

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (MA)

The Interdisciplinary Studies Program (IDS) is an innovative, flexible, and highly individualized graduate program designed to meet students' academic and professional goals. The program gives students the opportunity to design a program of study tailored to their own needs and interests. When students choose IDS, they take on the exciting challenge of creating their own curriculum and unique plan for learning. Creating an individualized program requires maturity, self-motivation, and independence. Students seeking a combination of flexible options and academic challenges are natural IDS candidates. IDS is a creative alternative to more rigid traditional, discipline-specific programs. Students can build their particular academic or professional interests and concentrate on specialized fields that are not available in traditional graduate programs.

The program offers students individualized cross-disciplinary majors, incorporating courses drawn from social sciences, humanities, business, computer and information science, and public service. The IDS Program is jointly administered with the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program (MALS) by the Interdisciplinary Self-Designed Program (ISD). IDS students are welcome to enroll in MALS Core Courses and cross-lists.

The program offers the following:

- Individual, self-designed graduate program of study that builds on specific academic and professional interests.
- Ability to combine various academic disciplines in chosen areas of study.
- Choice of courses in most colleges and schools.

The MA in Interdisciplinary Studies may also be expanded to include select graduate certificate programs covering particular areas of interest. Students participating in a combined MA/certificate program should consult with their academic advisor to determine what coursework might count toward both programs. A separate application process for the certificate is required. Students who are interested in any of the following combination programs should contact the Graduate Student Services Office for additional information.

- Interdisciplinary Studies + Community Development Certificate
- Interdisciplinary Studies + Digital Humanities Certificate
- Interdisciplinary Studies + Global Health Certificate
- Interdisciplinary Studies + Metro Planning and Development Certificate
- Interdisciplinary Studies + Public Health Certificate
- Interdisciplinary Studies + Social Research Certificate
- Interdisciplinary Studies + Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Certificate
- Interdisciplinary Studies + Women's and Gender Studies Certificate

| Program Requirements | Quarter Hours |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Degree Requirements | 48-52 |
| Total hours required | 48-52 |

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches in research and writing.
- Use their knowledge of the methods and approaches of at least one particular academic or professional discipline to complete academic writing projects.
- Analyze and interpret discourse and media in a variety of academic, literary, professional, and popular genres.
- Research and write in a variety of academic and/or professional genres, including expository essays, critical analysis, research papers, white papers, etc. culminating in an extended capstone, analyzing and incorporating a variety of academic and technical resources in appropriate scholarly and professional formats.
- Analyze the social and/or historical context of phenomena and value systems in social and institutional settings.

Degree Requirements Portfolio

All students will keep a portfolio of significant work done for courses, such as final papers or special projects, with comments and grades from the professor. By the midpoint, there will be work from a total of at least three courses in the portfolio. At the culminating point there will be work from a total of at least six courses in the portfolio.

Midpoint Essay

After completing the sixth course but before taking the ninth course, all students in both programs will write a 3-5 page essay examining their progress to that point, using as evidence work from the portfolio. The Midpoint Essay reflects on the student's intellectual growth, and suggests directions for the second half of the student's program.

Culminating Point Essay

All students in both programs (regardless of which final option they choose) will write an essay of 3-5 pages, reflecting on their intellectual growth in the second half of the program.

Course Work

- Completion of 48 or 52 quarter hours of graduate credit, depending on the completion option (thesis, practicum, enhanced portfolio or exit course) chosen by the student.
- Maximum of 8 quarter hours of credit in approved 300-level courses, and remainder of credit hours from 400/500/600-level courses.
- No more than five courses may be taken in the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business (KGSB), including courses which are cross-listed in other programs and courses transferred from other institutions which are business courses. Registration for courses in the KGSB must be done through the IDS office.
- No more than six courses may be taken in any single discipline within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, no more than six courses may be taken in the College of Education, and no more than six courses may be taken in the Jarvis College of Computing and Digital Media (CDM). Special permission must be sought for courses taken in the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (formerly SNL). Only non-performance courses may be taken in School of Music or the Theatre School.
- Prerequisites within Departments and Schools apply.
- Certain individual courses may not be open to IDS students.
- To support the student's program plan, the IDS advisor may require that the student take certain courses in areas such as writing,

statistics, disciplinary methodologies, foreign languages, etc., when appropriate.

Program Completion (Capstone) Steps

All students must apply and be approved for the particular option they wish to use for program completion (thesis, practicum, enhanced portfolio or exit course). This application will include the student's portfolio. The thesis and practicum options include a Formal Proposal. Approval of the proposal is necessary before the student undertakes this final stage of the program. Enrollment in MLS 499, the culminating project independent study course, takes place after approval of the proposal has been secured. If necessary, in lieu of an elective, students may enroll in MLS 498 if they require an additional quarter of research and other preparation for MLS 499.

Both 498 and 499 are conducted as Independent Studies. Instructions for proposing and pursuing these are available with the Program. When the project is completed both the members of the committee and the ISD director sign a Culminating Project Completion Form.

Program Completion (Capstone) Options

The IDS program may be completed in one of four ways:

Thesis Option (12 Courses)

In addition to the Culminating Point Essay and final portfolio submission, the student will write a paper of approximately 35-50 pages that includes 3-4 components or sections, one of which will be a research component and original exploration of the subject. (Other components might include a review of literature, a synthesis of earlier research, a reflection on various disciplinary and methodological approaches to the issue, suggestions for future research, etc.) The research component of the Master's Thesis involves reflection on primary research, or actual primary research combined with reflection on the primary research of others. The student is encouraged to make a public presentation about his or her thesis. Students who have earned a GPA lower than 3.3 may in some cases be asked to complete their program with a different capstone choice.

- Ordinarily taken as MLS 499 the student's 12th and final course.
- Requires minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3, evaluation of "satisfactory" on the Midpoint Portfolio, formal proposal and approval of committee.

Practicum Option (12 Courses)

In addition to the Culminating Point Essay and final portfolio submission, for the Practicum Option the student will create a project aimed at developing and executing a community-based intellectual or intellectual/creative activity. Examples are a public presentation as a lecture, in broadcast or print media, or on the web. Service learning projects are also encouraged. A 15-25 page descriptive/analytic essay documenting the project is also submitted. The student is encouraged to make a public presentation about his or her practicum in addition to the primary distribution of the project. Students who have earned a GPA lower than 3.3 may in some cases be asked to complete their program with a different capstone choice.

- Ordinarily taken as MLS 499, the student's 12th and final course.
- Requires minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3, evaluation of "satisfactory" on the Midpoint Portfolio, formal proposal, and approval of committee.

Enhanced Portfolio Option (13 Courses)

In addition to the final portfolio submission, and a Culminating Point Essay based on portfolio pieces selected from at least three courses in

the second half of the program, the distinctive feature of the Enhanced Portfolio option is the writing of a new extended expository essay of 12-15 pages. This is a paper on a topic of the student's own choosing that makes an argument. (Further information on this paper and the option is available from the program.)

- Ordinarily taken as MLS 499, the student's 13th and final course.
- Requires formal proposal and approval of committee.

Exit Course Option (13 Courses)

In addition to the Culminating Point Essay and the final portfolio submission, the student proposes a particular course over and above the original 12 courses. This course should be chosen as an "exit course," in that it brings together a number of areas of interest that the student has pursued over the course of the program. By arrangement with the instructor, the student uses the final paper or final project to make connections with the goals of his or her overall IDS Program. The instructor will grade the paper, and another reader suggested by the IDS program will also review and comment on the paper.

- Requires formal proposal and approval of committee.

Determination of Degree

If the majority of courses completed for the master's degree are drawn from programs that award the Master of Arts degree, then the student will earn the MA. If the number is equal the student can choose the MA or the MS.

Student Handbook

Probation

Students are expected to maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. A GPA below 3.0 will result in the student being placed on warning status. If this status persists for two quarters, the student will be requested to leave the program. If he or she decides to remain in the program, the student will be placed on academic probation and be given one quarter to raise the GPA to 3.0. If the student's GPA falls to 2.5 or below, he or she will be immediately placed on academic probation and must raise the GPA to 3.0 in the next quarter or face dismissal from the program. If the GPA falls to 2.5 or below a second time the student will be dismissed from the program.

When a student is admitted to the MALS or IDS Program under the category of "Conditional Admission" he or she is considered under academic probation until the conditions are met. The conditions are usually that a student must earn a grade of B or higher in all courses taken during the first three quarters in the program. The student may request continued registration in the second and third quarters if the grades are not adequate in the first quarter. If the conditions of admission are not met by the third quarter, the student will be dismissed from the program. Other conditions may include the requirement to take certain courses, and the student must comply within the specified time period or face dismissal.

IDS students who select courses that are not on their approved List of Courses (LOC) may face warning after one quarter and probation after two quarters if they do not seek approval for their altered programs. The procedure for altering an approved List of Courses is found on the ISD D2L site.

Students whose grades fall below the minimums described above will be considered in the categories of warning or probation whether or not the program administrators are aware of the student's grades. The

program administrators may apply the categories of warning or probation retroactively if the student does not self-report his or her status. Students are required to seek advisement from program administrators when facing academic warning or probation. A student who does not contact program administrators about potential warning or probation status may face dismissal from the program.

Dismissal

In addition to the minimum GPA requirement, students may be dismissed for breaches of academic honesty or breaches of the code of student responsibility. MALS students may also face dismissal for failure to complete Core Courses with a grade of B or higher within the first half of their academic career. Students who have completed their coursework, but who are still working on their thesis, practicum or other capstone project must be enrolled in Candidacy Continuation (MLS 502 or IDS 502) during the three quarters of the academic school year. After three consecutive terms of Candidacy Continuation, students should enroll in Active Status (MLS 501 or IDS 501) if they still require time to complete their capstone. Failure to enroll in candidacy continuation or advanced status may result in dismissal from the program if the student has not formally withdrawn from the program.

Readmission

When a student has withdrawn from the program or has not been enrolled in classes for three or more quarters during the academic year, he or she must apply for readmission using the Readmission and Reclassification form available from the LAS Graduate website.

Transfer Credit

A student may apply to transfer up to three courses of graduate work from another accredited institution. The courses must be approved by the Program Director as part of the student's overall course of study for both MALS and IDS students. The courses must then be approved for transfer credit by the Office of Student Records.

Undergraduate Courses

Courses at the 200-level cannot be approved for graduate credit, even when a student needs to take such a course as preparation for more advanced work. Courses at the 300-level may be approved for graduate credit under the following circumstances:

1. The course is necessary as a part of the student's overall interdisciplinary program.
2. The department does not offer courses in the same area on the graduate level.
3. The student has arranged with the professor to enhance the course to graduate level by the addition or alteration of assignments, including the final project of the course.

Unless approved by the Program Director, a student should take no more than two 300-level courses as part of his or her program.

Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate, students in the MALS and IDS Programs must complete the coursework specific to their programs (either 48 or 52 credit hours depending on capstone choice) with a minimum GPA of greater than 3.0, a midpoint and culminating point essay, the submission of an electronic portfolio of final and other projects from a minimum of six courses, and one of four capstone choices offered by the program. A full description of the requirements for the capstones, as well as further policies and procedures for both programs, are outlined in the documents

found on the ISD D2L site under Program Documents. Students in the program are expected to be familiar with these policies and procedures and to comply with them.

Graduation with Distinction

In order to have the degree conferred with distinction, students in MALS and IDS completing their programs with a thesis or practicum capstone (48 credit hours) must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.75, plus earn a designation of "distinction" on their thesis or practicum by their thesis advisor and at least one of the two readers on their committee. Thesis and practicum writers eligible for distinction are required to present their projects at a ISD event within three academic quarters of completion. Students in MALS and IDS completing their programs with an exit course or enhanced portfolio essay capstone (52 credit hours) must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.85 in order to graduate with distinction.

Time Limit

Students are normally expected to complete the MALS or IDS Program within four academic years. During quarters in which no courses are taken, students are required to maintain active status in the program by registering for Candidacy Continuation or Active Status. Students who have not taken courses for three consecutive quarters during the regular academic year and have not registered for Candidacy Continuation or Active Status must apply for readmission using the Readmission and Reclassification form listed here.