



Universität  
Basel

# Master of Arts in Critical Urbanisms

University of Basel



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# What is Critical Urbanisms?



Migration research in the Mediterranean, 2019.

## Critical Urbanism

Critical urbanism means opening up an exploratory space for learning that traverses disciplinary purviews on the city and enriches urban studies through collaborative work and practical intervention.

Critical urbanism means harnessing the urban humanities to develop situated modes of engagement, opening up the potentials of other ways of knowing cities and exploring alternative practices of world-making in them. In our rapidly changing and contested global environment, cities are becoming increasingly important: they house a majority of the world's inhabitants and act as catalysts of social, political, economic, cultural, and ecological change.

The **Master in Critical Urbanisms** at the **University of Basel** offers a pedagogical platform for understanding these planetary transformations. The program expands the study of the urban by examining today's social struggles and global conflicts in relation to the legacies of empire and alternative practices of world-making and knowledge production. It starts from the premise that the world's urban and environmental challenges call for new ways of thinking as well as doing. Imagining alternative futures means rethinking the present—its historical making, its political unfolding, and the ways in which it is made sensible.



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# Why Critical Urbanisms at the University of Basel?



The Master in Critical Urbanisms is an **English-taught four-semester program** that trains a new generation of graduates to think and act beyond divisions of urban versus rural and North versus South in order to address the complexity of urban lifeworlds in the twenty-first century.

The program is supported by an internationally recognized faculty who work on and with cities and territories from a global perspective.

The curriculum trains students to develop theoretical and practical competencies, oriented toward both scholarly and public platforms. This combination is essential to address the extraordinarily complex imperatives of urbanization in the twenty-first century.

The program prepares students for careers in a variety of national and international settings, from research institutions to local, regional, and national government planning offices, development aid organizations, NGOs, architecture and design firms, museums, urban planning and policy offices, international organizations, universities, and consultancy firms. Students will be equipped and are also encouraged to continue their studies at the PhD level to pursue an academic career.

## Two trademark elements:

1) **Interdisciplinary urban research** that combines humanities and social science methods with **creative** practice and visual representation. Drawing from the disciplines of architecture, geography, history, sociology, political science, and anthropology, the curriculum provides students with a unique grounding in urban research.

2) Immersive learning in dynamic urban contexts, with the choice between a semester of study and research on urbanisms from the Global South, which takes place at the **African Centre for Cities of the University of Cape Town**, or a semester of study and **multi-sited research exploring urban processes that work across North/South geographies**.

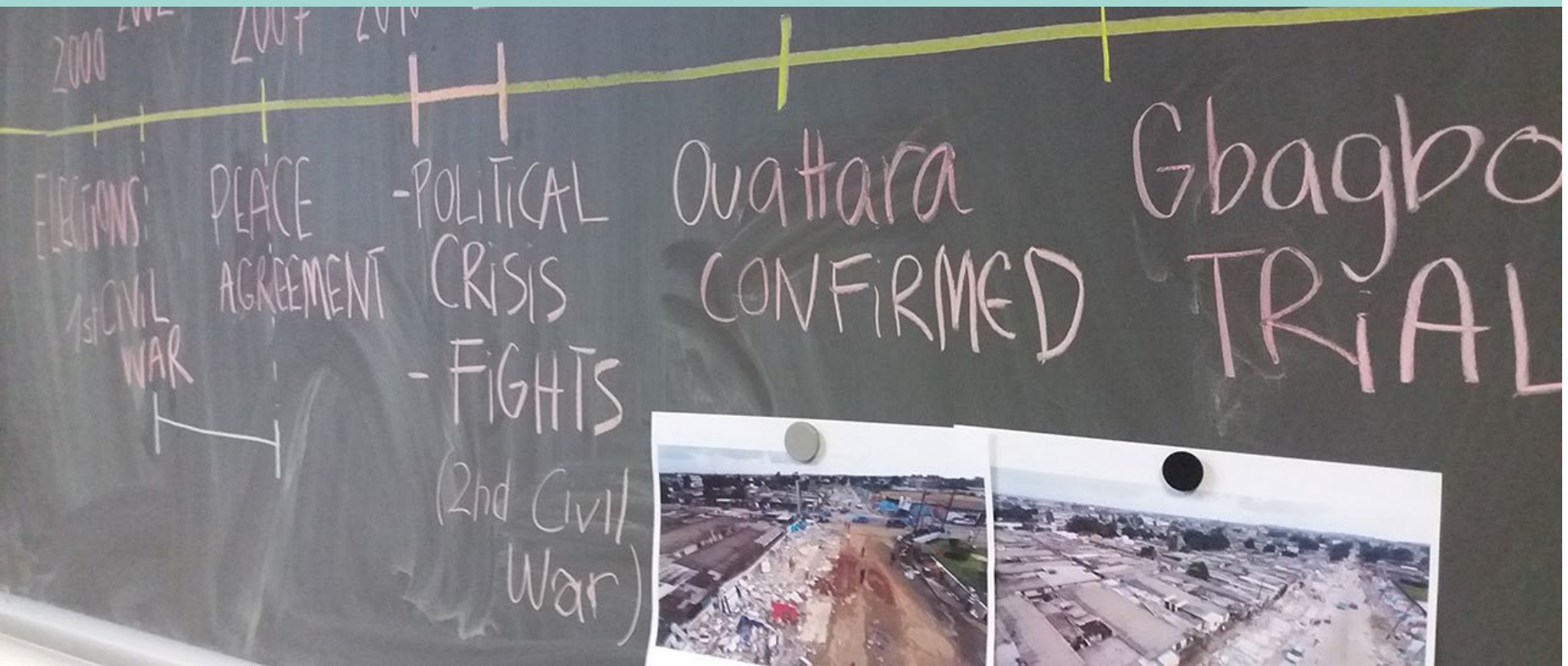


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# How to apply to Critical Urbanisms?



# APPLICATION

The program targets students from a wide range of fields in the humanities and social sciences, as well as academically qualified professionals from the fields of architecture, landscape design, and urban and regional planning.

**\*\*\*Important\*\*\***

Since the application process for a study permit for non-EU citizens can take up to four months, and this process can only be started after the letter of admission is issued, we highly recommend that students submit their complete application as early as possible, e.g. within the first week of application period. Please make sure to submit [a complete dossier](#) (including **writing sample** and **list of urban studies coursework**, as specified in the [Study Plan](#)).

## **Key Elements of the Program**

Degree: Master (120KP)

Next start of program: Fall 2026

Duration of study: 4-5 Semesters (with one optional semester at the University of Cape Town)

Language: English

Fall 2026 Application Period: [1<sup>st</sup> February to 30<sup>th</sup> April](#)



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# Program Structure



| Completion of the study program, CP                              | Modules                            | Eligible Course Formats                        |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 3 CP   | Introduction to Critical Urbanisms | All according to Master- Ordnung §7Abs.4 and 5 |
| 12 CP  | Ways of Knowing the City           | All according to Master- Ordnung §7Abs.4 and 5 |
| 15 CP of one of the three modules, including -5 CP seminar paper | Urbanism from the South            | All according to Master- Ordnung §7Abs.4 and 5 |
|  | Urbanism across Geographies        |  |
|  | Anthropological Fieldwork          |  |
| 15 CP, including -10 CP studio -5 CP seminar paper               | Interdisciplinary Urban Research   | Studio Seminar Paper                           |
| 15 CP including -5 CP seminar paper                              | The Urban across Disciplines       | All according to Master- Ordnung §7Abs.4 and 5 |
| 10 CP  | Master's examination               |  |
| 30 CP  | Master's thesis                    |  |
| 20 CP  | Free Electives                     |  |
| <b>120 CP</b>  | <b>Master of Arts</b>              |  |

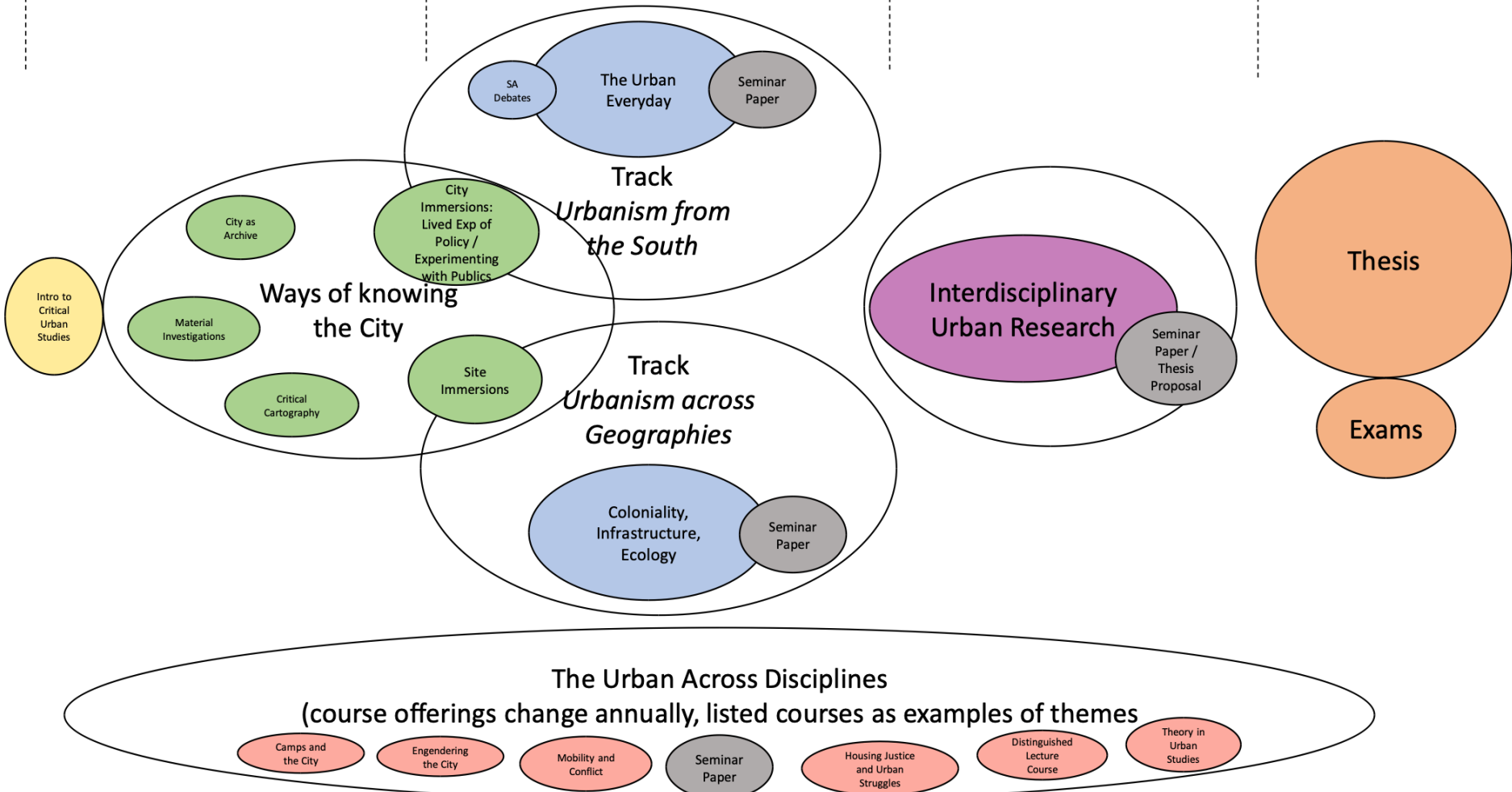
# Critical Urbanisms – Program Structure by Semester

Semester 1

Semester 2

Semester 3

Semester 4





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# FAQs

Frequently asked Questions:

[Philhist FAQs](#)

[Advice & Counselling](#)

[Applications](#)

Any further questions? Please e-mail: [Francesca Dell'Aglio](#) or [Jennifer Felsenberg](#)

Urban Studies Office:

Hebelstrasse 3, 4056, Basel

Tel. +41 61 207 01 08

Admissions' Office:

Tel. +41 61 207 30 23

## Details of the program

Please refer to our [WEGLEITUNG](#) for further details.

For questions regarding admissions in general, please contact the Students'

Administration Services: [Students' Enquiries](#)

Contact persons for Critical Urbanisms @ University of Basel:

Head of Urban Studies: [Prof. Kenny Cupers](#)

Curriculum and Student Consultation: [Dr. Francesca Dell'Aglio](#)

Student Consultation: [Jennifer Felsenberg](#)