

MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

WHY SHOULD YOU CONSIDER THE Master of Arts in LIBERAL STUDIES?

A good B.A. or B.S. degree deliberately leaves its recipient hungry for the mental stimulation that continued learning can supply. But everyday life intervenes: a career, a family, a move to a different town. Continuing education courses meet some of the need, but the mature and intellectually curious person may come to a point when a more systematic and academically disciplined approach is desired. For many, an advanced degree could also contribute significantly to personal goals.

A dilemma then ensues. The longer a person has been out of school, the more likely it is that traditional graduate programs may be narrower than his or her own life interests. The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program is a response to this type of student. At the University of Maine, Liberal Studies at the graduate level offers:

- ❖ Guidance in focusing your exploration of knowledge.
- ❖ The opportunity to integrate serious work in several disciplines into a program that is academically and personally meaningful.
- ❖ The solid achievement of a Master of Arts degree.
- ❖ The possibility of pursuing these studies as either a part-time or full-time student

Graduate work in the Liberal Studies Program was designed for a broad base of students. From its inception in 1979, it has drawn students from such diverse backgrounds as advertising, art, career counseling, employee relations, English instruction, fisheries biology, homemaking, journalism, landscape design, the ministry, occupational therapy, and broadcasting, among others.

THE PROGRAM OF STUDY

Study for the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) degree proceeds in three stages: 1) Interdisciplinary study in Core Seminars, 2) Graduate level coursework, and 3) Completion of a master project growing out of and integrating knowledge acquired in earlier stages of study. A minimum of 30 credit hours is required. All work for the master's degree must be completed within six years of the time of first registration or earliest transfer credit.

In the Core Seminars the student will explore various topics from an interdisciplinary perspective. 15 to 18 credit hours of coursework are required in addition to the Core Seminars. Courses will be selected from at least two disciplines. Some examples of disciplinary combinations that have been used in MALS programs include English/History, Sociology/Education, Art/Music, and Anthropology/Women's Studies.

During the application process the potential student will identify a University of Maine graduate faculty member who must agree, in writing, to serve as major advisor. Students wishing to pursue a particular area of research should contact potential faculty advisors as early as possible, to ensure that appropriate faculty are available to support the anticipated POS.

The student, in conjunction with his/her advisor, drafts a proposal for a Program of Study (POS), which lists all courses that will fulfill the requirements for the MALS degree, along with a brief description of the work proposed for a Master Project. The POS is reviewed by the Liberal Studies Policy Review Committee during the admission process to ensure that the coursework reflects the objectives of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program.

Once a student has been admitted into the MALS program, and after he/she has completed 12 credits of study, or before their third registration (whichever comes first), he/she is required to form an Advisory Committee composed of a total of three members (the major advisor, and two additional University of Maine graduate faculty members) chosen by the student¹. The Advisory Committee will validate the student's POS and once they do, the POS will become the student's required graduate curriculum. Any changes to the curriculum must be made either prior to obtaining the Advisory Committee's signatures, or if changes take place after the POS has already been submitted to the Graduate School, wards, a Request for Change in Program of Study form will have to be submitted to update the status of the POS (student's MALS curriculum).

¹ If the student wishes to include in the Advisory Committee an individual who does not belong to the University of Maine graduate faculty, a Record of Qualifications form filled out by the potential Advisory Committee member, needs to be submitted to the Graduate School for evaluation. This person however, cannot serve as the primary advisor.

SUMMARY OF CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED:

3 credit hours of MALS Core Seminar LIB 500 Exploring Interdisciplinarity (mandatory)
 3-6 additional credit hours of MALS Core Seminars (LIB 500). A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 9 total LIB 500 credit hours
 15-18 credit hours of graduate work (500 or 600 level). A maximum of 6 credits can be 400-level
6-10 * credit hours of MALS Master Project (LIB 699) credits.

30 credit hours minimum, of which at least 12 credits must be in 500 or 600 level courses exclusive of LIB 699.

** Graduate School Policy states that no more than 15 credits of thesis/project work should be included as part of a Master's degree.*

THE MASTER PROJECT

The culmination of the Liberal Studies Program is the Master Project. An independent work carried out with faculty guidance, the Master Project demonstrates the ability to integrate materials from at least two fields of study. Typical examples of work that may be done include: 1) Original research in primary resources; 2) A synthesis of materials from several disciplines focused on a specific problem area; 3) Field-based study; or 4) An original creative work in the arts, music, or literature. Examples of specific Master Projects might be: the influence of science on public policy, drawing on materials in sociology, political science, and ethics; an examination of the aging process based upon psychology, history, and literature; or, the writing of a play that focuses upon life in rural Maine during the 19th century, integrating study in history, theater, and education. Projects will normally take a written form, though another medium may be approved for specific projects. Although not considered a thesis, projects in written form or the written portion of a project must adhere to the "Guidelines for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation," which are available at www2.umaine.edu/graduate. Three to six credits are awarded for completion of the Master Project. The student's Advisory Committee is responsible for guiding the development of the Master Project. It must approve a written Master Project proposal before you begin work on the project. This proposal should include a statement of the purpose and methodology of the project, as well as a description of the final product; and it must be submitted to the student's Advisory Committee at least one month prior to completion. Students will give an oral presentation on their Master Project when it is completed. The Advisory Committee, the MALS Policy Review Committee, and other interested students and faculty will be invited to the oral presentation. Sufficient time must be allowed when planning the project's oral defense, to allow for appropriate scheduling and deadlines.

Graduate students in the Liberal Studies program are also subject to the policies and regulations of the Graduate Faculty at the University of Maine. Copies of these Policies and Regulations are available at www2.umaine.edu/graduate.

GRADUATE LEVEL COURSES

The University of Maine Graduate School Catalog contains a complete listing of courses which qualify for graduate level credit. As a Liberal Studies candidate, at least 15 credit hours of work must be 500 or 600 level courses. Core Seminars will fulfill a portion of this requirement. In addition, a limited number of 400 level course credits (typically no more than 6), may be included in the MALS POS, with the approval of the Advisory Committee. No more than 2 Independent/Directed Readings courses should be included.

CORE SEMINARS

Two Core Seminars are required for the degree, one of them is mandatory to all students entering the program on or after Spring 2007: LIB 500 Exploring Interdisciplinarity. A third or fourth Core Seminar (LIB 500) may be used to fulfill the degree requirements, with the permission of the student's Advisory Committee. The Core Seminars are interdisciplinary in their approach, and are usually taught by members of the graduate faculty. Most classes are small, 7-15 students, and are planned for late afternoon and evening hours and summer sessions. Core Seminars are offered on a rotating basis, with one or two scheduled each semester if possible. It is not necessary to begin the MALS study with two Core Seminars, but taking one early in the program is advisable; additional seminars may be added later.

EXAMPLES OF MALS CORE SEMINARS

MYTHOLOGY & IDEOLOGY

This course serves two purposes. The first is to provide the student with a grounding in select mythologies from the ancient and contemporary world; the second purpose of the course is to use the example of mythology to illustrate the function of ideology within cultures, i.e., to illustrate how mythology functions within cultures to reinforce and transmit the ideals and truths important to those cultures. * Instructor: Dr. Kristina Passman, Modern Languages and Classics.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

A study of religion and politics in a wide variety of human societies, past and present with particular emphasis on 1) the interrelationships among religion, culture, and political ideology as systems of belief and value, 2) the relationship between religious and national identity and 3) the role of interests and values in determining political action. * Instructor: Dr. Henry Munson, Anthropology Department

AMERICAN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The course examines the history of science both “internally” – as ideas and experiments – and “externally” – as related to the society that has produced them and upon which they in turn have had impact. Similarly, the course examines the history of American technology both “internally” – as tools and machines – and “externally” – as related to the society which has produced them and upon which they in turn have had impact. * Instructor: Dr. Howard Segal, History Department.

WOMEN & GLOBALIZATION

Constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements are receding, a process with implications for the world’s women. Topics investigated will include women’s work in factories such as the maquiladoras, immigration, domestic work, and sex tourism to name a few. * Dr. Mazie Hough, Women’s Studies

ROMANTIC LOVE

From Sappho to Shakespeare, from Virgil to (perhaps in the eye of some beholders) the bulgar, from the sentimental to the sensuous, from the exotic to the erotic - all the world’s stages have seen it all: Romantic Love. Gilgamesh and Enkidu, Romeo and Juliet, Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning - so much force pushing some of our great literature. This course proposes to bring these forces together by exploring the ways in which romantic love has so powerfully informed world literature and generated a readership perhaps greater than that for any other genre (one could argue that the primary impulse behind, for example, Christian religious devotion is romantic, not theological or philosophical, as the religious typically find themselves in an emotional not an intellectual relationship with the Virgin or Jesus). This course will deal with the apparent gender differences between the documented interest of women in bodice-ripper novels and Harlequin Romantics and the interest of men in more directly erotic fiction. And just as clearly, this would lead to a discussion of the much commented upon emergence of the “feminine” side of men in recent culture and the re-emergence of the goddess figure throughout the western world. Has the Shekhinah - so long lost to the legalism and to the patriarchal and self-serving mind set of the deuteronomists - come back? The ideas coursing through this discussion would also have to deal with the re-emergence of paganism, for it - like the power of the Shekhinah in the Old Testament - underscores the humanness of the human-divine encounter. However, it shapes itself in our contemporary culture, romantic love has taken many forms throughout history, but in essence it has focused on the spiritual, the devotional, the emotional, the feminine, the human. * Instructor: Dr. John Wilson, English Department

THE ETHIC OF CARE: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

This course acknowledges a feminist perspective for ethical decision making. The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle serves as a touchstone for course content. Next, the course explores the historical/philosophical/psychological context of women’s moral development. The uses of extant feminist theories and models allow students praxis in ethical decision making. “New” theories of the moral development of women lead to the articulation and evolution of, the Ethic of Care. Classroom practice and projects bring together the experiential and theoretical aspects of the Ethic of Care and the practice of Virtue Ethics. Using the feminist pedagogy of storytelling we privilege students’ life experience and innate knowledge. This interdisciplinary study incorporates projects that investigate contemporary areas of moral decision making; these projects are presented to the class for discussion. Topics of discussion may include end-of-life issues, perspectives on disability, mental health/illness, cross-cultural practices, and abortion. * Instructor: Dr. Kristina Passman, Modern Languages and Classics

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Consideration for admission to the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program is open to applicants holding a bachelor's or graduate degree from an accredited college or university. A strong academic record (i.e., 3.00 GPA) is expected. Because of the unique nature of the program in serving the nontraditional student who has been out of school for a lengthy period, Graduate Record Examinations and similar testing procedures are not required for admission. In the absence of a formal entrance examination, the MALS admissions committee reviews transcripts and other materials and considers both, potential for success within the program and whether a student will make a positive contribution to it. The MALS application essay is weighed heavily in the admission process.

Prior to making application to the Liberal Studies program, students must contact the Graduate School to arrange an interview to discuss interests and academic goals. After the interview, applicants whose academic goals are consistent with the mission of the MALS program will have to ensure that the Graduate School receives the following materials:

- 1) An e-mail to: Jessica.Ouellette@umit.maine.edu from a faculty member at the University of Maine who has agreed to serve as the primary advisor.
- 2) Two letters of recommendation. Students are strongly encouraged to use the online form available at: https://www2.umaine.edu/graduate/recommendation/recommendation_request.php.
- 3) Official college/university transcripts (2 copies) from all institutions attended.
- 4) A \$65.00 application fee
- 5) A personal essay which presents student's life experiences as well as objectives and reasons for applying to the program.

Admission is contingent upon the positive vote of the majority of the members of the Liberal Studies Policy Review Committee.

NON-DEGREE APPLICATION

Students who prefer to take some preliminary coursework before making formal application or who do not meet all the admission requirements, may enroll as a non-degree student and apply for regular admission after completing two appropriate graduate courses with a grade of B or better in each course.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Students initiating their studies as non-degree students should be advised that normally only six hours of graduate non-degree credit may be granted (with the approval of the student's advisory committee) for work done at the University prior to admission, if students were post-baccalaureate at the time of registration. A maximum of six hours in transfer credits from other institutions is also acceptable upon appropriate approval.

TUITION

Cost per credit hour in 2009-2010:

Resident.....	\$379.00
Non-Resident.....	\$1,090.00

The financial requirements of the University, changing costs, state and legislative action and other matters may require an adjustment of these charges. Contact the UM Office of Student Aid for information on financial assistance.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The MALS is an interdisciplinary degree, which means that although classes to fulfill curriculum (POS) requirements will be taken in different departments, as a student you are not enrolled within any of the graduate programs sponsored by the department. This disables you to be eligible for graduate assistantships, since those positions are allocated to within-the-discipline department.

MALS students' option to find financial support is to file a FASFA form on time (March 1st) and based on need, a student might be eligible to have Federal Work-Study moneys. If however, a student fails to file a FASFA form by the deadline, the only available option is to apply through the office of Financial Aid for a Stafford Loan.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

The deadline dates for submission of **complete** applications for the MALS program to ensure appropriate review time are as follows:

Fall/Summer Semester.....	First Monday in April
Spring Semester.....	First Monday in November

GRADUATE FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

The University of Maine is both a resident and non-resident campus. The University of Maine, unlike a strictly Liberal Arts College or University, gives students access to Graduate Faculty specializing in the natural and social sciences and in several technical disciplines, as well as in the arts and humanities. Several institutes and research centers provide additional resources. Research facilities include the Raymond H. Fogler Library, the Computing Center, the University Art Collection, and collections in anthropology and folklore. The Fogler Library contains more than 960,000 books and pamphlets and receives some 6,700 periodicals. Networked computer clusters are available in the Student Union and Fogler Library as well as in the Graduate Student Center in Estabrooke Hall. The University's Art Collection and Gallery contains 4,000 works as well as more than 10,000 photographs and color reproductions and 35,000 slides of art masterpieces which are available for study. There are also extensive collections in the Hudson Museum and in the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History.