

Course Syllabus

MALS 601—Introduction to Graduate Liberal Studies

Tuesday, 6-9 p.m.

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Course Description

A gateway experience for incoming Master of Arts in Liberal Studies students. Students will learn the conventions and expectations of graduate-level reading, writing, research, and critical analysis and explore the concept of interdisciplinarity. Topics include documentation of sources, formulation and development of independent research projects, research methods, and the use of online databases. Students will explore liberal-studies topics typical of those taught in other MALS courses. The content will be interdisciplinary and/or intercultural, and the course methodology will include lecture, discussion, independent research, group projects, and varied forms of academic writing.

Course Goals

- Become familiar with the expectations and practice of academic writing, including proper documentation and citation of sources.
- Understand how to read, evaluate and analyze source material at the graduate level.
- Learn to formulate, develop and carry out a research project.
- Become familiar with the use of online databases and other library resources.
- Practice productive classroom discussion skills.
- Hone presentation skills by sharing research findings with the class in the form of an oral and/or multimedia presentation.
- Become acquainted with the UD campus and its resources, including the library and the Writing Center, campus activities, MALS students and faculty, and UD policies and procedures.
- Understand the concept of interdisciplinarity in graduate study.
- Explore the ways in which an interdisciplinary study of a particular subject fits into the concept of a graduate liberal arts program.
- Reflect on the study of the liberal arts and the writing and research skills associated with it.

General Guidelines

Attendance and Emergency Absences

Although we are not meeting on campus this semester, attendance is a crucial part of the course, and participation in class discussions and activities comprises a large portion of your grade. If you have an emergency that causes you to miss or be late to a Zoom session, please let Aimee know as soon as possible so that other arrangements can be made.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments will be submitted via the [Canvas](#) course site. The work in this course is scaffolded, meaning that you prepare for assignments later in the course by completing previous activities and assignments. For this reason, completing and turning in assignments on time is essential. If a problem arises that causes you to miss a deadline, contact Aimee immediately to arrange an extension. You do not have to share details about the problem, but you should suggest a new deadline by which you will complete the work.

Academic Integrity

Any work that you submit at any stage of the writing process—draft, thesis and outline, bibliography, etc. through the final version—must be your own; in addition, any words, ideas, or data that you borrow from other people and include in your work must be properly documented. Failure to do either of these things is plagiarism. The University of Delaware protects the rights of all students by insisting that individual students act with integrity. Accordingly, the University severely penalizes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

Disability Support Services

Any student who needs an accommodation based on a disability should contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) office as soon as possible at dssoffice@udel.edu or 302-831-4643. Let Tara and Aimee know if you have a documented disability that affects your performance in this class, and we will find a way to work together.

Counseling Services

Students in need of counseling and support may call UD's Center for Counseling and Student Development at 302-831-2141 or the UD Helpline, 302-831-1001, which is available 24/7 for students feeling anxious, overwhelmed, depressed or otherwise in need of counseling.

Technology

- Email: Please check your University of Delaware email regularly because you might miss announcements or other important information. Aimee and Tara check their email several times a day on weekdays.
- Canvas: All assignments and activities will be completed through the course website in the [Canvas](#) learning management system. Aimee's primary form of communication to the whole class will be Canvas announcements. Please ensure that you [set up notifications](#) so that you receive an email when a new announcement is posted.
- Zoom: All live classes will be held on Tuesdays at 6 PM using the same Zoom link.

If you need assistance with Canvas, there is a [useful help page for students](#). If you have general questions about your technology, consult the [Tech@UD](#) page. Other tips for succeeding in an online course are available in the [UD Online Orientation](#) resource. If you have a technology problem you are unable to resolve, please contact Aimee ASAP.

Required Texts

- *Bedford Handbook* (11th ed., ISBN 9781319361082, buy in the UD bookstore or elsewhere)
- *Verdict of Twelve*, by Raymond Postgate (ISBN 9781464207907, buy in the UD bookstore or use the [ebook available through UD Library](#))
- *The Night of January 16th: A Play*, by Ayn Rand (ISBN 9780452264861, buy in the UD bookstore or elsewhere)
- *12 Angry Men* (1957 film; [available to rent](#) from various streaming services; [DVD available in the UD Library](#))
- Additional assigned readings are linked on the course [Canvas](#) site. You can print them or read them on a screen. We will refer to the texts during our Zoom discussions.

Grading (see following sections for details)

- Short writing assignments = 35%
- Class participation = 30%
- Group presentation = 10%
- Writing Center consultation = 5%

- Final paper = 20%

Short Writing Assignments

Short paper assignments throughout the course focus on honing the skills that will make you an effective writer in the MALS program and help prepare you for the research prospectus assignment due at the end of the semester. You will practice the skills of summarizing, evaluating, and synthesizing source material, as well as writing with clarity, unity, coherence, organization, support, and audience awareness. You will learn about interdisciplinary research methods, develop research topics, and engage in the research process using UD Library resources.

Instructions for each paper assignment are posted on Canvas, and you will turn in each paper by uploading it to Canvas by 6 PM on the due date. All papers must be double-spaced with 1-inch margins in a common 12-point font (Times New Roman, Calibri, or Cambria). Short papers should be 2-3 pages, not counting the Works Cited page. Because we all improve our writing skills by revising our written work, you may revise any or all of the short papers.

Class Participation

You will earn your class participation grade by completing activities on Canvas and by attending Zoom meetings. Both components offer you opportunities to share your ideas, to respond thoughtfully to your classmates and the assigned readings, and to ask questions about assignments and concepts. Try to complete each week's activity by Saturday so that others have time to view and respond to your posts before class on Tuesday evenings.

Your participation grade also includes one individual conference with Aimee to discuss your research for the final paper. These conferences will be held in lieu of a scheduled class meeting in week 12. While only one individual meeting is required, you are welcome to meet with Aimee outside of class time as well.

Group Presentation

For this assignment, you will be paired with another student or two to deliver a 10-minute oral presentation and a complementary set of presentation slides on the subject of a historical murder trial. Each student will have conducted research and written a paper on this topic individually in earlier weeks of the course. The goal of the group presentation is to synthesize the group members' previous findings into a cohesive

argument of the case. Complete instructions for this assignment are included in the Canvas module for week 7.

Writing Center Consultation

The UD Writing Center provides free one-on-one consultations to all students who have writing assignments. You may schedule [real-time or asynchronous e-tutoring appointments \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to receive feedback on your draft of any assignment for this course. At least one consultation is required for the course. When scheduling your appointment, look for option to have an email verifying your visit sent to your instructor, and enter Tara Kee's email address (twkee@udel.edu). You will receive credit for the visit when Tara receives the verification from the Writing Center.

Final Paper

The final assignment is to write a prospectus of 5-7 pages for a hypothetical research project on an interdisciplinary topic. The research question, research methods, and sources you explore in the second part of the course will form the basis of your proposal. This assignment is intended to help you practice skills you will need to write successful research papers in future courses and to complete the capstone thesis or project at the end of the MALS program. Complete instructions for this assignment are included in the Canvas module for week 15.

Course Schedule Outline

See the weekly modules in the Canvas course site for complete details.

Week 1 (Sept. 1)

- ACTIVITY: Introduce Yourself
- ZOOM: Introduction to the course

Week 2 (Sept. 2-8)

- READING: *Verdict of Twelve*; *Bedford Handbook* Part 1 "A Process for Writing"
- ACTIVITY: Revise common writing problems
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 1
- ZOOM: Discuss *Verdict of Twelve* and the academic writing process

Week 3 (Sept. 9-15)

- READING: *The Night of January 16th*; *Bedford Handbook* chapters 50-51 on MLA format

- ACTIVITY: Practice MLA style citations
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 2
- ZOOM: Discuss *The Night of January 16th* and address questions about MLA style

Week 4 (Sept. 16-22)

- READING: *12 Angry Men* (film); *Bedford Handbook* Part 2 “Academic Reading and Writing”
- ACTIVITY: Use the historical *New York Times* database
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 3
- ZOOM: Discuss *12 Angry Men* and academic reading and writing

Week 5 (Sept. 23-29)

- READING: *Bedford Handbook* Part 9 “Researched Writing” (only chapters 44-49)
- ACTIVITY: Practice paraphrasing and quoting a source
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 4
- ZOOM: Discuss researched writing

Week 6 (Sept. 30 – Oct. 6)

- READING: Latucca, “Considering Interdisciplinarity”
- ACTIVITY: Practice writing claims and identifying their audiences
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 5
- ZOOM: Guest lecture by Jon Cox

Week 7 (Oct. 7-13)

- READING: Menken & Keestra, “The Interdisciplinary Research Process”
- ACTIVITY: Share group presentation slides
- ASSIGNMENT: Group presentation (delivered during Zoom meeting)
- ZOOM: Group presentations

Week 8 (Oct. 14-20)

- READING: Blair, “Writing the Proposal”
- ACTIVITY: Create a RefWorks account
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 6

- ZOOM: Guest lecture by Lowell Duckert

Week 9 (Oct. 21-27)

- READING (choose 2): Ellis and Albrecht, "Climate change threats to family farmers' sense of place and mental wellbeing"; Sharma, "Appreciating migration flows for health-social services planning"; Appleby, Wilson, and Swinton, "Spiritual Care in General Practice"
- ACTIVITY: Brainstorm search strategies for your topic
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 7
- ZOOM: Discuss interdisciplinary scholarly conversations

Week 10 (Oct. 28 – Nov. 3)

- READING: Byrne, "Developing a Researchable Question"
- ACTIVITY: Import a citation into RefWorks
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 8
- ZOOM: Discuss interdisciplinary research strategies

Week 11 (Nov. 4-10)

- READING: Denicolo & Becker, "What Should Be Included in the Methodology / Research Implementation Sections?"
- ACTIVITY: Consider the research design of your prospectus
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 9
- ZOOM: Discuss using sources in the prospectus

Week 12 (Nov. 11-17)

- READING: Read potential sources for your prospectus.
- ACTIVITY: Create a bibliography with RefWorks
- ASSIGNMENT: Short paper 10
- ZOOM: Individual conferences

Week 13 (Nov. 18-24): Thanksgiving Break (no class)

Week 14 (Nov. 25 – Dec. 1)

- ACTIVITY: Prospectus peer review

Week 15 (Dec. 2-8)

- ASSIGNMENT: Research Project Prospectus (Final Paper)
- ACTIVITY: Complete your course evaluation
- ZOOM: MALS student/alumni panel