University of Birmingham

# MA Colonial and Postcolonial Studies

This interdisciplinary programme will offer you a cultural, literary, theoretical and historiographical foundation in the field of colonial and postcolonial studies. Taking an original, interdisciplinary approach, you will be studying material from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and beyond. Working with World Literature, film and historical sources, you will explore major currents in cultural production and identity politics. Looking at some of the most decisive phenomena the modern world has witnessed, the course develops your understanding of the complexities of the contemporary era, preparing you for a wide range of professional and intellectual future activities. You will be introduced to a range of authors, and have the opportunity to study works and critical texts which originated in languages other than English. Works will be taught in English translation, with the possibility to read them in the original modern languages.

**Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham has been awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)**

## Course fact file

**Type of Course:** Taught

**Study Options:** Full time, part time

**Duration:** 12 months full-time; 24 months part-time

**Start date:** September

## Contact


Dr Berny Sèbe
**Tel:** +44 (0)121 414 6173
**Email:** **b.c.sebe@bham.ac.uk (mailto:b.c.sebe@bham.ac.uk)**

Dr Louise Hardwick
**Tel**: +44 (0)121 414 5964
**Email**: **l.a.hardwick@bham.ac.uk (mailto:l.a.hardwick@bham.ac.uk)**


**(mailto:b.c.sebe@bham.ac.uk)**

**Department of Modern Languages (/schools/lcahm/departments/languages/index.aspx)**

**Department of Modern Languages: French Studies (/schools/lcahm/departments/french/index.aspx)**

**Department of Modern Languages: Hispanic Studies (/schools/lcahm/departments/hispanic/index.aspx)**

## Details

This programme is ideal for those with a background in French Studies, Hispanic Studies, Modern Languages, History, Translation Studies, Gender Studies, European Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, English Literature, Cultural Studies, Film Studies and World Literature.

It will give you the opportunity to undertake further study to develop your understanding of key principles underpinning the study of colonial and postcolonial cultures in a comparative, global and inter-disciplinary context.

The programme includes the following core modules [full descriptions available below]:

- World Literatures and Film I
- World Literatures and Film II
- Before Postcolonialism: Europe and its Empires
- Postcolonial Theory
- Research Methods

You will also choose an optional module chosen from a range of relevant disciplines such as History, African studies, Development or literature related to colonialism and postcolonialism.

You will complete the course with a 15,000-word dissertation on a topic which you will choose, refine and analyse with the help of your supervisor (who will be allocated to you depending upon your own research interests)

## Why study this course

This programme brings together literature, history and cultural studies and provides a broad geographic range.

You will also benefit from being able to access non-Anglophone perspectives on key issues, through the use of translated works and critical texts which originated in major world languages other than English (primarily French and Spanish, with the opportunity to be guided through them by specialists).

The University is also home to a wide range of expertise in colonial and postcolonial studies, within the Department's **FRANCOPOCO (Francophone Colonial and Postcolonial) Network (/schools/lcahm/departments/french/research/francopoco.aspx)** and the University's **Postcolonial Birmingham Research Network (/research/activity/postcolonial/index.aspx)** , so provides an ideal environment to study this programme.

## Modules

You will study five core modules:

### World Literatures and Film I and II

These modules set out to examine World Literature and Cinema, through a range of critical investigations. How might these concepts be theoretically defined? How might they have the potential to alter established approaches to power relations, identity, socio-political order and literary canons? The modules offer a fascinating insight into major literary phenomena of the modern era, through critical examination and dynamic discussion of a range of texts coming from areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and beyond.

### Postcolonial Theory

This module involves the study and analysis of key thinkers of postcolonial theory, examining figures such as Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Frantz Fanon, in addition to the more recent theorists of World Literature. The approach will be both theoretical and applied, enabling you to encounter and examine these intellectual figures and their work, and to assess critically possible applications and relevance to your own fields of interest.

### Before Postcolonialism: Europe and its Empires

Postcolonialism is primarily an intellectual (and often political) attempt to challenge the politico-economic and symbolic world domination of European powers – i.e. colonialism. But how did European empires develop in the first place? What were the value systems which drove a tiny peninsula of the Eurasiatic continent to expand and conquer the rest of the world? And how did modern European colonial systems compare with empires of other times and places? Through a comparative approach of imperial systems since the early modern period, this module examines the conditions and modus operandi of a political phenomenon which came to rule the world in the late nineteenth century, when the majority of the planet became subjected to half a dozen European countries. It offers a thought-provoking introduction to a condition which triggered multiple emancipatory reaction, and still influences much of today's world.

### Research Methods

This module will prepare you for the 15,000-word dissertation. It will allow you to hone your research, critical and writing skills under the supervision of a subject specialist.

You will also choose one optional module:

### Module outside of the Main Department

You will also choose an optional module chosen from a range within History, African Studies, Development or Literature related to colonialism and postcolonialism.

### Dissertation in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies

You will complete the programme with a 15,000-word dissertation in colonial and postcolonial studies, which will give you the opportunity to research a topic of your choice related to colonial and postcolonial studies. You will be invited to reflect upon topics which you would like to explore academically, and you will then be given the opportunity to discuss with your supervisor the sources, methodology and argument which you can use to produce an original piece of research which will make a contribution to scholarship. The variety of languages and disciplines represented in the Department of Modern Languages ensure that we are able to offer highly qualified supervision in a large variety of fields and intellectual approaches.

## Fees and funding

### Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's **Postgraduate Funding Database (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx)** .

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

## Entry requirements

Learn more about **entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)**

### International students

#### Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our **country pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx)** show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

#### English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an **English language qualification (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx)** to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our **English courses for international students (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx)**

## How to apply

#### Before you make your application

You may wish to **register your interest with us (https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate)** to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

**Making your application**

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the **How to apply pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx)**

**Apply now (https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL169.htm)**

## Learning and teaching

Teaching on the core modules will allow you to engage in an active learning process: interactive lectures will see you to taking the lead in the exploration of key texts, and you will also deliver presentations and integrate the University's virtual learning environment into your work.

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

### Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx)** which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the **English for International Students Unit (EISU) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/insessional/index.aspx)** .

## Related research

- **Postcolonial Birmingham Research Network (/research/activity/postcolonial/index.aspx)**
- **FRANCOPOCO (Francophone Colonial and Postcolonial) Network - Department of French Studies (/schools/lcahm/departments/french/research/francopoco.aspx)**

## Related staff

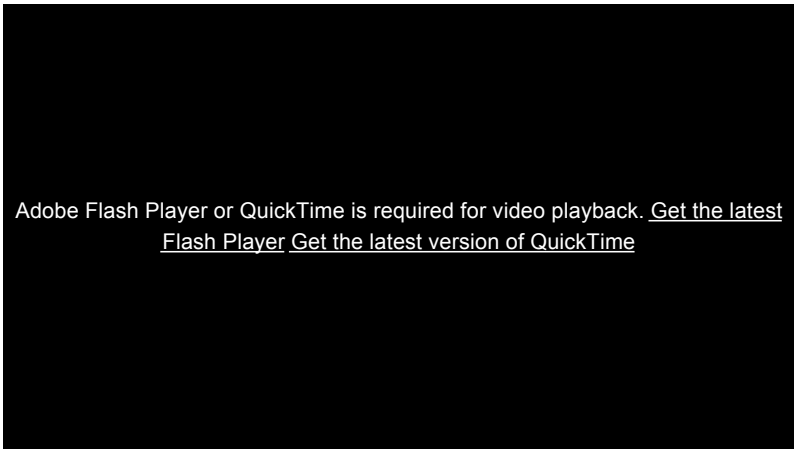
**Dr Berny Sèbe (/staff/profiles/french/sebe-berny.aspx)**

**Dr Louise Hardwick (/staff/profiles/french/hardwick-louise.aspx)**

## Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.




Birmingham?s Modern Languages postgraduates develop excellent communication skills, whilst cultural awareness and foreign language skills are highly sought after by employers. Postgraduates in Modern Languages also have a range of transferable skills including the ability to gather and interpret information, organisational skills and the ability to work well with others. Such skills can be used in a variety of occupations.

Over the past five years, over 94% of Modern Languages postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation. Some of our language graduates

train to become professional linguists such as translators and interpreters. Others graduates enter employment where their language skills may be advantageous but not central to their role ? for example, within international organisations, the Civil Service and in the travel and hospitality industry. Employers that graduates have gone on to work for include: Arts and Humanities Research Council; Deloitte; Tate Britain Gallery; University of Manchester; and Zamyn (a communications agency).



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