

## 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. From its inception in 1979, The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program has been an option to this type of student by offering:

- ❖ Guidance in focusing your exploration of knowledge
- ❖ The opportunity to integrate work from 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
- ❖ With careful planning and in close coordination with a faculty-advisor, the degree can be completed fully online

### CONCENTRATIONS

The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program allows students to design a graduate degree that integrates classes from a multi-disciplinary perspective; in addition to that, the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program offers four concentrations which have pre-established curricula. Students interested in pursuing a concentration are expected to contact the coordinator prior to applying, Maine Studies (Dr. Carol Toner), New Media (Dr. Owen Smith), Peace Studies (Dr. Tina Passman) and Women Studies (Dr. Ann Schonberger).

### THE PROGRAM OF STUDY (POS)

Study for the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) requires a minimum of 30 credit hours. All work for the master's degree must be completed within six years of the time of first registration or earliest transfer credit.

### SUMMARY OF CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED

Credit Hours	Description
3	MALS Core Seminar <i>LIB 500 Exploring Interdisciplinarity (Mandatory)</i>
3–6	MALS Core Seminars (LIB 500). A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 9 total LIB 500 credit hours
15–18	Graduate-level classes (500 or 600 level). A maximum of 6 credits can be 400-level
<del>6–9*</del>	MALS Master Project (LIB 699) credits
<b>30</b>	<b>Credit hours minimum, of which at least 12 credits must be in 500 or 600 level courses exclusive of LIB 699</b> <i>* Graduate School Policy states that no more than 15 credits of thesis/project work should be included as part of a Master's degree.</i>

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 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 student<sup>1</sup>. The Advisory Committee

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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, 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).

### 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 [www.umaine.edu/graduate](http://www.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 [www.umaine.edu/graduate](http://www.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 maquiladores, immigration, domestic work, and sex tourism to name a few. \* Dr. Mazie Hough, Women’s Studies

### **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: [Graduate@umit.maine.edu](mailto:Graduate@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 have recommenders send an electronic copy to [graduate@maine.edu](mailto:graduate@maine.edu)
- 3) Official college/university transcripts (2 copies) from all institutions attended.
- 4) Apply online. Include essay which presents student’s life experiences as well as objectives and reasons for applying to the program and pay the \$65.00 application fee

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.

**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 departments.

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.

<b>Application Process Checklist</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting/phone conversation with Graduate Coordinator for the program 581-3222 (must be done before applying)
<input type="checkbox"/> Fill out online application
<input type="checkbox"/> Have official transcripts for prior degree(s) be sent to the Graduate School, 42 Stodder Hall, Orono ME 04469.
<input type="checkbox"/> Pay application fee. (Call 207-581-3291)
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify UMaine faculty advisor and have him/her e-mail: <a href="mailto:graduate@maine.edu">graduate@maine.edu</a> indicating his/her willingness to serve as advisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Two letters of recommendation
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft of Program of Study (POS). Submit to: <a href="mailto:graduate@maine.edu">graduate@maine.edu</a>

In complying with the letter and spirit of applicable laws and in pursuing its own goals of diversity, the University of Maine System shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or citizenship status, age, disability, or veterans status in employment, education, and all other areas of the University. The University provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. Questions and complaints about discrimination in any area of the University should be directed to Harry Payne, Executive Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, The University of Maine, Room 101, 5754 North Stevens Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5754, telephone (207) 581-1226 (voice and TDD).