Program Handbook

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

2016 - 2017
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Welcome to the MA program in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS).

We are excited that you are joining our innovative and flexible program, designed for students who wish to pursue a distinctive educational experience by combining the study of two or more disciplines. Building on the entirety of the ASU curriculum, the MA program in Interdisciplinary Studies “hands the keys” to the University to you while also providing you with a “bird eye’s view” of major trends in critical thought over the last several decades. This Program Handbook provides essential information and resources to help you be successful in our program. I look forward to working with you and helping you negotiate the challenges of graduate study. If you have questions or concerns about the program, please contact me.

I look forward to working with you and to seeing where your studies take you.

Best wishes,

with best wishes,

STEFAN STANTCHEV, PhD
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School of Humanities, Arts & Cultural Studies
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Program Description

The MA degree in Interdisciplinary Studies offered by the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences is an innovative program that allows students to combine the study of two or more disciplines.

Founded on the conviction that solving problems in the 21st century often requires an interdisciplinary approach, this flexible program provides exposure to a variety of research methods, historical perspectives and modes of inquiry.

The program offers access to faculty members who are active practitioners of interdisciplinary inquiry. Working with the faculty, students may define their own area of emphasis or adopt an existing area such as American studies; cultural studies; gender studies; digital media art; or philosophy, rhetoric and literature.

By developing their own course of study, students can choose to either tailor their MA degree in Interdisciplinary Studies to the pursuit of a specific goal or to cast a broad net and use the degree as a general intellectual foundation of a higher level than that provided by BA degrees in the humanities or social studies.

The skills and knowledge that diligent students will acquire can 1/be fruitfully harnessed in service of a great variety of professional goals in any institution, agency, or business that engages in research and/or education (or that does business with entities that engage in research and/or education), 2/used as a stepping stone towards any doctoral program in the humanities or the social sciences, and 3/aid in the pursuit of careers as diverse as advertising and marketing, arts therapy, documentary film production, or gallery direction.
Curriculum and Graduation Requirements

Degree Requirements. The MA in Interdisciplinary Studies consists of 30 credit hours of graduate level (500-level or above) coursework. The program requirements include:

A. Three required core courses (9 credit hours)
   - **MAS 502 Perspectives in Interdisciplinary Studies** (required for 1st semester students except for students who begin in the Spring semester)
     This course serves as the MAIS students’ introduction to interdisciplinarity through the exploration of epistemological and rhetorical practices that bridge traditional disciplines.
   - **MAS 505 Theories of Change, Culture, and Mind** (required for 2nd semester students except for students who begin in the Spring semester)
     This course introduces students to graduate-level interdisciplinary study of key thinkers, movements, theories, and paradigms in 20th and 21st-century thought.
   - **MAS 501 Methods of Interdisciplinary Inquiry** (required for 3rd semester students)
     This course provides students with a critical survey of current models of inquiry, tools, processes, and methods in different fields in preparation for the capstone project.

B. Elective/Focus Area (18 credit hours)
   These are courses that will count toward your elective/focus area and are offered through the MAIS program. Other courses from various units at ASU can be approved through the student’s committee. Course descriptions listed below.

C. Capstone Course (3 credit hours)
   MAIS students register for **MAS 585: Capstone** in their final semester of study. This course is structured as an independent study in which the student works closely with the Chair (primary faculty advisor) and committee member (secondary advisor). Note: Full-time students are required to plan their course of study in a way that does not make it necessary to register for any courses alongside MAS 585. Part-time students are urged to explore ways to prevent the need to take a course alongside MAS 585. When needed, the Program Director may allow a student to register for 3-credit hours alongside MAS 585.

Course Requirements. See Appendix A for a chronological representation of a typical Program of Study and sequence of courses.
MAS Elective/Focus Area Courses

These are courses that will count toward your elective/focus area and are offered through the MAIS program. However, students are encouraged to choose any courses (at the appropriate level) from various units at ASU that will further their interests. When equivalent courses are offered by various units, it is strongly preferred that MAIS students take the course offered by the program’s home college (New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the West Campus). Courses drawn from the general ASU catalog should be selected in consultation with one’s chair and are approved by the program director.

**MAS 510 – Science and Religion: Cosmologies and Worldviews**
This course examines science and religion, stressing modern scientific findings and philosophical/historical debates and dialogues.

**MAS 511 – Technology, Environment and Humanity**
This course critically analyzes technology in relation to human and environmental issues.

**MAS 512 – History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences**
Examines the development, historical content, and long-term importance of major theories of human nature from the 17th century until today.

**MAS 513 – Sociology of Everyday Life**
Examines institutional ethnography, a way of exploring the particular and generalized social relations that shape people’s everyday experiences. Prerequisite: graduate standing or instructor approval.

**MAS 550 – Philosophical and Spiritual Approaches to Death and Dying**
Examines how death and dying contribute to an understanding of human existence, through the writings of Plato, Aquinas, Kübler-Ross, Derrida, and others. Prerequisite: graduate standing or instructor approval.

**MAS 553 – Latin American Cities**
An interdisciplinary study of Latin American world cities (Mexico City, Santiago, etc.) emphasizing integration with U.S. cities, including Los Angeles and Phoenix.

**MAS 580 – Practicum: Capstone Development**
This practicum is a graduate-level Capstone Project development course – a conceptual phase for general research and creative output. Students will examine the theories and practices of interdisciplinary research and creativity while following a series of developmental strategies towards the development of a final concept paper.
MAS Omnibus Graduate Course Descriptions

Students can select to take these courses when it is appropriate.

**MAS 584 - Internship**  
Structured practical experience following a contract or plan, supervised by faculty and practitioners.

**MAS 590 - Reading and Conference**  
Independent study in which a student meets regularly with a faculty member to discuss assignments. Course may include such assignments as intensive reading in a specialized area, writing synthesis of literature on a specified topic, writing literature review of a topic.

**MAS 591 - Seminar**  
A small class emphasizing discussion, presentations by students, and written research papers.

**MAS 592 - Research**  
Independent study in which a student, under supervision of a faculty member, conducts research that is expected to lead to a specific project such as a thesis, report, or publication. Assignments might include data collection, experimental work, data analysis, or preparation of a manuscript.

**MAS 598 - Special Topics**  
Topical courses not offered in regular course rotation - e.g., new courses not in the catalog, courses by visiting faculty, courses on timely topics, highly specialized courses responding to unique student demand.
Important Policies

ASU Graduate College Policies

Being a part of ASU means that all students, regardless of program, are held to the same high standards of academic integrity and excellence.

ASU Graduate College establishes many policies that will affect you as you progress through the program. These policies are outlined at the website below. It is important that all students familiarize themselves with these polices. https://graduate.asu.edu/policies-procedures

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Note: The MA Program follows the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy. The current policy can be found at http://graduate.asu.edu/faculty_staff/policies.

Student Life

ASU has policies related to a variety of aspects of student life and academics available online at http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/index.html.
Plan of Study

In a graduate program, the specific courses that will count toward your degree must be approved by your graduate advisor and the program director. The list of these courses is called a Plan or Program of Study (POS).

In order to facilitate degree completion and shorten time to degree, graduate students with regular status must submit their POS by the time they have enrolled for 50 percent of the minimum credit hours required towards their degree program.

If you need help with filing your iPOS, contact your faculty advisor and/or download the iPOS training manual. After you submit your iPOS, your faculty advisor will approve it. You can track the approval process online through your MyASU account.

When we evaluate your iPOS, we will look to see that you have met the program requirements described above. In addition, we will check to make sure that you are following the additional rules below:

- Students will be limited to 9 credit hours of individualized instruction, any combination of 590, 592, 580. The Program Director can approve additional 3 credit hours of individualized instruction when no scheduled courses can adequately further the student’s progress.
- Students will be limited to 6 credit hours of individualized instruction with any one instructor
- Students will be limited to 3 credit hours of individualized instruction with a faculty member outside of the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. The Program Director can approve additional 3 credit hours of individualized instruction with a faculty member outside of the New College under exceptional circumstances.
- A maximum of 6 credit hours of 400-level coursework (when appropriate graduate coursework is not available). Any 400-level coursework must be approved by the Director
- A grade of B or higher on all core courses (MAS 502, 501, 505)
- You must maintain a 3.0 GPA to progress in the program and graduate
- You must be enrolled in at least one credit during each Fall/Spring semester after admission (see ASU Graduate College Continuous Enrollment Policy)

All courses that appear on your iPOS are applied toward your MA degree and are ineligible to be applied toward a future graduate degree. As such, we recommend listing only the 30 credits required for the MA degree on your iPOS. Students are strongly discouraged from the pursuit of any additional/excess credits. However, should such credits be earned, they could theoretically be used toward a different degree program at ASU so long as they are not included in the iPOS.
Advising

On your Plan of Study, you are required to list a minimum of two individuals who will advise the coursework selection part of the program (if you choose to work with more faculty members, they do not all have to be listed on the iPOS). The committee members listed on your iPOS should be the committee members you will work with on MAS 585: Capstone Course.

Forming relationships faculty advisors is one of the most important elements of graduate education. Your advisors can help you in selecting the proper courses, in developing a capstone project, and, more generally, in understanding the complexities of graduate-level education. Most importantly, your primary advisor will play a key role in guiding you through major research challenges. Of course, because your faculty advisors play such a key role in your education, the process of identifying the right ones and making contact with them can be anxiety producing. Here are some tips for overcoming that anxiety and finding the best advisor for you.

1a. Review the faculty listed on the MAIS Advising Website (https://newcollege.asu.edu/advising/graduate/interdisciplinary-studies-ma) to identify those MAIS faculty members whose research interests correspond to your own. Then read some of those faculty members’ work to gain a better knowledge of the research questions they ask, the methodologies they use, and the writing styles they employ.

1b. Talk to other MAIS students, the Program Director, and/or the Academic Success Coordinator (ncgradadvising@asu.edu) about your research interests and possible advisors.

2. If possible, take a course or two with those faculty members whose interests correspond to you own, so that you can get to know them and their approaches to teaching.

3. Make arrangements to meet with prospective advisors in order to discuss your interests and their availability for mentoring duties.

After you have identified your primary faculty advisor, you should meet with him or her to discuss your Plan of Study in detail. Remember, the MAIS faculty and staff are here to assist with your educational journey, but you should be proactive in finding the right guides for you!
Culminating Experience (Capstone)

The capstone is the integrative project undertaken at the end of the program of study. It may take the form of a traditional research paper, an original creative work, or an applied project. **NO LATER THAN 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE CAPSTONE SEMESTER,** students must submit a capstone project proposal, which must then be approved by the Program Director and your faculty advisors. The proposal should outline the interdisciplinary nature of the capstone project, as well as its original contribution to the relevant field(s) of scholarship and/or creative activity. Students who are interested in further study beyond the MAIS degree should consider preparing a capstone project that prospective doctoral programs would recognize as the equivalent of a master’s thesis in their field(s).

**Registration.** Registering for MAS 585: Capstone is an important milestone for each MAIS student. **It is necessary to prepare for this course.** Please read the following information and guidelines carefully. **No exceptions to these policies can be made.**

MAIS students register for **MAS 585: Capstone** in their final semester of study. This course is structured as an independent study in which the student works closely with the Chair (primary faculty advisor) and committee member (secondary advisor). Students must do their best to avoid the need to register for an additional course in their final semester of study.

**Student Eligibility for Enrolling in MAS 585:**

1. Entering the last semester of study or completed **minimum** of 24 MAIS credit hours.

2. Good academic standing, as defined by the MAIS Standards of Satisfactory Progress

3. Approved and current iPOS on file

4. Approved capstone proposal (SIGNATURES OF BOTH FACULTY ADVISORS AND THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR)

**Capstone Proposal**

All students must work with their faculty advisors to complete a capstone proposal. It is expected that students take **MAS 501: Methods for Interdisciplinary Inquiry** as they develop their capstone proposal (typically, during their third semester of residence in the program). Click here for the **Capstone Proposal Form.**

When all three signatures have been obtained, please deliver or scan and email the capstone proposal form to the Academic Success Coordinator. You will then be issued a line number for registration. **You will not be eligible to register for MAS 585 until this is complete and approved.**

Reminder: If your applied project will involve collecting data from human subjects, complete the necessary Human Subjects Institutional Review Board forms before collecting data. Consult with your faculty advisor. Forms are available on the ASU Human Subjects Home Page https://researchintegrity.asu.edu/humans.
iPOS. No student will be allowed to register for the culminating experience without an approved and up-to-date iPOS on file. Please follow the iPOS approval policies to accomplish this. It is recommended that before a student submit the approved Capstone Proposal Form to the Academic Success Coordinator for registration the following be completed:

1. Print out an unofficial copy of transcript from MyASU.
2. Print out a copy of the iPOS currently on file.
3. Confirm that all coursework (prefix, number, title, campus) on the transcript appears the same on the iPOS.
4. Make sure the faculty committee listed meets the iPOS committee requirements (as outlined above in the iPOS section).
5. Submit course or committee petitions for any discrepancies.
6. Get the committee chair to approve the new iPOS and submit this to the Academic Success Coordinator along with an approved “Thesis/Applied Project Proposal.”

**Graduation Checklist**

After you have successfully registered for MAS 585, please review the following information to ensure a successful and smooth graduation process.

- Apply for graduation through your MyASU account online.
- Review dates and deadlines established by ASU Graduate College. Discuss these dates with your committee to determine dates to submit drafts and a date to submit the final project.
- During the eighth week of the semester, students must submit a signed Capstone Progress Report to the Academic Success Coordinator. *The student is responsible for obtaining signatures on the form and sending a signed electronic copy to the Academic Success Coordinator.*
- Complete the capstone according to the recommendations, suggestions, and revisions provided by your graduate committee.
- When your final project is approved by your faculty committee:
  a. The Chair of your committee will input a letter grade for your MAS 585 course.
  b. Please submit an electronic copy of your capstone project, including a 100-word abstract, to the Academic Success Coordinator at NCGradAdvising@asu.edu. In the email please indicate whether or not you give permission for this to be included in an online library of capstone projects that may be viewed by other students.
Student Learning Outcomes

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) creates an innovative learning environment for post-baccalaureate students from all disciplines seeking to problem-solve via “out-of-the-box” interdisciplinary thinking and action. Motivated MAIS graduates will be well-prepared, interdisciplinary-skilled people, capable of meeting the multiple demands and challenges of today’s workplace.

MAS 502
Learning outcomes:
- Introduce principles and practices of interdisciplinarity
- Extend knowledge and practices of graduate-level research
- Strengthen graduate-level writing and editing skills
- Enhance critical thinking skills

Direct measures of students’ achievement of outcomes:
- Produce short essays that demonstrate understanding of current scholarship on interdisciplinarity
- Develop a detailed bibliography for a major research project
- Conduct a critical literature review of a research topic

MAS 505
Learning outcomes:
- Acquaint students with a spectrum of 20th- and 21st-century theorists and their predecessors
- Summarize the key points of difficult theoretical texts [I made this plural]
- Reinforce the critical reading, research, and writing skills of MAS 502

Direct measures of students’ achievement of outcomes:
- Demonstrate knowledge of the vocabulary associated with various theories
- Demonstrate knowledge of how various theories can inform interdisciplinary research

MAS 501
Learning outcomes:
- Introduce practical quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Acquaint students with theoretical/methodological issues relevant to interdisciplinary inquiry
- Acquaint students with epistemological debates
- Reinforce principles of interdisciplinary graduate research
- Acquaint students with the ethical concerns of research

Direct measures of students’ achievement of outcomes:
- Obtain IRB certification for human subjects research
- Produce a preliminary capstone proposal that displays the ability to analyze debates in the methodological literature
- Demonstrate ability to undertake multiple methods of inquiry
- Demonstrate ability to conduct literature searches across multidisciplinary databases
- Demonstrate ability to pose a researchable interdisciplinary question
**University and Campus Resources**

**Fletcher Library.** Fletcher Library at the West campus is an invaluable resource to students and faculty. Among the highlights of its collection are 337,000 volumes, 1.5 million microforms, 9,500 videos, 50,104 subscriptions, and 252 electronic databases. The majority of these databases are available to ASU users from home computers. A range of information and research tools are accessible through the ASU Libraries website: https://lib.asu.edu/. With a seating capacity of 600 and space for 350,000 volumes, the 106,000 square-foot facility is a state-of-the-art information access center designed to take full advantage of electronic technology.

**West Computing Commons.** Computing Commons is the general-purpose student-computing lab at ASU. It is equipped with networked computers, general-purpose and class-related software, printers, scanners, and adaptive technology. Macintosh and IBM-format/Windows personal computers are available for use. It is located in the basement of Fletcher Library. Students are encouraged to establish and learn to use an e-mail account and the Internet. MyASU is an e-mail and conferencing system that is available free to all registered ASU students. The website is: [https://ucc.asu.edu/sites/hours-and-locations/west-locations/cpcom-west/](https://ucc.asu.edu/sites/hours-and-locations/west-locations/cpcom-west/). The phone number is 602-543-8277.

**Student Success Center.** The Student Success Center at the West Campus provides tutoring and academic support services to help students succeed in college. These programs and services include: Writing Center, Subject Area Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, and Academic Success Courses. With convenient hours and locations, the Student Success Center provides assistance with what to learn and how to learn. For more information, see: [http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/](http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/). The Student Success Center is located in Fletcher Library LL2 across from Technopolis. The telephone number is 602-543-6151.

**Career Services.** A variety of services are available through this office, including information and assistance in career planning and placement, workshops, and job listings. Students can make contact with career recruiters through this office as well. It is located in the University Center Building 220, phone number 602-543-8124. The website is: [http://students.asu.edu/career/west](http://students.asu.edu/career/west).
# Appendix A

## MA Interdisciplinary Studies Plan of Study

### Full-time MAIS Student (4 Semesters)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Semester (Fall – 9 Credit Hours)</th>
<th>Second Semester (Spring – 9 Credit Hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAS 502: Perspectives in Interdisciplinary Studies</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>MAS 505: Theories of Change, Culture, and Mind</strong>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of Focus Course</td>
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<td>Area of Focus Course</td>
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**Third Semester (Fall – 9 Credit Hours)**

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<th>Fourth Semester (Spring – 3 Credit Hours)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MAS 501: Methods for Interdisciplinary Inquiry</strong></td>
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<td>Area of Focus Course</td>
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<td>Area of Focus Course</td>
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*Students starting in Spring take MAS 502 and MAS 505 in reverse order

### Part-time MAIS student (5 Semesters)

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<th>First Semester (Fall – 6 Credit Hours)</th>
<th>Second Semester (Spring – 6 Credit Hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAS 502: Perspectives in Interdisciplinary Studies</strong></td>
<td><strong>MAS 505: Theories of Change, Culture, and Mind</strong></td>
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<td>Area of Focus Course</td>
<td>Area of Focus Course</td>
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**Third Semester (Fall – 6 Credit Hours)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fourth Semester (Spring – 6 Credit Hours)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MAS 501: Methods for Interdisciplinary Inquiry</strong></td>
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<td>Area of Focus Course</td>
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**Fifth Semester (Fall – 6 Credit Hours)**

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<th><strong>MAS 585: Capstone Course</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Area of Focus Course</td>
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Appendix B

Contact Information

Faculty offices for MAIS are located in the Faculty Administration Building.

With specific questions about the Graduate Program in Interdisciplinary Studies contact:

Academic Success Coordinator
New College of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences
602-543-6266
ncgradadvising@asu.edu

or

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New College of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences
President, West Campus Senate
Arizona State University
4701 W. Thunderbird Rd, Glendale, AZ 85306-4908
https://webapp4.asu.edu/directory/person/1473647

With general questions about ASU Graduate Studies policies/procedures contact:

Graduate College – Student Academic Services
Administration Building, B Wing, Suite 285
(480) 965-3521
http://graduate.asu.edu/

With questions about tuition, scholarships, and financial aid:

ASU Financial Aid
120 University Center Building
(602) 543-8178
http://students.asu.edu/financial-aid