

Graduate Studies in German at the University of Pennsylvania

The Department of Francophone, Italian, and Germanic Studies (FIGS) at the University of Pennsylvania invites applications to its PhD programs for the 2027–2028 academic year.

FIGS combines top-tier expertise in Francophone, Italian, German, and Yiddish Studies within a collaborative environment for doctoral research. While most students focus on one language area, they also participate across disciplines through seminars, advising, and research clusters. As a FIGS PhD student at an Ivy League institution, you will join a welcoming community, work closely with [leading scholars](#), and have access to Penn's exceptional resources, including mentoring, research support, teaching opportunities, and a vibrant international community.

PhD Program in German Studies

The Germanic Studies PhD program within FIGS offers a comprehensive foundation in German-language cultural and literary traditions alongside cutting-edge interdisciplinary approaches. Areas of strength include literary and cultural history, the history of material texts, visual culture, cinema and media studies, narratology and narrative theory, German-Jewish Studies, Yiddish Studies, climate criticism and environmental thought, experimental humanities, race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ+ studies, as well as translation theory. Students receive training tailored to their career goals. The program also offers professional training in language learning and pedagogy to help you build a strong teaching portfolio.

Interdisciplinary work is strongly encouraged. There are graduate certificates in Women and Gender Studies, Cinema Studies, Africana Studies, and Urban Studies. Empirical research is supported through the Experimental Humanities Lab. Additional resources include the Wolf Humanities Center, the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, the Price Lab for Digital Humanities, the Kislak Center for Special Collections, and the Horner Memorial Library at the German Society of Pennsylvania.

Funding

All admitted students receive full funding for at least five years, including tuition, fees, health insurance, and a competitive stipend. The current stipend is \$49,000, with annual increases. Students spend most of their time in their program on fellowship support and teach only in the second and third years as Teaching

Fellows. Students also receive summer funding and additional support for research, travel, and study abroad. Students regularly secure prestigious fellowships.

Life in Philadelphia

Penn's urban campus offers access to Philadelphia's vibrant cultural scene, rich history, and diverse communities. Known as the street art capital of the U.S., the city boasts world-class museums, theaters, and historic neighborhoods. Its affordable cost of living and proximity to New York City, Washington D.C., and Baltimore make Philadelphia an ideal location for graduate study.

Application

Applicants must hold a bachelor's or master's degree in a related field by the start of the program. We encourage prospective students to contact faculty for informal conversations about our program. Applications are evaluated holistically, with particular emphasis placed on the originality and strength of the writing sample, as well as the potential for innovative scholarship.

The [application portal](#) is open until **December 8, 2026, at 11:59 PM Eastern Time**. Late applications may be considered in case material is missing—please contact us.

Required materials:

- Statement of purpose
- CV
- Transcripts
- Three letters of recommendation
- Writing sample (up to 30 pages in German or English)
- TOEFL for non-native English speakers

For questions, contact Graduate Eva Del Soldato (evadel@sas.upenn.edu) or Graduate Coordinator Laura Flippin (flippin@sas.upenn.edu).