

Academic Year 2018 – 2019

Master of Liberal Studies Handbook



College of Liberal Arts
Metropolitan State University
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Welcome!

This handbook presents a selection of information about the Master of Liberal Studies program (MA). If after reading it you have any additional questions, please contact the MLS Director.

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE MLS PROGRAM

The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies is a student-centered, interdisciplinary graduate program designed for individuals who have successfully completed a bachelor's degree. Admitted students progress from an introductory seminar through a series of team-taught courses to explore advanced liberal arts themes and issues through methodologies drawn from several disciplines. Students create major research projects aligned with their personal educational goals and support and develop their work on these projects through a series of graduate-level Supporting Study courses or independent studies. For each student, the MLS program culminates in the creation of a self-directed Capstone Project that draws from and builds upon the program **as a whole**.

PROGRAM GOALS: WHAT'S TO BE GAINED FROM GRADUATE STUDY IN LIBERAL ARTS?

MLS graduates will broaden and deepen their store of **knowledge** through the specific liberal arts content of their MLS seminars, MLS Explorations, and MLS Supporting Study course work.

MLS graduates will gain enhanced, graduate-level **skills**:

- Research locating and organizing information
- Analysis critical thinking, source evaluation
- Communication writing, oral presentation, discussion

MLS graduates will have succeeded in applying skills and knowledge within structured opportunities for self-directed **research**, employing interdisciplinary perspectives inclusive of diverse viewpoints and anchored in the liberal arts, leading to effective presentations of research within a student-centered community of motivated adult learners similarly engaged.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL BENEFITS

Advanced liberal arts study expands one's potential for analysis, communication, critical thinking, cultural and multicultural understanding, intellectual resourcefulness, problem-solving and research. Liberal studies skills and knowledge are portable and applicable in the workplace, the community and the personal sphere. In an era of information explosion and rapid global development, it is more timely than ever to invest in advanced liberal arts study.

Some employees need a master's degree as a prerequisite for supervisory or managerial positions. Our program offers an alternative to the MBA, one centered in the liberal arts, but still building skills relevant to successful management. Other individuals can qualify for raises or promotions with a graduate degree. And many pursue post baccalaureate education for personal enrichment, including those not interested in predetermined courses of study.

GRADUATE LIBERAL STUDIES AT METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Metropolitan State University is committed to make education accessible to busy working adults. The Master of Liberal Studies program is designed to help its students succeed in meeting their individual educational objectives:

- Evening and weekend classes
- Flexible program completion guidelines
- Opportunities for independent study and internships

This MLS program reflects the mission of Metropolitan State University in several ways.

- The MLS program welcomes and encourages **diversity** in students, faculty and topics of study alike, capitalizing upon a range of backgrounds and life experiences.
- As part of Metropolitan State’s curriculum, MLS courses will be affordable and offered in formats and at times convenient for working adult learners, maximizing **accessibility**.

The MLS is a strongly **student-centered program**, leading each student towards academic success through independent research projects within and across courses and all building towards to a student-designed Capstone Project that supports each student’s pursuit of his or her **educational goals** within the liberal arts.

- Taught by experienced university professors, the MLS is a **high-quality liberal arts** program, with an unshakeable commitment to **academic excellence**.
- The MLS program is situated squarely **within the context of lifelong learning**, welcoming students seeking post-baccalaureate liberal arts study and preparing them with enhanced skills and knowledge to continue that study throughout their lives.

THE MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM DESIGN

An admitted MLS student begins by taking “MLS 600 Introductory Seminar,” which teaches methods of interdisciplinary inquiry through variable topics within which students craft individual projects. Arising from interactions with seminar team teachers and with other students, one of the seminar’s outcomes is analysis and refinement of each student’s educational objectives within the framework of MLS program resources.

Following MLS 600, a student then selects at least three iterations of “MLS 620: Master of Liberal Studies Exploration.” Topics vary, but each MLS 620 encourages interdisciplinary inquiry, with opportunities to pursue individual interests as these relate to the Exploration’s theme. For example, a student interested in world politics and economics might take an Exploration on the topic of globalism. Students also select 12 credits of Supporting Study at the 500G or higher level, which can include independent studies or internships. All MLS Supporting Study credits must be **clearly relevant** to the student’s MLS program, as determined by the MLS Director.

MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES ACADEMIC ADVISING

Since its founding, Metropolitan State University has emphasized a student-centered educational philosophy with strong faculty involvement in advising. For MLS students, advising occurs in several ways. One is embedded in “MLS 600 Introductory Seminar,” where students articulate their educational objectives.

Each MLS student will also be assigned a graduate faculty advisor, normally the MLS Program Director, who can advise students towards appropriate course selection and also help to arrange creative learning strategies, including customized independent studies and internships.

As a student nears completion of the MLS program, the MLS Program Director arranges the appointment of a faculty Reader from a liberal arts discipline related to the student’s evolving Capstone Project. This faculty Reader reviews a student’s Capstone Project and thus, in addition to the team teachers of MLS 690, can advise to reinforce or enhance cohesion, persuasiveness, and overall quality in the final stages of a student’s MLS program.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The MLS program welcomes applications from international students. Please visit the website <http://www.metrostate.edu/studentaff/int/index.html> and contact the International Student Services Office: Dr. Kamal Ali Elbasher, Director (Kamal.Elbasher@metrostate.edu) with any questions regarding international student processing. Be prepared to provide the following upon the request of the Admissions Office:

- Affidavit of Financial Support (bank statements, scholarship reward, sponsorship letter, etc.)
- Photocopy of passport and I-94
- Transfer Verification Form
- Copy of current I-20
- A foreign residential address

In addition to other documents required for the application packet, the following are required of applicants whose first language is not English for their application to be considered complete:

- **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL or IELTS) Score Report**
 - TOEFL: The Educational Testing Service: www.ets.org (or by mail to TOEFL Services, ETS, P.O. Box 6151, Princeton, NJ 08541-6151, (609) 771-7100)
 - IELTS: The International English Language Testing System: <https://www.ielts.org/en-us>
 - A TOEFL or IELTS test score is not required if you have earned a degree from an accredited US institution.

TOEFL: Your most recent score must be at least 600 for the paper-and-pencil test or at least 250 for the computer-based test (equivalent to 100 on Internet Based Test).

IELTS: Your most recent score must be at least 7.

World Education Services (WES) or Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE)

These two services evaluate educational credentials from any country in the world into their U.S. equivalents. It describes each certificate, diploma or degree that you have earned and states its academic equivalency in the United States. Contact either organization by going to their respective websites, www.wes.org or www.ece.org. This is not required if you acquired your baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution within the United States.

All score reports and transcript evaluations should be mailed to:

Master of Liberal Studies Program
Metropolitan State University
700 East Seventh Street
Saint Paul, MN 55106-5000

LIBERAL ARTS: IS THE MLS FOR ME?

The programs in a university have a variety of different goals. Some departments teach students skills that are directly applicable to specific jobs.

Other departments, those in liberal arts, have somewhat different goals. They usually do not focus directly on job skills (though liberal arts can make learning job skills easier). The liberal arts disciplines are more interested in helping individuals understand themselves, other people and the world around them.

Characteristics of liberal arts students include:

- An awareness that liberal arts study tends to be beneficially abstract and theoretical;
- A commitment to developing tools of critique and critical reasoning;
- An awareness of the importance of developing moral or narrative imagination;
- A commitment to developing both contemplative and creative skills;
- An awareness of the potentialities flowing from informed appreciation of the arts.

Liberal arts disciplines promote such traits and achievements not by description or enactment of established procedures. Rather, they seek ways of telling stories, or of conceptualizing events and themes that offer models for various and therefore valuable ways of thinking about the self and its relation to the social and natural worlds.

The Liberal Arts in the MLS Program

In the “MLS 600 Introductory Seminar,” each student constructs a theme that will organize his/her multidisciplinary liberal arts education in the MLS program, and writes an essay explaining how courses selected for each student’s MLS program will help develop that theme. Discipline-based liberal arts Supporting Study courses or independent studies play an important role here. In a different way, the three iterations of “MLS 620 Exploration” will also contribute as students bring their evolving MLS themes to interact with the general topic of each separate Exploration. Liberal arts internships may also help develop a student’s theme. Each student must have an approved “Capstone Application” before registering for the “MLS 690 MLS Capstone Course.”

The liberal arts skills and knowledge—and perspectives—gained through Supporting Study and Explorations provide background, context and especially depth for the relatively focused MLS Capstone Project. All Capstone Projects are expected to be solidly grounded in a suitably broad range of interdisciplinary liberal arts scholarship, developed across each student’s MLS program **as a whole**.

MORE ON ACADEMIC PREPARATION FOR THE MLS

Among its other application requirements, the MLS calls for a “B.A. or B.S. degree from an accredited institution,” with

- “A major, or significant course work in liberal arts disciplines,” and
- “A minimum GPA of 3.00 from the degree-granting institution”

A Major in a Liberal Arts Discipline . . .

The liberal arts have been defined as academic disciplines that “provide information of general cultural concern.” The liberal arts may thus be thought of as distinct from professional or technical education, although degree programs vary in content and nomenclature from institution to institution. At Metropolitan State University, MLS disciplines and associated faculty are located in the College of Liberal Arts, and provide the basis and support for MLS coursework and Capstone Projects. The Capstone Projects are to derive from research in at least two of the following disciplines (or their sub-fields), and are to be expressed in persuasive writing and speaking:

Arts	History	Philosophy
Communications	Humanities	Religious Studies
Ethnic Studies	Linguistics	Social Sciences
Gender Studies	Literature	Writing

MLS disciplines do not include business, computer science, criminal justice studies, education, human services, law enforcement, math, natural sciences, nursing, psychology, social work, or other applied or vocational fields. These disciplines and associated faculty are not located in the College of Liberal Arts.

Significant Course Work in Liberal Arts Disciplines . . .

This would typically mean **at least 20 upper division semester credits with a GPA of at least 3.00**, in some combination of the disciplines listed above (or their sub-fields).

Minimum GPA of 3.00 . . .

Exceptions to this standard would be **rare** and based only upon the MLS Admissions Committee’s recognition of special circumstances for the lower GPA and the candidate’s clear demonstration of additional compensatory strengths.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GRADUATE-LEVEL EDUCATION IN THE MLS PROGRAM

- Because the MLS is by definition generalist and interdisciplinary, it does not seek to establish a credential for any specific profession.
- The MLS program overall does not develop or build either the specific disciplinary methodology or the specific expertise typically employed and developed through a master's program in a single discipline.
- As a rule, all of a student's MLS coursework will be drawn from the curricula of the College of Liberal Arts.
- Compared to undergraduate study, the MLS has in common with other master's programs the expectation of increased sophistication in academic work:
 - The MLS graduate student will be expected to demonstrate greater intellectual initiative and independence in framing scholarly inquiries and analysis, exercising critical and creative thought and producing results;
 - The MLS graduate student will evaluate and apply theoretical materials in order to produce analytical and informed scholarship.
 - The MLS graduate student will be expected to develop both written and oral exposition and argumentation, within the conventions of professional liberal arts discourse, in order to write and speak persuasively to a generalist audience of other MLS students and MLS faculty.

MLS STUDENTS

Education

MLS students have undergraduate degrees, in some cases additional graduate work.

Employment

MLS students work in a wide variety of careers in business, education, and services.

Viewpoints

“I am confident that this program aligns with my academic goals, providing me with more opportunities to not only work on my writing, but enabling me to focus on particular areas of interest while benefiting from a liberal arts education.

“ . . . I mean to broaden my knowledge of art and literature, which I focused on during my undergraduate studies, to include other areas of the liberal arts, specifically history and philosophy. I think an interdisciplinary program such as this is the perfect complement to my previous work. . . .” *Michelle Eide*

“ . . . [M]ost theoretical frameworks in the humanities and social sciences intersect with their counterparts in some way and further . . . the questions I want to explore in my graduate studies—questions about hegemonic social arrangements and their underlying constructs of race, class, gender, etc.—seem best approached from an interdisciplinary perspective. I believe graduate liberal studies will deepen my multicultural, cross-disciplinary knowledge in ways that will undoubtedly benefit my students, especially those who need the most support.” *Katherine Kraemer*

“Interdisciplinary study promotes asking the big questions fundamental to understanding social, political and cultural life. That’s not something necessarily nurtured in today’s society, which seems to reward short-term thinking. In that sense, a big-picture, interdisciplinary approach offers a needed counterpoint. . . . I also expect to sharpen my critical thinking, resourcefulness, problem-solving and researching skills. . . . Broadly speaking, I anticipate the understanding and skills I learn from the Master of Liberal Studies Program will help me lead a richer, fuller and more examined life.” *Harvey Meyer*

“. . . I want and need to be intellectually provoked and challenged in a respectful environment. . . . I can’t imagine a topic that wouldn’t engage my interests. I am a devout enthusiast of an interdisciplinary approach to study. . . What do I hope to gain from my study in this program? Knowledge. Enhanced creativity. The pleasure of new friendships. Days of wonder.” *Nancy Bagshaw-Reasoner*

MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES COURSES

MLS 600 INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR

Catalog Description

The seminar will address aspects of theory, method, research and knowledge formation in selected disciplines within communications, humanities, and social sciences. The course will move from the study of selected disciplines to an interdisciplinary study of the connections among disciplines and its implications for the students’ program of study and their final research project.

A Message from the MLS 600 Faculty

The goal of this seminar is two-fold; there is a theoretical as well as a practical goal. Theoretically, we want students to begin to think about how research and knowledge construction occur, both in traditional disciplines and in several kinds of interdisciplinary work. We want them to carry this awareness into all of their MLS courses as an aid to developing the kind of reflection a graduate education requires. Toward this end, we will discuss both the traditional roles of theory and method, as well as the potentially constitutive roles of political and social context. We will look at selected disciplines in communications, humanities, and social sciences.

Practically, we want to help students construct a preliminary plan of study for their MLS program and a proposal for their MLS Capstone Project. We will help them develop a guiding theme for their MLS program, one that will organize both the Supporting Study courses they choose, as well as their participation in the 620 MLS seminars. We will help them as well in creating a preliminary proposal and background bibliography for their Capstone Project.

MLS 620 EXPLORATIONS

About the MLS 620 Exploration: _____

The Explorations Seminars, a requirement within Metropolitan State's MLS degree program, bring students and faculty together to explore liberal arts topics of consequence that relate to a common theme. The co-instructors have selected this theme so that it will encourage

- an interdisciplinary perspective, anchored in the liberal arts;
- opportunities to pursue individual interest areas related to the Exploration's theme;
- opportunities for research, both primary and secondary.
- the application of critical thinking skills;
- opportunities to practice scholarly writing and persuasive speaking.

An essential component of this class is the open and respectful exchange of ideas. As a graduate seminar, this class requires students to engage in individual research and share their insights through large and small group discussion. During the term, each student will have the opportunity to present and/or to lead class discussion on a topic selected by the student and the instructors. The goal here is sustained, perceptive and critical conversation on challenging topics, conducted through class participation, presentation and written assignments.

Almost all of the MLS 620 Explorations are scheduled for fifteen once-a-week meetings of three hours and 20 minutes each, on a weekday evening, at the university's Saint Paul or Midway centers. Occasionally, a once-a-week Saturday format may be used. There are currently no plans to offer the MLS curriculum during weekday business hours or online.

MLS 620 EXPLORATIONS OFFERED IN PRIOR YEARS

Note: Most Explorations are offered only once, although the faculty associated with each topic may still serve as resources for consultations, and possibly for Supporting Study independent studies. A few Explorations are repeated after about three years; these are marked: * = *Repeated*.

Fall 2007	Gender, Sport and Culture Professors Aronson and Kantar
Spring 2008	One World and Many: Multiple Perspectives on Globalization* Professors Goldade, O'Connell and T. Wagstrom
Fall 2008	The Chapbook Workshop* Professors Patterson and Rasmussen
Spring 2009	Technological Momentum and User Voices* Professors Frazzini and Sadler
Spring 2009	Art and War Professor Galt

Fall 2009	Race: The Excavation of an Idea* Professor DeSoto
Fall 2009	Art and Social Control* Professors Gremore and Whitson
Spring 2010	Creative Writing and Asian Poetic Tradition Professors Hill and Lee
Spring 2010	Globalization* Professors Nowak, Ortiz and T. Wagstrom
Fall 2010	Violence and Nonviolence* Professors T. Wagstrom and Durant
Fall 2010	Uncommon Knowledge Professors Estrada and Leibel
Spring 2011	The Chapbook Workshop* Professors Patterson and Rasmussen
Spring 2011	The Life of the Mind Professors Bute and Hill
Fall 2011	Social Evolution in the Information Age Professors Gottshalk and Luoma
Fall 2011	Voices in the Wilderness: Topographies of (Self-)Discovery Professor McCarthy
Spring 2012	Approaches to the Study of Gender and Sexuality Professors DeSoto and McCartan
Spring 2012	Technological Momentum and User Voices Professors Frazzini and Sadler
Fall 2012	Power, Propaganda and Politics: The 2012 Election Professors Filner and McCarthy
Fall 2012	Social Media and Digital Identities Professors Carlson and DeJonghe
Spring 2013	Art and Social Control* Professors Gremore and Whitson
Spring 2013	Globalization* Professors Frazzini and T. Wagstrom

Fall 2013	The Chapbook Workshop* Professors Rasmussen and Patterson
Fall 2013	Death Professor McCarthy
Spring 2014	Race: The Excavation of an Idea* Professor DeSoto
Spring 2014	Utopian Studies Professors Atchison and Tedder
Fall 2014	Categories of Identity: Making and Breaking Borders Professors Filner and McCarthy
Fall 2014	Violence and Nonviolence* Professors Durant and T. Wagstrom
Spring 2015	The Rhetoric of Research* Professors Bute, DeJonghe and T. Wagstrom
Spring 2015	The Search for Immortality Professors Frykman and Schroeder
Fall 2015	Marginalized Knowledge Professors Vaughan and Larson
Fall 2015	People, Plants and Biotechnology Professors Tuominen and Sadler
Spring 2016	Writing and Speaking for Academic Success Professors Schroeder and McCartan
Spring 2016	Public History and Citizenship Professors David and T. Wagstrom
Fall 2016	Politics as Performance: Discerning Authentic Leadership Professors Filner and McCarthy
Fall 2016	Globalization* Professors DeJonghe, Earhart, and T. Wagstrom
Spring 2017	Rhetoric, Research, and Writing* Professors Bute, DeJonghe and T. Wagstrom
Spring 2017	Approaches to Emotion Professors O'Dougherty and Omdahl

Fall 2017	Disconnect: Re-imagining Wilderness in the 21st Century Professor Thomas McCarthy
Spring 2018	Race: Excavation of an Idea* Professor Aureliano DeSoto
Fall 2018	Rhetoric, Research, and Writing in the Age of Trump* Professors Monte Bute, Jennifer DeJonghe, Thor Wagstrom
Spring 2019	Marginalized Knowledge* Professors Margaret Vaughan and Christine Larson

Note: Full descriptions of all Explorations are available from the MLS Director.

MLS 620 EXPLORATIONS: FOUR SAMPLE DESCRIPTIONS

Spring 2013	Art and Social Control Professors Gremore and Whitson
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The topic of art and social control invites students to examine how political, religious, and social power have spoken in works of art—and also to consider how the less powerful have used art to talk back. The course looks at sculpture, painting, architecture, photography, and such verbal texts as poetry and song lyrics. We will focus especially on artworks from across the historical and geographical spectrum whose discourse is about individual and group identity, power relations among groups, or social behavior. (By “social behavior” we mean either the “appropriate” or assumed behavior of people who belong to particular social groups, or the behavior expected of individuals in any public setting.) The goal of the explorations will be to situate works of art in their historical and cultural context by understanding them as “voices” in a discourse of power and selfhood. That is, we want to examine how specific works of art may function in specific historical contexts to provide individuals or groups (both powerful and less powerful) with understandings of who they are, how they fit into the social order, and what their possibilities in life are. Working together towards that goal, the class will first examine selected artworks from ancient, classical, medieval, and renaissance cultures, and will then move into more contemporary examples, including a selection of works from outside the Western tradition.

Spring 2015

The Rhetoric of Research

Professors Bute, DeJonghe, and Wagstrom

Every Master of Liberal Studies student must complete a Capstone Project. This final product is neither a compilation of facts nor a synthesis of others' research. It is an original inquiry unified by a thesis, an assertion buttressed by a unique argument. As three noted rhetoricians put it, "Scholarship uses argument, and argument uses rhetoric." Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, and MLS students will use rhetorical tools to convince readers of their scholarly argument. This exploration scrutinizes the rhetorical structure of each student's Capstone Project. The course is suitable for beginning, intermediate, or advanced graduate students.

Fall 2015 and 2019 **Marginalized Knowledge**

Professors Vaughan and Larson

Students will deepen "their store of knowledge" (as stated in the MLS Handbook) by researching, discussing, and writing about the political and social value of knowledge. Focus will be on settings and groups that are perceived as having less structured forms of knowledge that generally do not constitute elite ideas of knowledge and therefore, may be termed "marginalized knowledge" or "subjugated knowledge." These groups include Indigenous Peoples, those in blue-collar professions, and local communities with know-how on particular issues or skills. Students will also practice using interdisciplinary approaches in case studies and homework assignments and can focus on topics that relate to their capstone project. Additionally, this course intends to build a variety of skills useful for completing the course work in MLS such as interdisciplinary thinking, research methods, close reading, and practice of oral presentation skills. The course is intended for students to gain insights that include a complicated, nuanced notion of the concept of knowledge.

Spring 2017

Approaches to Emotion

Professors O'Dougherty and Omdahl

Across the liberal arts and throughout the centuries, the elicitation, expression, and implications of human emotions have been widely addressed. Philosophers, psychologists, and anthropologists have contributed major approaches to the understanding of human emotion. While the psychological perspective focuses on the individual and universal qualities of emotion, the anthropological explores how humans in diverse societies engage in the production and expression of emotion in their daily lives. This course will explore key approaches from each of these disciplines and present thematic applications in such contexts as family, politics, health care, and trauma and loss. We will explore questions such as: What is an emotion? What gives rise to emotions? Are emotions universal or culturally specific? How are major life experiences affected by cultural context? How are emotions gendered? and How are emotions induced to influence compliance with recommended practices or political views?

MLS SUPPORTING STUDY

Each MLS student is required to complete 12 Supporting Study graduate credits, in addition to MLS 600, three sections of MLS 620 and MLS 690. Regarding Supporting Study:

- The main consideration for Supporting Study is stated in the MLS catalog description: “Students create major research projects aligned with their personal educational goals and support and develop their work on these projects through a series of graduate-level Supporting Study courses or independent studies.” So Supporting Study courses are expected to be **clearly relevant** to the student’s MLS program. Supporting Study courses should build skills and knowledge in liberal arts disciplines contributing to the development of the student’s Capstone Project. A professional or technical graduate course with little or no liberal arts content is not appropriate for Supporting Study; therefore as a rule, all of a student’s MLS coursework will be drawn from the curricula of the College of Liberal Arts. Final authority over whether or not any Supporting Study credit applies to a student’s MLS program resides with the MLS Director.
- Given the interdisciplinary nature of the MLS, it is likely and often desirable that a student’s graduate Supporting Study courses involve two or three different liberal arts disciplines.
- Metropolitan State Supporting Study must be at the 500G-level or higher. That “G” is required. Plain 500-level courses do not count as Supporting Study, but with instructor agreement, registration as 500G, with commensurate work, may be possible.
- Many MLS students use three graduate courses of 4 credits each as their Supporting Study, but other combinations of credit sizes are allowed, so long as the Supporting Study total is at least 12 credits.
- Of the MLS program’s 32 credits, a minimum of 24 must be taken at Metropolitan State: MLS 600, 3 sections of MLS 620, MLS 690 and 4 Supporting Study credits. This means that up to 8 graduate credits earned at another accredited institution (before or after MLS admission) may be applied to the MLS program as Supporting Study, provided that those credits are not part of any other completed degree program, and that the credits are **clearly relevant** to the student’s MLS program, as determined by the MLS Director.
- MLS Supporting Study could theoretically be any combination of graduate courses, graduate Student Designed Independent Studies (SDIS), graduate Faculty Designed Independent Studies (FDIS) or graduate internships.
- MLS students are expected to take MLS 600 first and MLS 690 last. In between, the order in which students take their MLS 620 Explorations and Supporting Study is flexible, though Supporting Study is usually more valuable later in a student’s program.

MLS INDEPENDENT STUDIES AND INTERNSHIPS

The MLS program calls for 12 Supporting Study credits at the 500G-level or higher. In addition to taking graduate courses at Metropolitan State University (or up to 8 transfer graduate credits from other institutions), MLS students can earn Supporting Study credits through three creative learning strategies.

Faculty Designed Independent Studies

Graduate FDIS would usually be an independent study version of an existing graduate course, or a 500G-level independent study version of an existing 500-level course.

Student Designed Independent Studies

Graduate SDIS would usually be a unique learning opportunity customized by the student with the individual faculty member. See the following pages for some possibilities.

Internships

Graduate internships would usually be coordinated through the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship and could involve a wide range of projects and activities. Contact the academic internship coordinator (internship@metrostate.edu; 651-793-1290) or MLS Director for more information.

FACULTY AND POSSIBLE TOPICS

PLEASE NOTE: A faculty member may not always be available for each student inquiring about an independent study or internship project. Those listed below have expressed willingness *to discuss possible independent studies or internships* with individual MLS students. It is essential that the MLS student have sufficient academic preparation for the SDIS or internship.

Students interested in setting up an independent study or internship are invited to send an email describing that interest to the MLS Director, who could help identify possible faculty.

Graduate SDIS would usually be a unique learning opportunity customized by the student with an individual faculty member. To arrange an SDIS, download and complete the [SDIS form](#) in consultation with the faculty member you will be working with. The course number should be 660I with a prefix indicating the discipline. (For example, HIST 660I, WRIT 660I, or ETHS 660I.) Submit the completed form to the chair of the faculty member's department for approval (*not* to the MLS Director). Once the SDIS has been approved, you will be able to register for it online. Each semester, there is a deadline to register for alternative learning strategies including the SDIS. Check the [university calendar](#) for the current deadline and see below for some possibilities for discussion.

Professor Thomas Atchison

Graduate SDIS's

- Moral philosophy/ethics (theoretical or applied)
- Political and social philosophy
- Political and social significance of the internet
- 20th century continental philosophy
- Philosophy of the social sciences
- Philosophy of psychology and psychiatry
- Figures in the history of philosophy

Professor Monte Bute

Graduate SDIS's

- Classical social theory
- Contemporary social theory
- Modern political thought
- Existentialism
- Social movements
- The Sixties
- Anarchism and nonviolence

Professor Andrew Carlson

Graduate SDIS's

- Communication for Social Change
- Online and Digital Identities
- Social Media and Online Communities
- Communication Research
- Post-Colonial Studies
- Online Education and Training

Graduate Student Designed Study Abroad Experiences

Professor Kathleen Cole

Graduate SDIS's

- Political philosophy: Ancient, Modern, Contemporary
- Feminist Studies
- Theories of Race and Racism
- Social Movements
- American Political Institutions, with special emphasis on the American Prison System
- Studies in Foucault

Professor Aureliano DeSoto

Graduate SDIS's

- Chicana/o-Latina/o narrative, autobiography and visual culture
- LGBT socio-cultural formation in the United States
- Theories and histories of race
- Race, representation and visual culture (film, video)

Professor Tammy Durant

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in Romanticism (poetry, novels, drama)
- Studies in Victorian poetry
- Studies in the Victorian novel
- Interdisciplinary studies, especially involving the relationships between art and/or literature and/or film

Professor Matthew Filner

Graduate SDIS's

- Political Theory — Ancient, Modern and Contemporary
- American Political Thought — e.g., The Founding Period, 19th Century, Progressivism, Civil Rights
- Constitutional Law and the U.S. Supreme Court
- Community Organizing and Development
- U.S. Politics—e.g., Campaigns and Elections, Political Parties, Congress, the Presidency
- Citizenship —Rights and Obligations
- Global Social Movements

Professor Jeanne Grant

Graduate SDIS's

- Medieval, early modern, or modern European history
- Studies in the history of the Holocaust
- Studies in the history of the crusades
- Studies in Czech history
- Studies in the Reformation
- Studies in religion, politics, and the law in Europe

Professor Craig Hansen

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in professional communication (qualitative research design, history of technology, emerging communication technology)
- Studies in media (early broadcast media, early film history)

Professor Beverly Hill

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in classics
- Studies in German literature or language (any period)
- Studies in linguistics

Professor Danielle Hinrichs

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in composition pedagogy
- Studies in the history and development of composition as a discipline
- Studies in American literature, particularly women writers and war literature

Graduate Internships

- Teaching college writing
- Tutoring writing

Professor Julie Kae Heyang

Graduate SDIS's

- American Literature, 19th century to present
- Asian American Literature and Film
- Women of Color Feminism
- Critical (his)stories of U.S. Childhood
- U.S. Law and Literature
- Literary Theory, Post 1950-Present

Professor Sheila Kunkle

Graduate SDIS's

- Film Studies (Theory and Analysis: American Film, Contemporary Film, World Film, Foreign films, Genres)
- Adult Education (Theory, Practice, and Philosophy)
- Psychoanalytic theory, culture, and major thinkers

Professor Kathleen Laughlin

Graduate SDIS's

- American Women's Movements
- Women, Law, and Public Policy

Professor Rhona Leibel

Graduate SDIS's

- Twentieth century analytic philosophy
- Philosophy of science
- Ethics

Professor Nantawan Lewis

Graduate SDIS's

- Asian American history
- Asian American women issues
- Race, ethnicity and religion
- Race, religion, gender and violence
- Race, religion and colonization
- World religions and globalization

Professor Mark Matthews

Graduate SDIS's

- History of philosophy (ancient to the present)
- Economic and political philosophy
- Philosophy of language
- History and theory of ethics
- Professional ethics areas of law enforcement ethics
- Business ethics, medical ethics, and the ethics of psychology

Professor Thomas McCarthy

Graduate SDIS's

- Wilderness studies
- Death: cultural and historical perspectives.

Professor Lawrence Moe

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in Milton
- Studies in prosody
- Studies in Shakespeare

Graduate Internships

- Literary research in early regional poetry

Professor Michal Moskow

Graduate SDIS's

- Discourse, including but not limited to political, advertising, gender
- Human rights
- Popular fiction
- Sociolinguistics

Professor Brian Nerney

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in American culture, mid-19th century to present, particularly either literary periodicals or nonfiction prose, especially nature writing.
- Studies in memoir and creative nonfiction, including family stories

Graduate Internships

- Interdisciplinary research
- Teaching college writing

Professor Becky Omdahl

Graduate SDIS's

- Emotion and Motivation
- Organizational Communication
- Family Communication
- Health Communication
- Interpersonal Communication

Professor Sumiko Otsubo

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in Japanese history, society and culture
- Studies in comparative/world history of eugenics
- Studies in comparative history of reproductive politics

Professor Daryl Parks

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in critical pedagogies
- Studies in literary theory (reader-response)
- Studies in critical literacy practices
- Studies in language use (critical discourse analysis)

Graduate internships

- Research in literacy practices and teaching

Professor Erica Rasmussen

Graduate SDIS's

- Studio arts

Graduate Internships

- Art gallery management
-

Professor Victoria Sadler

Graduate SDIS's

- Documentation, especially user-centered design/usability
- Rhetorical genre studies, especially governmental/bureaucratic discourse
- Online learning

Graduate Internships

- Creating and/or modifying online learning modules

Professor Jose Leonardo Santos

Graduate SDIS

- Studies in ethnology/ethnography
- Comparative Religious Studies
- Cross-Cultural Gender Studies
- Studies in Latin American Anthropology
- Studies in Masculinity

Professor Lori Schroeder

Graduate SDIS's

- Studies in rhetoric and public address
- Studies in rhetorical implications of song
- Studies in persuasion
- Studies in feminist music
- Studies in motivation theory
- Studies in rhetoric of social movements
- Studies in rhetorical theory

Graduate Internships

- Interdisciplinary research
- Teaching college public speaking

Professor Shannon Skarphol-Kaml

Graduate SDIS's

- Rhetoric
- Persuasion
- Visual communication

Professor Gail Smogard

Graduate SDIS's

- Production/performance work within the university theater season and with a professional Director
- Advanced playwriting with submission of an existing draft

Professor Charles Tedder

Graduate SDIS's

- American literature after 1900
- Literature and human rights
- Literary and critical theory
- Science fiction, futurism, and Utopian studies
- Fantasy, popular culture, and genre studies

Professor Margaret Vaughan

Graduate SDIS's

- American Indian studies
- Ethnic studies
- Material culture
- Ethnic memoirs
- Environment

Professor Carolyn Whitson

Graduate SDIS's

- GLBT literature and film
- American working-class literature
- Medieval literature
- Myth
- Nineteenth-century literature and culture
- Women writers
- Visual Culture theory
- Studies in photography

MLS 690 CAPSTONE COURSE

The MLS 690 Capstone Seminar revolves around the final revisions and completion of students' self-directed Capstone Projects. The liberal arts skills and knowledge—and perspectives—gained through 12 credits of MLS Supporting Study and 12 credits of Explorations provide backgrounds, context, and especially depth for the relatively concentrated MLS Capstone Project.

All Capstone Projects are expected to be solidly grounded in a suitably broad range of interdisciplinary liberal arts scholarship, developed across each student's MLS program as a whole. Students are generally expected to be objective, scholarly and critical in the development of their Capstone Projects, which must be the original work of each student through all stages (consultants and coaches are fine; proofreaders or ghostwriters are not). Students may change the topic or focus of their Capstone Project after they complete MLS 600, but please note that the later in the student's MLS program, and/or the more profound the change, the more difficult it will be to achieve the depth of preparation and development that will be expected in MLS 690.

All MLS capstone projects are characterized by:

- The opportunity to pursue self-directed, interdisciplinary interests in the liberal arts;
- Interdisciplinary perspectives inclusive of diverse viewpoints, anchored in the liberal arts.
- The application of critical thinking skills;
- The application of advanced writing skills;
- Primary and secondary interdisciplinary research in the liberal arts, sufficient in depth and breadth to be commensurate with graduate-level work.

Prerequisites

MLS 600, completion of at least 24 credits in the MLS program (MLS 600, 8-12 Supporting Study credits at the level of 500G or higher, and 8-12 credits in MLS 620 Explorations), and an approved MLS 690 Capstone Application.

Learning Outcomes

- Enriched understanding of the student's own self-directed Capstone Project topic.
- Enriched understanding of the self-directed capstone topics of other MLS students.
- Enriched ability to present liberal arts research results, both orally and in writing.
- Application of critical thinking and rhetorical skills.

Capstone Projects

The Capstone Project is 30 to 50 pages in length (excluding bibliography), and is a research paper that defends a thesis—"a proposition maintained by argument."

Be sure to understand that a thesis is the student's own original argument in defense of his or her own position; a thesis is not merely descriptive reportage or synthesis of

many sources. Rather, a thesis actively argues in favor of one position, with some significant understanding of the issue at stake, against other possible positions. A student should be able to state the argument succinctly in one sentence, called the **thesis statement**. The thesis paper as a whole actively pursues the implications, significance and consequences of following the student's line of argumentation. The emphasis in a thesis is always on the production of the student's original analysis, arguments, claims and organization of the issues—rather than mere transmission, assemblage, and arrangement of others' ideas and conclusions.

Creative Capstone Projects

The Creative Capstone option no longer exists. It remains an option only for students admitted before October 2014.

Learning Strategies and Activities:

- During the introductory portion of the course, students will participate in exercises and activities, including oral reports, designed to consolidate and focus the elements of their Capstone Projects. Students will learn how other members of their seminar articulate issues and challenges, and problem-solve, in the organization and completion of Capstone Projects. Students will receive training and forms to develop and enhance constructive critiques in peer conferences.
- During the middle portion of the course, students will be responsible for turning in high-quality drafts of their Capstone Projects, submitted for the analysis and commentary of the other class members, the MLS 690 team teachers, and each student's MLS 690 Reader (a CLA faculty member not on the teaching team).
- During the final portion of the course, students will give their final oral presentations on the Capstone Projects, and submit the final revisions of their Capstone Projects for evaluation by the MLS 690 teaching team

Evaluation

Evaluation criteria are those appropriate for post-BA, generalist, self-directed, research-based, persuasive achievement in a terminal MLS program. But please note that since the Capstone Projects are to be developed systematically throughout the MLS program **as a whole**, and are to represent the student's highest academic achievement in the program, the evaluation standards and expectations are naturally higher in MLS 690 than those in a single course.

Besides evaluation by the MLS 690 team teachers, each Capstone Project is closely examined by a faculty MLS 690 Reader from a discipline related to the Project. For each student, the MLS 690 Reader must be identified and confirmed at least one semester before the MLS 690, through a process coordinated by the MLS Director. Each MLS 690 Reader (1) reviews the Project concept, (2) the Project draft, and (3) the final version of a Project, and then sends a report to the MLS 690 team teachers for their consideration in determining the student's final MLS 690 grade.

PREPARING FOR MLS 690 CAPSTONE COURSE

The MLS Capstone is where Capstone Projects are brought to completion. Before registering for MLS 690, students must devote considerable time and attention toward developing their Projects. This means taking multiple graduate-level courses, having consultations with faculty advisors, doing independent research and reflection, and writing drafts for components of the Projects. In MLS 690, students focus largely on organizational and presentational considerations required to revise, refine, and complete high quality Capstone Projects. MLS 690 is offered in spring only.

Before you can register for MLS 690:

- (1) Complete MLS 600. In this course, you will develop a provisional Project proposal.
- (2) Confer regularly with faculty to discuss progress on your Capstone Project.
- (3) Complete at least 24 credits in the MLS program: MLS 600, 8-12 credits of Supporting Study (500G level or higher), and 8-12 credits of MLS 620 Explorations.
- (4) Your Supporting Study credits are expected to support your Capstone Project directly. It usually advisable for you to set up one or more independent studies (SDIS) specifically focusing on skills and scholarship you'll need for your Capstone Project.
- (5) Each MLS 690 student is required to have one (and only one) MLS 690 Reader from the CLA faculty, who is not a member of the current MLS 690 Teaching Team. A Reader is assigned to each MLS 690 student by the MLS Director. If there is a CLA faculty member you'd like to request as your Reader, place that name here. Please contact the MLS Director if you wish to discuss the selection of your Reader.
- (6) If your cumulative MLS GPA is less than 3.0, you will not be admitted to MLS 690. You should consult with the MLS Director if your MLS GPA **ever** falls below 3.00, and certainly as you approach MLS 690. See also the information on "Academic Progress Policy" in this *HANDBOOK*, below.
- (7) Submit your completed Capstone Application to the MLS Director for review by September 1 before the spring semester in which you plan to take MLS 690. Once your Capstone Application is approved, you are ready to register for MLS 690.

MLS 690 CAPSTONE APPLICATION

Instructions: In an email to Dr. Lawrence Moe, MLS Director, please give responses to each of the following numbered points, using the same number for each response in your email. Your application must be received by **September 1** of the year before the spring semester MLS 690 Capstone to which you apply (lawrence.moe@metrostate.edu). MLS 690 faculty will review your application and respond before spring registration opens in late October.

Please follow these instructions carefully. Thank you!

1. Your Name
2. Your current contact information (email, phones, US Mail address)
3. Your Capstone Project title
4. The format you're using: MLA or APA.
5. Each MLS 690 student is required to have one (and only one) MLS 690 Reader from the CLA faculty, who is not a member of the current MLS 690 teaching team. If you have worked well with a professor and would like him or her to be your Reader, please inform the MLS Director, who will seek to confirm the arrangement with the professor. If you are not sure who should be your Reader, please inform the MLS Director, who will arrange for a Reader.

For points 6-9 please do not exceed the word limit for each:

6. Using no more than 500 words: Describe your Capstone Project, and be sure to name and explain the liberal arts disciplines that you have used or blended in the interdisciplinary scholarship underlying your Capstone Project.
7. Using no more than 250 words: Describe the development of your Capstone Project since you took MLS 600, through your MLS 620s, and through your Supporting Study courses or independent studies. That is, explain how your Capstone Project has evolved.
8. Using no more than 250 words: Describe the outcomes of consultations with faculty on your Capstone Project, explaining constructive suggestions that affected your Project.
9. Using no more than 500 words: Describe the current status and readiness for finalizing your Capstone Project. Share your concerns and questions. Please note that most MLS students have all or most of their Capstone Projects drafted *before* MLS 690 starts.
10. Provide two bibliographies: (a) an annotated bibliography of your 10 most important scholarly resources; no more than 50 words for each annotation; and (b) a general bibliography of no more than 10 additional works that have contributed to your interdisciplinary liberal arts research.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

Each MLS student is responsible for understanding the Academic Progress Policy, and for monitoring his or her own academic progress carefully. If a low grade or non-completion has or might damage your academic standing, contact the MLS Director immediately.

To remain in good standing and to be qualified for graduation, you must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. Grades below C do not apply to program requirements, but are calculated in the cumulative grade point average. Policies relating to academic probation, dismissal and reapplication are determined by the school or college in which you are enrolled.

MLS ACADEMIC PROBATION, DISMISSAL AND REAPPLICATION

Satisfactory Academic Progress

- You must maintain satisfactory academic progress to remain in the MLS program.
- Only courses for which you receive a letter grade of C (2.0) or better count toward degree requirements; and a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 is required for admission to MLS 690, and for graduation.
- If your cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.0, or if you do not complete 67% of cumulative graduate credits attempted, you will be placed on academic warning. You will then have your next semester of enrollment to improve your academic performance, such that your cumulative GPA returns to 3.0 and/or your cumulative completion rate exceeds 67%. You may be suspended from the MLS program if after the warning semester your academic performance has not improved to these levels.
- If you have been suspended from the MLS program for unsatisfactory academic progress, you may reapply after one calendar year has passed. Readmission decisions are made by the MLS Admissions Committee and are not automatic.
- Only courses in which you receive a letter grade (A-C) are applied to your degree, except and only in the case of graduate internships, which may be graded S–NC.
- Consult with the MLS Director immediately if you have any questions or concerns about your academic standing.

Appeal of Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Removals from the Program

If you are suspended from the MLS program for unsatisfactory academic progress, you may appeal the suspension to the College of Liberal Arts dean. The appeal must be in writing and it must provide specific grounds for the appeal. The appeal is due to the dean within 30 days of receiving confirmation of suspension from the MLS program; appeals received after 30 days will not be considered.

Reactivating into the MLS Program

An admitted MLS student may sit out (registering for no courses) for up to a year without jeopardizing admitted status; but a student who chooses or needs to sit out for that long (or longer) should consult with the MLS Director. Students who sit out for

more than a year without consulting with the MLS Director may be dropped from active status. If you are a student in good academic standing who has not registered for courses for three or more calendar years, you must reapply to the MLS program. If readmitted, you would be required to satisfy the degree requirements in force at the time of readmission, even if those requirements differ from those in force at the time of original admission.

APPLYING TO THE MLS PROGRAM

Application Process and Components

The first step is the same for all applicants: Go to the Graduate Studies Office website and complete the online program admission form: graduate.studies@metrostate.edu.

The second step is to complete the rest of the MLS Application Dossier, either online, or on paper mailed or emailed to the MLS Director. There are five parts either way:

1. Official transcripts from all institutions you attended while earning a four-year degree, and from any graduate courses or programs you may have completed. The MLS requires a BA or BS from an appropriately accredited institution, a major or significant coursework in liberal arts disciplines, and a minimum GPA of 3.00 from the BA/BS degree-granting institution. And see p. 10 above.
2. Two and only two letters of recommendation. The most effective letters tend to come from liberal arts professors familiar with your work in upper-division liberal arts courses, and able to comment on your preparation for advanced liberal arts study. The Letter of Recommendation Guidelines and Letter of Recommendation Forms are available from the MLS Director, or the Graduate Studies website.
3. Your resume or vita. (Some applicants have valid liberal arts experience gained in non-academic settings, and the Admissions Committee will consider that.)
4. Your Purpose Essay. No more than 1000 words, addressing these questions:
 - Why are you interested in graduate interdisciplinary liberal arts study?
 - How have you prepared for the MLS program, academically or otherwise?
 - What subjects and what liberal arts disciplines are you interested in?
 - What skills and knowledge do you expect to gain?
 - How do you anticipate being able to apply the MLS in the future?

5. **Your Writing Sample.** A piece of analytic academic writing in one or more liberal arts disciplines; no more than 3,000 words, well-edited in a standard format; a research paper from an upper-division liberal arts course is preferred.

The MLS Admissions Committee will make admissions decisions on the basis of the above components, for complete applications only. Note that students may apply while still completing a four-year program, but they cannot start MLS coursework until they have finished the bachelor's degree.

Application Deadlines

There are multiple MLS application points a year, to maximize student access:

Fall Semester:	September 1, October 1, November 1, December 1
Spring Semester:	January 1, February 1, March 1, April 1
Summer	Anytime in between May 1 and August 1

Complete applications will be reviewed by the MLS Admissions Committee, which will report its decision to each applicant in about three weeks. Applicants accepted in fall semesters typically begin their MLS programs the following spring; those accepted in spring or summer typically begin the following fall.

The number of places for students in the program is limited, so admissions are on a space-available basis. The MLS Admissions Committee's criteria are constant through the year, but there may be fewer places available the later the application. Thus in some semesters MLS may offer qualified applicants deferred admission.

Timeliness of Applications

All application materials must be received by the MLS Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on any deadline date. Applicants should be sure to plan ahead so that all documents (including official transcripts, and letters of recommendation) reach the MLS program in time.

Letters of Recommendation

An MLS application requires two (and only two) letters of recommendation. Letters may be written by anyone able to address the "Letter of Recommendation Guidelines" in the application packet; the "Letter of Recommendation Form" should be used. Because the MLS is an academic liberal arts program, professors acquainted with an applicant's liberal arts strengths are in a good position to write effective letters, for example by detailing a student's outstanding work in an undergraduate liberal arts major. When requesting letters of recommendation, applicants should ask early, make certain that the recommenders know the deadline, and confirm timely receipt of the letters by MLS.

Preapplication Interviews

It is strongly recommended that those considering the MLS program arrange an informational interview with the MLS Director **before** submitting their applications.

Financial Aid

Please direct all questions about financial aid to the Financial Aid Office:

<http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/pathway/aid/>

Phone: 651-793-1300

Fax: 651-642-0636

TTY: 651-772-7687