

**MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES**  
**Student Handbook**  
**2020 - 2021**



**Arizona State University**  
**Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies**  
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## **WELCOME to the MASTER of LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM at ASU!**

The faculty of the Leadership and Interdisciplinary program is excited that you are considering applying to, or have been admitted to the Master of Liberal Studies program. As graduate students, you will have the opportunity to interact with faculty from divergent backgrounds who are committed to the humanities and liberal studies. The intellectual and artistic diversity of our faculty ensures graduate students will participate in course offerings that are unique, nationally recognized, and supported by Arizona State University's commitment to innovation.

The graduate faculty is committed to your success and are here for you at every stage of your journey through the Master of Liberal Studies graduate program.

This handbook lays the foundation for your success in this program. It sets shared expectations for both the faculty and students. It also outlines the standards and policies set by the College of Integrative Sciences and Arts and ASU's Office of Graduate Education. Please keep this handbook nearby and refer to it often. As a graduate student it is your responsibility to make sure that you are following it in letter and in spirit. If you have any questions or concerns about the content in this handbook, do not hesitate to shoot me an email or request a Zoom meeting for clarification.

As Director of the Master of Liberal Studies Program, I speak for the graduate faculty in reiterating our commitment to an innovative and rewarding educational journey. I want to ensure students that my door (on campus or virtually!) is open and I join our faculty in looking forward to working with you to achieve your graduate degree in this program and beyond.

**Angela Giron**, Director, Master of Liberal Studies

Assistant Clinical Professor, Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies

[angela.giron@asu.edu](mailto:angela.giron@asu.edu)

## THE ASU MASTER of LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

The Master of Liberal Studies (MLSt) program offers students the opportunity to explore a wide array of topical, intersectional and disciplinary approaches and build critical thinking and communication skills that can be applied to daily life and work.

Based on the premise that engaging multi-disciplinary pursuits -- from creative writing and practices to critical research and analysis -- stimulates intellectual awareness and self-fulfillment, the MLSt program simultaneously builds capacities for informed citizenship, professional development and democratic engagement. Students frequently express their love for the flexibility of the program, and ability to choose the focus they enjoy most!

The MLSt program ultimately prepares students to meet the contemporary moment with concrete tools of creative and critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and expression.

### MLSt PROGRAM FAQs

**What do students enjoy about the program?** Classes are exciting, diverse and dynamic. The course resources involve films, online libraries and databases, news and literary sources, engaged discussions and ideas that challenge thinking, and much more.

**How many courses are required for the MLSt program?** Students take 10 classes. Three are Core classes, six are electives, then an Applied Project completes the degree. (The opportunity to craft your own program of study -- by making selections among electives -- is a high point of the program.)

**What is the Applied Project?** The Applied Project is the final effort created and submitted by a graduating MLSt student. It is the equivalent of a “thesis” or “capstone.” This independent study is approved and mentored by a faculty member. There are a huge number of options, including:

- An anthology of original creative work
- Extended research project
- Curated blog focused on personal interest
- Film or video project (including scripts)
- Theatrical, dance, spoken-word, musical, or other performance productions
- Lesson plans, syllabi, and other educational materials
- Community or civic projects
- Efforts in publishing
- Many more choices

**How long does it take a typical student to complete the program?** The degree can be accomplished in 16 months. Some students will take more time and others less.

**What are some of the highlights of the program experience?** Students appreciate the chance to pursue their interests via an array of unique electives. The MLSt program at ASU has been lauded by its graduates for the close personal attention of instructors and engagement with other students, often from all over the world.

**Who are the MLSt program Faculty?** We have a mix of full-time professors of practice alongside adjunct faculty who are experts in their fields. Our key professors are:

**Angela Giron**, MFA, Program Director, Assistant Clinical Professor

**Rebecca Byrkit**, MFA, Assistant Clinical Professor

**Dr. Megan Todd**, PhD, Lecturer

### **MLSt Online and On-campus Programs:**

**What is the difference between the online and on-campus MLSt programs?** There are different considerations for choosing our online or on-campus versions of the program, however, regardless of format, program requirements remain the same. Please note: all MLSt classes are offered online, elective courses vary in their delivery platforms, from online to on-campus. Thus, if one or the other method is preferred, or a combination works for the student, it's good to work with an advisor on a Plan of Study.

**How long has the on-campus program been around and what is the student population of the campus program?** The program was founded in 2007. Our campus students are adults who often live close to the ASU campus. Most are working professionals, some are returning to school after years and others enter our program directly from their bachelors programs.

**How long has the online program been offered, and what is the student population?** The online program was initiated in 2013. Our students are adults, many of whom are working professionals, some returning to school and others enter our program directly from their bachelors' programs. Many online students live far from the ASU campus (we have a global student registry reaching Asia, Cuba, South America, Canada, Europe and across the US). Students are attracted to the multidisciplinary approach to the program, intersections of several interests, as well as the depth and regularity of online interaction.

### **MLSt Course FAQs:**

**What is a typical class size?** Five to 30 students.

**What does a typical MLSt class entail?** Each week students move to new topics, including reading and media resources, responding to energetic class discussions, and engaging in a variety of assignments (mostly writing). Classes often include:

- **Lectures:** Short video talks by instructors and guests
- **Carefully selected readings**, including student suggestions
- **Film and video viewing**
- **Opportunities to hone critical thinking and to review and improve writing and communication skills**
- **Exposure to a diverse, engaged and attentive academic community**
- **A sense of continuing best practices in sustaining creative scholarship**
- **Student projects (both individual and group):** Results of individual or group study that might involve creating PowerPoint and/or GoogleSlides presentations, podcasts, blogs, film or video projects, collected creative writing, critical writing, research projects and many more options, often customized by the student and mentored by the instructor
- **A distinct variety of experience from class to class:** MLSt instructors design their own courses, drawing from a wealth of professional experience, student interests, current cultural and educational trends and faculty collaboration.

**What is the time commitment expected per class per week?** Each 7.5 week, 3-credit class requires 18 hours of student engagement per week. Weekly attendance is mandatory in online courses, and students are required to attend every class held in on-campus courses.

### **MLSt Career and Industry FAQs:**

**Are there any specific careers or licenses that this program will prepare me for?** While Liberal Studies prepares students to meet the contemporary moment with concrete tools of creative and critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and expression, it does not provide occupational-specific training or licenses.

**What are key industry and/or occupational skills I can learn?** Many employers value the aptitude for polymathy (an avid interest in multiple subjects), critical thinking and communication skills encouraged and cultivated in this program. Skills developed in this program can include:

- Building an informed socio-cultural analysis to meet today's world and professional demands
- Analysis into the historico-cultural context of various forms of expression, documentation, media
- Reading, writing and communicating effectively and persuasively
- Conducting and evaluating evidence and research
- Communicating complex ideas through research and creative narrative writing

- Evaluating and applying creative and critical skills to address the complexities of a changing society and culture

**What Are the Standards for English Proficiency?** If your 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>

## DEGREE OVERVIEW

### Master of Liberal Studies Degree requirements:

The MLSt Degree is a 30-credit-hour program including a culminating experience. The program includes 9 credits of required core courses, 12-18 credits of electives, and 3-9 credits of culminating experience, including an Applied Project and focused individual study.

### Three Different Degree Options:

There are different considerations for choosing our online or on-campus programs. While all MLSt classes are offered online in 7.5 week semesters, elective courses from outside of our program vary in their delivery platforms, from online to on-campus and from 7.5- 15 week semesters. It's important to work with an advisor to develop an Interactive Plan of Study that meets your needs and interests.

**1. The Master of Liberal Studies (on-campus)** can be completed on campus with a mix of online MLSt core courses and electives, as well as on-campus elective courses from outside of our program. Campus students have the option of searching other programs for 500-level classes to use as electives. These electives can be included with approval by the MLSt program director. Tuition cost varies with residency status.

**2. The Master of Liberal Studies (online)** is entirely online with a broad array of classes to choose from within our MLSt program. Students do not visit the campus for classes. Electives from other programs are rarely available due to limited Online graduate classes in other departments.

**3. The Master of Liberal Studies in Film and Media Studies (on-campus only)** can be accomplished on campus with a mix of online MLSt core courses and elective on-campus or online courses from outside of our program. On-campus students have the option of searching other programs for 500+level classes to use as electives. These electives can be included if approved by the

MLSt program director.

Tuition cost varies with residency status.

The MLSt program offers an array of film classes including film analysis, film philosophy, global cinema, creative nonfiction, food, film and culture to name a few, but in this degree, students also gain access to classes in many different departments. (It is important to note that we do **not** teach film techniques or video editing.)

Film course elective options at the 500+ level are sometimes offered by the Department of English (FMS), Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts (THF), and the School of International Letters and Cultures (SLC). You will need to request permission to enroll from the instructors.

## **ADVISORS**

### **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 all MyASU areas.

**Profile:** Update your address, phone number, email information, or add guests, such as a parent, so they can look for 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 module reviewing academic integrity expectations. Please complete as soon as possible. Please note, this module explains the university-wide policy.

**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.



**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 Job & Career Services. Please note these job resources are university-wide and not specific to a particular program offered by the Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies.

## **ASU EMAIL**

All ASU MLSt students are required to have an active ASU email account. You can forward the ASU email to another preferred account (if you wish).

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 priority tasks for messages and holds from the university. **Students are independently responsible** for managing their tuition payments, finances, assignment deadlines, graduation process, and tracking university academic calendar deadlines.

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

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 that student:

1. Engages in any form of academic deceit
2. Refers to materials or sources or uses devices (e.g., computer drives, 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 their 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, field experience, clinical activity or similar activity
14. Attempts to influence or change any Academic Evaluation, assignment or academic record for reasons having no relevance to academic achievement

**ABOR Published 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>

We require that students **do not disrupt classes**. In discussions, we request students to respond thoughtfully and respectfully to each other, and to their instructors and guests. In our academic world, we can all disagree with each other but still be respectful of others. Sarcasm, insults, sneers, and other derogatory or disruptive language **will not be tolerated**.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies has a zero tolerance policy toward academic dishonesty that is enforced within every course and educational activity offered or sanctioned by the school. Any allegation of academic dishonesty will be referred to the College of Integrative Sciences and Arts Standards Committee for review and recommendation to the dean of the school. If any student is found to have engaged in academic dishonesty in any form – including but not limited to

cheating, plagiarizing and fabricating – that student shall receive a grade of XE for the class and will be dismissed from the school. There will be no exceptions.

International students who violate academic integrity policies may be dismissed immediately. Being withdrawn from a degree program can have immediate consequences regarding visa status.

## **PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

In addition to academic integrity commitments, graduate students in Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies programs must abide by the highest levels of academic ethics. 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.

## **CULTURE of RESPECT**

**The MLSt Culture of Respect is a foundational commitment to the integrity of the classroom community and scholarly environment.**

By receiving this handbook, you are agreeing to uphold this foundational commitment in all courses and program environments.

The Culture of Respect means to treat everyone, your peers, instructors, other students, staff, faculty advisors and members of the ASU community with respect and communicate in a professional manner at all times. This is of utmost importance in community forums, discussions, peer work and all communication, whether online or in person.

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 class behavior can include derogatory or discriminatory statements in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, sex, ability, immigration status. It can include aggressive, combative or threatening language. It can include the inappropriate address of a fellow student or faculty.

Disruptive classroom behavior is defined by the instructor. If a disruptive incident occurs here is the procedure that instructors will follow.

- **First occurrence:** The instructor will notify the student of the disruptive behavior and suggest a corrective approach. No further action taken.
- **Second occurrence:** The instructor will notify the student of the disruptive behavior. The student will be allowed to continue in class but may immediately lose the privilege of

further classroom interactions with other students, including, but not limited to discussions and peer work. An incident of disruptive behavior may be reported to the Dean of Students.

- **Third occurrence:** The student may be withdrawn with a mark of "W" or be assigned a grade of "E." An incident report of disruptive behavior will be reported to the Dean of Students.

## **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/>

## **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](#) to determine tuition, costs and fees.

On-campus and Campus-only students in the **Master of Liberal Studies** and **Master of Liberal Studies in Film and Media** programs need to declare residency status. Please visit this link for more information on how to determine residency here: <https://students.asu.edu/residency>.

Once you have determined residency status, please move to ASU's [Tuition and Cost Calculator](#) to determine tuition, costs and fees based on residency status.

## **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS KEY POLICIES**

All graduate students are expected to make systematic progress toward completion of their degrees. Students are responsible for verifying and tracking satisfactory progress policies as required by their degree program and Graduate Education. If a student fails to satisfy the requirements, the student may be dismissed from his/her program based on the academic unit's recommendation to Graduate Education.

These policies are outlined below and detailed on the university's Graduate Education website: <https://graduate.asu.edu/key-policies>.

## GPA AND COURSE GRADES

Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) overall and in courses included in their Interactive Plans of Study. Courses taken as an undergraduate at ASU and reserved for use in a graduate degree program are included in the GPA (i.e. a [“4+1” program](#)).

If a student’s GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be notified in writing 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 Graduate Education to remove the student from the program.

To receive their degrees, students also are required to earn at least a B (3.0) in their culminating experience of a thesis or applied capstone.

## INCOMPLETE GRADES

**The grade of “I” (Incomplete) will only be considered by an instructor when a student has been doing acceptable work and is unable to complete a course (e.g., final exam, term paper, or other culminating project) because of illness or other conditions beyond the student’s control.**

**The student must have completed 80 percent of all assignments with a cumulative grade class average of 80 percent or higher to be eligible to request an Incomplete.** Terms of Incompletes must be finished in the time frame stipulated in the Incomplete contract or within a maximum period of one year. (After one year, the grade of Incomplete [I] becomes a permanent grade.) **Incomplete requests require the approval of the student, faculty of record, and faculty head.**

If you receive an “Incomplete” grade in a graduate-level course (500-level or above) you must complete the necessary work within the time frame stipulated in the Incomplete contract or within a maximum period of one calendar year.

If the Incomplete is not removed within the identified term, it will become part of your permanent transcript and cannot be used on a student’s iPOS. 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 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.

## **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 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 link to see more information about the informal and formal procedures.

<https://clas.asu.edu/resources/academic-grievance>

## **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 reapplying 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.

## CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

Of all the rules in this Handbook, there is one rule that is frequently broken unwittingly by students in the program. **A student 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/file/679>

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.

## CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

Once admitted to a graduate degree program, students must be registered for a minimum of one graduate credit hour during all phases of their graduate education.

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit the Maintain Continuous Enrollment request form (<https://graduate.asu.edu/file/maintain->

[continuous-enrollment-masters-and-certificate](#)). 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 adviser as soon as possible if they will not be able to meet continuous enrollment.

**Maximum Time Limit:** All work toward a master's degree must be completed within six consecutive years per ABOR policy.

## **TIMELINESS, PARTICIPATION, and COMMITMENT**

Your success in the program will require you to consistently meet deadlines and scheduled meetings. To this end, the Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies has a strict deadline policy. Please allow enough time to account for potential technical problems submitting work online.

Remember that graduate classes require considerably more work than undergraduate classes. MLSt courses are considered "accelerated" courses, that presume a student's willingness to prioritize their coursework, regardless of family, other classes, or work obligations. 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.

## **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/key-policies>



**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 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-manual.pdf>

## **ACADEMIC PROBATION**

**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
3. The student has more than two Incompletes since starting the program
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.

Every student has 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.

Students who fail to meet satisfactory academic progress as previously described will be placed on academic probation and notified by mail and email. Details for each situation will be provided in the

letter notifying the student that he/she is on academic probation.

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

Students on academic probation may be withdrawn from their academic program upon recommendation of the Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies to university Graduate Education.

For students placed on probation the previous semester who have met the condition of probation, the Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies will send a letter of reinstatement.

## **WITHDRAWALS**

**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) at: <https://issc.asu.edu> before submitting a Voluntary Withdrawal form, as it most likely will affect their visa status.

**Voluntary Withdrawal/Switch from a Graduate Degree 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. Visit: <https://students.asu.edu/voluntary-withdrawal-form>

**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](https://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/policies-procedures>

## **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
- Classes 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, they could reapply but learn that their previous credits must be considered as pre-admission 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. 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.

## GRADUATION AND DEGREE CONFERRAL

Students must apply for graduation at the beginning of the term in which they plan to graduate. Students may apply for graduation through your MyASU portal. Go to My Programs, under the Graduation tab.

Applying for graduation begins a review process essential for finishing the degree. The Graduation department will compare your Interactive Program of Study (iPOS) to your transcript. Classes are checked and matched by sequence and semester. (The right class in the wrong semester will be noted and brought to your attention.) It's essential to review your iPOS and make sure it is current before you apply to graduate.

Students who do not complete all requirements in the semester they intend to graduate will need to reapply for graduation the next semester; the application will not be automatically renewed.

Students must have their iPOS approved before they can apply for graduation. The application should be submitted online before the application deadline to avoid late fees. For more information, please visit <https://students.asu.edu/graduation-apply>.

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>.

If a student chooses not to attend the graduation or commencement ceremonies, they must still apply for graduation to earn their degree.

### **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.

**Convocation** is The College of Integrative Sciences and Arts' own graduation event. Graduates walk across the stage in front of a smaller audience. The Master's diploma cover is distributed at convocation.

The MLSt program faculty typically hosts a celebratory event for graduating students and their families following convocation. Be sure you have been invited!

## **STUDENT SERVICES and RESOURCES**

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 the Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies are committed to providing every resource possible for students to succeed academically, personally and professionally.

**ASU Libraries:** As a research university, ASU has an impressive library system spread across several physical buildings and campuses offering extensive online and hardcopy collections. The Tempe campus is home to the Hayden Library (main library on campus), the Music Library, the Design and 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. The MLSt class in The Research Process teaches how to best use these materials and resources, and your Canvas course shells provide links as well. The link to ASU Library One Search can be found here: <https://lib.asu.edu/>

**Online Graduate Tutoring and Writing Center:** The university provides assistance with writing and tutoring for a variety of subjects for graduate students. Both on-campus and Online students may enjoy access to writing assistance. For complete details:

ASU Graduate Writing Centers (currently open for student appointments):

Online: <https://tutoring.asu.edu/student-services/online-writing-graduate-support>

On campus: Tempe: Noble Library, room 280 (currently closed during quarantine)

**Technologies:** The MLSt program requires that you have access to use of a computer with internet access, a webcam (hopefully with audio capabilities) and a web browser, such as Chrome, Firefox, or Safari and ASU's Canvas platform.

**Zoom:** If your course meets via Zoom (either as a class, in groups, or in an instructor conference), you'll find your course Zoom link on the "MyClasses" section of your MyASU page.

There are a number [of very helpful resource links available to students](#) requiring assistance in learning Zoom skills. The ASU University Technology Office provides an excellent resource library: <https://uto.asu.edu/zoom-resources>.

Here is a list of some of the technologies, programs and platforms you are likely to encounter in MLSt courses:

- General computer access to create and upload photo and video
- Microsoft Office (PowerPoint, Word) (Note: [Microsoft 365](#) is free for current ASU students)
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free)
- [Adobe Flash Player](#) (free)
- Online platforms: *Perusall* and *PowerNotes*, *Loom*, *Zoom*, *Peerceptiv*, *VoiceThread*
- ASU and local libraries for film rentals, research and texts
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos
- Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
- Streaming services:
  - NETFLIX
  - Amazon Prime video
  - YouTube (including fee rentals)

This is not an exhaustive list as technologies are always changing, but this provides a good accounting of the types of programs you may be using.

*Note:* A smartphone, iPad, Chromebook, etc. will **not** be sufficient for completing your work in an online environment. **While you will be able to access course content with mobile devices, you must use a computer for all assignments, quizzes, and virtual labs completed in Canvas.**

**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, any issue you're dealing with, or whether you've had counseling before. Something as simple as talking to someone can help you improve your grades and manage stress. <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>

Support is available 24/7.

**In-person counseling: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

ASU Counseling Services, Student Services Building 234  
Tempe, AZ 85287 480-965-6146

**After-hours/weekends** Call EMPACT's 24-hour  
ASU-dedicated crisis hotline: 480 921-1006

**For life-threatening emergencies**

Call 911

**Financial Services:** The Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies offers a limited number of merit-based assistantships and fellowships for graduate students. As funding opportunities for MS students become available, we will let students know.

For all other financial questions, please contact ASU Financial Aid and Scholarship Services:  
<https://students.asu.edu/financialaid>

**Veterans and Military:** The Pat Tillman Veterans Center provides guidance and support for students who are veterans, active-duty military or military dependents. For more information, please call the office at 602-496-0152 or visit: <https://veterans.asu.edu/>

**International Students:** ASU's International Student and Scholars Center can provide support and answers to questions about visas, employment, scholarships and travel. To find more information or schedule an appointment with an ISSC advisor, visit the website:  
<https://issc.asu.edu/>

**Health and Fitness:** All ASU students enrolled in in-person programs have access to Sun Devil

Fitness facilities on all campuses. For more information about facilities, membership and group fitness classes, please visit: <https://fitness.asu.edu>

For information about health insurance and appointments with care providers, please see the ASU Health Services website: <https://eoss.asu.edu/health>

**Transportation and Parking:** Students may purchase parking and public transit permits through ASU Business and Finance. To learn more, visit: <https://cfo.asu.edu/pts-parking-downtown>

**Disability Resources:** 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 with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations.](#) Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are [responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation](#) to the DRC. Every effort is made to provide reasonable 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>, calling (480) 965-1234 or emailing [DRC@asu.edu](mailto:DRC@asu.edu). To speak with a specific office, please call: (480) 965-1234

**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 <http://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs/students>.

**Business Services/Student Accounts:** Student Business Services offer a variety of individual 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>.

**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>

## **INTERACTIVE PLAN of STUDY (iPOS)**

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 do not make expensive mistakes in enrollment.

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 Angela Giron and/or Program Manager Erica Peters will review it, approve or deny it (if denied you will receive an email and comments as to why it was denied, and will have the opportunity to make changes to resubmit).

Once your iPOS is approved it will be sent 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. It is best to submit your iPOS no later than the second semester. Approach an advisor with assistance on crafting and maintaining an iPOS!

## **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 (through your MyASU portal). 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 MLSt 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 MLSt 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.

## **MLSt CONCENTRATIONS**

The Faculty of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies is actively working with other units, schools, and colleges to build concentrations that reflect specializations suited to pair with Liberal Studies. When they are officially built they will be listed here. In the meantime, please let your teachers, advisors, or the graduate director know your goals and we will do our best to facilitate your success.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Core Classes**

Students select **three core classes** to help ensure smooth entry into graduate study with MLSt.. 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*  
In this Core course, we take time with key concepts in writing: narrativity

(autobiographical storytelling), rhetorical writing, lyrical sensibilities, and research-based writing. We think about the nature of critical thinking and writing, and endeavor to avert the impulse to "debate." We observe and discuss with great interest some of the problems that we face, as individual human beings, in a troubling (and comforting) world. We identify ourselves as individuals that care about these problems. We identify ourselves as avid readers and observers of lives beyond our own. Finally, we also review graduate-level expectations in writing, research, and editing our own work.

- *MLS 503: Ethics, Science and Culture*

This Core course introduces an ethical approach related to the practice of art, science, and unlimited sense of "culture" in our discussions, critical thinking and writing, and research.

~ *Ethics*. What is the definition of that term? Are we "ethical" people? To what extent do we apply ourselves to an ethical sensibility in our lives? How do we assimilate an ethical element within all of the things we care about?

~ *Science*. What do we mean by "science"? You have embraced a college of integrative sciences and the arts. Where is that intersection, for you?

~ *Culture*. What is the meaning of "culture," for you? Arts, politics, athletics, education? How do you intersect ethics and your own cultural pursuits?

As a Core course, we reinforce the skills expected of a graduate level student with regard to narrative and rhetorical writing, alongside graduate research skills.

- *MLS 504: Film and Media Analysis*

This Core class provides an introduction to film and media analysis. By examining the cultural currencies of film and media through various theoretical lenses, as well as methodologies of production we will develop our critical and creative viewership muscles. To assist and inform analysis development, we will engage a series of writings, films, structured analysis, peer work and discussions. Themes and ideas explored may include, humanity, justice, identity and place.

- *MLS 502: Religion, Culture, and Health*

The World Health Organization has defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This multifaceted definition points to the material, socio-cultural and spiritual or religious influences that shape health. This Core class is not an in-depth study of religion, but

instead a journey into the intersections of individual and social practices and beliefs that shape health.

### **Elective Courses: MLS 598 (Special Topics)**

- *MLS 598: The Research Process*  
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 MLSt classes.
- *MLS 598: Hip Hop: Arts, Aesthetics & Cyphers of Cultural Citizenship*  
This course is a selective, historico-cultural analysis of hip hop arts, aesthetics and culture organized through 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) and culminating in a creative and critical engagement of Hip Hop's arts and aesthetics to explore a critical societal issue.
- *MLS 598: Crimes and Punishment*  
Tracing the historical antecedents of mass incarceration, from American slavery, to the 13th amendment and its loop hole, which abolished slavery except for convicts, through codes, policies, laws and practices that gave rise to the prison-industrial complex, we examine mutable systems of oppression and racism in the U.S. today. Course topics may include: prison abolition, defunding the police, felony disenfranchisement, prison labor, the epidemiology of mass incarceration, child incarceration, parenting from prison, the drug wars, solitary confinement, criminalization of LGBTQIA+ youth experiencing homelessness and immigrant incarceration. We pay particular attention to the vital roles of media and popular culture in perpetuating and promoting mythologies and narratives of criminality, in particular Black criminality. We root ourselves in our empathy and humanity as a foundation to engage difficult conversations on the visceral, psychological and cultural

impacts of crimes and punishment.

- *MLS 598: Inviting the Wolf In: Cultural Taboo in Text and Visual Texts*  
Here, we 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.
- *MLS 598: 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 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 at home, and compose reactions both to the films you see and the extratextual materials you collect.
- *MLS: 598: Food, Film and Culture*  
This course examines food and its place in telling the contested stories of who "we" are. After all, food is never just food, it is a medium by which we can explore our deeper humanity, as well as our diverse identities. Food reveals issues of equity, justice, diversity and inclusion whether in media, or our daily lives. From Instagram, TVshows, food writing/blogs, diet/health food industry, cookbooks, memoirs, etc) food (as) performance in our daily lives and in art, we root ourselves in our own embodied knowledges of food first, and then examine selected readings, films and media to analyze and (re)imagine food and its possibilities for health, storytelling, and ability to work for justice and equity for all.
- *MLS 598: 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?

- *MLS 598: Exploring Identity in American Life*  
This course examines enduring and contested narratives, monuments, myths, and histories around what it means to be a USAmerican. Engaging a broad array of cultural performances and productions, as well as historical records, we excavate and deconstruct historical underpinnings and legacies of dominant USAmerican narratives, identities and foundational myths. Drawing from this informed and critical history, we then engage our creative capacities to envision and perhaps, create our way toward a more liberatory future.
- *MLS 598: '50s: The Decade of Denial*  
Cultural and historical inquiries 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.
- *MLS 598: The '60s Decade of Turmoil*  
Cultural and historical inquiries 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.
- *MLS 598: 70s: Decade of Upheaval and Transformation*  
Cultural and historical inquiries 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.
- *MLS 598: 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. 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?

- *MLS 598: Poetry and Memory*  
This course 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 poets ourselves, trust in our never-ending blossoming bank of memory to create new poems? We read selected works of published contemporary and classic poets, and try our hand at our own, thus inspired.
- *MLS 598: Writing the Journey: Travel Narratives*  
Here we embrace the love of travel -- the human desire to move, with curiosity, respect, and a desire to observe, truly learn, and with a true sense of adventure -- from one geographical place to another. In addition, we embrace our human impulse to chronicle these adventures: these meditations of change, through our writing. Here, we cultivate an awareness of a personal philosophy of why we, as humans, travel -- and why we write about it. In doing so, we develop a sense of craft and finesse when writing about travel. We explore a strong sense of the tradition, as well as the modern sense, of travel writing and travel writing culture, including journaling and photography.
- *MLS 598: Memoir and Personal Essay*  
This writing-intensive class introduces the techniques of creative nonfiction writing leaning on your own life experiences. Memoir gives you the opportunity to explore memories and to learn writing craft techniques such as scene, dialogue, descriptive language, narration, reflection and musing. The Personal Essay focuses on memories dealing with a specific topic, unified by a theme. 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 share those stories with one another, through support and trust.
- *MLS: 598: Humor Writing*  
This enjoyable course is an observant survey that covers a breadth of types of humor writing and reading (principally American) that marks history and cultural points of interest, gender and racial accomplishments, a variety of humor types, and touches on various alternative forms of humor writing. Rather than obsess on the relatively dull parlay of personal taste on "what's funny" versus "what's *not* funny," we lend a critical

eye to the topics, methods of storytelling and jokes, gestures and patterns of “funniness” and how humor earns its authentic position and value in literature. Here, we identify and become well-versed in a number of subgenres and movements in the wild world of humor writing.

- *MLS 598: Food Writing*  
The enjoyment of writing about food has ancient origins, when rhapsodizing about the pleasures of food are addressed with reference to all human (perhaps all living) sensory experience. This tradition has evolved joyfully into the 21st century, as the genre of food writing (including essays, works of fiction, theater, visual and media arts) enjoys unprecedented popularity. Global cultural connection is long associated with the acquisition, preparation, presentation, and taking of meals. This course invites students to not only pursue new knowledge about the equally simple and complex relationship we have to food: we tell our own “food stories,” as well.
- *MLS 598: 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 *addressing* 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.
- *MLS 598: Documentary Film*  
This course is structured to analyze various visual and categorical and rhetorical modes used by documentary filmmakers to comment on issues of social and cultural importance through cinema. Documentaries offer rich, multilayered, nonfiction narratives that require attentive viewing and analysis. This course will focus on developing your recognition of communicative strategies associated with documentaries and identifying the genre and historical context surrounding each production. Students will apply critical analysis to interpreting the messages embedded in the respective documentary films viewed.
- *MLS 598: 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.

- *MLS 598: 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've completed the course, 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.

### **Individual (Independent) Study Courses**

During the course of the student journey with MLSt, it's encouraged that you think about, and plan for, your Applied Project -- the exit project of the MLSt program (in lieu of a thesis project). As you do so, consider taking independent studies that will help you prepare your Applied Project.

- *MLS 590: Reading and Conference*  
Select a topic in consultation with your instructor. Spend the session reading books, articles and/or viewing films that you feel may inform your Applied Project. Students maintain a detailed journal and check in with their instructor on a weekly basis. (This class is repeatable one time for credit.) Talk to your advisor about options!
- *MLS 580: Practicum*  
This is offered for extended research, writing and editing, related to your Applied Project.. While the Reading and Conference focuses on research, the practicum emphasizes creating something based on being "in the field," or actually *applying* your research or creative efforts. There are a great number of options here. Students keep detailed notes and writings in a weekly journal describing their process. (This class is repeatable one time for credit.)

### **THE APPLIED PROJECT**

The Applied Project is the final effort created and submitted by a graduating MLSt student. It is the equivalent of a "thesis" or "capstone" project. This independent-study Project is approved and mentored by a faculty member. There are a huge number of options for any student, including:

- An anthology of original creative work
- Extended research project
- Curated blog focused on personal interest
- Film or video project (including scripts)
- Theatrical, dance, spoken-word, musical, or other performance productions
- Lesson plans, syllabi, and other educational materials
- Community or civic projects
- Efforts in publishing
- Many more choices

All students are urged to begin thinking about their Applied Projects as soon as they enter the MLSt degree program, and sculpting their Program of Study accordingly.