for 4 units and for a letter grade.
- The graduate proseminar, Asian Studies 201, is required for two semesters; however, the units do not count toward the 20-unit minimum.

Foreign Language

A minimum of three years of course work in an Asian language relevant to the student's regional specialization or evidence of equivalent preparation. For students who want to apply for PhD programs, it is advantageous to take more than one Asian language.

- Relevant language work beyond the three-year minimum requirement is encouraged and may be included among the program units upon approval of the Faculty Chair.
- For students who are already proficient (beyond the equivalent of three years of language study) in an Asian language, the language

requirement can be considered satisfied. However, as noted, it is strongly encouraged that students take on an additional language.

Capstone/Thesis (Plan I)

A Master's thesis that will be supervised and approved by a three-member faculty committee.

Curriculum

Courses Required		
ASIANST 201	Asian Studies Proseminar (two semesters)	1
Asian language coursework (6 semesters)		
20 units of graduate or upper division courses, as per approved study 20 list, for one of four area concentrations:		
East Asia (China)		
Northeast Asia (Japan and Korea)		
South Asia		
Southeast Asia		

Asian Studies

ASIANST 201 Asian Studies Proseminar 1 Unit

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024
This course is required of all first-year graduate students and supervised by a regular faculty member. The seminar will familiarize students with faculty, their Asian interests, research methods, and the courses they teach. It consists of presentations by faculty on their past, present, and future research.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1.5 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Asian Studies/Graduate
Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

ASIANST 298 Directed Group Study 2 - 6 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2021

Group study of selected topics that vary from term to term.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 1-5 hours of independent study per week

8 weeks - 1-4 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Asian Studies/Graduate

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

ASIANST 299 Independent Study 1 - 7 Units

Terms offered: Summer 2025, Spring 2025, Summer 2024

Directed reading in subject matter not covered in scheduled seminar offerings.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Consent of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 1-5 hours of independent study per week

8 weeks - 1-4 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Asian Studies/Graduate

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.