Diploma in Liberal Studies (DLS)

Program Learning Outcomes for the Diploma in Liberal Studies

Upon completing the Diploma in Liberal Studies, students will be able to:

1. Identify significant interdisciplinary problems or issues and select one that the student can successfully address in a research project.
2. Apply current interdisciplinary research methodologies and techniques, appropriate to the student’s selected disciplines, to a problem.
3. Demonstrate a critical and creative use of primary sources and content appropriate for the research topic.
4. Analyze critically and evaluate one’s own findings and those of others.
5. Communicate effectively ideas, methodologies, analyses, and interpretations of the research topic.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the current interdisciplinary work in at least two academic disciplines.

Requirements for the Diploma in Liberal Studies

For general university requirements, see Diploma Programs (ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-diploma-programs). Students pursuing the Diploma in Liberal Studies must complete:

- A minimum of 30 credit hours to satisfy the Diploma in Liberal Studies program requirements.
- MLSC 750 Introduction to Diploma Research in their entering term, before taking any other DLS courses with a grade of B (3.0 grade points) or better. Additionally, students may take only 1 course, MLSC 750 Introduction to Diploma Research, in their entering term. Afterwards, students may take up to 2 courses per term.
- Students must maintain a 3.33 (B+) grade point average (GPA) and all courses must be completed with a grade of B- (2.67 grade points) or better to count toward the diploma.
- Continuous enrollment in the program and are expected to complete successfully at least 2 courses an academic year and be enrolled in at least 2 terms of the academic year unless granted an official leave of absence.

Additionally, students must follow the guidelines listed below:

- With respect to the 2 main disciplines chosen by the student for interdisciplinary work in completing the diploma project, a student must complete a minimum of 3 courses in each before taking the 2 diploma project courses. This is a minimum. Additional courses in the 2 chosen disciplines are recommended. A student may petition to have post-baccalaureate courses taken before entering the DLS program considered as a partial satisfaction of this requirement. An undergraduate degree in 1 of the disciplines could similarly serve as the basis of a petition.
- If 1 of the 2 main disciplines chosen by the student for the interdisciplinary work of the diploma project is outside the humanities, then the humanities discipline is the primary, the non-humanities discipline the secondary discipline. In such a case, the student must complete a minimum of 3 courses in the primary discipline before taking the 2 diploma project courses (MLSC 798 and MLSC 799), and a minimum of 2 courses in the secondary discipline. More are recommended. A student can petition to have post-baccalaureate courses taken before entering the DLS program considered as a partial satisfaction of these requirements. An undergraduate degree in 1 of the disciplines could similarly serve as the basis of a petition.
- Diploma students are allowed to take up to 7 years to complete the diploma.
- Students must successfully complete all content coursework before taking the research coursework of MLSC 798 and MLSC 799.
- Students should refer to the Diploma in Liberal Studies Student Handbook for additional information.

Summary

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<th>Code</th>
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<th>Credit Hours</th>
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Diploma Requirements

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<td>MLSC 798</td>
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<td>MLSC 799</td>
<td>DIPLOMA PROJECT II ¹</td>
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Elective Requirements

Students must complete 7 courses from MLSC course offerings at the 500-level or above. ²

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Footnotes and Additional Information

¹ MLSC 798 and MLSC 799 are taken for a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade and must be completed with a Satisfactory grade, however, these courses do not apply to the requirement of a minimum grade of B- (2.67 grade points) in each required course.

² Students may choose to take up to 6 credit hours of MLSC 797 Advanced Independent Readings to fulfill the Elective Requirements.

Students in the Diploma in Liberal Studies program will complete 24 hours of content coursework from the Liberal Studies catalog of classes, beginning with MLSC 750 Introduction to Diploma Research. Upon completion of these 24 hours, the student will then take 6 hours of research coursework (MLSC 798 and 799) under the direction of 3 readers, a first, second, and third reader. (The first reader is referred to also as "the advisor."

The diploma project will typically take the form of an interdisciplinary diploma thesis. Alternatively, the student may opt to write 2 interdisciplinary academic papers (starred papers) of publishable length and thesis quality.

The interdisciplinary journal of the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs, Confluence, serves as an example of the academic research level required. Confluence is a peer-reviewed journal, publishing articles that reflect “the best scholarly and creative work produced by faculty, students and alumni of AGLSP member institutions,” all of
which programs offer graduate degrees in liberal studies, in some cases doctoral programs.

In order to complete the DLS program, students must defend their diploma thesis or 2 starred papers in a public diploma project defense and satisfactorily answer questions from their research advisor and readers and others in attendance. The 3 readers will then decide, with the first reader/advisor serving as chair of the discussion, whether the student has met all diploma project requirements, including passing the defense, with all 3 signing the appropriate papers if the decision is positive.

Policies for the Diploma in Liberal Studies

Admission

Admission to the Diploma in Liberal Studies program requires a 3.5 GPA in successfully-concluded post graduate degree work from either: 1) the Rice MLS program or 2) a liberal arts or liberal studies graduate degree program at an AGLSP member institution. Other post-graduate degrees may be considered (e.g., MA, MD, JD), but only along with evidence of significant academic work in areas relevant to a student’s proposed interdisciplinary work in the Diploma program – for example, an interdisciplinary undergraduate major with relevance to the work proposed for the DLS program or an undergraduate double major in the two disciplines chose for interdisciplinary work in the DLS. Applications will be accepted for Fall admission only and will be due on the March 15 prior. Completed applications will be forwarded to the Graduate Liberal Studies Faculty Steering Committee for review and admission decision. Admitted students will attend a new student orientation.

For additional information, please see the Graduate Liberal Studies website: http://mls.rice.edu.

Opportunities for the Diploma in Liberal Studies

Association of Graduate Liberal Studies National Honor Society

MLS graduates who earn a 3.75 GPA or higher and have demonstrated leadership in the classroom and in the greater community are eligible for nomination to the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies National Honor Society.

For additional information, please see the Graduate Liberal Studies website: http://mls.rice.edu.