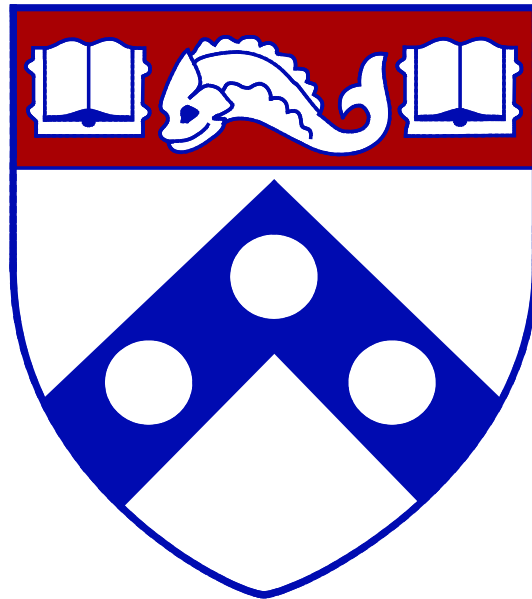


UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA



Master of Liberal Arts Program
Student Handbook

College of Liberal and Professional Studies
Academic Year 2019-20

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Welcome to the University of Pennsylvania and the Master of Liberal Arts Program. This MLA Handbook describes MLA Policies and Procedures, outlines the MLA degree requirements, shares tips on structuring your individualized curriculum, and provides information about the academic resources available to you at Penn. It should prove useful to you as you pursue your degree.

I. MLA Program Requirements

Graduation Requirements

The MLA degree will be awarded after successful completion of nine graduate courses (courses 400-level and above), including the submission of a Capstone Project.

- Ideally, you will define your area of concentration during your first semester, if not before, so that you can generate a program of study and define your capstone project during your first year in the program.
- No more than four courses may be taken in any one discipline; however, at least five courses should define your area of concentration, which will likely be interdisciplinary in nature.
- You must take at least one, and may take up to three, MLA Proseminars as part of your program.
- You may incorporate up to two independent studies into your MLA program.
- You may count up to two graduate courses from schools at Penn other than the School of Arts and Sciences toward your degree.

MLA Seminars

MLA seminars are graduate seminars designed specifically for MLA students with no prerequisites. These dynamic and interactive seminars meet exclusively in the evenings to accommodate students who work during the day and are typically reserved for MLA students. Class sizes are kept small in order to facilitate an intimate, collegial atmosphere. The instructors for MLA seminars are each approved by the MLA Program Director and by the department rostering the courses, and they typically teach additional courses outside of the MLA program at Penn. Though the instructors do not presuppose student familiarity with the course material, they hold MLA students to the same standards as any other graduate student at Penn.

MLA Proseminars are led by members of Penn's Standing Faculty and are designed to introduce students to graduate level coursework and to conducting interdisciplinary research. MLA Proseminars require extensive written work. **We require MLA students to take at least one MLA Proseminar as one of their first three courses in the program.** Their performance in each MLA Proseminar

will be assessed by the faculty members, and these evaluations will be returned to the Program Director to support advising and curricular design.

II. MLA Program and University Policies

Academic Standards

The MLA Faculty Advisory Committee has set the following minimum standards for MLA students to ensure they are making good progress toward their degrees. MLA students:

- Must maintain term and cumulative GPAs above 3.0
- Must take all courses that will count towards the MLA degree requirements for a letter grade; pass/fail courses will not be counted toward the degree (the letter grades of “S” or “U” also do not count toward the degree)
- Must earn course grades of B or above for courses that count towards the degree.
- Only one grade below B can count toward the degree and no grades below C may be counted.
- May not have two or more incomplete courses.

Students who receive one grade of B- or lower will be given an academic warning via email. Further grades below B will not count toward the 9 graduate c.u.s and additional courses will be required if the student otherwise in good academic standing and continuing in the program.

When the same course is taken again to meet the academic requirements of the program, both courses and grades appear in the transcript, but only the first course’s CU contributes to the total number of CUs and only the grade for the first course is included in the cumulative GPA.

Students who receive more than one grade below a B-, or who do not meet the above criteria to maintain good academic standing, will be placed on academic probation and reviewed by the MLA Faculty Advisory Committee. With the permission of the MLA Faculty Advisory Committee, students may take additional courses in order to increase their GPA or to fulfill requirements in courses where the student received a grade below a “B”. Students should work with the MLA Program Director to develop an academic plan and facilitate student success; students will not be allowed to register for courses during their probation period without an approved plan in place.

Program dismissal

Students who do not meet the terms of academic probation are subject to dismissal from the program. The MLA Faculty Advisory Committee will review the progress made by students placed on academic probation. This review will take place by the end of the first semester after the student has been placed on academic probation. Based on this review, the committee may decide to lift academic probation; continue academic probation for another semester; or drop the student from the MLA program. If the Committee decides to dismiss a student, the student will be sent an academic dismissal letter via email and U.S. mail.

Students who have been dropped for poor academic performance and who wish to be considered for readmission must contact the MLA Program Director for requirements and procedures for readmission. Students cannot be readmitted to the program without a review by the MLA Faculty Advisory Committee. If a student is readmitted, the student must maintain good academic standing throughout the duration of program until they graduate. If the student fails to meet these conditions, the student will be dismissed from the MLA Program again without further warning, and with no opportunity for readmission.

Provisional Status

Many students seeking admission to the MLA program are returning to school after a long absence or have undergraduate records that do not accurately reflect their academic ability. Some of those applicants are accepted into the MLA Program provisionally. Applicants accepted as provisional admits should adhere to the following procedure:

- Students must successfully completing two courses, taught by different instructors, and one of the courses must be an MLA Proseminar.
- Students must receive a grade of "B" or better in both courses.
- If a student takes three courses in their first semester, all three courses must receive grades of "B" or better.
- Students may not receive an Incomplete (I, NR, GR) in any of these courses.
- Students must receive a favorable recommendation from the instructors in both courses.

Students who meet the above requirements will have their status changed to full admit status. If after two courses, students do not meet the requirements outlined above, they will not be allowed to continue in the MLA Program.

Deferred Enrollment

Students who are admitted to the MLA Program may defer their matriculation for one year. Students who wish to defer should notify the MLA Program Director in writing of their intentions as early as possible. It is not necessary for

deferred students to reapply. However, students must inform the MLA Program Director if they enroll at any other institution prior to their matriculation at the University of Pennsylvania, and they must submit final official transcripts of any coursework completed prior to their enrollment at the University of Pennsylvania.

Sub-matriculation

The MLA Program does not permit sub-matriculation.

Incomplete Coursework

An incomplete grade indicates that a student has not completed all the work in a course and has done so with the instructor's permission. If the work for a course is incomplete as a result of the student's unexplained failure to hand in assignments or to take the final examination at the regularly scheduled time, the instructor should issue a grade of F for the course. An instructor who chooses to grant an extension to a student who has not completed a course by the end of the term may grant either an Incomplete (I) or an Extended Incomplete (II). An Incomplete must be made up within the first four weeks of the start of the next term, and an Extended Incomplete must be made up by the end of the next term (including the summer term). In either case, if the Incomplete is not made up by the deadline, it will become an F. An Incomplete is made up only when the official grade is received by the LPS Office and recorded by the Registrar's office on the student's official transcript. Once an Incomplete grade is converted to an F, the instructor may change the grade after the student has completed all required work. Students with two or more Incomplete grades are subject to registration hold and are required to meet with the MLA Program Director to explain the circumstances of the Incompletes and develop a plan to resolve them. Students with two or more outstanding grades of Incomplete will not be allowed to register for courses; students with two or more outstanding grades of Incomplete who have already registered will be dropped from courses.

Inactive Status

Students who do not enroll in courses for four consecutive terms, including Summer, will be in inactive status and automatically withdrawn from the program during the fourth term. Students who are withdrawn will be required to apply for readmission. Standard application fees will apply.

Academic Grievance

<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/graduate-division/resources/academic-grievance-procedure>

The following procedures should be followed in the event of an academic grievance. Academic grievances concern only matters pertaining to a student's performance and progress in his or her academic program, such as coursework, grading, evaluations, teaching and research responsibilities, examinations, dissertation, and time-to-degree.

These procedures apply to current students enrolled in graduate programs in SAS, and may also be used by former students within 3 years after leaving the University. This policy covers School-based Master's degrees that are administered either by the College of Liberal and Professional Studies (and the Associate Dean for Continuing Education) or the SAS Graduate Division (and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies). At the local level, they are overseen by Program Directors. A standing faculty committee, the SAS Committee on Graduate Continuing Education, advises the two Associate Deans on these programs.

1) Procedure for Appeal of an Evaluation, Exam or Course Grade

(a) Faculty members have the authority to make academic judgments in relation to their students and to make decisions in the interests of furthering their students' education. Therefore, ordinarily, only the instructor who gives an evaluation, exam or course grade has authority to change the evaluation, exam or course grade.

(b) In cases in which the instructor who gave the evaluation, exam or course grade no longer has an appointment at the University, the authority to change an evaluation rests with the Graduate Chair of the student's graduate group or Program Director of the relevant graduate program.

(c) Graduate students who wish to have an evaluation, exam or course grade reviewed must first discuss the matter with the instructor who gave the evaluation provided the instructor retains an appointment (including that of emeritus faculty) at the University. (In cases in which the instructor no longer retains an appointment at the University, the student must first discuss the matter with the Graduate Group Chair or Program Director.) Should this discussion not yield a resolution that is satisfactory to both the student and the instructor, or should a discussion not be possible, the student may submit a request, in writing, to the Graduate Chair or Program Director of the relevant graduate program for assistance in the matter.

(d) Should the matter not be resolved with the aid of the Graduate Chair or Program Director, the student may seek the assistance of the appropriate Associate Dean. The role of the Associate Deans is to ensure that the involved

SAS graduate group or program has arranged for a proper review of the matter and that the evaluation was fair and impartial and in accordance with applicable University policies.

2) Procedure for Requesting Waiver of a Graduate Group Requirement and Transcript Changes

(a) Students may petition their Graduate Group Chair or Program Director, as applicable, for waivers of requirements. The Graduate Group Chair or Program Director will forward all approved requests for waiving requirements to the appropriate Associate Dean for final consent and transcript change. Proposals for waivers in Ph.D.-track programs that violate the rules and regulations of Graduate Council of Faculties will be denied. In cases where there is a request to drop courses from the transcript, consultation of the involved faculty, if the faculty members are still at the University, is required.

3) Procedure for All Other Academic Grievances

(a) For graduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences, the first person to consult about most academic problems is the Graduate Group Chair or Program Director.

(b) If the Graduate Group Chair or Program Director does not provide a satisfactory resolution, or is seen as part of the problem, graduate students in the Graduate Division of Arts and Sciences whose graduate groups are associated with an academic department may next bring the grievance to the Department Chair. Students whose programs are not associated with specific academic departments may follow the procedures beginning in the next paragraph (3c), which describe appeals to the Associate Dean.

(c) If the student cannot reach a satisfactory solution after following the preceding procedures, s/he may take the problem directly to the appropriate Associate Dean. If such a meeting fails to resolve the problem, the student may request a hearing before the Graduate Academic Grievance Committee of the School of Arts and Sciences (on which see below, #4). This request should be made only as a last resort (that is, after the student has exhausted all viable channels discussed above). To file a formal grievance with the Graduate Academic Grievance Committee, the student must contact the office of his or her Associate Dean by letter or email that includes a description of the grievance and a description of the outcomes of the student's attempts at resolution through the channels described above.

(d) Upon receipt of a grievance, the Associate Dean will convene the Grievance

Committee, which will discuss the grievance and decide whether a hearing with the student is appropriate. The committee's decision about whether or not to hear the case will be final.

(e) In cases where a hearing is held, after committee meetings are finished and the committee has reached a determination, the chair will draft a recommendation, which, in most cases, will be addressed to the Associate Dean (the recommendation would go directly to the Dean if the Associate Dean were implicated in the grievance). To the best of its abilities, the committee will present its recommendation to the Associate Dean (or other applicable entity) in no more than twenty days after the hearing, and the Associate Dean (or other applicable entity) will strive to reply to the aggrieved student within one month (thirty days) of the hearing.

4) Composition of the Academic Grievance Committee

(a) The committee is composed of six voting members – three SAS faculty members and three SAS graduate students. The Associate Dean appropriate to the student's program will convene the committee and serve as a non-voting, ex officio member. The Associate Dean is responsible for appointing the three faculty members, who should come from diverse departments within SAS and whom s/he will draw from the members of either the standing SAS Committee on Graduate Education or the Committee on Graduate Continuing Education, as appropriate to the student's program. SASgov (the official graduate student government of SAS) is responsible for appointing the three graduate student members of the committee.

(b) The committee has a faculty chair, who is elected at the first meeting of the hearing. Only the faculty members of the committee are eligible to be chair. At the first meeting, the Associate Dean serves as chair, reviewing the role of the committee with all members and orchestrating the election of the faculty chair.

(c) The chair is responsible for drafting a recommendation for the disposition of a grievance after full deliberation by the committee. This recommendation is then transmitted to the Associate Dean for consideration and a decision about implementation. The decision of the Associate Dean will be final, unless verifiable procedural objections are raised. In such cases, the matter will be referred to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences for final disposition.

In addition to the channels outlined above, students may take problems to the Office of the Ombudsman (<http://www.upenn.edu/ombudsman/>). The Ombudsman does not have decision-making authority, but serves as an impartial mediator in helping to resolve disputes. Further, any student who feels

that he or she has been subject to discrimination may take his or her complaint to the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity Programs. The role of the Office of Affirmative Action is to coordinate compliance with certain anti-discrimination laws.

[\(https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/student-grievance/\)](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/student-grievance/)

The Penn Book

The Penn Book is a collection of policies that relate to student life at the University of Pennsylvania. These policies govern academic activities such as grading and exams, provide guidance on the use of campus resources, and explain expectations for membership in the university community.

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/>

Leave of Absence

Students take time away from their studies for a wide variety of reasons including: manage a medical concern, fulfill a family obligation, pursue career-related opportunities, complete military service, or work on a political campaign

While interrupting your studies to take time away may seem intimidating, a leave is a means to the successful completion of a degree, not a barrier to graduating. More than three quarters of students who take a leave return to complete their degree within two years.

If you are considering a leave, take time to think carefully about your goals for your time away and for when you return. Speaking with the MLA Program Director is an important first step. Depending on your circumstances you should get advice from other sources as well. Students taking time away in order to manage a medical condition should discuss the leave with their healthcare provider. Your MLA Program Director will help you connect with other campus resources as you prepare to take a leave of absence, such as Student Financial Services, Housing, and International Student and Scholar Services.

Students typically take a leave for a full academic year. Individual circumstances may require more or less time; the length of the leave is determined by the school. Students on leave should remain in contact with their Program Director and update them about changes in plans. The return from leave process supports students in a successful re-entry to academic life at Penn. When

preparing to return, students must consult their MLA Program Director to develop a plan that includes connection with appropriate resources.

(1) Requesting a Leave of Absence:

- Students must meet with a program advisor to discuss a leave request.
- The student must submit a written request for leave of absence, detailing the reasons for the desired leave.
- The leave request will be evaluated by the Program. If the request is approved, the Program will stipulate conditions that must be met by the student before returning from leave.
- The student will be notified with the result of the leave request. The Program may deny any request for leave. In granting leaves, the decision of the Program is final.
- A student on leave may not be enrolled in Penn classes and will not receive credit for classes taken elsewhere during the leave unless special approval by the Program is given. Students on leave may not live in University-owned housing during the term of their leave. In addition, a student may not participate in and/or hold a leadership position in a registered University organization.
- Discontinuance of study without permission from the University does not constitute a leave of absence. Students who have requested a leave of absence for a given semester may still be dropped from the University rolls if their previous term's grades qualify them for this action.

(2) Checklist: Leave of Absence, Drop or Withdrawal

Once a leave of absence or withdrawal has been approved, or you have been dropped, that action will be posted to your transcript. Your PennCard will be deactivated as soon as the leave, drop, or withdrawal has been processed.

Notifications

Be sure to notify all relevant offices of your leave or drop. These offices may include the following, if applicable:

- [Student Registration and Financial Services](#)
[Housing and Conference Services](#)

- [International Student and Scholar Services](#) (ISSS)
- [Student Health Service](#)
- [Office of Student Conduct](#)

While Out

During the term of your leave or drop, you may call your program office if you have any questions. Please be aware of the conditions for return outlined in your leave or drop letter, since you will be required to fulfill them before you may re-enroll.

Applying to Return

You must apply to return from leave or drop by the relevant deadline (for the fall semester, July 15; for the spring semester, November 15; for the summer, April 15). At that time you must fill out a request to return from leave or drop form and show that you have fulfilled all of the conditions for return as outlined in your original letter from your program. To begin this process, contact your program advisor.

(3) Return from Leave of Absence

When a student wishes to return from a leave of absence, he or she must submit a request to return by the deadline (July 15 for the fall semester, November 15 for the spring semester and April 15 for the summer), or before the beginning of the relevant Advance Registration period, if the student wishes to advance register. This is done by contacting a program advisor and asking for the request to return from leave form.

Any return request submitted to the program advisor later than the above-indicated deadlines may be denied. Timely submission of requests and documentation is a condition of all leaves.

The standard length of a PLE/LPS leave of absence is one year. Students may request an early return from leave after one full semester on leave, but should bear in mind that this request may be denied.

Transfer Credits

No transfer credits from other colleges or universities are accepted into the program. The MLA Program can accept transfer credits from other Penn programs provided that the classes were graduate level and the coursework did not count toward an earned degree. The maximum number of courses eligible for internal transfer to the MLA is two. These courses must be approved for transfer by the MLA Program Director as courses that contribute toward the stated area of concentration in the student's MLA program of study.

Student Health Information

The university has a number of health-related requirements for students. These include completion and submission of health and immunization records, coverage for outpatient medical care through the Student Health Service (SHS) and maintenance of health insurance coverage for in-patient and catastrophic care. Students are advised to call SHS or consult their web site for the most accurate and up-to-date information on student health requirements. Visit <http://www.upenn.edu/shs> for more information or call 215-662-2850.

Student Health Insurance

The University requires all full-time students to maintain medical insurance with coverage for in-patient care and catastrophic illness and injury. Students may satisfy insurance requirements through private or employer-sponsored plans or through enrollment in PSIP. All full-time students must carry coverage for care at the Student Health Service, either through payment of the Clinical Fee, through enrollment in the Penn Student Insurance Plan (PSIP), or submit a waiver indicating alternative coverage. **Students who fail to provide information about coverage will be enrolled in and billed for PSIP.** Part-time students may enroll voluntarily in PSIP, but they are not subject to the insurance requirement, and will not be enrolled by default in PSIP. Coverage for the Student Health Service (either through the Clinical Fee or through enrollment in PSIP) is optional for part-time students.

Student Health Service

The University provides outpatient medical care to students through its Student Health Service. SHS offers an array of clinical services, including initial and follow-up treatment of acute medical illness and injury, management of chronic health problems, health screening and preventive care. Full-time students who

have private or employer-sponsored insurance do not have to purchase the student plan, but they must still pay the clinical fee for coverage at the Student Health Service. Coverage for the Student Health Service (either through the clinical fee or through enrollment in PSIP) is optional for part-time students.

The Student Health Clinic is located at 3535 Market Street, Suite 100. Be sure to bring your PennCard and insurance information whenever you go for medical care. SHS can be reached at 215.746.3535 or online at <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/shs/>.

Immunization

Students enrolled in the MLA Program are part of the University community and benefit from the University's efforts to provide a safe and healthy environment. **All MLA students are required to comply with immunization requirements upon first enrolling in credit courses.**

Penn requires all incoming students to be immunized against certain diseases and to submit this information online using the Immunization Worksheet. Please visit <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/shs/immunization.php> for additional information on fulfilling these important requirements.

In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease in any University class, all students in that class would be required to comply immediately with the University's immunization requirements. Contact the Immunization Coordinator at 215.349.5047 for more information.

Code of Academic Integrity and Code of Student Conduct

Inasmuch as the standing of an educational institution and the value of a degree from that institution are dependent upon the integrity of study and research carried on at that institution, the Code of Academic Integrity is drawn to make clear the policy of the University concerning academic honesty. Each student attending the University must abide by this code, the text of which appears in the Pennbook and is described on multiple websites:

Provost's Code of Academic Integrity:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

Provost's Code of student conduct:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-student-conduct/>

Rules Governing Examinations

Policy on Common Midterm Examinations: Instructors teaching a course with multiple sections who plan to schedule a common midterm examination outside the class's regular meeting time must notify students of this event during the first week of the semester and be prepared to offer one or more make-up examinations to accommodate any student who is enrolled in a course that meets at the time of the common examination. Students enrolled in a course that conflicts with the time of a common midterm examination must notify the instructor administering the common midterm examination of the conflict by the end of the course selection (add) period. Students may not be required to miss their regularly scheduled class.

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/common-midterm-examinations/>

Rules Governing Final Examinations can be read in their entirety at:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/final-examinations/>

Confidentiality of Student Records

Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, in general, personally identifiable information can be disclosed to people outside the University only with the written consent of the student or alumnus/na involved. A statement setting forth specific University policy concerning (1) disclosure of information to people outside the University, (2) disclosure of information to people within the University, (3) permitting students to inspect and review records and (4) providing students with the opportunity to seek the correction of their records appears in the Pennbook and is found at the website below.

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/confidentiality-student-records/>

Nondiscrimination

The University of Pennsylvania values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, age, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected class status in the

administration of its admissions, financial aid, educational or athletic programs, or other University-administered programs or in its employment practices.

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy:

<http://www.upenn.edu/affirm-action/docs/EqualOpptyPol.pdf>

Questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to the Executive Director of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs, Sansom Place East, 3600 Chestnut Street, Suite 228, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6106; or (215) 898-6993 (Voice) or (215) 898-7803 (TDD).

Holidays

The University observes the following holidays: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, and New Year's Day.

The University also recognizes that there are several religious holidays that affect large numbers of University community members, including Christmas, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Passover and Good Friday. In consideration of their significance for many students, no examinations may be given and no assigned work may be required on these days. Students who observe these holidays will be given an opportunity to make up missed work in both laboratories and lecture courses. If an examination is given on the first class day after one of these holidays, it must not cover material introduced in class on that holiday.

The University policy can be read in its entirety here:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/secular-religious-holidays/>

Penn Violence Prevention (PVP)

<https://secure.www.upenn.edu/vpul/pvp/>

The University of Pennsylvania is committed to the safety of all students, and is at the forefront of handling cases involving sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking. The Penn Violence Prevention (PVP) is a collaborative program that grew out of the Penn Women's Center. PVP aims to engage the Penn community in the prevention of sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking on campus. The goal is to not only ensure students have access to safe and effective resources, but to provide preventative education focused on building healthy relationships, understanding consent, reaching out to friends in need, and being an active bystander.

Please go to the following links for specific concerns or issues.

Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, and Stalking Policy:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/sexual-misconduct-resource-offices-complaint-procedures/>

Sexual Misconduct Resource Offices Complaints:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/sexual-misconduct-resource-offices-complaint-procedures/>

Student disciplinary procedures for resolving complaints of sexual assault, sexual violence, relationship violence and stalking:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/student-disciplinary-procedures-sexual-assault-violence-relationship-stalking/student-disciplinary-procedures-sexual-assault-violence-relationship-stalking.pdf>

Sexual Harassment Policy:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/sexual-harassment/sexual-harassment.pdf>

III. Designing Your Program

Advising

Do not expect to be able to negotiate the complexities of Penn alone. The MLA Program Director and LPS Staff look forward to assisting you through the bureaucratic mazes and to navigating with you the vast, academic options Penn offers. For example, your advisors will know what prerequisites are expected for a course or which other well-suited courses loom on the horizon. They can counsel you on finding courses that complement one another or alert you when the requirements of two specific courses are likely to overwhelm even the most accomplished student. Please remember that your advisor is available to help you at all stages of your academic program.

The MLA office is located in suite 100 of 3440 Market Street. To schedule an appointment with an advisor, call the main office at 215.898.7326.

Course Selection

Your academic development will largely depend on the courses you select. All MLA coursework must be graduate level with course numbers 400 or higher. No courses numbered 399 or lower will count toward the 9 required MLA c.u.s. Accordingly, you should strive for a balanced program of method- and content-driven courses in complementary departments around an area of concentration of your choosing. You may take a course outside of your primary area of concentration; however, the majority of courses in your program (at least five courses) should be related to your concentration. If your curriculum is simply a random selection of courses that do not relate to one another, you will not be prepared to undertake a Capstone Project. Your advisor will assist you in formulating your area of concentration and selecting appropriate courses, given your background and goals.

As soon as you have decided what your area of concentration will be, please submit the [Declaration of Concentration form](#) to the MLA Program Director.

The University's Course Register, which is available online at <http://www.upenn.edu/registrar/register/index.html>, provides course descriptions for many courses offered at Penn. Departmental web pages often include course descriptions as well. In addition, the Course Timetable appears in March and October and may be reached online at <http://www.upenn.edu/registrar/timetable>.

LPS offers evening courses in most areas of the arts and sciences. A complete listing of evening courses with times and descriptions is published in the LPS Course Guide available in March for the following Fall term, in October for the Spring term, and in January for the Summer Sessions. Courses numbered at the 400-level or above may be taken for graduate credit. The LPS course guide is found here: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/courses>.

Independent Study

Students who are interested in a particular subject related to their course of study or who would like to explore more fully a topic covered in a course may conduct an independent study under the supervision of a faculty member. It is the student's responsibility to propose a topic to an instructor(s) and to secure his/her agreement to work with the student on the project. The role of the faculty member is to recommend a focus for the paper produced for this study, suggest literature to review and a methodology to follow, and read and grade the final paper.

It may be helpful to enroll in an Independent Study as your eighth course to prepare for writing your Capstone Project. In this case, the person who will

serve as the primary reader of your Capstone Project should supervise your independent study.

Students are limited to two Independent Studies in their program in addition to an independent Capstone Project. To register for an Independent Study, MLA students must submit an Independent Study Proposal (ISP) Form prior to the end of the term before the term in which the student will complete the Independent Study. The ISP Form is available in the LPS office and must be completed and signed by the faculty supervisor, then returned to the LPS office and delivered to the MLA Program Director in order to register for an Independent Study.

IV. Course Registration Procedures

Registration

To access the online registration system, PennInTouch, go to <http://www.upenn.edu/registrar> . You will need a PennKey to register for courses via PennInTouch. To establish a PennKey, go to <http://www.upenn.edu/computing/pennkey> and follow the steps there. **Note:** You will need the PennKey SetUp Code mailed to you at your home address to set up a PennKey.

Once you have authenticated yourself by establishing your PennKey, click “Registration” in the left navigation bar to begin the process of registering for classes.

- Please note that courses must be taken for a normal letter grade in order to count toward your MLA degree. Also, only courses numbered 400 and above (the first set of three digits after the course subject is the course number eg. HIST 420 601 but **not** HIST 001 601) may count toward your degree.
- As a Master’s student, you will need permission from the instructor to register for a Ph.D. seminar (courses numbered 600 and above). You should contact the instructor directly for permission.

Advance Registration

The course registration process involves two registration periods. The first is Advance Registration, when students enter their requests for courses they wish to take. At the end of Advance Registration, a scheduling program processes all registration requests at the same time to determine who gets enrolled in the requested courses. Approximately two weeks after Advance Registration closes, students may view the schedule of the courses in which they have actually been enrolled on Penn InTouch. Students may advance register during a two-week period in early November for the following Spring term. There is no Advance Registration for Summer Sessions, but students may register for summer courses at the same time that they advance register for Fall.

Permits and Authorizations

The courses that require special permission from the instructor are indicated in the Course Timetable. The permits are authorized by the instructor and entered electronically into the Student Record System (SRS) by the department offering

the course. A permit is not a registration. Students must “claim” the permit by actually enrolling in the course through Penn InTouch. A permit reserves a seat in the course; an authorization allows the student to enroll if a seat is available. After both Advance Registration and Registration Drop/Request periods have ended, the Registrar’s Office removes unclaimed permits from students’ records.

Auditing Courses

MLA students may audit courses. However, they will be charged tuition and fees at the MLA tuition level. Audited courses will appear on the student’s transcript, but no grade will be issued and the course will not count toward the 9 CUs needed to complete the program. Most courses are open to auditors on a space-available basis.

Course Changes

MLA students are subject to LPS registration and drop/add deadlines which may be different than deadlines for other schools and departments. Students should consult the current LPS Course Guide or the LPS web site for deadline dates for making registration changes and for the corresponding financial obligations (<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/calendar>). Students are able to make these changes in Penn InTouch. Adherence to LPS deadlines is strictly observed. Should students need to drop or withdraw from a course beyond the deadline, they should petition LPS (<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/students/current/forms-handbooks>). It may be necessary to provide documentation of the situation that necessitates the drop or withdrawal, particularly if the student is requesting a refund of tuition.

Adding a Course

Students may add a new course through the second week of the term. After that it is not possible to add a course. Students may add a course during the first two weeks of the semester via Penn InTouch.

Dropping a Course

Students may drop a course with no financial obligation until the published Add/Drop deadline posted on the LPS Website (<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/about/academic-calendar>), which is approximately two weeks into the term.

Students may also drop a course between the second and fourth weeks of the term, but in so doing they will incur a 50 percent financial obligation for the

tuition and fees for the dropped course. Absence from class does not constitute a drop, nor does notifying the instructor. Students can officially drop a course through Penn InTouch through the second week of the term. After the second week of the semester, students must submit a Withdrawal Form to LPS.

When making registration changes via Penn InTouch, it is always advisable to double check to make sure the changes have taken effect before logging-out. Students may also want to contact the MLA Program Director to confirm that the dropped courses are no longer on their schedules. **Students who fail to drop a course officially may receive a grade of F and will be required to pay the full tuition rate.**

Changing Grade or Credit Status of a Course

All MLA courses must be taken for a letter grade. However, students may register for courses that they do not want to count for their program on an audit or Pass/Fail basis. Before doing so, however, they should discuss this with the MLA Program Director. Once they have done so, students may change their status in a course from credit to audit, from a letter grade to Pass/Fail or from Pass/Fail to a letter grade until the published deadline on the LPS website (approximately four weeks into the term). No change is permissible after the published deadline. Auditors pay full tuition and fees.

Withdrawing from a Course

Students may withdraw from a course after the deadline to drop a course has passed (approximately four weeks into the term). To withdraw, students must submit a petition to the LPS office (<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/students/current/forms-handbooks>). Normally, permission is granted and a W (withdrawal) is recorded on the transcript. After the published withdrawal deadline, students are permitted to withdraw only under extraordinary circumstances, which must be documented. Students who withdraw from a course have full financial obligation, except in documented cases of illness, military service, or other extraordinary circumstances, when they may petition for a 50 percent refund.

Note: **Dropping a course is not identical with withdrawing from a course.** Withdrawing from a course takes place after the sixth week of class and carries with it full financial obligation. In addition, the student's transcript will read "W" (Withdrawal) next to the title of this course. However, if a student drops a course during the normal Add/Drop period, no record of that course will appear on the transcript and there is no financial obligation.

V. Capstone and Graduation Procedures

Capstone Guidelines

The MLA Capstone Project should represent the student's expertise in his/her area of concentration. It provides each student with the opportunity to integrate, synthesize, and analyze information, and to design and execute a piece of individual research. While it is expected that each MLA student should have a good working familiarity with the literature in his/her field, the student's knowledge of this literature need not be as exhaustive as for students writing traditional master's theses or doctoral dissertations. Nor is it necessary that the work be publishable in a scholarly journal, although this is encouraged.

Capstone Project Timetable

Generally speaking, during the semester in which you are enrolled in your sixth MLA course (for full-time students, this is typically your second semester in the program), you should decide which topic you would like to pursue for your Capstone and tentatively select your faculty readers.

Types of Capstone Projects

There are three ways you may complete your Capstone Project:

- as part of an independent study (usually your ninth course) -- summer Capstone projects are almost exclusively MLA Capstone Independent Study Projects,
- as part of the Capstone seminar (offered in both the Fall and Spring semesters), or
- as the term paper in a course whose content exactly matches your Capstone topic.

Please note that, in order to receive credit for your Capstone Project, your Capstone Project Proposal must be approved by the end of the semester *prior to* the one during which you plan to work on your project.

If you intend to enroll in the Capstone seminar, you should have an approved Capstone proposal with you *at the first class meeting* of the seminar. The Capstone Seminar normally runs only in fall and spring terms. **You will need to meet with the MLA Program Director before you are permitted to enroll in the Capstone seminar.** Please submit Form 400 with the signature of your Primary Reader and an approved Capstone Project Proposal to the MLA Program Director prior to the beginning of the term, and you will be issued a permit to register for the MLA Capstone Seminar.

Selecting Faculty Readers

You will need two faculty readers for your Capstone Project: one you designate as the primary reader and the other as the secondary reader. The difference is based on degree of involvement in your project. Generally, the primary reader is the one who will help you compile your bibliography, suggest the research methods you should employ in your Capstone, and ultimately approve your proposal and evaluate your final Capstone Project. The secondary reader will evaluate drafts of the proposal and/or project, though he/she may also be involved in formulating the project as well. The primary reader must be an expert in your area of concentration, though the secondary need not be.

Not all Capstone faculty readers need to be members of the Penn standing faculty; one reader may be drawn from outside the School of Arts and Sciences. However, both readers must have a Ph.D. and be academically engaged in your area of concentration. Professors from local universities have served as Capstone readers, as have adjunct faculty members and lecturers. In general, students choose faculty readers from among the professors they have had within the MLA Program.

It is never too early to think about whom you might like to have serve as your Capstone readers. You should forge relationships with faculty members right from the start of your program. If you have difficulty identifying faculty readers, the MLA Program Director can recommend likely prospects among the faculty. However, it is your responsibility to contact the potential readers and discuss your project in depth.

Once two readers have agreed to serve on your Capstone committee, you should submit a completed faculty reader agreement (Form 400) to the MLA Program Director.

Writing the Capstone Proposal

Proposals will vary based on the disciplines the MLA student will explore in their research. These may also vary based upon the amount of preliminary research or writing done in advance. In general, a capstone proposal of 3 to 5 pages that outlines the goals of the projects, identifies a research agenda, thesis or creative genre supplemented by a preliminary bibliography will suffice. This proposal must be approved by the 2 Capstone Readers when they agree to serve as readers and the proposal must then be submitted with appropriate forms and the readers' affirmations of their approval of the project proposal and willingness to serve as readers.

Writing the Capstone Paper

The Project Paper may take one of two forms:

- an extended traditional academic research paper, or
- a creative piece (e.g., students have written novels/short stories and produced films for their Capstone). If you choose to do a creative Capstone, you must write a brief analytical paper that places the creative piece in an academic context.

Forms

There are three forms associated with your Capstone Project, which need to be submitted at various times during the completion of your project. These forms are available online at <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/graduate/mla/forms>. You must also submit a Capstone Project Proposal to your readers and upon receiving approval from the two readers submit the proposal to the MLA Program Office.

- **"Form 400: Agreement to Serve on Capstone Project Committee"** – certifies that two people have agreed to serve as your Capstone readers. This form must be filed along with a Capstone Proposal in order to register in the Capstone Seminar or to be enrolled in a Capstone Independent Study.
- [MLA Capstone Independent Study Approval Form](#)
- Capstone Project Proposal – There is no standard proposal. Each project will have a proposal formatted to satisfy the two readers and fit into disciplinary models appropriate to the project. Most proposals are 3 to 5 pages in length, define the thesis and research agenda, lay out previous work completed toward the project, outline the paper and present an overview of the argument to be pursued and developed in the capstone. Please contact your readers or the MLA Program Office with any questions about your project proposal.
- **"Form 500: Completion of Capstone Project Certification"** – to be completed by your readers to certify the approval of your completed Capstone Project. This form will be submitted along with the Final, bound Capstone on the last day of classes in the term in which you intend to graduate.

- **Graduation application** – lets us know when you intend to graduate. This form should be filed at the beginning of the term in which you intend to complete the program and graduate. Please find graduation information and forms here:

<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/students/current/graduation/application>

The table that follows indicates the deadlines for submitting the necessary forms. Please refer to this table and the LPS Academic Calendar to determine when classes begin and end as these dates change each term and every academic year.

Capstone and Graduation Timetable

Copy of approved Capstone proposal due in MLA office	First day of classes in the term in which you intend to complete the Capstone
Faculty Reader Agreement (Form 400)	Before end of classes in term prior to the term in which you intend to complete the Capstone
Graduation Application	Spring Term: Feb 1 Summer Term: June 1 (Feb 1 if you wish to participate in May Ceremony) Fall Term: Oct 1
Capstone project completed and approved	Submit bound copy on last day of classes to the MLA Program Director
Completion of Capstone Project Certification (Form 500)	Submit signed Form 500 to MLA Program Director on last day of classes

Incomplete Capstone Projects and Master's Thesis Registration

Students who fail to complete Capstone projects before the final deadline for the term in which they register for the Capstone Seminar or a Capstone Independent study must remain active students in all subsequent terms in order to complete their MLA program and graduate. In brief, Capstone Projects are projects which you complete by enrolling in a 1 c.u./term course, and **the Capstone is due approximately two weeks prior to the end of term** to permit us to process the grades and audit students for graduation. If a student receives an Incomplete grade for their Capstone project, they must register for Master's Thesis (MLA 990) in the subsequent term, and for each and every term thereafter, until the completed and approved Capstone is submitted to the MLA Program Director. Should a student wish to extend Master's Thesis registration beyond two semesters, they must receive permission from the MLA Faculty Advisory Committee. Students not completing the program requirements after two semesters of Master's Thesis may be withdrawn from the program.

In addition to the requirements for enrollment in each term during which students continue to work on the Capstone, graduation posting will also be affected. Students must reapply online for graduation in the term during which they plan to complete the Capstone. Thus if a student does not complete the capstone in the semester in which they originally applied, they must re-apply for graduation in the next semester. The student's graduation date will be posted for the term in which they complete their capstone and receive a grade, not the term in which the student originally intended to graduate.

VI. University Resources

Below, we have highlighted some of the various resources available to you. For additional information, see the “Program Resources” section of the MLA website at:

<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/graduate/mla/resources>.

PennCard

In order to use the library, to enter and exit campus buildings after 6:30 p.m., and to use any of the University's recreational facilities, a Penn ID card (PennCard) is necessary. To obtain a PennCard, students should bring a valid form of photo ID (driver's license, passport, etc.) to the PennCard Center located on the 2nd floor of Penn Bookstore at 3601 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-3895. You will find additional information about the PennCard, including PennCard office hours, here: <http://www.upenn.edu/penncard/>. Or, you may call the office at 215.417.CARD.

Only active students registered for courses in the current or upcoming term may receive a PennCard, which should be carried at all times on campus.

PennKey

<http://www.upenn.edu/computing/pennkey/>

A PennKey is required to authenticate, or verify, an individual's identity for many of Penn's networked computer systems and services. Authorized users need a PennKey and password to access such resources as Penn InTouch (course registration), Canvas (used in most classes/ <https://canvas.upenn.edu>), certain library resources, and public campus computers. A PennKey is also required to obtain a Penn email address. New students should receive either a letter or an email with information on how to create a PennKey and password within a few days of their admission to the MLA.

Penn InTouch

https://medley.isc-seo.upenn.edu/penn_portal/intouch/splash.html

Penn InTouch provides secure access via the Internet to online course registration, class schedules, academic records, future academic planning, billing, financial aid application status and awards, address corrections and updates, and student health information. A PennKey is required to access Penn InTouch.

Email

<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/computing/help/students/email>

All students enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania are eligible for a Penn email address free of charge. Even if the student plans to use a non-Penn email account, they should also establish a Penn address. The MLA Program will send out program information to this address and also contact students with important information through this system. Course instructors will be given this address as well and will expect to contact students in this way. Should students wish, they may forward email from their Penn address to another account through Penn's webmail site. Instructions on how to create and use a Penn email account are available through SAS Computing website above. Students can arrange to forward email from their Penn account to another account at this website.

MLA Listserv

The MLA Program uses an MLA listserv as the primary means of informing students about changes in course offerings, campus events, job/fellowship opportunities, important dates, and other useful information. Upon completing your intent to enroll in the program please confirm with the program staff that you have a Penn email address or if you have another preferred email address in order to be subscribed to the list. We can subscribe Penn and non-Penn email addresses to this list and prefer to make sure that you will be reached by our important messages so feel free to subscribe more than one email address.

Academic Support Services

Weingarten Learning Resources Center

<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/>

215.573.9235.

3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300

Provides professional consultation services in skills such as academic reading, writing, study strategies, and time management. This academic support is provided through a variety of services and programs including the very popular series of study skills workshops offered at the beginning of each fall and spring term for students. Consult their website for specific dates and times for these workshops or for more information.

Access & Achievement Programs

<http://www.upenn.edu/programs/acadsupport.php>

215.898.0809
3820 Locust Walk

Offers individual and group tutoring, and mid-term and finals review sessions for all Penn students. The support services help students enhance learning in core academic subjects, manage their time, find financial aid and feel more confident about their abilities. Assistance and counseling are available on an individual basis. For information, consult the Academic Support Program at:

Student Financial Services

<https://sfs.upenn.edu/sfs>

215.898.1988
100 of the Franklin Building at 3451 Walnut Street

Student financial aid, including applications and disbursement of money, are handled through Student Financial Services (SFS). Call or visit the website for deadlines and procedures.

Penn Bookstore**

<https://upenn.bncollege.com/shop/upenn/home>

215.898.7595
36th St. and Walnut St

The Penn Bookstore carries textbooks and trade books as well as stationery, art supplies, school supplies, gifts, and other items.

Computer Connection

<http://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/computerstore>

215.898.3282
Second floor of the Penn Bookstore

Carries computers, software, and computer supplies at student rates.

**Note that many faculty members use the Pennsylvania Book Center, on 34th Street between Walnut and Sansom Streets, to order their courses' texts.
215.222.7600.

Career Counseling

<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/connectwithus.php 2>

15.898.7530
3718 Locust Walk

The University provides career counseling through the Career Services office.

Computer Labs

http://www.sas.upenn.edu/computing/teaching_resources/computer_labs

For a current list of computer labs on campus, along with a list of software installed and eligibility for usage.

Computer Resource Center

<http://www.upenn.edu/computing/crc/general/location.html>

215.898.9085

Suite 202 Sansom West (Grad Tower B), 3650 Chestnut Street

The Computer Resource Center (CRC) offers advice, training, consulting services and computer support to Penn students. Students will need their PennCard for access to the building.

Libraries

<http://www.library.upenn.edu/>

3420 Walnut Street (entrance on College Green)

Van Pelt Library, the main University library has extensive holdings, computers, and the Weigle Information Commons.

Writing Center

<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/critical/>

215.573.2729

[Weigle Information Commons](#) at [Van Pelt Library](#)

The Writing Center provides free writing consultation by appointment at Weigle Information Commons. Appointments are made online.

Recreation Facilities

<http://www.upenn.edu/recreation/>

215.898.6100

MLA students have access to all of the recreation facilities available to the University community. For information on fees, hours, programs, locker rentals, etc. see website above.

Office of the University Ombudsman

<http://www.upenn.edu/ombudsman>

215.898.8261

The Office of the Ombudsman assists individuals in finding solutions to problems that they may not be able to resolve through normal channels. The office is concerned with safeguarding individual rights and promoting better channels of communication throughout the University. It is independent of all administrative offices. The Ombudsman is not an advocate for any one individual or group. He or she is an advocate for fairness, adherence to University regulations, due process, and personal responsibility. The Office supplements, but does not replace, any existing grievance mechanisms or modes of redress. It can and does recommend changes in the existing rules and practices when necessary.

Counseling and Psychological Services

<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/>

215.898.7021

3624 Market Street, First Floor, West

CAPS provides professional psychological and psychiatric services to all Penn students who need help in dealing with academic stress, social difficulties, situational crises, managing personal problems, developing greater self-awareness and skills for life-long learning. Students presenting with more serious concerns like depression, anxiety, and eating disorders, among others, are seen as well. Licensed psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers provide confidential short term psychotherapy for individuals, group counseling, emergency crisis services, medication evaluations, workshops, career assessments/development counseling, and referrals free of charge.

Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Initiatives

www.vpul.upenn.edu/alcohol/

215.573.3525

3611 Locust Walk

This office seeks to identify methods to reduce substance abuse and violence, control and mitigate campus environments where potential abusive behavior exists, and foster a campus culture in which healthy living efforts are plentiful and successful.

Student Disability Services (SDS)

www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc

215.573.9235 or TDD 215.746.6320

Stouffer Commons, 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300

The Weingarten Learning Resources Center houses the Office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS), which provides comprehensive professional services and programs for students with disabilities to ensure equal academic opportunities and participation in University-sponsored programs. Reasonable accommodation to a qualified student's known disability may be provided to assure equal access. Penn invites students with disabilities to self-identify at any time during their course of study as enrolled students. Although the self-identification process is confidential and completely voluntary, it is required for those requesting accommodation.

Office of Student Affairs

<https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osa/>

215.898.6533

The Office of Student Affairs, a department within the Division of University Life, serves as a primary source of information and advice about co-curricular opportunities and resources. Staff members assist students in becoming involved in campus life, conduct leadership development programs, provide continuity for organizations from year to year, manage organizational finances, educate students about University policies, mediate disputes, advise event planners, and help students put classroom learning into practice through the techniques of experiential education. A full list of services provided by the Office is available.

The Office of Student Affairs seeks to provide a range of co-curricular experiences designed to supplement students' classroom experience and contribute significantly to their personal development. Staff members encourage students to create and participate in intellectual, artistic, social, recreational and multicultural activities; to assume campus leadership and governance responsibilities; to develop positive interpersonal relationships and skills within groups; to explore different cultures, ideas and experiences; and to put their learning into practice in the laboratory of co-curricular programs. Staff members support students through various forms of advocacy, through the encouragement of proactive approaches to campus problems and concerns, and through a commitment to the creation of a Penn community.

OSA provides information on student organizations categorized as follows.

Students can learn more by visiting their website.

- Academic and Educational
- Cultural and Support
- Environmental Organizations
- Governmental and Umbrella
- Hobbies and Recreation
- Honor Societies

- Performing Arts
- Political Issues
- Publications and Media
- Religious
- Service
- Social
- Graduate and Professional Organizations
- Registered Organizations