Master of Liberal Studies (Online)
Master of Liberal Studies (on Campus)
Master of Liberal Studies in Film and Media Studies (on Campus)

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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences/Humanities
Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona
“Live to Learn, Learn to Live.

Rev. June 2019
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERE IS A GUIDE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEARN YOUR REQUIREMENTS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASU EMAIL</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTURE OF RESPECT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEXUAL HARASSMENT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIFFICULT MATERIALS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM OVERVIEW</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW ARE WE DIFFERENT?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEGREE REQUIREMENTS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THREE DIFFERENT DEGREE OPTIONS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES (CAMPUS)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES (ONLINE ONLY)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES IN FILM ANALYSIS (CAMPUS ONLY)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMILAR DEGREE REQUIREMENTS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A DEGREE IN LIBERAL STUDIES?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIFELONG LEARNING</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM ADMISSION</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLISH PROFICIENCY</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEN TO APPLY?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW TO APPLY?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO IS MY ADVISOR?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM CLASSES</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE CLASSES</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELECTIVES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP STUDY ELECTIVES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIVIDUAL STUDY ELECTIVES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPLIED PROJECT</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAMINATIONS</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSENTIAL POLICIES</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADUATE COLLEGE HANDBOOK</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC GRADE DISPUTES</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADES AND GRADE POINT AVERAGES (GPA)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC PROBATION</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBATION POLICY</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOMPLETE GRADES</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOMPLETE POLICY</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSFER CREDITS</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVISIONAL ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About This Handbook
Here is a guide for graduate students admitted to the Master of Liberal Studies program. Consider this your first resource for answers to common questions. This handbook will help you understand a number of requirements that you must follow in order to graduate. As a program, we follow these rules. Of course things change from time to time and so the handbook is updated annually.

- **Student Responsibilities:** As a graduate student you must understand and observe all procedures and requirements specified by the ASU Graduate College and the Master of Liberal Studies program. You should become familiar with this program handbook, the information in the Academic Catalog, and the ASU Graduate College website and policies.

- **Learn Your Requirements:** We’ll repeat this again: All students must read the Graduate Handbook and the ASU Academic Catalog as well as follow the Student Code of Conduct. Faculty and staff provide academic advice and assistance; however, the ultimate responsibility for meeting degree and other requirements remains with you the student.

- **ASU Email:** All ASU students are required to have an active ASU email. You can forward the ASU email to another preferred account (if you want). It is essential that you check the ASU email account at least three times per week, so you don’t miss important notices. (If you are an Online student, we recommend you check it every weekday.) Arizona State University and the Master of Liberal Studies program conduct their business via ASU email only. Check your MyASU account frequently. Check your MyASU priority tasks for messages and holds from the university. Students are responsible for managing their tuition payments, finances, assignment deadlines and tracking university academic calendar deadlines.

- **Culture of Respect:** ASU is both a community and a professional work environment. As a graduate student, we expect you to treat your peers, instructors, students, staff, and members of the ASU community with respect. Communicate with them in a professional manner. Do not disrupt classes. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of "W" or assign a grade of "E" when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor.

- **Sexual Harassment:** The University prohibits sexual harassment by employees and students and will not tolerate sexual harassment that interferes with an individual’s work or educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working, learning or residential environment. ASU’s sexual harassment policies and procedures can be found Online at this address: https://www.asu.edu/titleIX/
- **Difficult Material:** Graduate work is challenging but some materials used for study in the Master of Liberal Studies Program may be especially challenging. Sometimes, R-rated or unrated films, literature with rough language or discussion of disturbing materials may be required as part of a course. It might be that a text contains difficult scenes of violence. In this program we explore, study and engage with a breadth of human experiences, that ultimately reveal the richness of human action and interaction.
Program Overview

The Graduate Liberal Studies program offers challenging interdisciplinary/integrative study for adults who work toward a master's degree while maintaining their careers. Our students come from a wide range of educational backgrounds and professions and they all share an intense love of learning, an active curiosity, and a desire for continued intellectual enrichment.

- **How Are We Different?** A traditional masters program offers a program of study that focuses on a single area. Our program offers a program of study in a number of different subjects - often within each class. Deep study of a topic is often powerful, however, we argue that subjects that are entwined with other subjects and ideas are particularly vital. Our classes might include a mix of film, cultural studies, examinations of gender, personal writing, classical literature, history and scholarly research. Students approach topics from multiple vantage points.

We believe the issues of our time are complicated and must be examined in multiple ways. Liberal Studies are based on the belief that the functioning person of the future will know something about many different things. That broad knowledge will equip a person for changing times. Graduates from the program have a deeper understanding of the diversity and challenges that exist in a changing America and a changing world. Students become more knowledgeable, thus, better critical thinkers and intelligent citizens with the capacity to potentially transform Humanities courses into Humanities in Action in the workplace and community.

Our student population is also diverse. We have students of every age -- from 25 to 70 years of age. We think lifelong learning is part of a quality life.

- **Degree Requirements:** Students take 10 classes and earn 30 hours of credit to complete the degree.
Three Different Degree Options
1. The Master of Liberal Studies (on campus) can be done on campus with a mix of internet course electives (iCourses). Students on campus can often find graduate elective classes outside of our program in some other departments, which can be included if approved by the MLSt program director and/or assistant program director. Classes in our program will be 7.5 weeks long and those outside of our program will probably be 15 weeks in length. Tuition cost varies with residency status.

Students have the option of searching other programs for 500-level classes to use as electives. These classes will be on campus and take place over 15-weeks. (Two classes at the 400-level can also be included if approved by the MLSt program director and/or assistant program director.)

2. The Master of Liberal Studies (Online) is done entirely Online with classes chosen from our MLS program. Classes are 7.5 weeks long. Students do not visit the campus for classes.

Students will rely largely on the classes offered by the Master of Liberal Studies program. Electives from other programs are rarely available due to limited Online graduate classes in other departments.

Options 1 and 2 have three concentrations to help students focus their studies:
   1. Creative nonfiction writing. We teach you how to write about actual experience with thoughtful storytelling techniques. Students often write about their own lives (memoir), explore ideas (essays) or writing about food or travel.
   2. Women, Religion and Gender. Our concepts of gender and religion are all in flux and transition. We hope to explore these topics thoughtfully.
   3. Borders: People in Migration. We live in a time when U.S. borders have become a hot topic of debate. We think there are ways to learn about the lines where people, cultures and politics meet and overlap.

3. The Master of Liberal Studies in Film and Media Studies (campus only) is completed on campus with a mix of internet (iCourse) options. In this degree concentration, students study global cinema, television and media. We offer films classes in the MLS program but also students gain access to classes in many different departments. Please check with the MLSt Director and/or Assistant Program Director for approval on any electives taken outside of the program. (We do not teach film techniques or video editing.) Tuition varies with residency status.

Film course elective options are offered by the Department of English, Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, School of International Letters and Cultures, among others. The School of International Letters and Culture (SILC) offers terrific classes on international film. Look for the prefix SLC which indicates that fluency in the native language is not required. A 500-level class in GER German Film requires students to read and write in the language but a
500-level SLC class in German Film does not (course work is done in English). They offer classes in Italian Cinema, Latin American Film, French New Wave Film, European Cinema, etc. Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts also teaches Asian film. The Department of English offers FMS classes in American Film studies. In some cases you may need to request permission to enroll from the instructors.

We encourage you to explore these other program offerings every semester. Note that these classes will be 15-week-long classes if based on the C-session class schedule. Also, two 400-level classes are acceptable as electives for this degree if approved by the program director and/or assistant program director.

**Similar Degree Requirements:** All three degree options share similar requirements. The degree requires 10 classes. The 10 classes should have three core classes, six electives and the applied project. The requirements are described in detail later in this document.

**Tuition Costs, Residency Requirements and Fees per Degree:**

Online students of *Master of Liberal Studies (Online)* pay a standard tuition and do not need to declare residency. Please proceed directly to ASU’s [Tuition and Cost Calculator](https://students.asu.edu/residency) to determine tuition, costs and fees.

On Campus and Campus Only students in *Master of Liberal Studies and Master of Liberal Studies in Film and Media Studies* need to declare residency status. Please go to this link for more information on how to determine residency here: [https://students.asu.edu/residency](https://students.asu.edu/residency). Once you have determined residency status, please proceed to ASU’s [Tuition and Cost Calculator](https://students.asu.edu/residency) to determine tuition, costs and fees based on residency status.
What Can You Do with a Degree in Liberal Studies? The people in Ancient Greece and Rome thought there should be two forms of education. They taught their slaves useful skills. They might take one and teach him how to cook. Cooks learned how to prepare food but little else. Another person might be taught to make wine or work with leather. Their training was limited and solely focused on job skills. These skills made their society function.

These civilizations then offered their free citizens a different type of education. They believed a free citizen needed to know many different things in order to participate in daily society. They taught their citizens logic, geometry, math, writing, history, astronomy, etc. They called this a “liberal” education because it was designed for free people. (“Liberal” from the Latin “liberals”—befitting a free person.) The emphasis was on learning many different skills and then being able to respond thoughtfully to the complex problems and challenges of their time.

We have similar approaches to education today. Some college degrees teach vocational skills and focus on how to do one thing—skills directly connected to current jobs. Law school teaches you the skills of a lawyer. You learn how to file a divorce but little about the complexity of the human heart and how to understand the cultural aspects of family breakups. The MBA teaches you the skills of how to read a budget spreadsheet and make changes in a company that will improve your financial numbers but not how to imagine the next thing that will replace the iPhone. Nursing degrees will help you learn how to manage patient care but rarely teach the poems that doctors have written about illness. Engineering teaches you how to build a bridge but not about the complexities of connecting two countries with a bridge between different cultures. Vocational degrees are essential in our world. Think of learning that is very focused on current job skills.

We know now that we can’t predict what jobs will be needed in the future or even what those jobs will be. Twenty years ago we had no knowledge of the internet, computer programs or a world where one could search for information online. Things are headed our way that we cannot envision. New jobs and careers will be invented that will seem surprising and amazing.

Our Liberal Studies program offers a liberal approach to education. The Association of Colleges and Universities describes this approach: "A liberal education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest."

Our degree offers a variety of approaches to thinking and dealing with complex issues. What if you learned a number of different skills—skills that could be used in many settings? What if you learned about the past, studying the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s in order to better understand what’s happening this year? What if your classes made you write a great deal and offered you ideas on how to review research from experts in the field? What if your classes looked at multicultural attitudes and how different fields of scholarship look at a topic? We even offer a
class called “Critical Issues in the Humanities” that questions the current vocational emphasis on education.

This degree will help you develop many important skills that will enable you to do an exciting range of different jobs in the future. We’ll help you learn to write with a clear purpose and focus. You’ll support your ideas with evidence and analysis. You’ll gain experience in creating effective presentations and organization of content that helps readers understand the relationship of ideas. You’ll think about selecting appropriate style, tone and voice for different audiences. Our students work at improving their command of language usage and mechanics.

The ability to read critically, communicate effectively, conduct research and understand the complexities of a changing society and culture will serve you well in any job. A multipart assignment completed over the course of weeks is the equivalent of project management. A senior seminar paper is evidence of research, synthesis, analysis, and communication skills. Recruiters of all industries identify these skills as the most sought after in successful job candidates.

Recently Google conducted a study of their employees (Project Oxygen) and learned that STEM expertise was not all that useful. Instead they identified a different group of characteristics demonstrated by successful employees: good coaching abilities; communicating and listening well; possessing insights into others (including different values and points of view); having empathy toward colleagues; being a good critical thinker and problem solver; and being able to make connections between complex ideas. Based on this study, the company began to hire people with humanities, arts and MFA degrees.

A masters degree makes people more competitive in the job market, however no job description will likely ever specify: Master of Liberal Studies degree required. Instead, you will need to market the skills you have gained in the program. Describe your studies and put in some skill words to grab the attention of a recruiter or HR coordinator who is scanning 1,000 resumes. You’ll need to sell yourself and your talents in your dynamic cover letter as well. An advanced degree will help you stand out and is a nice credential to have on your resume and business cards.

Having a job is essential in life and a Liberal Studies degree will be useful in your daily work. One of the repeated comments we’ve heard from alumni is that they use what they’ve learned in our program every day. Their studies gave them skills and insights that made them valuable employees.

If you want to share your resumes, we are happy to review them and make suggestions on the MLS portion.
Lifelong Learning: Many people enter our program because they’re interested in a number of topics. They find it limiting to only study one subject area. They sometimes tell us they’re interested in everything! One man told us, “I like my work but I can’t talk to anyone there about literature.”

We think graduate study will not only help you with daily work but also with other aspects of your life. If you’re in our program, you’ve demonstrated a hunger for learning and will probably be a person who will always be curious about the world and contributing to its wellness.

Your study in this program is partly about engaging with intellectual ideas and the great literature of the world. You can actually spend a semester looking at classic French films or reading the works of Kafka or Virginia Woolf. You might research a topic that’s connected to your daily life. Several students have researched Elder Care since they were taking care of elderly family members.

You’ll study film and, as you learn about theory and techniques of analysis, you’ll never watch a movie in the same way again. You’ll become a viewer who thinks critically about everything—television shows, books, the evening news and the cat videos you find on Facebook.

You will see the world differently. There will no longer be just two sides to an argument. You’ll see our culture as complex and diverse and that we need to rethink what we’ve been told. You’ll become comfortable with ambiguity. Whatever you are told, you’ll learn to question those assumptions. Once you can do these things, you will be a different person, a better citizen—one who is ready to live in the world as it is and what it can potentially become.
Program Admissions
Applicants must have an undergraduate degree by the time their classes begin. (You can apply for admission before you have graduated but must prove you actually have the degree before you start classes.)

We need:
- A letter of interest (one to three pages double spaced), explaining your interest in this degree. Why this program? What are your goals?
- A resume, CV or a bio statement
- Transcript from your final undergraduate college
- Recommendations? Offer two people’s emails who can answer three questions about you. They’ll receive an email requesting they click on a link and answer: 1) If you are ready for graduate study; 2) if they have any concerns about your ability to succeed in the program 3); And anything else they’d like to add. These recommenders can be outside of academia. They might be from your workplace or people who know you well.
- We do NOT look at GRE scores. We think they are not helpful in determining a person’s capacity for academic success, are expensive, and create a needless barrier for people returning to college.

English Proficiency
If you are from a country whose native language is not English (regardless of where you may now reside), you must provide proof of English proficiency. Your application will not be processed without valid proof of English proficiency. https://students-dev.asu.edu/graduate/proficiency

When to Apply?
We review applications all year round. We offer six sessions of classes (Fall A/B; Spring A/B and Summer A/B) and admit students to each of these sessions. You can apply as late as up to four weeks before a session for admission.

How to Apply?
The entire application is done Online. Visit the webpage for the Graduate College: https://graduate.asu.edu/

Additional information about the application process can be found there. All materials go to the Graduate College either Online or by mail. The application can be found here: https://webapp4.asu.edu/uga_admissionsapp/

Who is My Advisor?
The Master of Liberal Studies program is a very small program and so the director and/or assistant program director, function as your advisor(s). We’ve worked hard to keep our program costs limited. We have a director, assistant director and a business person. We have
full-time faculty but they are scattered around the country. So keep that in mind as we communicate with each other. Email is the best way to begin a conversation.

The program director and/or assistant program director are happy to offer you advising as needed but are also busy with meetings on campus and so will respond faster to email requests. It’s helpful to include your ASU ID number and a phone number in your note. As we schedule phone calls around the world, take a minute to search on the time in Phoenix, Arizona and note the time difference. To schedule a meeting or phone call, send an email to Paul Morris, Founding Director of Master of Liberal Studies Program at: paulmorris@asu.edu or Angela Giron, Assistant Program Director at: angela.giron@asu.edu
Program Classes

Core Classes: Students select three core classes to help ensure smooth entry into graduate study, scholarly thinking and writing. The core classes teach research techniques, approaches to reading scholarly texts and how to create logical arguments about ideas and concepts. You can take these in any order and within your first three semesters. We offer four courses but you choose your three from this list:

- **MLS 501: Writing about Social Issues: Culture, Gender, Society and Well-being in the Southwest** - Learn the current techniques of nonfiction writing and how to create engaging, interesting writing. The course also looks at various approaches to writing about social concerns using memoir, graphic novels, historical texts and other types of literature.

- **MLS 504: Film and Media Analysis** - An inquiry into the analysis of films through various theoretical lenses as well as the cultural viewpoints exemplified from various national cinemas. By examining the cultural currencies of not only “Hollywood” paradigms but inclusive of global cinematic texts and methodologies of production we can explore more clearly the hybridization of current and evolving world film styles. Other texts and ideas that we will be exploring through the film viewing assignments will include the politics of war, diaspora, race, class, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender complexities and gender orientation.

- **MLS 503: Science and Ethics** - This class introduces concepts about the social issues transforming our headlines today. The politics of new technologies, religion, bioethics, biogenetic engineering, stem cell research, abortion, cloning, organ transplants, and climate change will be covered. You will also gain insight on current topics, like addressing Ebola globally and at home. Pack your intellectual toolkit with the information you need to master any social situation, hold your own in the boardroom or simply exude the confidence necessary to discuss controversial topics without hesitation.

- **MLS 502: Religion, Culture, and Health - Where Cultures Intersect** This class focuses on how cultural and religious notions may come into conflict around issues of health. We look at contemporary issues found in the growing integration of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) approaches to healing, along with scientific studies behind the placebo effect in treatment. We will examine the complicated medical ethical issues in end-of-life care, vaccination debate and untested medical treatments.
Electives (18 hours/six classes)
In addition to three core classes, all students select six electives from the list below. Students often enjoy pairing a Core class with an elective during their first three semesters.

Group Study Electives:
* Our MLS 598 special topics change every session and semester:
  - **MLS 598 The Research Process** – Time was when you’d have to root through library card catalogs and dusty shelves to find scholarly information. Fast forward, and research is a lot more fun and effective today than it was twenty or even five years ago. Learn to navigate ASU’s Library One Search; mine library databases; markup, annotate and color-code text; and more tools that researchers from the past could only dream of. This course raises the level of graduate student writing by a working familiarity with the terms, norms, and expectations of scholarly research and subsequently, scholarly writing. This class serves as an introduction to contemporary writing and research methods that you can use in all of your MLS classes--now and for years ahead! *This course is currently in Curriculum Changemaker pending a unique number to be included as a Core Course shortly.*

  - **Hip Hop: Arts, Aesthetics & Cyphers of Cultural Citizenship** - a selective survey and historico-cultural analysis of hip hop arts, aesthetics and culture organized around the foundational elements of DJing, MCing, B-boy and B-girling, Graffiti Arts and Knowledge. It examines how Hip Hop’s competing cyphers of arts, aesthetics and cultural citizenship respond to/confirm/confront the contemporary socio-political landscape of the United States and its intersecting ideologies and embodiments of race, space, class, gender, sex, politics and power. Through discussions, readings, film, music, visual arts and popular culture examples, we examine how the foundational elements manifest in various art forms (performance, spoken word, theater, dance, literature, poetry, painting, design and film, etc). This course culminates in a creative and critical engagement of Hip Hop’s arts and aesthetics to explore a critical societal issue.

  - **Paranoia and Culture** – In this class, we will be looking at the many ways paranoia informs our contemporary culture. What are the ways that television, film and music reflect a general fear of authorities? Why would the Buffalo Springfield (*For What It’s Worth*… “Paranoia strikes deep,”) and Sting (*Every Step You Take*… “I’ll be watching you…”) write songs that explore paranoia and surveillance? Why do so many Americans believe that 9/11 was a conspiracy constructed by the US government or that Princess Diana’s death was the result of a plot? What are the many ways that government and organizations can spy on us? If we value privacy in our society, why are we also fascinated by opportunities to look into other people’s lives through television reality shows and YouTube, Facebook and Instagram? We will examine what it means to watch other people and to be watched by looking at reality television and surveillance theory.
● **Storms and Culture** – How does weather shape people and cultures? We look at hurricanes and tornadoes in history and contemporary life. It’s easy to think about storms in an entirely intellectual manner but after Hurricane Katrina and the yearly results of tornado season, we must remind ourselves that storms play active roles in our lives and our society. While everyone talks about the weather, some people actually sit down and write about it. We’ll look at literature about bad weather as well as YouTube clips, websites, popular songs and other sources of information. This is your invitation to delve into these writings and viewings and see what they can teach us.

● **Crimes and Punishment** – This course begins an inquiry into mass incarceration in the United States and crimes and punishments in various cultures and histories. By examining the historical considerations of crime and punishment as not only American concerns but inclusive of global concerns through texts and visual texts, including film, we can explore more clearly the crossroads of current incarceration practices that societies and specific populations face. Other texts and ideas that we will be exploring through the reading assignments will include the politics of prisoners of war, child incarceration, children of the incarcerated, the drug wars and what should or should not be considered as a crime.

● **Seven Deadly Sins** – Medieval scholars created the concept of the seven deadly sins. More than 500 years later, these ideas are still compelling and manifest themselves in ever-changing ways in society. In this course, we’ll explore how the sins make their appearance in contemporary American culture and we’ll attempt to answer these questions: Have the meanings of the sins changed over time? Have the sins transformed into assets or even virtues? We will research historical background as we learn how to approach topics in an interdisciplinary/integrative manner, and we’ll become fluent in the way we communicate with one another about our thoughts, ideas and opinions. Our sources include historians, theologians, religious figures, current events, science and pop culture. The topic is sin but our subject is how ideas change and transform over time.

● **Inviting the Wolf In: Cultural Taboo in Text and Visual Texts** – We will engage in a discourse on the multi-faceted level(s) of taboo to begin an inquiry into the analysis of cultural taboos through various theoretical lenses as well as the cultural viewpoints exemplified from respective histories, art forms and films. By examining cultural taboos through films, visual art, nonfiction and literary texts from several nations and social groups, both historical and contemporary, we can begin to more fully understand the origins and mutability of respective taboos.

● **Intro to Film-Philosophy** – How can we really understand film without thinking about the philosophical issues they raise? To what extent are films capable of examining philosophy? To what extent are films capable of “doing” philosophy? Philosophy is the endeavor that seeks to answer the most basic issues that concern us as human
beings. In this course students will examine the ways in which film, both as a popular cultural medium and as an art form, illustrates, reflects, embodies and problematizes fundamental philosophical questions that transcend time and space, while also considering the social context of each film.

- **Global Cinema** – This course is an introduction to formal and cultural issues important to appreciating films from around the world. The course is structured to survey global approaches to filmmaking, with the assumption that the more we understand film as a means of universal expression, the closer we will come to understanding other cultures. These representative films from across the globe require attentive viewings that offer us rich, multilayered and transformative experiences. This course focuses on developing your recognition of formal elements of filmmaking, identifying the socio-cultural context of film productions, and applying critical theory to the interpretation of a film’s meaning. Students will screen films both in class and for homework, compose reactions both to the films you see and the articles you read, write a 12-15 page research paper, and compose several online presentations based on your screenings and research. Subjects include selections from German Expressionism, Russian Marxism, Italian Neorealism, Japanese Modernism, Mexican Surrealism, and Chinese Wuxia among other topics.

- **Documentary Cinema** - an introduction to communication strategies important to understanding documentary cinema for Master of Liberal Studies, Master of Liberal Studies in Film and Media Studies or Master of American Media and Popular Culture students. The course is structured to analyze various visual and rhetorical modes used by documentarians to comment on issues of social and cultural importance through cinema. Documentaries offer rich, multilayered, narratives that require attentive viewing and analysis. This course will focus on developing your recognition of communicative strategies associated with documentaries, identifying the historical context surrounding productions, and applying critical theory to interpreting the messages embedded in cinema. Students will screen documentaries for homework, compose reactions both to the films viewed and the articles read, develop several presentations based on screenings and research, and record original interview footage on a topic of academic interest.

- **Food, Film and Culture** - This course examines the varied cultural meanings of Food Genre Films. We will traverse varied culinary cultural viewpoints through global films and cinematic texts, and across different time periods, to examine the currency of food motifs in film. We will analyze the multiple meanings of these food motifs employed by filmmakers, as well as the shifting and evolving styles of the “Hunger Artist.”

- **Contested Territory: Critical Issues US/Mex Border** - Drawing from a wide variety of disciplines across the humanities, social sciences and the arts, this course examines
the ways in which the ideology of the border has crossed the past and the present of cultures on both sides of the US-Mexico Border. As a way of reflecting on the multiple meanings of the border, we will delve into a rich archive of documentary and fiction films, music and public art. Our goal is to ask: How have histories of exclusion, migration, assimilation, and political resistance shaped the arts and cultures of the borderlands? And, in turn, how has cultural production influenced the political landscape of the region?

- **Exploring Identity in American Life** - Americans are asserting their identities in surprising ways, often challenging decades, if not centuries, of established social norms, as well as upsetting the status quo in many different areas of American life, including politics, education and the workplace. How do we learn about and become sensitive to groups/others we aren’t familiar with? One way is to study American identities by examining cultural artifacts such as personal essays, videos, newspaper articles and books. In this graduate course, students will explore the various ways they identify themselves and others, including age, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, where they were born, and biological gender. The class is designed to help students understand how identities shape life experience in America. Students will explore such topics as: identity as a social construct; power, and discrimination; and the role of the media and culture in shaping identity bias.

- **50s Decade of Denial** – Cultural and Historical Studies that explore the zeitgeist, literature, film and thinking of this specific decade. Through the use of scholarly readings and expressions of popular culture (films, television, plays, music, art) and additional ephemera and artifacts of the time; clues emerge to reveal the undercurrents of this increasingly relevant decade.

- **60s Decade of Turmoil** – Cultural and Historical Studies that explore the zeitgeist, literature, film and thinking of this specific decade. Through the use of scholarly readings and expressions of popular culture (films, television, plays, music, art) and additional ephemera and artifacts of the time; clues emerge to reveal the undercurrents of this increasingly relevant decade.

- **70s: Decade of Upheaval and Transformation** – Cultural and Historical Studies that explore the zeitgeist, literature, film and thinking of this specific decade. Through the use of scholarly readings and expressions of popular culture (films, television, plays, music, art) and additional ephemera and artifacts of the time; clues emerge to reveal the undercurrents of this increasingly relevant decade.

- **Critical Issues in the Humanities**: Are the humanities still valued in a world that's all about jobs and making money? Some might argue, no. Why should we read Shakespeare or study Ancient Roman history? Why would anyone study the Italian language or how to play the violin? Why study philosophy or religion? This class argues yes to the value of the humanities and examines recent national discussions
about the role of the humanities in college instruction and in daily life. We see a reaction to the recent emphasis on career-based vocational training as business leaders call for employees with training in the liberal arts. Let’s ask the question: What do the humanities offer individuals and society?

- **Poetry and Memory** investigates the role a poet's memory plays as inspiration, and creative utility, in the craft and enjoyment of meaningful, memorable poems. Most students who take this course have little or no real background in the reading or writing of much poetry (although many students do have this background, and that's wonderful). So we posit: What are poems? What is a memoir, and how may the two forms intersect? What is meant by "memory-based" writing? What isn’t "memory-based writing"? How do we, as readers of poetry, presume to identify a poet's work as memory-based? How do we, as poets ourselves, trust in our never-ending blossoming bank of memory to create new poems? How is the connection between poet and reader made significant via the poem? We read selected works of published contemporary and classic poets, and try our hand at our own, thus inspired. We conclude with a collection of original poems. One purchased text required: All other texts are provided.

- **The Arrival of Belief** is a memoir writing class (and not a study in religious or ethics studies). This is a memory-based writing adventure that refers to the students' actual life-sculpting experiences. As we summon our narratives, we take an aggressive turn inward as each writer attempts to forge an articulate “creed,” chronicling the development of a personal belief and belief system. Here, students are surveyed extensively on a variety of large ideas and issues; a series of brief anecdotal, reflective memoirs are assigned to illustrate landmarks in the lives of students that define their life’s philosophies. Beliefs that have previously been embraced without question are now questioned; the actual individual “tolerance index” is examined as well, to evaluate one’s acceptance of the ideas of others who diverge vastly from one’s own. The student will produce one complete portfolio of edited nonfictional short pieces (vignettes of varying length) and reviews that chronicle this journey. Our texts include weekly films and online reading, provided.

- **Writing the Journey: Travel Narratives** – Travel defines us in many ways. We go to someplace new. We meet strangers, eat strange foods and see different ways to live. We return to our homes changed. This writing intensive class teaches the basics of literary travel memoir writing as well as typical magazine assignments.

- **Memoir and Personal Essay** – This writing intensive class introduces the techniques of creative nonfiction writing using your own life experiences. Memoir gives you the opportunity to explore memories and to learn writing craft techniques such as scene, dialog, description, narration, reflection and musing. Personal essay focuses on memories dealing with a specific topic. In both memoir and personal essay, research helps writers further develop themes and ideas to explore their universality.
Published memoirs and essays of well-known writers are used for models and prompts. Everyone’s life holds fascinating stories and in this class we get to share those stories with one another through support and trust.

● **Humor Writing**: This writing class explores the craft and approaches to turning a regular story into a laugh-out-loud experience. Yes, there are techniques and they can be learned. Discover how to choose good topics. Experiment with exaggeration, irony and surprise. Play with structure – maybe the story of your first job is best told in the form of a recipe gone awry, or a travel guide to a foreign country. And learn what editors are looking for when they look for humor. Of course, you’ll also share a few chuckles and guffaws because you’ll be reading some of the funniest writers out there, including David Sedaris, Rick Reilly, Bill Bryson and Nora Ephron.

● **Writing the Graphic Novel and Comic Book** - By analyzing recent graphic novels and the actual scripts for many modern comics, you’ll learn methods for description, pacing, character movement, and more. When you’re done, you’ll have the tools and techniques you need in order to create comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels of your own, ready and able to dive into this pop culture medium and make something exciting and new.

● **Food Writing**: You’re an unrepentant foodie who loves nothing more than a great meal paired with the perfect glass of Rioja. You love the entire experience – the first bite, the last sip, and the review you’ll relate to your friends the next morning. You’ve been thinking you’d like to write about food, but how do you begin to capture magnificence without sounding cliché? In Food Writing, you’ll learn the fundamentals of this increasingly popular genre. You’ll learn about the wide range of writing opportunities available from blogs to memoirs to restaurant reviews. You’ll read the work of contemporary masters, such as Calvin Trillin and Ruth Reichl. And, you’ll develop a plan for publishing your work after the class is over. Of course, you’ll also have fun in the process, whether you’re visiting a local cheese shop, unearthing family recipes or searching for treasures in your local farmer’s market. By the end of this class, students will understand what constitutes good food writing, they will have written several of their own pieces, including blog entries, restaurant reviews, food memoirs, and a researched article that takes readers inside an intriguing corner of the food world; and they will have developed the ability to critically analyze the work of professional writers. Best Food Writing 2008, edited by Holly Hughes; Will Write for Food, by Diane Jacob; and Garlic and Sapphires, by Ruth Reichl.
**Individual Study Electives**
Other MLSt options for electives include individual study classes. These classes allow the student to choose topics to explore and to learn more about their areas of concentration.

For example, those with an interest in religion read books, articles and texts to deepen their study. Those with an interest in borders and migration look at documentary films about the border along with researching articles about immigration. If a student is interested in gender issues, study topics might include representations of women in film and television, gender studies in the workplace, or feminist criticism in literature. You work closely with the instructor to select your topic, how to focus and narrow it, and learn how to research your topic. Students who work on topics that truly interest them find these classes exciting and productive.

Note: These are individual study courses so students work alone (and not in groups). Students must be self-starting and comfortable with completing a solitary project. These classes also are optional and many people do not take them. Do not enroll in an Independent Study course until you’ve taken at least two of the other MLS 598 electives.

- **MLS 590 - Reading and Conference**: You select a topic in consultation with the instructor and spend the session reading books, articles and/or viewing films. Students keep a detailed journal online detailing their research. This class is repeatable one time for credit.

  Students have studied hoarding, graphic novels, Japanese Anime films, the films of Stanley Kubrick, Science Fiction writing about robots, documentary films about the US/Mexican border, memoirs about mothers, travel literature, humor writing, evolutionary theory, the history of numbers, films of North Africa, the writings of Albert Camus, Elder Care issues and many other topics.

- **MLS 580 - Practicum** (for extended research, writing and editing). While the reading and conference focuses on research, the practicum emphasizes creating something. Some people build blogs, websites, write papers or personal writing. The student keeps detailed notes and writings in an Online journal describing their process. This class is repeatable one time for credit.

  You have many exciting options. Students have written papers about issues of control in the war films of Stanley Kubrick, and landscape and architecture in the films of Antonioni. Others have created blogs about Elder Care resources, or have created blogs that look at representations of women in film and television shows or the representations of African-Americans in film and television. Others have made websites, written book proposals, edited their personal writings, or simply written memoirs. Some use this class to create work to use in their applied project.
Applied Project (3 hours)
The final class must be taken during the final semester. All MLS students finish with an applied project, MLS 593, supervised by the program director and/or assistant program director. The applied project is different than a thesis. Students must earn a grade of B or better to graduate. (a B-minus grade is not acceptable.) There are a great variety of opportunities to develop a sophisticated Capstone Project. You will work with a mentor to devise the best project for your individual interest and skill set to showcase your best work.

The project can take many forms:
- a traditional scholarly paper
- a collection of edited personal writings
- a book proposal
- a website, blog or series of podcasts
- a community project
- an applied project that addresses a critical social issue through a humanities lens.
- We can discuss other ideas

Only a few students know what their applied project will be when they enter the program, but later in their studies ideas for the Applied Project begin to germinate. Oftentimes students have ideas on projects at the beginning but frequently change their minds as they discover exciting new areas for study and research from their studies. Ultimately, some students choose to extend research begun in classes, while others may choose to pursue newly developed scholarly and artistic interests.

Examinations
The program has no final exams. Other programs might, but we have none. You might see a note about exams on your myASU page but it will not apply to you.
Essential Policies

Graduate College Handbook: Here at ASU, the Graduate College oversees graduate programs and university policies. As a graduate student, you are responsible for learning these policies in addition to our program policies. The ASU Graduate Policies and Procedures guide covers all university-level requirements. Information can be found here: https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/asu-graduate-policies-and-procedures_032019_0.pdf

Academic Grade Disputes: If you disagree with a class grade you have received, you have a procedure to question and dispute it. The following steps must be followed by any student seeking to appeal a grade. (This process does not address academic integrity allegations, faculty misconduct or discrimination.) Student grade appeals must be processed in the regular semester immediately following the issuance of the grade in dispute (by commencement for fall or spring), regardless of whether the student is enrolled at the university.

There are two stages to the grade grievance process, the informal process and the formal process. Begin with the informal procedure. Write a thoughtful note and email to your instructor and explain your concerns. Refer to the syllabus and to the assignment descriptions. Express why you think that the grade is incorrect. Keep your note professional, cordial, and focused on the issue. The instructor will reply to your note with explanations.

If you still disagree, contact the program director and/or assistant program director and explain your situation, your original note and the instructor’s responses.

If you still disagree with the grading, you can then contact the dean’s representative in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. (The director will help you with this.) After sharing your concerns with the Dean’s office, and you still disagree with the grade, you can begin the formal process to appeal. Visit this Web link to see more information about the informal and formal procedures. https://clas.asu.edu/resources/academic-grievance

Satisfactory Academic Progress: As a graduate student, you are required to make systematic progress toward completion of your degree. You are responsible for verifying satisfactory progress policies as required by this program and the Graduate College. If you fail to satisfy the requirements, you may be dismissed from this program based on the academic unit’s recommendation to Graduate College. These policies are outlined below and detailed on the university’s Graduate College website: https://graduate.asu.edu/

Grades and Grade Point Averages (GPA): Graduate students demonstrate academic excellence and commitment to their studies. Students in our program MUST maintain a minimum 3.00 grade point average (GPA) to maintain satisfactory academic progress and to graduate. The minimum 3.00 GPA must be maintained on all GPA’s (Plan of Study (iPOS) GPA, Overall Graduate GPA and Cumulative GPA).
1. The iPOS GPA is calculated on all courses that appear on the student’s approved iPOS (with the exception of LAW and Transfer credits)

2. Cumulative ASU GPA represents all courses completed at ASU during the graduate career.

3. The Overall Graduate GPA is based on all courses numbered 500 or higher that appear on the transcript after admission to a graduate program or graduate non-degree. This includes shared coursework if in an approved accelerated bachelor’s/master’s program

The Graduate College policies on student GPAs can be found here: https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/asu-graduate-policies-and-procedures_032019_0.pdf

**Academic Probation:** If a student’s GPA falls below a 3.0, the student will be notified and placed on probation. If the student’s GPA is not raised to at least a 3.0 by the end of the next semester, a recommendation will be made to the Graduate College for the student to be dismissed from the Master of Liberal Studies program.

The Graduate College conducts a GPA audit at the end of each semester. Any graduate student with a cumulative GPA below 3.00 is placed on academic probation. The student will receive a notification on their MyASU and an email from the Master of Liberal Studies program. Typically, students on academic probation will have one semester to be reinstated to good standing.

**Probation Policy:** A student may be placed on academic probation if:

1. The student’s cumulative GPA falls below the 3.00 GPA requirement;
2. The student receives a “C” or lower in a course on their plan of study;
3. The student has more than two incompletes since starting the program; or
4. The student fails to complete the program within specified time guidelines and does not meet milestones specified in the graduate handbook.

Students will be notified by email when first placed on probation and will be required to complete a Probation Agreement with their faculty advisor or the Graduate Committee.

You have one semester to advance to good standing before termination is considered. Students will be notified by email if they are being recommended for withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal any action concerning academic probation and withdrawal by petitioning the Graduate Committee within 10 business days, using the SOS petition form. Approval of petition is not guaranteed.

**Incomplete Grades:** The grade of “I” (Incomplete) can only be given by an instructor when a student, who is doing otherwise acceptable work, is unable to complete a course (e.g., final exams or term paper) because of illness or other conditions beyond the student’s control. If you receive an “Incomplete” grade in a graduate-level course (500-level or above) you must complete the necessary work within one calendar year. If the
incomplete is not removed within one calendar year, it will become part of your permanent transcript and cannot be used on a student’s plan of study. To receive credit for the course, the student must repeat the course by re-registering, paying fees and fulfilling all course requirements. This may also delay or prevent a student’s graduation.

The form form for requesting an Incomplete can be found here:

https://students.asu.edu/forms/incomplete-grade-request

Students with more than one “Incomplete” at any time will be considered “failing to make adequate progress,” and will be placed on probation. If the student does not complete the work to remove the incomplete and earn a letter grade by the end of the calendar year, a recommendation may be made to the Graduate College to remove the student from the program.

Note that 400-level courses taken for graduate credit have different rules. You are required to complete the necessary work to remove an “Incomplete” grade within one calendar year. If the “Incomplete” grade is not removed within one calendar year, the “I” will become an “E.” An “E” cannot be used to meet the requirements for a graduate degree, but it is used to calculate your GPA. You may retake the class to earn a higher grade; however, both the “E” and the new grade will be used in calculating the student’s GPA. If this results in the GPA falling below 3.0, a recommendation to withdraw the student from the master’s program will be made to the Graduate College.

Incomplete Policy: A student must have completed 80 percent of all assignments with a cumulative grade class average of 80 percent or higher to even be eligible to request an incomplete. Incompletes must be finished within one year. (After one year, the grade of Incomplete (I) becomes permanent.)

Transfer Credit: Students admitted to the 30-credit-hour Master of Liberal Studies program may transfer up to 12 credit hours of coursework taken before beginning the program (referred to as pre-admission credits). Pre-admission credit hours must be approved by the degree program and the Graduate College. Students are responsible for alerting their graduate advisor that they plan on transferring in credits.

To qualify for preadmission credits, the courses must meet specific criteria:

- Be at a graduate-level
- Have been taken within three years of admission to the ASU degree program.
- A grade of “B” or better must have been earned.
- Must not have been used toward a previous degree.
- Completed at a regionally accredited US institution or international institution officially recognized by that country.

If a student in the program skips a Fall or Spring semester and falls out of the program, she or he could reapply but learn that their previous credits must be considered as preadmission credits and are required to meet the above requirements.
Certain types of graduate credits cannot be transferred to ASU, such as courses taken at a non-collegiate institution, institutions that lack regional accreditation, for life experience, continuing education programs, workshops, etc.

Students must officially transfer in preadmission credit hours through the iPOS system for approval by the academic unit and the Graduate College office. Official transcripts from where the preadmission credits were earned must be sent to the Graduate Admission Services.

**Provisional Acceptance:** The Graduate College demands that applicants have a GPA of 3.0 or better. That’s because all graduate students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 in order to stay in the program and to graduate. Unlike undergraduate study, the majority of graduate students earn A and B grades. Grades below a B indicate a student who may not be ready for graduate study at this time.

However, the Master of Liberal Studies program on occasion will consider students with a less stellar GPA for provisional admittance. An applicant should address the lower GPA and explain why she or he is ready to do graduate-level work now. If the committee recommends a provisional admittance to the program and the Graduate College agrees, the student has two semesters to earn grades of B or better in all classes during the first year in the program. If the grades are lower, the Graduate College removes the student from the program.

**Continuous Enrollment:** Of all the rules in this handbook, there is one rule that is frequently broken unwittingly by students in the program. You must be registered for a minimum of one graduate credit hour during each of the Fall and Spring semesters. (Summer enrollment is optional.)

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit Maintain Continuous Enrollment request form [https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maintain-continuous-enrollment-masters-certificate.pdf](https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maintain-continuous-enrollment-masters-certificate.pdf)

This request must be submitted and approved BEFORE the anticipated semester of non-registration. Students may request to maintain continuous enrollment without course registration for a maximum of two semesters during their entire program.

Students should contact their advisor as soon as possible if they will not be able to meet continuous enrollment.
How Many Classes Should I Take?

For financial aid disbursement, please use the chart below for fall, spring and summer semesters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Graduate Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time:</td>
<td>9+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4 time:</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-time:</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than half-time:</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that graduate classes require considerably more work than undergraduate classes. Four classes in one semester carry a tremendous amount of required readings, researching and writing. (Note that each semester has two sessions.)

Maximum Time Limit: All work toward a master’s degree must be completed within six consecutive years.

Maximum Credit Limit: The program requires 10 classes (30 credits) for completion. On some occasions a few students will take an additional two or three classes for various reasons. Students who take more than 12 or 13 classes will be removed from the program unless they receive permission from the director and/or assistant program director prior to enrolling for the additional classes. The goal is that students graduate without additional expense and time beyond what is needed.

Withdrawals and Program Changes

Voluntary Withdrawal from ASU
Students who wish to withdraw from their graduate degree or certificate program and the university must complete and submit a Voluntary Withdrawal form. Students must separately complete the appropriate forms with the University Registrar to withdraw from their courses. International students should contact the International Student and Scholars Center (ISSC) before submitting a Voluntary Withdrawal form, as it most likely will affect their visa status.

Voluntary Withdrawal from a Graduate Degree or Certificate Program
Students who wish to transition from one graduate program to another graduate program should complete and submit a Voluntary Withdrawal form. Students should not take this action until they have been admitted to the other graduate degree program.
Other Types of Withdrawal
There are appropriate circumstances when students may need to withdraw from the university (i.e. medical withdrawal, compassionate leave). The policies for such withdrawals are the same for both undergraduate and graduate students. Types of withdrawals and procedures can be found at: students.asu.edu/drop-add. For course withdrawals contact the University Registrar’s Office.

Should you decide to leave the program or change programs, contact Graduate Admissions and follow their process. https://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maintain-continuous-enrollment-masters-certificate.pdf

Leaves of Absence

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit a Leave of Absence request via their Interactive Plan of Student (iPOS). This request must be submitted and approved before the anticipated semester of non-registration. Students may request a maximum of two semesters of leave during their entire program. Having an approved Leave of Absence by the Graduate College will enable students to re-enter their program without re-applying to the university.

Students who do not register for a fall or spring semester without an approved Leave of Absence are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason may reapply for admission to resume their degree program; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program.

Students with a Graduate College approved Leave of Absence are not required to pay tuition and/or fees, but in turn are not permitted to place any demands on university faculty or use any university resources. These resources include university libraries, laboratories, recreation facilities or faculty and staff time.

Concurrent Degrees
A student may pursue concurrent master’s degrees with prior written approval from the head of the academic unit for each degree program and the Graduate College. A separate online application is required for each degree program. A maximum of 20 percent of the minimum total semester hours for the completion of both degrees may be common hours shared between the Plans of Study. The total number of hours common to both degree programs may vary from this maximum value only when the Graduate College has formally approved coordinated degree programs.

Coursework common to both programs must constitute a well-planned and meaningful part of each of the programs and may only include coursework completed after admission to both degree programs. In all cases, the guidelines below must be followed:

1. The student must be enrolled in both programs each fall and spring semester to maintain continuous enrollment or must submit a Request to Maintain Continuous Enrollment form. A Graduate College approved Request applies to both degree programs; students may not be registered for coursework in either program.
2. Graduate credit transferred from another institution may be applied toward only one degree program.
3. Culminating experiences (e.g. the MLS applied project) cannot be shared between concurrent degree programs.
4. The six year maximum time limit for completing degree requirements and graduation apply to each concurrent degree individually.

Note: Concurrent degrees with the MLS are not common. They have the potential of increasing your tuition costs since different programs may have different costs. Research your potential costs before making concurrent applications.

Academic Integrity: The entire work, culture and purpose of the university is based on the pursuit of knowledge, information and ideas. This means the university holds academic integrity as one of its highest values. Master of Liberal Studies students are expected to be ethical in their multiple roles as students, researchers and representatives of the University. There is little sympathy for graduate students who break these rules. It is essential that you become familiar with these policies.

The highest standards of academic integrity and compliance with the university’s Student Code of Conduct are expected of all graduate students in academic coursework and research activities. The failure of any graduate student to uphold these standards may result in serious consequences including suspension or expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as specified in the academic integrity policies of individual colleges as well as the university. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, fabrication of data, tampering, plagiarism, or aiding and/or facilitating such activities.

At the graduate level, it is expected that students are familiar with these issues and that each student assumes personal responsibility in their work. When in doubt about appropriate conduct, students should review ASU Academic Integrity Policies and Resources and consult an instructor or advisor to seek clarification as needed. As outlined by ASU’s policy, a student may be found to have engaged in academic dishonesty if he or she:

1. Engages in any form of academic deceit;
2. Refers to materials or sources or uses devices (e.g., computer disks, audio recorders, camera phones, text messages, crib sheets, calculators, solution manuals, materials from previous classes, or commercial research services) not authorized by the instructor for use during the Academic Evaluation or assignment;
3. Possesses, reviews, buys, sells, obtains, or uses, without appropriate authorization, any materials intended to be used for an Academic Evaluation or assignment in advance of its administration;
4. Acts as a substitute for another person in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
5. Uses a substitute in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
6. Depends on the aid of others, including other students or tutors, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment to the extent that the work is not representative of the student's abilities;
7. Provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, including the unauthorized use of camera phones, text messages, photocopies, notes or other means to copy or photograph materials used or intended for Academic Evaluation;
8. Engages in Plagiarism or Self-Plagiarism;
9. Uses material from the Internet or any other source without full and appropriate attribution, citation;
10. Permits his or her work to be submitted by another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, without authorization;
11. Claims credit for or submits work done by another;
12. Signs an attendance sheet for another student, allows another student to sign on the student's behalf, or otherwise participates in gaining credit for attendance for oneself or another without actually attending;
13. Falsifying or misrepresenting hours or activities in relationship to an internship, externship, field experience, clinical activity or similar activity; or
14. Attempts to influence or change any Academic Evaluation, assignment or academic record for reasons having no relevance to academic achievement

**Zero-Tolerance Policy:** Master of Liberal Studies program cannot and will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. Penalties for unethical behavior range from failing grades to dismissal from the program. The Program follows University’s policies and procedures when responding to an academic integrity complaint and determining sanctions.

**How You Can Learn About Academic Integrity.** We offer a training to help students develop an awareness and understanding of protocols to operate with academic integrity. New graduate students will find a “priority task” on their MyASU page linking them to a Canvas training module on academic integrity. A PowerPoint offers detailed information on academic integrity and students must pass a quiz with a grade of 80 percent or higher.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to adhere to the Arizona Board of Regents Student Code of Conduct and university policies and procedures:

[https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct](https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct)

[https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/PoliciesAndProcedures](https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/PoliciesAndProcedures)

We require students to not disrupt classes. In discussions, we request students to respond thoughtfully and respectfully to each other. In our academic world, we can all disagree with each other but still be respectful of other students and instructors. Sarcasm, insults, sneers, and other disruptive language will not be tolerated.
Plan of Study: The plan of study (iPOS) functions as a contract between the student, the academic unit, and Graduate College. This ensures that students are on track to finish their programs and not making expensive mistakes in enrollment.

You will go to your MyASU page and complete the Internet Program of Study (iPOS) by listing classes taken from your transcript and your best guess on your future classes. (It’s easy to update the iPOS if you change your choices later.) Hit SUBMIT when finished. (Oddly, that’s a common overlooked error with the e-form.) The program director and/or assistant program director will review it, approve it and then send it to the Graduate College for their official review. Each semester, you should compare your class choices with the iPOS document and update as necessary.

Master of Liberal Studies students must submit an iPOS before enrolling for their third semester. Graduate College will place an enrollment hold on a student’s account if he/she has not submitted an iPOS by this time. * It is best to submit your iPOS by the second semester.

Graduation: Apply for graduation through your MyASU. You can find that in My Programs, under the graduation tab.

Applying for graduation begins a review process essential for finishing the degree. The Graduation department will compare your program of study (iPOS) to your transcript. They look to make sure the classes match and match by sequence and semester. (So the right class in the wrong semester will be kicked back to you.) It’s essential to review your program of study and make sure it is still current before you apply to graduate.

Graduation has some strict rules that must be followed. Read these rules carefully.

- The application to graduate should be submitted Online before the application deadline to avoid late fees.
- Students who do not complete all requirements in the semester they intend to graduate will need to re-apply for graduation the next semester; the application will not be automatically renewed.
- Students must have their iPOS approved before they can apply for graduation.
- Students also must be enrolled in at least one class the semester they apply to graduate. For more information: https://students.asu.edu/graduation
Commencement and Convocation: Attending the graduation commencement or convocation is optional (but a lot of fun). If you choose not to attend the graduation ceremonies, you must still apply for graduation to earn your degree. When you graduate, you are invited to attend two separate ceremonies during graduation week. Each requires individual RSVPS. You will not receive a diploma at either ceremony. Diplomas are mailed to your address six weeks or so after the end of the semester.

Commencement is the university-wide graduation ceremony led by the President of the University. (The Graduate ceremony is separate from the undergraduate event.) Commencement usually takes place on the Monday of graduation week.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has its own graduation event - Convocation. Graduates walk across the stage in front of a smaller audience. The Master’s diploma cover is distributed at convocation.

Student Resources and Services: The charter of Arizona State University declares that the university is “measured not by whom we exclude, but rather by whom we include and how they succeed.” The University and Master of Liberal Studies program are committed to providing every resource possible for students to succeed academically, personally and professionally.

The program director, assistant director, and instructors are all responsible for ensuring a supportive, inclusive learning environment and a valuable academic experience for master’s degree students. Please contact them with questions or concerns about the program or ASU resources.

ASU Libraries: As a research university, ASU has an impressive library system spread across several physical buildings and campuses offering an impressive online and hardcopy collections. The Tempe campus is home to the Hayden Library (main library on campus); the Music Library; the Design and the Arts Library; and the Noble Science Library. While the library system offers books galore, you’ll find that your student access to Online databases has become an essential tool for academic research. Our class in The Research Process teaches how to best use these materials and resources.

Tutoring and Writing Center: The university provides assistance with writing and tutoring for a variety of subjects. This service is also available to Graduate Students. Online students also enjoy access to writing assistance. For complete details: The ASU Graduate Writing Centers are currently open for student appointments:

- Online: https://tutoring.asu.edu/student-services/online-writing-graduate-support
- Tempe: Noble Library, room 280
ASU Counseling Services: ASU Counseling Services offer professional, confidential, and time-limited counseling and crisis services for students experiencing emotional concerns, problems in adjusting, and other factors that affect their ability to achieve their academic and personal goals. We will talk with you, help you identify solutions or support, and connect you with those services at ASU or in the community.

ASU Counseling Services are for any Sun Devil, regardless of your race, gender, sexual orientation, age, student status, religion, ability, size, financial situation, the issue you're dealing with or whether you've had counseling before. Something as simple as talking to someone can help you feel better, improve your grades and manage stress. Ready to talk to ASU Counseling Services? https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling

Financial Support: The Master of Liberal Studies program has no teaching assistantships, research assistantships or scholarships. (We wish we did.) At ASU, most graduate funding is reserved for PhD students. Students seeking financial support should investigate all opportunities and conduct independent research on funding opportunities beyond the program. Students are responsible for finding and securing funding to pay for their education. Contact ASU Financial Aid and Scholarship Services: https://students.asu.edu/financialaid

Veterans and Military Resources: We thank veterans and military personnel for their service and welcome them to our program and the university. The Pat Tillman Veterans Center provides guidance and support for students who are veterans, active-duty military or military dependents. Veterans in the program sometimes have paperwork that requires signatures from the program director and/or assistant program director and we’re happy to help as needed.
https://veterans.asu.edu/

International Student Resources: ASU’s International Students and Scholars Center can provide support and answer questions about visas, employment, scholarships and travel. International students have multiple requirements during their stay in this country and may have paperwork that requires signatures from the program director and/or assistant program director. The ISSC offers help with all these things. To learn more or schedule an appointment with an ISSC advisor, visit their website: https://issc.asu.edu/

Transportation and Parking: Students coming to campus should consider purchasing parking and public transit permits. Parking on campus and in the surrounding areas is always challenging. While parking permits are expensive, they can be helpful.
https://cfo.asu.edu/parking

Health and Fitness Resources: All ASU students enrolled in In-Person campus programs have access to the Sun Devil Fitness facilities on all campuses, including the expansive gym on the Tempe Campus. For more information about facilities, membership and group fitness classes, please visit: https://fitness.asu.edu
**Disability Resources**: Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation to the (Disability Resource Center) DRC. Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Talk to the DRC and they will guide you through the process and paperwork. Once the DRC reviews your situation, they may communicate with your instructors about possible accommodations and assistance.

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADAAA) of 2008, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact the DRC by going to [https://eoss.asu.edu/drc](https://eoss.asu.edu/drc) and by calling (480) 965-1234 or emailing DRC@asu.edu

**Title IX**: Title IX is a Federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at [https://www.asu.edu/titleIX/](https://www.asu.edu/titleIX/)

**Business Services**

**Student Accounts**

Student Business Services offer a variety of student account services including tuition and billing, student refunds (including financial aid), receipt and payment processing, support for past due accounts, third party sponsorship assistance and loan repayment. Contact [https://students.asu.edu/payment-options](https://students.asu.edu/payment-options)

**Sun Card**

Students must obtain an ASU identification card. The Sun Card is the official student ID for ASU and provides access to campus amenities and services, including secure buildings and elevators as needed. The Sun Card is located in the Memorial Union lower level. Visit: [https://cfo.asu.edu/cardservices](https://cfo.asu.edu/cardservices)
Campus Amenities

Dining

There are multiple options for dining-on-campus. Sun Devil Dining manages dining halls, kiosks, restaurants and convenience stores in the Memorial Union and other locations at the Tempe campus. Students may make purchases with cash or conventional card payment, or use meal plan credits. To learn more about Sun Devil Dining on the Tempe Campus: https://sundevildining.asu.edu/experience-dining
To learn more about meal plans: https://sundevildining.asu.edu/meal-plans

Shopping

Textbooks, supplies, ASU apparel and gifts and computing technology can be purchased at Sun Devil Campus Stores. There are two locations at the Tempe campus, on Orange Street and at the Sun Devil Marketplace.

Entertainment

ASU offers many options for culture and entertainment on campus. From top-rated Broadway Shows at For more than 50 years ASU Gammage to PAC-12 Sun Devil Athletics https://asuevents.asu.edu/sun_devil_athletics, from the ASU Art Museum https://asuartmuseum.asu.edu/exhibitions, to the Marston Exploration Theater, there is something for everyone.

MyASU PORTAL: Your my.asu.edu portal is your go-to place for information about courses, transcripts, transportation, student success and support, finances, university policies and the academic calendar. Please take time to familiarize yourself with these areas:

- **Profile:** Update your address, phone number, email information, or add guests, such as a parent, so they can look at FERPA-protected information including grades.

- **My Classes:** Click on the name of each course to access the corresponding Canvas content. This is where you will see the syllabus, find links to readings and submit assignments. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the structure of each course.

- **Final Transcript:** If you sent in a transcript for admission to the program before you graduated, send your final transcript with your degree posted.

- **Academic Integrity Module:** ASU Graduate Education has created an Online training about academic integrity. Please complete as soon as possible.
- **Academic Calendar** (bottom right box): This has important dates you need to monitor, including when classes begin, last day to register or drop/add classes, tuition and fee payment deadlines, holidays, withdrawal deadlines, schedule of classes available and when to enroll for future semesters. Be sure and look at the dates and deadlines for withdrawing from classes for refunds of tuition or for simply dropping and adding classes. The Academic Calendar can be found here: [https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar](https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar)

- **Campus Services**: This includes Health and Wellness Resources, such as health insurance, counseling, disability services; Transportation, such as parking permits, METRO Light Rail, U-Pass and campus shuttles; Student Success and Support, such as disability services, tutoring and student success centers; and [Career and Professional Development Services](https://students.asu.edu/career-prodev). Please note these job resources are university-wide and not specific to the Master of Liberal Studies program.

- **Campus Safety**: Dial 911 to report an emergency on campus. For non-emergency ASU Police or campus-safety matters call 480-965-3456. ASU offers an opt-in, text-message alert system which sends text messages from ASU during an emergency. Sign up for the service online. Students are also encouraged to download the LiveSafe mobile application on their phones. For additional resources, visit the Safety Resources website. [https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/Safety](https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/Safety)

- revised June 2019
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

Q: How long has this program been around at ASU?
A: We created the Master of Liberal Studies in 2005 for campus students. In the Fall of 2012, we created the Online degree.

Q: How is the Master of Liberal Studies program different from other master programs?
A: Most traditional masters degrees focus on going deeply into one subject. This sort of highly focused study in one area is powerful and a traditional way to study. The Master of Liberal Studies program chooses another type of study that is more interdisciplinary and integrative. We look at topics in a broader manner—using different approaches and materials. Studying in an interdisciplinary and integrative way is also powerful—just different. Our classes use history, film, literature, music, pop culture, art and other materials in order to understand issues.

Q: How does Online graduate instruction work?
A: We teach the same materials we would teach in person—only the delivery system changes. You’ll have weekly readings, films to view, questions to answer, threaded discussions with your peer classmates, papers to write and Online videos to watch. We’ve worked hard to make our Online classes visually interesting, fun to study and enjoyable learning experiences. Students do not have to be Online at a certain time on a certain day. Instead, each student has a week to complete a number of tasks and responses. Students control when to access the materials. Typically students log on to the Online website three or more times during the week.

Q: How difficult are these classes?
A: Our classes are rigorous and challenging. They require time, commitment and persistence. In seven-and-a-half-weeks, you might spend between 80 and 120 hours Online with your computer working on class materials as well as offline writing and researching. Graduate classes are more demanding than undergraduate studies.

Q: Why do you have these short A and B sessions during each semester?
A: We began offering compressed classes five years ago. We found that adult learners really like the shorter, seven-and-a-half-week course. They also found the traditional 15-week classes to be a bit too long. The downside of the short semesters is you need to really pay attention to the dates of the academic calendar. You’ll see brief windows of time to drop and add classes. Classes are also more concentrated and demand focus and time to complete them.

Q: Which classes am I supposed to take?
A: You need 10 classes total. That means:
· Three core classes
· Six electives (your choice)
· And then end with the MLS 593 Applied Project
Take the core classes early in your studies, then select electives that interest you. The special topic classes (MLS 598s) are unusual, wide ranging, fun, and challenging. You’ll study with a group of energetic classmates, an experience which offers intellectual companionship and opportunities for spirited discussion. The individual study classes are solitary study where you challenge yourself to research and explore a topic. The MLSt program gives you freedom to select your electives from this list. Many programs do not.

Q: What can you do with a Master of Liberal Studies?
A: The degree teaches you how to write, research, communicate and explore ideas. You learn to take on many different ideas and synthesize new ideas. You learn how to evaluate conflicting information while crafting arguments to convince and persuade your readers. These are skills that employers want in potential employees. Employers say they can teach you to run an accounting spreadsheet but they can’t teach you to write clearly. The degree gives you essential skills and critical thinking abilities that can be applied to any job. While a masters degree makes you competitive in the job market, knowing how to communicate your skills, experience and abilities to recruiters and potential employers is crucial.

Q: Why do people choose this program?
A: Some people come solely for intellectual engagement. They tell us they’re interested in many different subjects and don’t want to limit their studies to one area. Others want a masters degree as a kind of professional credential. Others find it useful in their work and as a socially conscious citizen. Graduates tell us that they use what they’ve learned everyday at work and in their communities.

Q: What do I do with letters of recommendation?
A: When you apply, you’ll be asked for the email addresses of your recommenders. These people then get an email asking for their recommendation. They click on a link and go to a website where they are asked to respond to three questions about your potential for graduate study.

Q: I’ve been out of college for a long time and I’m not sure I can reach my previous professors. Who else can I ask for recommendations?
A: You can certainly ask your professional contacts, employers or co-workers for recommendations.

Q: Why don’t you ask for GRE scores like many other programs?
A: We think the GRE exams are a tremendous barrier for many adult learners. The GRE prep classes people sometimes take are expensive. We also are not convinced the test scores predict whether a student is capable of graduate study.

Q: Can I apply for a doctorate program after completing this Master of Liberal Studies program?
A: We don’t recommend using this masters as a stepping stone toward a PhD program. Across the country, there is only one PhD in Liberal Studies (Georgetown University). If you
apply to any other doctoral program, you will be competing with applicants who already have a traditional masters in that field. You will have to work hard to convince a program that you have the traditional background and skills.

It’s not impossible but requires extra work. In some cases, the program will suggest you take classes before entering. We have had graduates enter Master of Library Sciences programs, law school, nursing programs, social work as well as MFA creative writing programs. Your best way to enter a PhD program is through a traditional masters in that study area.

Q: Can I take Online classes from other departments as electives?
A: Maybe. If you can find 500-level Online courses in other programs, check to see if they have restrictions. (Some classes are restricted to students in their programs.) If they have no restrictions, you should be able to enroll in it and count it as an elective. All this is beyond our control. It’s dependent on the other programs to decide if they’ll allow other students into their classes. (We allow students from other programs into our classes if they ask permission.) In general, we recommend that you expect to take only MLS classes for the degree. Please check with the MLSt program director and/or assistant program director to see if the class is appropriate for your degree.

Q: How many classes can I take in a semester?
A: Some students take only one class a semester and that’s ok. We break the semester into two 7.5 week sessions so we see some people taking as many as two classes per session. (That’s really a great deal of work and requires a lot of time.) However, if you are using financial aid, be sure and check with them about their requirements. Typically three classes in an entire semester are considered full-time for campus grad students. Remember, you’re studying at a level that’s different than your undergraduate classes. You’ll want to have time to investigate things that you find—to make side trips in your research as you discover interesting ideas and concepts. Students who work full time and have families tell us that one class is really fun. That two classes are really fun and really busy. And three classes can take up much of your free time.

Q: Can I take a semester off if I need to?
A: Everyone can skip summer classes if they want. However, the Graduate College insists that you take at least one class in the fall and one class in the spring semester. If you don’t, you need to apply for a leave of absence with the Graduate College (before the semester begins). Some adult learners in our programs have taken leaves of absence due to issues with Elder Care, pregnancy, job changes, travel for work, divorce, illness, etc. If you don’t take one class or obtain the leave of absence permission, you’ll fall out of the program and have to reapply again. Sometimes, we suggest you enroll in a reading and conference class to continue your studies during this time.

Q: What is a program of study?
A: The Graduate College wants students to have a plan as they go through their studies. They want you to file an Internet program of study (iPOS) before you’ve taken five courses. You
complete it from your MyASU page. It’s simply a listing, semester by semester, of the classes you’ve taken and plan to take. You submit it, the program director and/or assistant program director reviews and approves it and then the Graduate College reviews and approves it. Once approved, it means you have a contract of sorts with the University that promises that you can graduate if you complete those classes. Then when you apply to graduate, the graduation department compares your transcript with this program of study. If they match exactly, you’ll graduate. (If you have classes in the wrong semester, they’ll not approve your graduation until you refile it.) Tip: When you submit your program of study, send a note to the program director and/or assistant program director.

Q: **What if I need to change a class on my program of study after it’s approved?**
A: That’s easy to do. You simply put in a petition to swap out a class. It’s simple and happens all the time.

Q: **What sort of grades do graduate students earn?**
A: Grad students earn Bs and As. Any grade below a B is a serious problem. You need to maintain a 3.0 grade point average to graduate. If you fall below a 3.0 grade point average, you will be put on academic probation by the college and the program. That’s a warning to improve your grades or leave the program.

Q: **If I have questions and want to speak to an advisor, how do I do that?**
A: We don’t have an advisor. Instead the program director and/or assistant program director will speak to you. Send an email and suggest some days and times to speak on the phone. (Remember we are often in different time zones.)

Q: **What other advice do you offer students?**
A: Thanks for asking. The Graduate College has a terrific website that’s filled with helpful information for students. You’ll find fascinating videos about academic integrity, suggestions on how to succeed in school, how-to guides and an essential graduate student handbook. The handbook is filled with rules that we all must obey. Read it, please. [http://graduate.asu.edu/](http://graduate.asu.edu/)
How to be Successful in the Program: You need to show up and be present on day one. You can’t be successful if you are not in class or present Online. If you wait until day three to open your Canvas Online class, you’re already past the drop/add date.

(We can actually tell if you are opening Canvas. If we dig into the program it has measuring devices that tell us how often a student has opened the program and interacted with it. Nothing depresses an instructor more than opening these tools in week three of class and seeing that a student has been a no show.)

We expect graduate students to manage their own affairs and educational experience. As adults, your lives are complicated as you balance work, life, families and studies. We cannot tell you how to be a parent, a good employee or where to find time in your week to read and study. We can, however, make suggestions about our classes.

Be cautious in the number of classes you take at one time. Graduate classes are different than undergrad courses. You are expected to read more books and articles, write many more pages and simply think more. Three classes a semester is considered full time for graduate students. In our program, you are welcome to take fewer classes at a time. Some students take one class a semester and tell us that they had a great experience. Others take two and tell us they were really busy but having fun learning. Those who take three classes and work full time say they had little time for leisure activities.

Part of thriving in graduate study is learning to do more than the assignments ask of you. If you are sent an article to read, you might then (on your own) look at additional readings on that subject. You are learning how to research and think like a scholar. We hope you have intellectual curiosity that will take you deeper into each topic. Your learning experience deepens as you take charge of it.

Manage Your Time: We suggest making a weekly chart and plug in several sessions to review class work. The fantasy that you’ll have eight hours on Saturday to do all the work may not happen every week. Try breaking up study sessions into shorter, more frequent sequences. Some people work every day before work. Others find time during their lunches. Others late at night after the family has quieted down.

Embrace Challenge: Our learning and pedagogical model envisions you as a self-starter, go-getter student who takes charge of and responsibility for your own learning process. Above all, you are expected to embrace challenge.

What does that mean?

1. **You are open to standing outside your comfort zone.**
   - Concepts that you may not have encountered are likely in advanced studies, even material which may challenge your perceived notions.

2. **You do more than demonstrate you have acquired an understanding of the materials.**
We do not ask you to memorize data; rather, we are here to facilitate the development of your critical, analytical, imaginative, rhetorical and writing skills.

3. **You understand that your work speaks for itself.**
   Extended time working on a project is not as meaningful as the substance and quality of your work.

4. **You understand the difference between an opinion and a well-supported viewpoint.**
   Research is required of each student in order to examine discussion points and issues concerning a given subject matter.

5. **You understand the value of agreeing to disagree**
   All discussions in class and with your instructors are conducted in a respectful and sensitive manner.

6. **You do not take comments regarding your critical, creative, and researched writing skills and assignments as personal offence or as commentary on your character.**
   As a mature student, you know that professors are devoted to pushing you toward ever higher levels of achievement. You know that in order to do that they may provide you with substantial constructive feedback.

7. **You strive to achieve the various levels of academic rigor and creative challenges that each course requires.**
   Employing a student-centered pedagogy, this program provides materials, critical tools and sets clear standards that each student should aim towards. We assume all are here to succeed, no matter the hard work, long hours, and challenges to personal learning each person encounters.

If you are using Canvas, plan on visiting the class pages several times during each week in order to see the range of student comments that filter in over the days. You should add your comments over several days, too. Bear in mind that different instructors might request different commitments to Canvas. For example, an instructor may require that you submit your first comment to a topic on each Wednesday.
**Tips For Online Comments:** Here’s an example of how to make appropriate comments online:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No discussion</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplistic* contributions that don't move beyond description OR contributions that merely parrot previous contributions</td>
<td>2 - 3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Note--There is a difference between simple and simplistic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful contributions, but no engagement of the contributions of others; doing the minimum</td>
<td>4 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful contributions that advance the discussion, engage points made by others (as indicated), and demonstrate knowledge of the text(s)</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A- to A+ | This grade is reserved for work of excellence that indicates mastery of the topic and an ability to apply knowledge to other areas of academic exploration.  
- Analysis is clear, complete and demonstrates the ability to apply knowledge to other settings.  
- Content is accurate, thorough, concise, coherent and organized  
- Correct sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, grammar  
- Chicago, MLA or APA style form is correct; references are used and properly cited  
- Answers go well beyond minimum expectation but stay within scope of assignment and page limits |
| B- to B+ | This grade indicates solid comprehension of course material and command of the ability to communicate about the material.  
- Analysis is complete and thorough but does not demonstrate ability to transfer new knowledge to other areas.  
- Content is accurate and organized, but lacks fluency of communication about the subject matter  
- Sentence structure, spelling, punctuation and grammar are mostly correct, with occasional errors  
- Chicago, MLA or APA form and reference citations are mostly correct  
- All requirements met and adequate length |
| C to C+ | This grade indicates that the work has met the minimum requirements and that the student has a partial and perhaps emerging comprehension of the material.  
- Analysis is nearly complete or lacks clarity  
- Content may be inaccurate, wordy, disorganized or incomplete and lacks evidence of critical thinking  
- Sentence structure, spelling, punctuation or word choice is awkward and contain enough errors to interrupt comprehension and readability  
- Chicago, MLA or APA form have several errors; references are present but improperly cited  
- Required elements are missing and length may not be appropriate |
### D

**This grade is earned by work that is unsatisfactory, incomplete and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the subject matter.**

- Analysis and content incomplete, poorly worded, unclear, and illogical
- Content lacks focus, organization or evidence of critical thinking
- Sentence structure, spelling, punctuation or word choice contain grievous errors.
- Chicago, MLA or APA form not present; references absent or improperly cited
- Length may be inappropriate, required elements missing

### E

**Work that is superficially composed and demonstrates no evidence of understanding about the subject matter or contains plagiarized content will earn a failing grade.**

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**How to Request a Recommendation Letter from MLS Faculty:** Students often request letters of support for their applications for jobs, other academic programs or grants. If you need a letter, we need this info:

- The deadline
- Your student ID number (so we can see your transcript)
- The contact email/website
- The snail mail address, i.e., home address (still essential for the heading of the letter, even when it is sent electronically)
- The contact person’s name, title
- The description of the job, the program or grant
- Your reason for pursuing the, job, the program or grant
- Dates you were in the MLS program or your future graduation date
- Specific classes you took with the recommender and the semester they were taken in
- Notes with ideas for tailoring the letter to the specific occasion

The last point is important. Your request should offer some ideas about your time in the program. Remind us about a project or two that you are proud of and excelled at completing. What was your applied project? Or tell us about things you did in classes that an instructor you are asking to write a Letter of Recommendation didn’t teach. The best letters offer specific examples of accomplishments. We’ve had people request letters eight years after graduating, so we will need help recalling your work. We can look at your transcript but we don’t have access to class materials once the seminar is over.
Be sure to send an email and ask us about a recommendation. We’ve had emails out of the blue from employers asking for student information. It’s important that we have your permission to speak about you to strangers.

Some people apply to multiple academic programs and it’s fine to request a letter for each program—with the understanding that it will be the same basic letter for each program. For example, we have had one student apply to 14 MFA writing programs. We individually wrote a letter and then sent it to each program, changing out the salutation and university names each time.

It’s rare now to actually send a paper recommendation letter anywhere. Generally, we will receive an email from the school that says you have requested a recommendation. We then click on a link that takes us to a webpage. Some programs have a list of 10 attributes that we are asked to rate on a scale of 1 – 10. Other programs simply ask us to upload a letter.

Recommendations for jobs can be challenging. The recommendation form might ask us to rate your ability to manage staff or work with a diverse customer base. What’s helpful is to hear from you about the job and your possible skills for the work.

If we agree to write on your behalf, we will do our best to support you and describe your work in our program. To do this, we need your help with the above materials.

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