



UNIVERSITY OF
DETROIT
MERCY

GRADUATE PROGRAM

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

Discover Inspiration in the Pursuit of Intellectual Excellence

Design your own degree within the structure provided by three “core” seminars. Receive the active assistance of a member of the University’s graduate faculty in tailoring a curriculum to fit your interests. This faculty mentor, chosen by the student, closely follows the candidate’s progress throughout the pursuit of the degree.

The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) at University of Detroit Mercy is a highly-personalized course of study. It is designed for individuals who believe that learning is a lifelong endeavor and who recognize that education is the means for dealing with life’s changes.

The MALS is for those who wish to explore and understand the social, cultural and humanistic dimensions and context of today’s world and their own individual lives. Most of all, the program is for people who value their freedom and independence to think and to understand.

Admission Requirements

Admission to the program is approved by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Education upon recommendation of the program director. To be admitted, the applicant must:

- Submit evidence of a B.A. from an accredited institution, with at least a 2.75 grade point average (GPA).
- Submit a written statement (approx. 1500 words in length) setting forth your motivation for entering the program, a plan of study and your overall goals for yourself in the program.
- Complete a personal interview with the program director.

Degree Requirements

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

Education Concentration

Required Courses:

MLS 5000 Introduction to Liberal Studies
MLS 5060 Final Project

One of the Following:

MLS 5010 Seminar in the History of Ideas
MLS 5020 Seminar in Study of Society/Change
MLS 5030 Seminar in Study of Culture/Society

Four Courses from the Following:

MLS 5410 Constitutional Law
MLS 5440 Society and Education
MLS 5442 Educational Policy Studies
MLS 5050 Directed Studies (education focus)
EDU 5--- Any 5000-level EDU course

3 Electives* (9 credits)

*The remaining three electives are chosen with the input and approval of the student’s program mentor.

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Individualized Concentration

The individualized concentration permits maximum flexibility and personal customization within a student-created curricular design, subject to the program director's endorsement. This concentration is for the student who wishes to design an individualized course of study completes a 30-hour program based on a nine-credit-hour, three-course core.

Required Courses:

MLS 5000 Introduction to Liberal Studies
MLS 5060 Final Project

One of the Following:

MLS 5010 Seminar in the History of Ideas
MLS 5020 Seminar in Study of Society/Change
MLS 5030 Seminar in Study of Culture/Society

7 Additional Electives* (21 credits)

*The remaining 21 credit hours are distributed across disciplinary lines in accordance with a program of study designed by the student and his or her mentor and may consist of formal courses or a combination of formal courses and individual readings or tutorials.

Religious Studies Concentration

Required Courses:

MLS 5000 Introduction to Liberal Studies
MLS 5060 Final Project

One of the Following:

MLS 5010 Seminar in the History of Ideas
MLS 5020 Seminar in Study of Society/Change
MLS 5030 Seminar in Study of Culture/Society

Four Courses from the Following:

MLS 5010 Seminar in the History of Ideas
(religious studies focus)
MLS 5111 Academic Study of Religion
MLS 5120 Modern Roman Catholic Theology
MLS 5132 Sexuality and Love in Christian Thought
MLS 5150 Christian Gospels
MLS 5170 Judaism
MLS 5180 Buddhism
MLS 5230 Christianity and World Religions
MLS 5240 Feminist Biblical Interpretation
MLS 5420 Problems in Social Ethics
MLS 5500 Religion and Psychology
MLS 5540 Gender and Religion
MLS 5550 Poets, Mystics and God
MLS 5570 Spiritual Autobiographies

3 Electives* (9 credits)

*The remaining three electives are chosen with the input and approval of the student's program mentor.

MLS Course Descriptions

MLS 5000 Introduction to Liberal Studies

Acquaints students with the various perspectives contained within liberal studies. A second, thematic and interdisciplinary seminar is chosen from a range of three special courses, which vary in content from term to term.

MLS 5060 Final Project

Under the direction of a faculty mentor, the student produces a substantive, integrative project that is submitted for the critical consideration of his or her colleagues.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I take any courses I want?

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

Will this degree get me a better job?

Not necessarily. The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies is not a specific professional degree or substitute for professional certification. In some professions — for example, the teaching profession—the M.A.L.S. can be an acceptable master's degree for purposes of advancement and salary increases. We recommend that prospective students talk first with their employers, to determine whether the degree will be satisfactory. The same applies to students interested in going on to further graduate study in a specific discipline. Talk to the appropriate party at the university you hope to attend. In some cases, the M.A.L.S. can be an acceptable course of study in preparation for advanced graduate work; in others, it cannot. Find out before you enroll!

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

Definitely. If a course is offered that fits into a student's program of study but is not being offered at the graduate level, take the course as MLS 5050 (courses that apply are 3000-level and above). This is a number reserved for tutorials, directed readings/study courses, and other unusual circumstances. Simply inform the Instructor of the course that you are taking as MLS 5050 and give him or her the Permission for Directed Studies form. This is for two reasons. First, your name will not appear on the actual class list and secondly, this will let the instructor know that you are taking the course as part of the MMALS program and that additional coursework, at the graduate level, is required.

What is the final project?

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



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

Regular contact with your personal advisor/mentor is extremely important. Unless you are the advisee of the program director, contact with the director can be minimal. The reason to keep in regular touch with your advisor, however, is simple: changes or adjustments to the program, planning and work on the final project, etc., can be accomplished smoothly only with regular contact. One of the most important functions performed by an advisor is to ask — constantly — the question: “How does this fit in with your plan/goals?” This prevents the creation of a block of courses or program of study that is lacking in fundamental coherence. One of the special features of the MALS program is the relationship between student and advisor — an ongoing process of evaluation and reconsideration of goals and means, since few programs of study remain unchanged or unaltered from beginning to end.

Is financial aid available?

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