

## Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program (MALS) is designed for people who wish to pursue a particular topical or interdisciplinary interest at the graduate level, but find the existing programs either too specialized or insufficiently individualized.

The liberal studies program offers students the opportunity to design a program of study to answer their particular needs and interests in a focused, coherent manner. All students complete intensive work in two or three areas of study and become familiar with interdisciplinary research theories and methods.

MALS students are self-motivated, disciplined, and independent. Many are passionately interested in problems and issues which cross the boundaries of traditional academic departments. Their goal may be to add coherence to their intellectual lives, or to provide themselves with the kind of broad knowledge base which will allow them to advance in their careers and adapt flexibly to an ever-changing job market.

Faculty who work with MALS students as advisors or committee members are chosen by the students and may come from nearly any department at the University.

### Admission Requirements

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. Applicants must also have a grade point average of 3.000 or better for the last 60 hours of course work. No more than 6 hours of graduate credit from another institution will be considered for transfer into the liberal studies program.

### Application Procedures

When submitting an application to the Wichita State Graduate School, students must contact the MALS office for an initial interview with the graduate coordinator. In addition, students must complete a brief essay describing their motivation for selecting the liberal studies program, outlining their proposed areas of study and showing how the program will contribute to their educational and career goals. Deadlines for application are April 1 for the fall semester and October 1 for the following spring semester. Soon after the deadline, the MALS Supervisory Committee will meet. This committee, made up of graduate faculty representing the various disciplines, reviews and votes on each complete application.

The Liberal Studies Advisory Committee may request that the applicant submit Graduate Record Examination scores (verbal and quantitative).

Three graduate faculty representing at least two of the three departments in which the student's work will be concentrated should be secured as program advisors. One of these advisors, who must be a graduate faculty member of Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, will serve as the student's primary advisor and chair the student's committee.

### Degree Requirements

Before or immediately following the completion of 12 hours of graduate work in the program, the student must:

- 1) Complete selection of members of the faculty advising committee and inform the graduate coordinator. The advisor/chair of the committee must also notify the

graduate coordinator in writing that she/he has agreed to chair the student's committee.

- 2) With the assistance of the advisor/committee chair and the other members of the committee, prepare a plan of study to be approved by the graduate coordinator and the Graduate School.
- 3) Complete LAS-I 800, Research Goals and Strategies, for 3 credit hours or an appropriate graduate level research/methodological course in one of the student's designated areas.

Once accepted by the Graduate School, the Plan of Study becomes the student's individualized curriculum and any changes to it must be approved by the student's thesis or terminal project committee.

A student has six years in which to complete the program. The MALS requires:

1. A minimum of 36 semester hours of credit.
2. No more than 12 semester hours from any one department.
3. A maximum of 12 hours in a college other than liberal arts and sciences.
4. At least 22 of the 36 total hours in courses numbered 700 or above.
5. Three of the 36 hours in LAS-I 800, Research Goals and Strategies or its equivalent.
6. A master's thesis for 6 hours' credit or a terminal project for 6 hours' credit.

### **Required Course Descriptions**

#### **800. Research Goals & Strategies (3)**

Introduces the methodology and practice of interdisciplinary research. Emphasizes the integration of methods native to the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Develops skills required for the writing of research papers and theses. Required of all students in the MALS

program during the first 12 hours of course work.

#### **875. Thesis (1-6)**

For students who are finishing the MALS. The student writing a thesis is enrolled in this course until the thesis is completed and all thesis requirements have been satisfied. Prerequisite: consent of student's degree committee chairperson and instructor.

#### **855. Terminal Project (1-6)**

For students who are near the end of the MALS program and involved in a terminal project. The terminal project may have many aspects such as field work, curriculum development, practicum, internship research report, or some other individualized activity. The project must have been approved by the student's advisory committee and the MALS Graduate Coordinator prior to beginning work on any terminal activity, whether thesis or project. While the terminal project allows for more creative flexibility than the thesis option, students and their terminal project committee should be aware that the standards of quality and research expectations are equivalent. The student involved in a project must be enrolled in this course until the project is completed and all project requirements have been satisfied.

### **For More Information**

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### **Apply On-Line**

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