



We Want Great Things for You

MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

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Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (M.A.L.S.) at the University of Detroit Mercy is a highly personalized course of study. It is designed for men and women who believe that learning is a lifelong endeavor, who wish to explore and understand the social, cultural and humanistic dimensions and context of today's world and their own individual lives, and who recognize that education is the means for dealing with life's changes. Most of all, the M.A.L.S. is for people who value their freedom and independence to think, and to understand.

Departments contributing courses to the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program are:

- Communication Studies
- Economics
- English
- History
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Religious Studies
- Sociology
- Theatre

Students enrolled in the program design their own degree within the structure provided by three "core" seminars. Each candidate receives the active assistance of a member of the University's graduate faculty in tailoring a curriculum to fit his or her interests. This faculty mentor, chosen by the student, closely follows the candidate's progress throughout the pursuit of the degree.

The University of Detroit Mercy's program lays equal emphasis on both broad and close reading within and across discipline, and on the cooperative relationship between faculty and students. The personalized and self-directed nature of the curriculum inspire a disciplined attitude in the student, while the relationship of a faculty and students ensure a rigorous, stimulating and rewarding course of study.

The M.A.L.S. program seeks to develop and nurture a creative, productive, enduring experience that contributes to

the intellectual vigor of the University while also benefiting from the richness of the institution's environment.

The men and women who join in this endeavor will discover a source of inspiration and a lifelong resource in new-found colleagues in the pursuit of intellectual excellence.

Admission Requirements

The dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Education, upon recommendation of the program director, approves admission to the program. To be admitted, the applicant must:

- Submit evidence of all undergraduate work and a B.A. from an accredited institution, with at least a 2.75 grade point average.
- Submit a written statement setting forth a proposed plan of study.
- Complete a personal interview with the program director.

Degree Requirements

The program requires 30 credits of planned study in either of two tracks; both tracks are interdisciplinary. One permits maximum flexibility and personal customization within a student-created curricular design, subject to the program director's endorsement. The other track provides a course of study with pre-defined limits, while still allowing adaptability to individual student interest. Both are based on a core of seminars crafted expressly for the program:

- **MLS 500** (An introduction to Liberal Studies). Designed to acquaint entering candidates with the varieties of perspectives contained within Liberal Studies. This seminar focuses attention on selected texts that are discussed by the group in concert with faculty members representing the several disciplines contributing to the overall program. Each text is approached from at least two different points of view, permitting members of the class to experience the interdisciplinary richness of the program first hand.

- **MLS 501** (Seminar in the History of Ideas). A second, thematic and an interdisciplinary seminar chosen from a range of three specific courses whose contents change with each academic year.

This course explores problems and questions concerning human values and experience from the perspective of Philosophy and/or Religious Studies.

- **MLS 502** (Seminar in Society and Change). Examines aspects of human experience from the perspectives of the social sciences.

- **MLS 503** (Seminar in Culture and Society). Addresses literature and the Fine and Performing Arts as expressions and reflections of human experience in a socio-historical context.

- **MLS 506** (A Final Project). Under the direction of the mentor, each student produces a substantial, integrative project and submits it to the critical consideration of his or her colleagues.

Other work toward the degree consists of graduate courses from various departments directed readings and tutorials. Candidates may combine courses from several departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Education, as well as selected courses in the School of Architecture, College of Business Administration and the College Engineering and Science. Written approval is required from each college specifying course(s) that students will be granted permission to take.

Many of the University's graduate-level courses are offered in the late afternoon and evening.

Track A (Individualized)

The student who wishes to design an individualized course of study completes a 30-hour program based on a nine hour, three course core: MLS 500, MLS 506 and once selected from MLS 501, 502, 503. The remaining 21 hours are distributed across disciplinary lines in accordance with a program of study designed by the student and his or her mentor and may consist of formal courses or a combination of formal courses and individual readings or tutorials.

Track B (Integrative)

The student who prefers a moderately structured plan of study with a special emphasis on human values and experiences (past and present), may complete a 30 hour program consisting of a 15 hour, five course core (MLS 500, 501, 502, 503, and 506); one additional course from each of the three areas – history of ideas, society and change; society and culture; and two remaining courses from among the various disciplines within the College.

For further information, please write, call or e-mail:

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The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Frequently Asked Questions

The following are some of the more frequently asked questions about the M.A.L.S. program at the University of Detroit Mercy.

What are the two tracks leading to the M.A. in Liberal Studies?

The two tracks leading to the M.A. in Liberal Studies are: (1) the Individualized Track, and (2) the Integrative Track. The individualized track allows students the greatest degree of flexibility in designing a program of study. The only required courses are: MLS 500 (Introduction to Liberal Studies), any one of MLS 501 (Seminar in the History of Ideas), MLS 502 (Seminar in Society and Change) or MLS 503 (Seminar in Culture and Society), and MLS 506 (Final Project). All remaining course work is selected by the student, in consultation with his or her mentor/advisor, in accordance with the student's personalized academic goals.

The Integrative Track is intended for those students who desire a greater degree of advanced and built-in structure to their program. Under this approach, students are required to MLS 500, one each of MLS 501, 502, and 503, MLS 506 (Final Project), and three other courses, one from each of the three areas of History of Ideas (a course in history, political science, economics, sociology or psychology), and culture and society (a course in English, music, fine arts, theatre, or communication studies). The final two courses can be chosen from any discipline.

Can I take any courses I want?

Yes, within reason. Although the Liberal Studies program sometimes seems to have the appearance of an academic cafeteria, students are expected to exercise common sense in selecting courses, lest they end up with the intellectual equivalent of a diet consisting solely of junk food. Students have extreme latitude in choosing courses, provided the courses fit into an overall academic plan. If necessary, students must be able to explain how the courses they select do in a fact complement each other or otherwise contribute to the attainment of a specific academic goal.

Will the M.A.L.S. degree get me a better job?

Not necessarily. The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies is not a specific professional degree or substitute for professional certification. In some professions—for example, the teaching profession—the M.A.L.S. can be an acceptable master's degree for purposes of advancement and salary increases. We recommend that prospective students talk first with their employers, to determine whether the degree will be satisfactory. The same applies to students interested in going on to further graduate study in a specific discipline. Talk to the

appropriate party at the university you hope to attend. In some cases, the M.A.L.S. can be an acceptable course of study in preparation for advanced graduate work; in others, it cannot. Find out before you enroll!

Can I take advantage of the University's study abroad as part of the M.A.L.S.?

Yes, courses in Oxford, Cork, Athens, Volterra and other programs can be taken for M.A.L.S. credit. For courses that do not have a specific graduate section number, simply enroll in MLS 505 (see below for more information).

Can I take courses that do not have a graduate section numbers?

Definitely. If a course is offered that fits into a student's program of study but is not being offered at the graduate level, take the course as MLS 505 (courses that apply are 300-level and above). This is a number reserved for tutorials, directed readings/study courses, and other unusual circumstances. Simply inform the Instructor of the course that you are taking as MLS 505 and give him or her the Permission for Directed Studies form. This is for two reasons. First, your name will not appear of the actual class list and secondly, this will let the instructor know that you are taking the course as part of the M.A.L.S. program and that additional course work, at the graduate level, is required.

What is the final project?

The final project is the capstone of the Liberal Studies degree. The student, in close consultation with his or her advisor/mentor, works it out. It can be a project eligible for either three (3) or six (6) hours of academic credit, depending on its content, nature and length. The final project cannot be described precisely, because it will vary from student to student. All that is required is that it be academically respectable, legitimate and variable. In the past, students have submitted final projects that have included theses, performance works, artistic creations, comprehensive, comparative and reflective analyses of work taken, etc. The most important aspect of the final project is that it is worked out with and approved by the student's advisor/mentor.

How important is regular contact with my advisor/mentor or the program director?

Regular contact with your personal advisor/mentor is extremely important. Unless you are the advisee of the program director, contact with the director can be minimal. The reason to keep in regular touch with your advisor, however, is simple: changes or adjustments to the program, planning and work on the final project, etc., can be accomplished smoothly only with regular contact. One of the most important functions performed by an advisor is to ask—

constantly—the question: “How does this fit in with your plan/goals?” This prevents the creation of a block of courses or program of study that is lacking in fundamental coherence. One of the special features of the M.A.L.S. program is the relationship between student and advisor—an ongoing process of evaluation and reconsideration of goals and means, since few programs of study remain unchanged or unaltered from beginning to end.

Is financial aid available for M.A.L.S. students?

Because the availability of financial aid for graduate students changes constantly, students are advised to go directly to the Financial Aid office and inquire about the current guideline for obtaining financial assistance. Educators—men and women employed full-time by a scholar or similar, accredited and legitimate institution—are automatically eligible for a 50 percent reduction in tuition costs. A form for applying for the reduction is available in the College of Liberal Arts and Education dean's office. Other aid packages for full-time and half time graduate students may be available. Please contact the Financial Aid office for further and reliable information.