

# Master of Liberal Studies Handbook 2021-2022

College of Liberal Arts

Metropolitan State University

St. Paul, MN



**EXPLORATIONS IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

# 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

The “MLS 600 Introductory Seminar” 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. MLS 600 should be taken in a student's first or second semester after admission.

The "MLS 620: Explorations" are variable-topics seminars, and each MLS student must take three of them. Whatever the topic, 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 might take an Exploration on 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.

A student may register for "MLS 690 Master of Liberal Studies Capstone" upon completion of MLS 600 and at least 24 credits in the MLS program (at least 8 credits in MLS 620's and at least 8 Supporting Study credits); with a cumulative MLS GPA of at least 3.00; and with an approved Capstone Application. See "MLS 690 Capstone Course" in this handbook, below.

The MLS 690 Capstone Seminar revolves around the final revisions and completion of students' self-directed Capstone Projects. The seminar is taught by a team of faculty from a range of liberal arts disciplines. Students conference on their Project revisions, and make oral presentations to the seminar on the evolution of their Projects and the results of their research.

Overview of MLS Program Required Course Work (32 credits):

- MLS 600      Introductory Seminar ( 4 credits)
- MLS 620      Master of Liberal Studies Exploration (1) ( 4 credits)
- MLS 620      Master of Liberal Studies Exploration (2) ( 4 credits)
- MLS 620      Master of Liberal Studies Exploration (3) ( 4 credits)
- Supporting Study (12 credits)  
     Graduate course work at the 500G  
     level or higher, in courses,  
     independent studies or internships  
     that are clearly relevant to the  
     student's evolving Capstone Project
- MLS 690      Master of Liberal Studies Capstone Course ( 4 credits)

**Sequence:** MLS students are expected to complete MLS 600 as early as possible in their programs, but they may register for MLS 600, and one MLS 620 or Supporting Study course concurrently. A student who has successfully completed two MLS 620's

without successfully completing MLS 600 shall be suspended from further MLS registrations until MLS 600 is successfully completed. MLS 690 is normally a student's final course. In between MLS 600 and MLS 690 there is significant flexibility in registering for MLS 620s or Supporting Study, though Supporting Study is usually more valuable later in a student's program.

**Transfer Credits:** Requests to apply transfer credits are decided by the MLS Director. Up to 8 graduate credits earned at another accredited institution (or at Metropolitan State University before MLS admission) may be applied to the MLS program's Supporting Study requirement, 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.

**Part-Time Graduate Studies:** The MLS program is especially designed for part-time graduate study. Most MLS students are employed full-time and therefore take just one graduate course per semester. Most MLS classes meet once a week on a weekday evening; occasionally, a class might be scheduled for Saturdays.

**Digital Literacy:** The required work of the MLS student involves significant use of technology, including navigating the Internet, researching online library databases, keyboarding, and using Metropolitan State University email for all official MLS business. It is expected that all MLS students hold competence in these areas.

## 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. Students are encouraged to take a Supporting Study course with their Reader. This faculty Reader also 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 <https://www.metrostate.edu/apply/get-started/graduate/international-application> and contact the International Student Services Office: Dr. Kamal Ali Elbasher, Director ([Kamal.Elbasher@metrostate.edu](mailto: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, visa page, 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](http://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.

Minimum scores: TOEFL 80 IBT, 213 CBT, 550 PBT or IELTS 6.5

IBT=internet based; CBT=computer based; PBT=paper based

Official TOEFL scores must be submitted; student copies are not acceptable.

Metropolitan State University's school code for TOEFL is 6445.

### **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](http://www.wes.org) or [www.ece.org](http://www.ece.org). This is not required if you acquired your baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution within the United States.



## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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 and inform both their participation in the MLS 620 Explorations, and especially in their Supporting Study courses or independent studies. We'll 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.

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## 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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
- Fall 2019        **Communication Technology and Civil Society**  
Professors Zorian Sasyk and Quan Zhou



Spring 2020           **The Search for Immortality**  
 Professors Kris Frykman and Lori Schroeder

Fall 2020             **Violence and NonViolence**  
 Professors Wagstrom and Maier

Spring 2021         **The Graphic Novel**  
 Professors Hill and Nielsen

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## MLS 620 EXPLORATIONS: THREE SAMPLE DESCRIPTIONS

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 appropriately 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 in their first or second semester, and MLS 690 in their last semester. 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 and graduate Writing courses. 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.

### 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. MLS internships include important theoretical content, and not applied activities alone. Contact the academic internship coordinator ([internship@metrostate.edu](mailto:internship@metrostate.edu); 651-793-1290) or MLS Director for more information.

## 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. If you are entering the program in Spring 2021 or after and are interested in writing a capstone in creative non-fiction or journalistic investigation, please talk to the MLS Director.

## 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 or earlier 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.

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## 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 is 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. Also, work with your Reader in a Supporting Study course.
- (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. Margaret Vaughan, MLS Director, please give responses to each of the following 10 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 ([margaret.vaughan@metrostate.edu](mailto:margaret.vaughan@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.

### **Program Completion Time Limits**

Students must finish the MLS program within ten years of being admitted into the MLS Program. Students may apply for a program time limit extension through a letter to the MLS Director.

## **APPLYING TO THE MLS PROGRAM**

### **Application Process and Components**

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#### **PART ONE -**

- Complete the [Online Graduate Programs Application](#), using your Minnesota State StarID. If you don't have a Minnesota State StarID you will create one at the beginning of the application.
  - If you don't have or choose not to provide your Social Security number (SSN), please follow the No SSN instruction to activate your StarID. If you encounter difficulty with the online application, please email [graduate.studies@metrostate.edu](mailto:graduate.studies@metrostate.edu).
- Non-refundable application fee, paid online

- The current fee of \$20 is waived for graduates of Metropolitan State, certified veterans and active military.
- [Official transcripts](#)
  - Must show a bachelor degree or equivalent earned from an accredited institution with grade-point average or narrative description describing courses completed.
  - Transcripts from ALL schools attended after high school and from any graduate or professional programs are required.
  - All transcripts from non-U.S. schools must be evaluated (course-by-course) by either [ECE](#) (preferred) or [WES](#).
  - Electronic transcripts should be sent to graduate.studies@metrostate.edu.
  - Paper transcripts should be sent directly from the sending institution (preferred) to:
    - Metropolitan State University  
Attn: Graduate Admissions  
700 East Seventh Street  
Saint Paul MN 55106

## **PART TWO -**

After you have submitted your online application, log in to the [Applicant Portal](#) using your Star ID and password to upload application materials, and check on the status of your application. The Applicant Portal will indicate any missing application items.

- Two Professional Reference Letters; upload via the [Applicant Portal](#) using your StarID.
  - 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.
    - A letter of recommendation should comment on intellectual ability, capacity for critical thinking, professional skill and excellence, motivation, or any other aspect of the referrer's knowledge of how well the candidate is suited for a graduate program that calls for teamwork in interactive seminars. Be aware that strong and effective letters of recommendation often tend to come from professors of liberal arts courses in which the applicant has had an excellent learning experience. Naturally, the MLS Admissions Committee is particularly interested in an applicant's intellectual preparation for advanced liberal arts study, and so this should be very directly

- addressed in any letters of recommendation. Letters that focus on other matters may not be as helpful for the candidate.
- The professional reference letters must include the writers contact information.
- Resume or Vita; Upload via the [Applicant Portal](#) using your StarID. -Some applicants have valid liberal arts experience gained in non-academic settings, and the Admissions Committee will consider that.
  - Admission Essay; Upload via the [Applicant Portal](#) using your StarID. 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?
  - Your Writing Sample; Upload via the [Applicant Portal](#) using your StarID
    - 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**

The MLS Program will accept applications at any time during the year. But do note:

- Applications for fall semester should be received by July 15 or sooner.
- Applications for spring semester should be received by December 1 or sooner.
- Only complete applications will be considered.
- Space available is limited so it's on a first-come-first-served basis—apply early!

- If space isn't available, some admissions may be deferred to a later semester.
- It typically takes one to three weeks to process an application, longer in summer.

### **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.

### **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:

<https://www.metrostate.edu/finances/aid>

Phone: 651-793-1300

Fax: 651-642-0636

TTY: 651-772-7687