Master of Arts - Humanities

The Institute for the Humanities at Old Dominion University offers a Master of Arts in Humanities in the College of Arts and Letters. The program, which promotes interdisciplinary studies with an emphasis on critical theory and cultural studies, allows students to pursue individualized programs of study that incorporate classes from across departments within the college. There are seven concentration areas that students can choose from: Cultural and Human Geography, Cultural Studies and Critical Theory, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies, Media and Popular Culture Studies, Philosophy and Religious Studies, and Visual Studies. Students in the program are also encouraged to develop their curricular and extra-curricular activities around one of two thematic anchors: the digital humanities and/or humanities in the Hampton Roads. Each student works closely with the program director to create an appropriate program of study.

Admission

The Humanities master’s program is open to all qualified holders of a B.A. or B.S. and is designed for full-time or part-time students, students who have recently completed their bachelor’s degree, as well as nontraditional or adult students. Although admission is selective, the Humanities program recognizes that each individual has unique qualifications that should be taken into consideration.

In addition to meeting general University requirements, an applicant must:

• Possess an overall undergraduate grade point average of 3.25
• Have earned at least 24 credit hours in liberal arts disciplines
• Have taken and submitted recent GRE scores
• Submit a writing sample reflecting their ability to do research and write intellectually
• Submit two recommendation letters
• An essay of 500 words must be submitted with the application material.

The essay should:

1. Propose a general program of study
2. Discuss personal, intellectual, and professional goals
3. Explain the relationship of those goals to the intended program of study

All application inquiries should be made to the Office of Admissions.

Requirements

Once students gain admission to the program, they may pursue the 36-hour thesis option or the non-thesis option. All students must take HUM 601, HUM 602, HUM 603, HUM 604, and HUM 692. Thesis students enroll in HUM 698 or HUM 699; non-Thesis students enroll in HUM 693. Students may only take 12 hours at the 500 level. Students are required to complete their graduate work within a 6-year period.

Curriculum

All students must take the following five required courses. These courses provide an introduction to humanities research, critical theory (HUM 601 and methods (HUM 602), ongoing debates about the future of the humanities in a digital era (HUM 604), introduce students to interdisciplinary research and teaching (HUM 603), and serve as a foundation for each student’s individualized program of study. HUM 692 prepares students for their final project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HUM 601</td>
<td>Introduction to the Humanities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUM 602</td>
<td>Theory and Methods in Humanities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUM 603</td>
<td>Preparing Humanities Teachers &amp; Scholars</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUM 604</td>
<td>Debates in the Digital Humanities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUM 692</td>
<td>Humanities Thesis and Non-Thesis Preparation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Hours 15

Thesis Option

Students pursuing the thesis option must take HUM 698-HUM 699 (thesis, six hours). The thesis is to be based on original scholarly research and should reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the humanities degree. Each student will choose a faculty advisor who will chair a thesis committee appointed by the director of the Humanities Institute. The thesis committee will direct and evaluate the student’s work and consists of faculty members from at least two different Arts and Letters disciplines. Upon completion of the thesis, the committee will conduct an oral examination and student defense of the thesis. A formal written statement explaining and justifying the project must be submitted by the student before the oral examination.

Non-Thesis Option

Students selecting the non-thesis option must enroll in HUM 693. Students have the option of creating a theoretically informed final project instead of a traditional thesis. Individual projects must be approved by the program director, but can include creative works, art installations, film and video, interactive and born-digital works, as well as other forms of community engagement.

M.A. Concentrations

The Master of Arts in Humanities is interdisciplinary in focus. Choosing from more than 70 graduate-level courses offered through various departments of the College of Arts and Letters each semester, students may design a program in order to meet their own intellectual and professional objectives, or they may select a pre-approved concentration with a more structured program of study. Students will work closely with the program director to design a coherent program of study that encourages critical thinking, individual vision and dynamic scholarship. Together, the student and program director design a curriculum that is comprised of courses from across the disciplines and fields in the College of Arts and Letters. These include art history, linguistics, literature, foreign languages and cultures, history, international studies, music, philosophy, political studies, geography, sociology, anthropology, communication, film studies, and women’s/gender studies. Alternately, students may choose to concentrate in a particular area of study focused on: Cultural and Human Geography, Cultural Studies and Critical Theory, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies, Media and Popular Culture Studies, Philosophy and Religious Studies, and Visual Studies. By taking 18 graduate credits in one concentration area, including a Proseminar class, students can qualify for a teaching certificate in that concentration.

Visual Studies Concentration

The Master of Arts in Humanities – Visual Studies Concentration emphasizes interdisciplinary studies, and allows students to pursue individualized programs of study. In addition to the core courses in the Humanities and one core course in Art (Visual Arts Across Media and Time), a curriculum comprised of studies in Art Education, Art History, Studio Art can be combined with courses in other disciplines housed in the College of Arts and Letters. These include Communication, English, Philosophy, History, Foreign Languages, Music and Performing Arts, Women’s Studies, Sociology, Geography, Political Science, and International Studies.

At the center of the Visual Studies Concentration course of study is the required Visual Arts Across Media and Time seminar course. This course is an introduction to and overview of creative, curricular, and research activities in contemporary art, design, art education, and art history. Through lectures, readings, Students will gain an overview of creative theory and practice in contemporary art, design, art education, and art history. Through written research assignments they will gain critical and analytical skills that will broaden their concepts about art and culture. Through class studio projects, they will acquire an immediate awareness of, and experience in,
creative process production while enhancing their hands-on artistic skills. The overview of the different disciplines (Art Education, Art History, and Studio Art) will guide students to selecting their own research direction in the Visual Studies track. Discussion, and creative work, students will engage with ideas and artwork across a broad spectrum of contemporary art education, process, investigation, and production. Faculty lecturers representing different areas in the art programs (Art Education, Art History, Art Studio) will provide insights into theory and practice in their disciplines. Lectures and readings will introduce significant concepts, figures, and works in the respective fields. Through creative written and studio projects, students will explore research activities and develop their personal skills.

The degree requires 36 hours in Thesis and Non-Thesis (Project) options. Those who intend to pursue teaching positions at the Community College or 4-year College/University level must complete at least 18 hours in the intended discipline.

**Admission Requirements**

**Studio Art**

For those intending to pursue studies in studio art, the submission of a portfolio of five examples of the applicant’s work in the area of intended concentration (Fine Arts, Prints, Graphic Design) is required.

**Art History**

For those intending to pursue studies in art history, the submission of a writing sample is required. The writing sample should demonstrate your ability to research and write a scholarly paper on a topic in Art History. The paper should be no more than ten pages in length and must be fully referenced according to a professional, scholarly style manual.

**Graduate Certificate in Arts & Entrepreneurship**

The graduate certificate in Arts & Entrepreneurship focuses on helping students cultivate tools that are essential to launching and sustaining successful for-profit, non-profit, and community-based arts programs and initiatives that place art at the forefront of social innovation. These tools include creating sustainable business plans, grant writing, fundraising, social media marketing, cultivating and engaging stakeholders, arts administration, and social entrepreneurial and design thinking skills. These skills are paired with critical tools drawn from studying the social, political, economic and cultural value of arts-based innovations. The certificate is intended for individuals interested in studio and/or the performing arts, including painting, sculpture, metalwork, graphic design, cartooning, illustration, letterpress, music, dance, theatre, film and video. Students earning the 13-credit certificate will obtain skills that equip them to start and/or sustain their own arts-based enterprises. Coursework is primarily project-based allowing students to apply course content while actively working with existing arts organizations and on art-based campaigns and initiatives. The certificate culminates in a capstone project wherein students will develop a proposal for social justice-based intervention and present their proposal to stakeholders in Hampton Roads for critique, feedback and possible implementation. The certificate is open to any graduate student enrolled in any graduate program at ODU. Non-degree seeking individuals can also earn it as a standalone certificate.

**Graduate Certificate in Social Justice & Entrepreneurship**

The graduate certificate in Social Justice & Entrepreneurship focuses on students cultivating tools that are essential to launching and sustaining successful activist, community organizing, non-profit, social entrepreneurial, and social justice-based programs/initiatives. These tools include action plan development and implementation, fundraising and grant writing, social media and on-the-ground mobilization and engagement, community-driven problem solving, attracting and engaging media and stakeholders, organizational communication strategies and developing sustainable and responsive programs by identifying and assessing opportunities and resources. These skills are paired with critical tools drawn from studying the history, ethics and principles of social justice activities. Students earning the 13-credit certificate will obtain community-based leadership skills transferable into various social justice areas. Coursework is primarily project-based allowing students to apply course content while actively working with existing social justice organizations and on social justice campaigns and initiatives. The certificate culminates in a capstone project wherein students will develop a proposal for social justice-based intervention and present their proposal to stakeholders in Hampton Roads for critique, feedback and possible implementation. The certificate is open to any graduate student enrolled in any graduate program at ODU. Non-degree seeking individuals can also earn it as a standalone certificate.

**Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies**

A Women’s Studies Certificate is available to graduate students through the Institute of Humanities (in association with the women’s studies program) upon completion of the following 15-hour program of course work:

- **WMST 560 Feminist Theory** 3
- **WMST 570 Feminist Research Methods** 3
- At least 9 additional credits in 500 or 600-level courses 9

**Total Hours** 15
Courses approved for the women's studies curriculum and drawn from various disciplines (such as English, history, political science and geography, foreign languages, art history, women’s studies, etc.). No more than six of these credits may be taken in any one field. At least one of the courses chosen must be on the 600 level. Only students who hold a B.A. or B.S. degree with an overall GPA of 2.80 may apply for the graduate women’s studies certificate. Students must maintain a 3.00 grade point average in the 15 graduate credits needed for the certificate. The women’s studies certificate may be undertaken independently or in combination with a graduate degree in humanities (or in combination with another graduate degree). Students wishing to pursue the certificate through the Institute of Humanities must gain admission to the humanities graduate program before the completion of nine graduate hours and must satisfy all of the admission requirements for the program including the GRE.

The director of the women’s studies program or a designee will serve as advisor for students who gain admission to the humanities program only for the purpose of pursuing the graduate women’s studies certificate. Students pursuing the certificate in combination with a graduate degree in the humanities will have their progress monitored by both a women’s studies advisor and the director of the Institute of Humanities.

Focalization Areas

The Institute is currently developing strength areas in the digital humanities and humanities in the Hampton Roads, around which we hope to generate grant funded collaborations and graduate student resources. These areas are also intended to serve as thematic anchors that students carry with them across their individualized and interdisciplinary course of study, proving grounded opportunities for students to develop coherent programs of study within the Institute’s flexible curriculum. These areas of focalization also provide opportunity for students taking varied courses to form community.

HUMANITIES Courses

HUM 510. Social Justice Theory and Practice. 3 Credits.

This course is designed to equip students with tools and perspectives to be effective and knowledgeable leaders and participants in organizing communities around issues and challenges related to social justice. Course readings will be used to ground, inform, and challenge students as they explore the complex and exciting dynamics of social justice work. Students are also expected to engage in the practical work or critique and evaluation of an organizing campaign with which they are already involved or interested.

HUM 511. Health and Humanities Pro-seminar. 3 Credits.

This course is concerned with addressing the human side of medicine and as such draws theoretical, critical and practical insights from across the social sciences and the arts to explore the meanings attached to illness, disease, embodiment, disability, health and therapeutic encounters (from both a professional and patient perspective). It embraces matters of ethics, aesthetics, history, representation and reflective practice.

HUM 595. Topics in Humanities. 1-3 Credits.

1-3 credits. Advanced study of selected topics designed for small groups of qualified students to work on subjects of mutual interest which may not be offered regularly. These courses will appear in the course schedule and will be more fully described in information distributed to academic advisors.

HUM 597. Tutorial Work in Humanities. 1-3 Credits.

1-3 credits. Independent reading and study on a topic selected under the direction of an instructor.

HUM 601. Introduction to the Humanities. 3 Credits.

Lecture, 3 hours. 3 credits. This class introduces students to the study of the humanities with a focus on the enduring questions and ideas of human history. These include questions of culture, reality, society, power, truth, communication, and mediation. Students address these questions and ideas by engaging with some of the great works of social theory from the twentieth century.

HUM 602. Theory and Methods in Humanities. 3 Credits.

Lecture 3 hours; 3 credits. This class instructs students in various theoretical and methodological approaches for conducting research within the humanistic disciplines. Students will become familiar with literary theory, critical/cultural studies, historical methods, qualitative social scientific approaches, and visual studies, as well as the conduct of research across disciplinary boundaries.

HUM 603. Preparing Humanities Teachers & Scholars Pro-seminar. 3 Credits.

The purposes of the pro-seminar are A) to help prepare Humanities graduate students to teach discipline-specific college-level introductory courses from an interdisciplinary perspective, and B) to provide Humanities students with opportunities to engage scholars who are producing new work across a range of disciplines, in turn learning to present their own research in public.

HUM 604. Debates in the Digital Humanities. 3 Credits.

This class will emphasize the ways in which the digital humanities intersects with critical theory and cultural studies approaches to studying digital media. Students will gain an understanding of the emerging role of the digital humanities across several academic disciplines. The course employs an experimental immersive learning component. Prerequisites: HUM 601 and departmental approval.

HUM 630. The Information Society. 3 Credits.

Lecture 3 hours; 3 credits. This course explores the theories, questions, claims and myths that have accompanied the rise of new communication technologies and electronically derived digital information that define the “Electronic Revolution,” also known as the Information Society. (cross-listed with COMM 630).

HUM 640. Television and Politics. 3 Credits.

Lecture 3 hours; 3 credits. This class closely examines television’s role in shaping and reflecting contemporary American political culture, the conduct of foreign policy, and formal political processes, such as elections. (cross-listed with COMM 640).

HUM 657. Introduction to American Popular Culture. 3 Credits.

Lecture 3 hours; 3 credits. This course introduces students to the history and diversity of popular culture forms, industries, criticism, and debates in the United States. The course is interdisciplinary, with a focus on the relationship of cultural hierarchy to social and national identity.

HUM 668. Internship. 3 Credits.

3 credits. This course allows graduate students in Humanities to pursue a structured work experience in a field relevant to a student’s course of study. Student will work with a supervisor at the work site and a faculty advisor in Humanities. Requirements include a formal essay connected to the experience, portfolio, and satisfactory evaluation by the supervisor. Permission of Humanities director required. Pass/Fail grading only.

HUM 692. Humanities Thesis and Non-Thesis Preparation. 3 Credits.

This class is designed to prepare students for completion of their final projects in the program. The class is designed to teach students how to conduct research. Students workshop their projects as they are being developed. It also teaches students to navigate the various institutional requirements for completing this work. Prerequisites: HUM 601, HUM 602, and departmental approval. Pre- or corequisite: HUM 603.

HUM 693. Non-Thesis Project. 3 Credits.

Students have the option of creating a theoretically-informed final project instead of a traditional thesis. Individual projects must be approved by the program director, but can include creative works, art installations, film and video, interactive and born-digital works, as well as other forms of community engagement. Projects are developed with help of supervisor. Prerequisites: HUM 601, HUM 602, HUM 603, HUM 604, HUM 692 and departmental approval.

HUM 694. Interdisciplinarity and the Humanities: Theory and Practice. 3 Credits.

The capstone seminar for non-thesis humanities students. The seminar provides a forum in which to discuss contemporary theories and questions concerning interdisciplinary humanities research. Students will also develop and complete a research paper which reflects their own interdisciplinary programs of study. Prerequisites: HUM 601 and HUM 602.
HUM 696. Special Topics in Humanities. 1-3 Credits.
1-3 credits. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Appropriate advanced
study of small groups on special topics selected under the direction of an
instructor. Conferences and papers as appropriate.

HUM 697. Tutorial Work in Humanities. 1-3 Credits.
1-3 credits. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Independent reading
and study on a topic to be selected under the direction of an instructor.
Conferences and papers as appropriate.

HUM 698. Thesis. 3 Credits.
3 credits. Prerequisites: HUM 601 and HUM 602.

HUM 699. Thesis. 3,6 Credits.
3 or 6 credits. Course requirement for thesis option.

HUM 707. Creative Medicine. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to give students an overview of contemporary
scholarship on the intersection of the fine and performing arts with
healthcare, wellness, and medicine.

HUM 708. Race, Gender, and Sexuality and Health. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to give students an overview of contemporary
scholarship on the intersections of race, gender, sexuality with healthcare,
wellness, and medicine.

HUM 709. Mediating Medicine. 3 Credits.
This course is designed to give students an overview of contemporary
scholarship on the representation of healthcare, wellness, and medicine on
film, television, and in digital media.

HUM 795. Topics. 1-3 Credits.
Appropriate advanced study of small groups on special topics selected under
the direction of an instructor. Conferences and papers as appropriate.

HUM 796. Topics. 1-3 Credits.
Appropriate advanced study of small groups on special topics selected under
the direction of an instructor. Conferences and papers as appropriate.

HUM 797. Tutorial Work in the Humanities. 1-3 Credits.
1-3 credits. Independent reading and study under the direction of an
instructor on a topic to be selected.

HUM 895. Topics. 1-3 Credits.
Appropriate advanced study of small groups on special topics selected under
the direction of an instructor. Conferences and papers as appropriate.

HUM 896. Topics. 1-3 Credits.
Appropriate advanced study of small groups on special topics selected under
the direction of an instructor. Conferences and papers as appropriate.

HUM 897. Tutorial Work in the Humanities. 1-3 Credits.
1-3 credits. Independent reading and study under the direction of an
instructor on a topic to be selected.

HUM 999. Doctoral Graduate Credit. 1 Credit.
This course is a pass/fail course doctoral students may take to maintain
active status after successfully passing the candidacy examination. All
doctoral students are required to be registered for at least one graduate credit
hour every semester until their graduation.