The Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences (MLAS) is for students who need or desire advanced education but do not require a specialized content area. This interdisciplinary degree stresses critical thinking, comparative analysis, and flexible content rather than a more traditional advanced specialization in a fairly small content area. MLAS is designed especially for students seeking a Master's degree as an occupational qualification and for those who wish more in-depth inquiry into the liberal arts and sciences as a step toward greater personal fulfillment. MLAS promotes an advanced level of critique, analysis, and comparison across disciplines; students also explore the broad questions faced by human beings as well as the specific means by which individual disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and mathematics have addressed these questions.

Admission Requirements
In addition to meeting the general admission requirements of the School of Graduate Studies, applicants for admission to the graduate program in Liberal Arts and Sciences must have a grade point average of at least 2.75 (based on all hours attempted) and successful completion of at least 18 semester hours (sh) of upper-division coursework in the arts and sciences, or a GPA of at least 3.0 (based on all hours attempted).

International students should demonstrate evidence of an overall TOEFL score of at least 580 (paper-based; 92 Internet-based) or satisfactory completion of the WESL program.

To apply, students are to submit the following documents to the School of Graduate Studies:

• A School of Graduate Studies application form (available online at wiu.edu/grad)
• Official transcripts from each college or university previously attended
• A one- to two-page personal statement that explains the applicant’s larger personal and career goals and how the MLAS degree will further those objectives
• An academic paper of at least 5 to 10 pages that demonstrates an ability to develop a thesis and make a sustained, well-researched argument
• Three confidential letters of recommendation

Applications will not be reviewed until all materials have been received.

Degree Requirements
The Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences (MLAS) program’s core courses provide a broad overview of the three areas of the arts and sciences: (1) humanities, (2) social sciences, and (3) natural sciences and mathematics. What big questions do these disciplines ask? What methods do they use to pursue those questions? The electives allow students to build on this foundation and to develop their interdisciplinary interests through courses across the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Finally, the exit option is an opportunity to apply coursework through a thesis, applied project, or internship experience, depending on the student’s educational, personal, and career goals.

I. Core Courses: 9 sh
LAS 501 Tradition and Change: Focus on the History and Philosophy of the Sciences (3)
LAS 502 Tradition and Change: Focus on the Social Sciences (3)
LAS 503 Tradition and Change: Focus on the Humanities (3)

II. Electives: 18 sh
Any CAS Post-Baccalaureate Certificate and/or directed electives approved by the Director of Liberal Arts and Sciences. No more than 3 sh of electives may be independent work.

III. Select one of the following exit options: 6 sh
A. Thesis
LAS 667 Thesis (6)

B. Internship
LAS 695 Internship Preparation (3)
LAS 696 Internship (3)

C. Applied Project
LAS 699 Applied Project (6)

Total Program: 33 sh
Distinctive Features
The MLAS program has many distinctive features and opportunities for its students, including flexibility, individualized study options, and opportunities to bridge coursework and career:

• **Flexible Program Structure**
  For their exit option or capstone experience, students can write a thesis, work on an applied project, or pursue an internship. All of these options feature a close working relationship with a faculty director chosen from the graduate faculty within the CAS.

• **Flexible Schedule**
  Most graduate courses are offered once a week in the evenings, with daytime and online offerings also available. The program is designed to meet the needs of full- and part-time students. The LAS director meets regularly with students on the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses and is directly involved in providing guidance for the student’s progression through the program.

• **Research and Scholarly Activities**
  Students in the MLAS degree program participate in annual departmental conferences; the WIU Graduate Research Conference; departmental, College, and University speaker events; professionalization workshops; and graduate organizations and clubs. In Macomb, MLAS students are active in the LAS Graduate Student Organization (LASGO).

Career Opportunities and Personal Development
A master’s degree in the Liberal Arts and Sciences is an interdisciplinary degree emphasizing comparative critical thinking, communication, and the application of a broad range of methodologies and applied skills. Among other things, the degree prepares graduates to adapt to different social and professional contexts, and to be creative problem solvers.

Faculty Excellence and Expertise
MLAS students study with a highly qualified and diverse faculty from across the CAS. By working directly with faculty whose scholarly activities and expertise match their professional goals and academic interests, our students have the opportunity for close mentoring during the program and beyond.

Assistantships and Other Funding Opportunities
There are numerous funding opportunities available for students in the MLAS program through awards, scholarships, and fellowships in the Graduate School, as well as University-wide assistantships.

Featured Alumnus
As a part-time student working full-time, I found the Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences program to be a great way for me to broaden my educational horizons. My classes were taught by exceptional professors, and I immersed myself in challenging academic material. An added bonus is that I forged lifelong relationships with fellow students in the program. I can’t think of a better way to have spent the last three years.

– Gretchen Steil Weiss, MLAS, August 2013

Contact Information
For admissions process and general program information, contact the School of Graduate Studies, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 298-1806, (877) WIU GRAD toll-free, Grad-Office@wiu.edu, wiu.edu/grad.

For specific program questions, contact Dr. Amy Mossman, Director, Liberal Arts and Sciences Program, Tillman Hall 301B, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 298-3025, grad-las@wiu.edu, wiu.edu/las.

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