

Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences



The Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences (MLAS) at Western Illinois University is for students who need or desire advanced education, but do not require a specialized content area. This multidisciplinary 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 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. The 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 WIU 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 need to submit the following documents to the WIU 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 5-10 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. Electives allow students to build on this foundation and develop their interdisciplinary interests through courses across the WIU College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). 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 SH)
- LAS 502 Tradition and Change: Focus on the Social Sciences (3 SH)
- LAS 503 Tradition and Change: Focus on the Humanities (3 SH)

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 SH)

B. Internship

LAS 695 Internship Preparation (3 SH)

LAS 696 Internship (3 SH)

C. Applied Project

LAS 699 Applied Project (6 SH)

Total Program: 33 SH

Program Location:

Macomb

Contact Information

Questions about the program:

Liberal Arts and Sciences Program
Professor Amy Carr, graduate director
Morgan Hall 203A
(309) 298-2507
grad-las@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/las

General admission questions:

School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad



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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, students can write a thesis, develop an applied project or pursue an internship. Through a close mentoring relationship with a faculty director, individuals choose and tailor their exit options to meet their personal or professional goals, including preparation for doctoral work, a new career or advancement within a current career.

- **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 MLAS director and department chair meet regularly with students on the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses and are 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. MLAS students are active in the LAS Graduate Student Organization (LASGO) in Macomb and the LAS Student Organization (LASSO) in the Quad Cities.

Career Opportunities

An MLAS degree prepares graduates to adapt to different social and professional contexts, and to apply their diverse skills and knowledge as creative problem solvers. Our alumni currently work in the following areas: career advising, customer service, data management, education, human resources, nonprofit administration, sales and marketing and social and human services.

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.

Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to, minorities, women and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability and veteran status.



Featured Alumnus

Being able to graduate in two years, despite working full-time, as well as having two kids and a husband at home, was due in large part to the support of the MLAS faculty, who are the driving force behind the comprehensive and highly-flexible degree program. I would recommend this program to any student interested in pursuing a well-rounded education, who would appreciate learning from such a diverse group of outstanding teachers.

— Jennifer Lenehan, MLAS, May 2013

“The MLAS program at Western is simply amazing! The program allows you to pick and formulate a degree plan based upon the offerings under the Liberal Arts and Sciences umbrella. The program is rewarding in that you can choose areas of study that expand your insights and allow for personal growth. The diversity of the students and professors lead to meaningful classroom discussions and learning opportunities. It is these kinds of experiences that form lasting impressions.”

— Shannon Reed, MLAS, May 2012