Master of Arts in Liberal Studies - Call for Course Proposals

The Liberal Studies program invites you to submit a course proposal for Fall 2011, Spring 2012, or Summer 2012. **Due date for proposals is January 21, 2011.**

The Liberal Studies program is designed to offer graduate level work to adult students who are seeking an opportunity to satisfy their intellectual curiosity and broaden their knowledge and perspectives. Students are given graduate level work, but the program is not intended to be a highly specialized, pre-professional degree. All courses emphasize an integrative and multidisciplinary approach to the content topic. The program started at Wake Forest University in 1987, has had over 200 graduates. There are 148 other Liberal Studies programs nationwide, including such universities as Duke, Wesleyan, Stanford, and the UNC system.

The structure of the Liberal Studies program is to offer four seminar courses in the Fall semester, four in the Spring and two or three in the Summer. During the normal academic year the courses meet one time a week (usually in the early evening) for 15 weeks. In the summer, courses meet 10 times within a 7 week period. Class size is held to 15 students to encourage interaction.

**Students**

Liberal Studies students have many different undergraduate degrees; however, they all must have had at least a 3.0 undergraduate gpa or earned a B in two graduate level classes and have expressed the appropriate motivation for a graduate program in their personal statement or interview with the director. While the students range widely in age and experiences, they have in common their exceptionally high motivation to learn and explore. Past instructors have commented on how Liberal Studies students provide a stimulating and rewarding teaching experience. Most students take one to two courses per semester and will finish the program in approximately three years. For more information on the program, please visit www.wfu.edu/mals.

**Courses**

All Liberal Studies courses are seminars which take an interdisciplinary approach. Thus many Liberal Studies seminars deal with topics not normally included in a departmentally-based graduate program. A list of examples of past courses is included here. An inspection of this list shows that the Liberal Studies program has offered courses in a wide variety of topics from many departments in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Given the diverse undergraduate backgrounds of the Liberal Studies students, these courses typically have no prerequisites as they are intended to be accessible to students with a general interest. Whenever possible, the courses take a broad perspective which ties the material to contemporary concerns. Liberal Studies courses are presented in a format which requires the student to write, discuss and make presentations.

**Faculty**

Liberal Studies instructors are full-time faculty at Wake Forest University. Instructors may teach the course in addition to their normal departmental load. In this case they receive a $6000 salary for one course. This amount is the same for all ranks of faculty and for both the normal academic year and summer sessions. This salary is added to the regular paycheck across several months within the semester the course is being taught. Alternatively, instructors can teach a course in the evening for the Liberal Studies program as part of their normal teaching load. In this case, the home department receives up to $6000 for a replacement instructor. Faculty interested in this second arrangement should speak with their departmental chairs and the Liberal Studies director. *All faculty sending proposals to Liberal Studies will need to obtain their departmental chair’s signature on the proposal form. Also, faculty may not teach in the Liberal Studies Program during a semester when they have a course reduction either for research leave or for administrative duties.*

**Course selection**

In a typical year, the Liberal Studies Program offers 10 courses selected from approximately 20 proposals. Courses are selected by the Director and Advisory Committee. Selections are based on how well courses fit within the objectives of the program and how well they fit with the other courses being offered in that academic year. An attempt is made not to offer the same course more than once every two years. Proposed Liberal Studies courses should not duplicate graduate courses already being offered in other departments. If a similar course exists (such as a freshman seminar), the faculty member should indicate how the Liberal Studies class will differ and provide a graduate level educational education.
Proposing a course
Attached is a form to be filled out for your proposed course. If you wish to discuss a possible course, I would be happy to talk to you about the program or ideas you might have for a course. Please contact me at 758-5232 or duncanws@wfu.edu

Examples of MALS Courses

Aging: An interdisciplinary perspective
An African Atlantic
American Paths of Freedom
Architecture, Memory and Meaning
Baroque Music
Chemistry and Modern Society
Christian Ethics and Capitalist Economics
Cultural Pluralism and Values
Cultural Politics of American Presidents
Daughters of the South
Death and Dying
Developing Communities
Evil and the Incomprehensible in German Literature
Film and the Creative Life
German Culture Clash, 1890 - 1940
Global Population & the Environment
Impressionism in Art, Music, and Literature
Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Crisis & Tragedy
Italian opera
Life, Teachings and Method of Gandhi
Literary Classics of the World Religions
Making Light of the Dark Ages
Manhood in America
Myths of Creation
Novel into Film: The Content of the Form
People and Cultures of the American Southwest
Pilgrimage and the Act of Reading: Lectio Divina
Prose Fiction: Creating Your Own Voice
Reason and Revelation
Responsible Citizenship
Science, Values and Culture
Shakespeare Unbound & Rewound
Space and Time in Fact and Fiction
The Art and Craft of Writing Poetry
The Drug War
The History and Culture of Venice
The History of Bioethics
The History of Medicine
The Mind of the South Revisited
The Scientist in Literature & Film
The Self in Literature
Twins, Doubles & Clones
Urban Design and the City
Urban Legends
US Foreign Policy in the Middle East
What the Artist Sees
Women in the Church
Writing Women’s Lives
You Are What You Eat

Examples of Course Description

Novels into Film
How often have you been disappointed in a filmed version of a favorite novel or been pleasantly surprised by a cinematic interpretation? How often have you heard someone say “read the book, but don’t see the movie”? This course will explore ways in which fiction has been translated into film. We will theorize about the respective languages of fiction and film, and examine particular film adaptations to test out hypotheses about “the content of the form,” by which I mean the narrative properties unique to each medium. We will explore issues of audience, production, narration, mimesis, and meaning in each medium. We will seek understanding of what novels do that films can’t and vice versa. Students in the course will be asked to learn the respective vocabularies for interpreting fiction and film, to identify, describe, and interpret narrative elements of fiction and film, and to make meaningful comparisons and analyses.

Christian Ethics and Capitalist Economics
In this course we survey the moral value system that both legitimates and critiques economic practices and institutions. The focus is upon American values and economics as they have developed since colonial times. Weekly discussions focus upon significant statements of the relation between ethics and economics, using primary sources as much as possible. The following are typical of course topics: economic individualism in Puritan thought; religious socialists such as the early Moravians; the morality of self-interest as expressed by Benjamin Franklin; the Laissez-faire economists, and the Social Darwinists; the critique of self-interest by Alexander Hamilton, Daniel Raymond (the first American economist), Horace Mann, and others; economic morality in the novels of Horatio Alger and Edward Bellamy; Andrew Carnegie’s “Gospel of Wealth”; the Social Gospel; libertarian values of Milton Friedman; the Roman Catholic bishops’ 1986 pastoral letter on the economy, and Ralph Bellah’s “Habits of the Heart”. A formal background in economics is not necessary.
MALS Seminar Proposal

Please print and return this form to the MALS Office, Reynolda 123
Please electronically submit the information requested on the following page.
Due date: January 21, 2011

Name ___________________________ Phone _____________ Email ____________________

Home Department ________________________ Rank __________________________

Approval signature of Departmental Chair ______________________________________

I have a departmental course reduction for a research leave or for administrative duties in:
_____ Fall 2011 _____ Spring 2012

Please rank your preferred semester (1 = first choice, 2 = second choice, etc.) If only one
semester is possible, please indicate this:

_____ Fall 2011  _____ Summer 2012 Session 1
_____ Spring 2012 _____ Summer 2012 Session 2
Please submit the following information in electronic format to duncanws@wfu.edu

1. Title of course (The title should be brief, appealing and informative. Students often pick courses on the basis of the title alone.)

2. Course description (Please write a 150 word description of your course. This statement should accurately describe the course content in an engaging way. This statement is sent to the student and is another basis for students to select a course. Statements that are lively, intriguing, and student-relevant tend to attract more students.)

3. As many Liberal Studies courses are interdisciplinary or tangential to the main expertise of usual specialty of the instructor, please indicate the particular relevant experience/expertise for teaching this specific course.

4. Vita (Please attach a copy of your current vita).