

CLASS OF 2024
Outstanding Graduate



SANDRA ODURO

Graduate School, Master's

Sandra Oduro will graduate with a Master of Arts in English with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Professional Communication. A first-generation student, she received her bachelor's degree in English from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana.

Growing up in a multilingual country, Sandra developed a passion for understanding how language impacts people in a society, and how identities, labels, and misidentifications are formed based on discursive practices. In particular, the power dynamics regarding the use of English in Ghana, a former colony of the United Kingdom, motivated her to pursue the study of rhetoric.

“ Dreams, however big they are, can be attained with the right mindset and a reliable human support system. I found that at NMSU.”

—Sandra Oduro

Sandra's dedication to leadership and service shone through in her academic, administrative, and volunteer activities. In addition to teaching composition and working as a research assistant to Dr. Kerry Banazek, she served as treasurer of the English Graduate Students Organization and as a coordinator for the NMSU Writing Center, facilitating workshops, mentoring tutors, and advertising services available to students. She was a reviewer for the Rhetoric Society of America 2024 Conference, a panelist for EducationUSA (which promotes U.S. higher education to students around the world) and has been active in her church's outreach activities for the unhoused.

Because of her experiences in Ghana with stigma related to her early non-use of English, Sandra's proudest accomplishments have been her academic successes, which she describes as “validating.” She credits the welcoming community of the English department with bringing out the best of her abilities: “Classes are lively and comfortable. Professors are open to ideas, and we all learn from one another.”

Sandra's next step is a Ph.D. program at Syracuse University to study cultural rhetoric, with an emphasis on how Ghanaian women in leadership positions navigate the male-dominated society and the misogynistic rhetorical labels and misrepresentations they often face. ▲