



# liberal arts

master of arts

## Program Description

CSUS offers an interdisciplinary program of graduate study leading to the Master of Arts degree in Liberal Arts. The graduate program is designed to give students an opportunity to study broad areas of human experience at an advanced level without requiring them to specialize in a particular discipline. Many graduates may find the program enhances their understanding and effectiveness in their chosen fields of work. It requires a commitment to serious reading, thinking, and writing, and the willingness to journey at times in uncharted academic regions where disciplines cross, whether to meet amicably or to join battle. Faculty from various disciplines who teach the courses are carefully chosen for their outstanding teaching and scholarship, and their interest in interdisciplinary approaches to learning.

This is a relatively new program at CSUS, though there are nearly a hundred similar graduate programs throughout the country with over 18,000 graduates. With this program, CSUS joins a nationwide effort to redress the imbalance that exists between the decreasing study of the liberal arts, particularly in undergraduate general education requirements, and increasing pursuit of specialized vocational training. It provides a second chance for graduates who feel that their bachelor's degree may have left them with an incomplete education in the liberal arts.

## Faculty

Clifford Anderson, Jeffrey Brodd, Bonnie Busick, Jackie Donath, Bradley Dowden, Marjorie Gelus, Nancy Kalish, Bradley Nystrom, Robert Platzner, Juanita Rice, Arthur Williamson

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## Graduate Program

### Admission Requirements

Admission as a classified graduate student in Liberal Arts requires:

- an undergraduate degree from an accredited four year college or university (or equivalent preparation if the student has done undergraduate work outside the U.S.) with a minimum 2.75 GPA in the last 60 units attempted;
- competence in the English language, as demonstrated by academic achievement;
- three letters of reference, to be sent to the Program Coordinator by application deadline;
- statement of purpose of at least 150 words (typed) as part of application.

Students with deficiencies in admission requirements that can be removed by specified additional preparation may be admitted with conditionally classified graduate status. Any deficiencies will be noted on a response to the admission application.

## Contact Information

Jeffrey Brodd, *Program Coordinator* ■ Karen Fujii, *Administrative Support Coordinator* ■ Mendocino Hall 2011 ■ (916) 278-6444 ■ [www.csus.edu/liba](http://www.csus.edu/liba)

california state university, sacramento

## Admission Procedures

Persons interested in applying should first contact the Office of Graduate Studies for information and application materials, River Front Center 206, (916) 278-6470.

Applications are accepted as long as room for new students exists, but students are urged to complete their application by April 1 in order to be included before Computer Access to Student Personal and Enrollment Records (CASPER) begins. (Those interested in beginning graduate studies in spring semester should contact the Program Coordinator). All students must complete an online application for admission. International visa students must submit the appropriate international student application form which is available at the Global Education office, Lassen Hall 2304, (916) 278-7471. All other application materials are filed with the Office of Graduate Studies and will be forwarded to the Liberal Arts Program Coordinator for appropriate action.

## Advancement to Candidacy

Students must file an application for Advancement to Candidacy, indicating a proposed program of graduate study. This should be initiated by the student as soon as the student has:

- removed any deficiencies in admission requirements;
- completed at least 15 units of 200-level courses in the graduate program with a “B-” or better in each of the required courses;
- maintained a minimum 3.0 GPA overall in the program’s electives and culminating requirements; and
- fulfilled all university-wide graduate requirements for advancement, including the Writing Proficiency Examination.

## Requirements ■ Master of Arts Degree

Units required for MA: 30

### A. Required Courses (6 units)

- (3) LIBA 200A Culture and Expression: Prehistory to the Middle Ages
- (3) LIBA 200B Culture and Expression: Renaissance to the Present (LIBA 200A or instructor permission)

### B. Electives (21 units)

At least 9 units must be earned through Liberal Arts courses. For the remaining 12 units, students are encouraged to take some courses from other departments, but such courses must be approved by the Program Coordinator. Up to 6 of these remaining 12 units may be earned through upper division undergraduate courses, also with the approval of the Program Coordinator.

### C. Culminating Requirement (3 units)

- (3) LIBA 500 Culminating Experience

**Note:** Before advancing to candidacy, the student must have an approved prospectus on file in the Program office.

## Graduate Courses

**LIBA 200A. Culture and Expression: Prehistory to the Middle Ages.** Interdisciplinary seminar on cultural movements, figures, and art forms of eras from prehistory to the Middle Ages. Focus on the West with some global comparison. Emphasis on theoretical perspectives, methods, and research techniques germane to the liberal arts. Fall only. 3 units.

**LIBA 200B. Culture and Expression: Renaissance to the Present.** Interdisciplinary seminar on cultural movements, figures and art forms of eras from the Renaissance to the present. Focus on the West with some global comparison. Emphasis on theoretical perspectives, methods and research techniques germane to the liberal arts. **Prerequisite:** LIBA 200A or instructor permission. Spring only. 3 units.

**LIBA 204. Performance of Culture.** Study of the relationship between discourses of culture, politics, aesthetics, and live performance. Critical theories drawn from new methodology and ideologies will be applied to theatrical representations, both classical and contemporary. Cross-listed as THEA 204; only one may be counted for credit. 3 units.

**LIBA 205. Space and Time: Plato to Einstein.** Historical introduction for non-specialists to Western notions of space, time and matter and their implications for philosophy and the humanities. Emphasis on the theories of Plato, Euclid, Newton, Kant, Einstein, Hawking and others. **Note:** No background or work in mathematics required. 3 units.

**LIBA 207. Foundations of Contemporary Consciousness.** Advanced overview of Western civilization development from 1650 to the present, examining basic ideas, assumptions, and commonplaces shared by modern people, including modern scientific attitudes, notions of privacy, self, love and work. 3 units.

**LIBA 208. Politics in the Age of Antichrist: Prophecy and Society, 1500-1800.** Examination of the role of the Judeo-Christian apocalypse in the creation of modern realms of discourse, including political thought, modern science, and secular values generally. 3 units.

**LIBA 209. Versions of the Self in Western Literature and the Arts.** Traces the stages through which the concept of the “self” emerges in Western literature, philosophy and the arts, from Antiquity to the 20th Century. Focus is on the transformation of moral identity as the West moves from a divinely ordered cosmos to a relativized universe. 3 units.

**LIBA 211. Psychological Issues in Films.** Examines the presentation of psychological themes in contemporary feature films. It will consider such topics as: Adolescence, Adulthood and Aging, Homosexuality, Drug Addiction, and Physical Disability as they are portrayed in films created for a mass market. Cross-listed as PSYC 296M; only one may be counted for credit. 3 units.

**LIBA 215. Images of America at Home and Abroad.** Study and analysis of uniquely American cultural patterns, social institutions, and core values, and how they are perceived both in America and abroad. 3 units.

**LIBA 216. Historical Reflections on the American Dream.** Multicultural exploration of how our nation’s history has been constructed, experienced, told and valued from varying ethno-cultural points of view, including each student’s personal history. 3 units.

**LIBA 217. Ordinary America.** Inquiry into the issues, theories, and methods associated with popular and material culture studies in order to provide students with insights into the past and present nature of American experience. Intended to be an exploration of the ways in which popular and material culture both reflect and contribute to the search for meaning in everyday life. 3 units.

**LIBA 222. Evolving Concepts of God: Portrait of Deity in Monotheistic Religions.** Seminar traces the historical origin and cultural evolution of the God concept in monotheistic religions. Topics include the archaeological record of humanity's earliest religious artifacts, evidence for the prehistoric worship of the "Great Goddess" figure, an examination of the polytheistic religions of the ancient Near East and their influence on the development of monotheism. Analyzes the evolving portrait of the Deity in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Koran. Cross-listed as HRS 222; only one may be counted for credit. 3 units.

**LIBA 224. Religions of the Roman Empire.** Survey of the major religious beliefs and practices in the Greco-Roman world from 100 B.C.E.-400 C.E. Topics include traditional Greek and Roman religions, healing cults, philosophical religion and Gnosticism. Cross-listed as HRS 224; only one may be counted for credit. 3 units.

**LIBA 226. Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature.** Examines two of the more creative literary genres that make up the canonical and deuterocanonical literature of the Jewish and Christian Bibles. Both the historical and theological underpinnings of wisdom and apocalyptic writing will be explored in-depth, with some consideration given to literary analogues in Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Greek cultures. Significant research into wisdom and apocalyptic writings outside of the testament framework required. **Prerequisite:** LIBA 200A or graduate status in History or instructor permission. Cross-listed as HRS 226; only one may be counted for credit. 3 units.

**LIBA 232. Moral Dilemmas in Modern Medicine.** Philosophic investigation of moral problems in the medical world, including decision making, rights and values pertaining to human life, and the principles of justice applied to the health care field. 3 units.

**LIBA 234. The Gothic Spirit.** Arts and ideas of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Western Europe, structured according to the principle of the "reconciliation of opposites." The Gothic period sees such opposites as faith and reason, vertical and horizontal (in architecture), counterpoint brought into harmony (in music). The period culminates in Dante's masterpiece the Divine Comedy, which exhibits the reconciliation of opposites in such sets as female/male, faith/reason, human/divine, beauty/horror, and chaos/harmony. Cross-listed as HRS 234; only one may be counted for credit. 3 units.

**LIBA 235. Pact With the Devil: Faust in Literature, Music, and Art.** Interdisciplinary seminar on the various literary and artistic manifestations of the Faust figure and the theme of the Faustian "pact with the devil." Focus on Goethe's Faust with in-depth study of several other depictions of the story, along with a survey of a wide variety of related material in literature, music, film, and the visual arts. Cross-listed as HRS 235; only one may be counted for credit. 3 units.

**LIBA 243. The Holocaust.** Analytical study of the Nazi extermination of European Jewry, with particular emphasis given to the roots of exterminationist anti-Semitism, and to the cultural response of Jews and non-Jews to the tragedy of mass-murder. Cross-listed as HRS 243; only one may be counted for credit. 3 units.

**LIBA 299. Special Problems.** Individual projects or directed reading. **Note:** Open only to students who have demonstrated competence in undertaking individual work. Enrollment requires approval of the supervising faculty member and the Program Coordinator. No more than 6 units total of LIBA 299 may be counted toward the major. 1-3 units.

**LIBA 500. Culminating Experience.** Completion of a thesis, project or comprehensive examination. **Prerequisite:** Advanced to candidacy and permission of the Program Coordinator. Graded Credit/No Credit. 3 units.