Master of Arts in Liberal Studies at Queens College, CUNY

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies—MALS, for short—is an interdisciplinary MA program that gives students great flexibility in choosing the courses they take for the degree. Thirty credits of graduate-level coursework are required, which means ten three-credit courses. Nine credits are obtained by taking the sequence of three core seminars required of all MALS students, which are as follows: (1) Liberal Studies 700 (Western Values I), which is a survey of high points of Western civilization—philosophy, politics, and society—from Antiquity through the Middle Ages; (2) Liberal Studies 701 (Western Values II), which carries on the survey from the Renaissance to World War II; and (3) Liberal Studies 702 (Western Values III), which deals with topics in contemporary philosophy, politics, and science. These seminars are offered in consecutive semesters, on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 9:20. (Most graduate-level courses at Queens College are offered in the late afternoon or in the evening, for the convenience of working students.)

Besides the three core seminars just described, students in MALS are required to take eighteen credits of elective courses (six courses altogether), and students have a wide latitude of choice with respect to these courses. One may take any courses one likes, provided that they are liberal arts courses at the graduate level and provided that not more than three courses are from any one department. Popular as electives with MALS students have been courses in History, Philosophy, Urban Studies, English, Sociology, Art History, and Education (courses in the historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education), to mention but a few. Information about graduate course offerings is available in departments’ offices well in advance of each new semester, and it is available online in the schedule of courses published by the Registrar’s Office.

Nine credits of core courses, plus eighteen credits of elective courses, add up to twenty-seven credits. For the remaining three credits needed for the total of thirty required for the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies degree, one writes a master’s thesis on a topic of one’s own choosing, with the assistance of a faculty thesis advisor. Usually one’s topic will have been suggested by something that has come up in an elective course, and usually one’s thesis advisor is a professor one has come to know in an elective course. A thesis must be a substantial work of seventy-five to a hundred pages. Most students find that they need two or three semesters to complete their theses. Full instructions for preparing theses are provided.

The Director of MALS, Professor James N. Jordan of the Philosophy Department, serves as general advisor to students in the program. He is available for any desired information or advice. His office is Powderton Hall 350-E. His office telephone number is 718-997-5280, and his e-mail address is James.Jordan@qc.cuny.edu. Always feel free to contact him.

To apply for admission to MALS, go to “Applying for Admission” at Queens College’s website: qc.cuny.edu. Applications are accepted for admission to MALS in both fall and spring semesters. Call the College’s Office of Graduate Admissions (718-997-5200) for any help you may wish with the application process.