

## MA AFRICAN STUDIES

### About the programme

The Master's degree in African Studies combines disciplinary, thematic and application-oriented modules. It emphasizes training along the main axes of research at the Centre for African Studies Basel (CASB), as well as training in applied African Studies and research methods.

The programme is distinguished by its decidedly interdisciplinary nature which fosters comparison among different scientific approaches as well as a wide variety of methods. The central disciplines are history, anthropology, sociology, political science, religious studies, environmental sciences and epidemiology. In addition, transdisciplinarity is promoted by integrating practical knowledge from outside the university and introducing students to applied research fields.

Students combine courses in the various modules according to their interests and profile. The courses are complemented with individual field research projects, collective excursions or non-university internships.

### Learning Goals

In the MA African Studies programme, students acquire interdisciplinary, theoretically sound and application-oriented knowledge about Africa. They develop a scientific understanding of the dynamics of African societies, the historical changes, the natural environment, the health situation, and the living conditions of people in different regions of the continent.

Students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to

- carefully use **scientific methods and concepts** especially when taking an interdisciplinary approach;
- comparatively analyse **natural, historical, political and social contexts** in Africa and beyond;
- understand **human and social actions** in different African societies or contexts;
- **intelligibly convey Africa-related knowledge** beyond the borders of disciplines or scientific contexts;
- **apply scientific insight** to professional practice.

This Master's degree at the Centre for African Studies Basel is interdisciplinary, organized across faculties, and integrative. It typically combines social sciences, humanities, health and environment approaches. Students acquire knowledge and skills to interact with Africa in a scientifically sound way both in an academic environment and in professional practice.

### African realities speaking to the world



"An MA in African Studies makes you understand the continent on its own terms, allows you to explore African realities that speak to the whole world."

Henri-Michel Yéré, Diversity and Inclusion Partner at Novartis

## STUDY PROGRAMME

### Introductory module and basics

The introductory module conveys the basics of interdisciplinary work and the epistemological foundations for African Studies in its historical context. In addition, students engage with the basics of scientific engagement with Africa from the perspective of different disciplines.



### Thematic modules

The thematic modules are based on the CASB's five axes of research. This guarantees that questions and results of on-going research are systematically incorporated into the classroom.

Students specialize in two of the following five thematic modules:

**Media and Imagination:** How is the development of information and communication technologies changing societies in Africa?

**Knowledge Production and Transfer:** How is knowledge in African contexts generated, negotiated and passed on?

**Governance and Politics:** How is political rule reproduced and transformed in changing local and global contexts?

**Public Health and Social Life:** How do African societies deal with local and global challenges in the health sector?

**Environment and Development:** How do environmental factors of global change impact the use of urban and rural habitats?

## STUDY PROGRAMME

### Interdisciplinary and Applied African Studies

This module includes a focused and intense exchange between different subject areas and strengthens the ability to fruitfully apply knowledge to practical situations. Students can complement their studies with research projects, excursions or professional internships.

### Research Skills

This module conveys research skills and offers guidance to students as they prepare for the master's thesis. Students formulate sensible research questions and develop research projects that extend either basic or application-oriented knowledge.

### Elective courses

Independently from their field of study, students may further develop their disciplinary competences, enhance specific thematic and practical knowledge, acquire general skills (language, IT, rhetoric) or gain competences required for a PhD position.

### Master's thesis

The purpose of the master's thesis is to prove the author's ability to produce scientific and independent work. Students develop a research question in their respective scientific field, justify the work procedures, and adequately present and reflect on the findings.

**Educating Talents**  
since 1460.

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## FOR WHOM?

### Interdisciplinarity and social science focus

Students of African Studies have a special interest in interdisciplinary work and in exploring the spaces between disciplines. The course is strongly shaped by the social sciences. Foundational knowledge in a social science discipline is therefore advantageous but not mandatory. Required is a Bachelor's degree in social sciences, humanities, geography, biology, environmental sciences, law, theology or social work, amongst others.

### Critical reflection

The key personal requirement for this course is a strong interest in Africa, in its natural, social and historical circumstances. This includes the willingness to reflect critically on one's own position as an affiliate of a European university.

### Basic and applied approach

Students have the option to design their studies around an applied-skills or a basic research approach. The individual combination of disciplinary and interdisciplinary thematic modules, the choice of either a research project or a professional internship, and the research topic of the MA thesis allow students to build their individual profile in line with their respective career goals.

## Diverse and inspiring



“This programme offers a broad choice of courses with many institutions working together. It was particularly inspiring to be with students from all over the world.”

Caro van Leeuwen, trainee at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

## PERSPECTIVES



The study programme enables students to access one of Switzerland's young scientific fields and an emerging international job market. In combination with appropriate internships and further training, students are solidly prepared for a wide array of professional fields including:

- Development policy and consulting
- Research, knowledge management, education
- International relations
- Environment and ecology
- Public and international health
- Migration, integration, diversity
- Journalism and communication
- Archives, libraries and museums

## CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES BASEL

## Why studying at the CASB

Founded in 2001, the Centre for African Studies Basel (CASB) is the first of its kind in Switzerland. It coordinates Africa-related research and teaching at the University of Basel and its associated and partner institutions. The Centre draws on a long tradition of scientific engagement with Africa in the region of Basel and benefits from a unique concentration of institutions and organisations with relation to Africa.

Due to the CASB's broad network within and outside of the university, the MA African Studies programme offers a broad variety of study subjects as well as manifold opportunities to acquire experience in practice.

The CASB has a strong tradition of hosting international students and faculty. It offers excellent assistance for students in and beyond university matters and the opportunity to exchange and socialize with local and international students.

## FACTS & FIGURES

# 1460

Founded in 1460, the University of Basel is the oldest university in Switzerland. It has an international reputation of outstanding achievements in research and teaching. Today, the University of Basel offers its unique studying conditions to around 13,000 students from over a hundred nations as they work towards their bachelor's, master's or PhD degrees.

**Minimum study achievements:** 120 ECTS credits

**Minimum duration:** 4 semesters

**Start:** Fall or spring semester (fall semester recommended)

**Language:** English (primary language), German (optional)

**Application fee:** CHF 100 (one-off)

**Tuition fees:** CHF 850 per semester

### Admission requirements

A disciplinary or interdisciplinary Bachelor's degree from a higher education institution recognized by the University of Basel; the Study Guidelines list all the disciplines that allow for direct admission: [www.zasb.unibas.ch/MA/guidelines](http://www.zasb.unibas.ch/MA/guidelines)

Admission is granted in accordance with the regulations and rules of the University of Basel.

### Registration

Applications for admission can be submitted through the Student Services (Registrar's Office) of the University of Basel: [www.unibas.ch/en/studies](http://www.unibas.ch/en/studies)

### International Students

Since the visa process risks to delay the start of studies we recommend that international students submit their application early. We recommend that you contact us beforehand by email for a preliminary assessment.

The estimated monthly expenses for living and studying at the University of Basel are between CHF 1500 and CHF 2000.

### Contact

[zasb@unibas.ch](mailto:zasb@unibas.ch) / +41 (0)61 267 34 82



University of Basel

Centre for African Studies Basel

## African Studies Master of Arts



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