

THE MA IN ARCHAEOLOGY AT CORNELL
GRADUATE HANDBOOK

Program Overview

The MA Program in Archaeology at Cornell is designed to provide students with an intensive orientation to the field, appropriate to both students with BA degrees in the liberal arts who have considerable experience in archaeology and those seeking to build a solid foundation for future work or study. The goal of the program is to offer students the intellectual resources and institutional support necessary to prepare them for successful admissions to top tier PhD programs and for careers beyond academia.

Cornell Archaeology supports a diverse array of interests, ranging from material culture studies to public archaeology, museum studies, archaeological science, and archaeological method and theory. Archaeology at Cornell is deeply committed to multidisciplinary studies. Faculty in Archaeology belong to the fields of Anthropology, Classics, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, History of Art, Landscape Architecture, Near Eastern Studies, and City and Regional Planning.

The ideal trajectory toward the MA should result in the completion of all requirements within 12-18 months, although extensions to 24 months are allowed when warranted by a student's research program.

General Requirements

Conferral of the MA in Archaeology entails satisfactory completion of the following requirements.

- 8 courses at the 6000 level or higher;
- Arkeo 6100: The Craft of Archaeology (offered in the Spring);
- A thesis;
- Successful completion of the MA exam;
- 2 semesters in residence (i.e., taking courses on the Ithaca campus)

Courses and Distributions

Within the total of 8 required courses, at least 4 must include:

- 1 course at the 6000+ level devoted to Archaeological Theory;
- 1 course at the 6000+ level devoted to Archaeological Method;
- 1 course at the 6000+ level devoted to the Archaeology of a Region;
- 1 additional archaeology course at the 6000+ level (this could be Archaeological Research Design, ARKEO 6250, or Master's Thesis, ARKEO 8901)

During the Fall semester, students are required to enroll in the CIAMS Core Seminar in Archaeological Theory and Method (ARKEO 7000). This course is intended for the entire entering cohort and is required in order to apply for research funding from CIAMS.

The CIAMS Seminar will typically satisfy either the course requirement in Archaeological Theory or Archaeological Method. In Fall 2021, it will satisfy the former.

During the Spring semester, students are required to enroll in The Craft of Archaeology (ARKEO 6100). This course, co-taught by the in-residence faculty, provides practical advice on thesis development, professional skills, and career trajectories within and beyond academia. Students are also strongly encouraged to enroll in Archaeological Research Design (ARKEO 6250) in the Spring.

Only one course to be counted in the total of 8 required courses may be taken S/U. All the rest must be taken for a quality grade.

If a course is not available in a given area of interest, students may speak to relevant faculty to discuss the possibility of an independent study. Students are advised to take no more than one independent study, but exceptions can be made in consultation with the Graduate Affairs Committee or the Special Committee.

Model Course of Study

Each student's course of study is guided by the Graduate Advisory Committee. There is thus no single model for a program of study. One possible model for a 2-semester curriculum would be:

SEMESTER 1: Course in Archaeological Theory (CIAMS Seminar) Course in Archaeological Method Course in the Archaeology of a Region Other elective END OF SEMESTER 1: Establish special committee EARLY IN SEMESTER 2: Submit research proposal to committee
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SEMESTER 2: The Craft of Archaeology Course in Archaeological Theory or Method Course on the Archaeology of a Region Other elective Archaeological Research Design GRADUATION SEMESTER: MA Exam Submission of MA thesis

Special Committee:

Each student's tailored course of study is developed in close consultation with faculty advisors. Entering students receive guidance initially from the temporary advisor assigned to them upon admissions and from the Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC). Composed of the DGS, CIAMS director, and one additional faculty member, the role of the GAC is to provide advice until such time as the Special Committee is constituted and to provide any assistance that might fall outside of the academic purview of the special committee (e.g., issues pertaining to the Graduate School, TAs, etc.).

Please note that the Graduate School requires all students to have registered an adviser online via Student Center by the **3rd week of the fall semester**. If you have not selected a Special Committee chair by this time, you should select the DGS or the adviser who was assigned to you in your letter of admissions. Once a Special Committee has been formed, you can remove the temporary member or alter their status as needed.

You should establish a Special Committee, including Chair and Minor Member(s) by the end of Fall semester. The Special Committee is ultimately responsible for all decisions regarding a student's academic trajectory. Each student should officially constitute a Special Committee no later than the end of the first semester in residence. The committee chair must be a member of the Field of Archaeology; the second member can be chosen from the Graduate Faculty at large, in consultation with the Chair. Students may change the composition of their committees at any time if needed.

Language

There is no language requirement for the Archaeology MA. However, the Special Committee can advise language study as appropriate. In particular, for some MA research papers – where relevant primary sources or key scholarly literature are not available in English – it will be necessary for students to demonstrate suitable minimum language ability (as advised by the Special Committee) at least by the time of their MA defense.

Language courses do count toward the 8-course requirement but they must be taken at the 5000+ level. If you wish to take a lower-level language course that does not have a graduate number, contact the DGS to discuss options.

MA Thesis

The final thesis for the MA in Archaeology should present a piece of original research on a topic of empirical, theoretical, or methodological importance. It must not exceed 30 pages including tables, figures, bibliography and notes (using standard formatting in accordance with graduate school requirements). It should aim to be similar in quality and scale to those published in professional archaeological journals.

No later than the second week of spring semester, students must submit to their Special Committee a short (maximum 4 pages) proposal detailing the focus of their thesis.

MA Exam

After submission of the MA research paper an oral examination is convened with the Special Committee and any other Archaeology Field members who choose to attend.

Scheduling

As you move toward completion of your MA thesis, it is important to be aware of Graduate School requirements that impact scheduling. The Graduate School stipulates a filing deadline for MA candidates who wish to graduate during a given semester. The final possible date for the MA exam is about 2 weeks before the filing deadline. The Graduate School's A3 form scheduling the MA exam must be filed with the GFA for

Archaeology (Laura Sabatini) at least one week prior to the exam. And the defense draft of the MA thesis must be circulated to your committee no later than 3 weeks prior to the exam. As you plan for the completion of your degree, please consult the Graduate School's timeline: <https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation/understanding-deadlines-and-requirements>

Required Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research

Per the Code of Legislation, all research degree students must complete training in responsible conduct of research, including authorship, peer review and avoidance and consequences of research misconduct. This training is provided through the Cornell Office of Research Integrity and Assurance and must be completed before the end of the second semester (Code E.2.a). You will receive an email with instructions and a link for completing this training.

Funding

Tuition & Stipend

We make every effort to help our students manage the costs of the MA in Archaeology by maintaining competitive tuition rates and offering various funding opportunities. Our MA students pay the [graduate research tuition rate](#) of the Cornell's contract colleges, currently \$10,400 per semester. To further defray these costs, each year two teaching assistantship packages are awarded on the basis of merit to incoming MA students at the point of admission. These packages are "half-TAships", which cover half the cost of tuition and health benefits, and include a half-stipend.

Occasionally, other opportunities arise for MA students to work as teaching assistants for other departments, and we make every effort to identify and secure such positions for our students.

Fellowships

For those who do not receive TAships, in the first year of the program we provide fellowships of \$2,500 in the fall semester, and an additional \$2,500 in the spring semester, provided students remain in good academic standing.

Research Assistantships

Students are sometimes able to work as assistants to faculty, supporting research in labs and on individual projects. If you are interested in a research assistantship position, inquire with your Special Committee if any such opportunity is available.

Research Grants

CIAMS is also pleased to sponsor various [grant programs](#), including the Hirsch Graduate Travel Scholarship and the CIAMS Research Grants.

Conference Grants

The Graduate School provides conference grants to all graduate students who are invited to present papers or posters at professional conferences. Award amounts are based on

geographic location, not actual expenses. The Graduate School tries to fund most requests from students who meet the criteria for eligibility. Only one award will be considered during a single academic year, which is from July 1 through June 30. For information and deadlines, please refer to the [Conference Grant Application](#) found on the Graduate School website. Students can [apply to CIAMS](#) to supplement a Conference Travel grant from the Graduate School.

Diversity Fellowships

We welcome opportunities to diversify our student body, and make every effort to support students from communities traditionally underrepresented in the field of archaeology by nominating them for competitive [fellowships](#) offered by the Graduate School. When possible, we also offer one CIAMS Diversity Fellowship per year, consisting of \$5,000 in the fall semester and an additional \$5,000 in the spring semester, provided students remain in good academic standing.

Finally, we understand that students may need to maintain part-time employment while in our program, and are supportive of such arrangements to the extent that they comply with Graduate School regulations.

Student Progress Review

Students are required to complete the Student Progress Review (SPR) process in March of each year. The SPR process supports regular communication including written feedback between students and their advisors, requiring research degree students and their Special Committee to have at least one formal conversation each year about academic progress, accomplishments and plans. Students complete a form describing milestones completed, accomplishments, challenges and plans. The Special Committee chair responds in writing and indicates whether the student's progress is excellent, satisfactory, needs improvement, or is unsatisfactory.

Field Resources

Staff

Director of CIAMS: Adam T. Smith
Director of Graduate Studies: Lori Khatchadourian
Graduate Field Assistant: Laura Sabatini

[Student Groups](#)

Anti-racism and Anti-colonialism (ARCO) Interest Group
Archaeological Science Group

[CIAMS Community Resources Canvas Site](#)

[Radio CIAMS](#)

Lounge

Students may use the lounge on the second floor of McGraw Hall.

TA Offices

If you are working as a teaching assistant, please contact Laura Sabatini and the DGS to inquire about TA office space in McGraw Hall.

Photocopying/Scanning

Students may use the scanner in the Anthropology mailroom. Students who are working as a TA for CIAMS may photocopy if required for the course.