

## MLS Creative Track Proposal, March, 2022

I've been on the MLS Steering Committee for two years now and I've been proposing a return to the creative track within the MLS program. This is part of a current description of the program:

"The Master of Liberal Studies program launched in Spring of 2007 with nine students. The program, now fourteen years old, includes 25 students in the program. Curriculum continues to develop that contains a topical breadth. Topics focused on include the study of graphic novels; searching for immortality; Indigenous knowledge; theories of race; digital identities; and cultural aspects of emotion." In 2007 there was an option for a creative track within this graduate degree, however over the years the steering committee found the creative track to be a problem with regular staffing and a commitment to teach in the program, along with silly other pithy arguables.

I think we need to think about collectively supporting a creative track within the MLS program, and bring this option back. I will focus on the four goal areas related to this proposal. Thank you for your time.  
Suzanne Nielsen, Associate Professor, CLA, Fine Arts.

1. **Goal:** Increase visibility and options for our Masters in Liberal Studies MA (MLS) program by adding a creative track to include courses from Fine Arts faculty: Gail Smogard; Jonathan Beller; Jeremy Bandow; Erica Rasmussen; Amy Sands; Ed Bok Lee; Suzanne Nielsen
2. **Rationale:** Student interest in pursuing a creative track within their MLS program will now have the option from focusing on courses on a masters level from the following fine arts areas (this wording is taken from the Fine Arts department BA Degrees):

**The Creative Writing program** at Metro State University is one of the richest and most diverse in the nation. Both our B.A. and minor in Creative Writing include workshops in fiction, poetry, memoir, and creative non-fiction; in writing children's literature, writing very short creative works, writing humor, writing the graphic novel, writing for publication and profit, and advanced creative writing. As a creative writing student at Metro State, you will gain experience in drafting, analyzing, and editing creative works of writing. **[taught by RF: EBL/SNI]**

Our stellar faculty is award-winning, widely published literary artists whose joy in both teaching and writing is infectious. Metro State's creative writing curriculum challenges students with the delights and hard work required to write imaginatively, including developing an individual writing process, setting writing goals, understanding the opportunities available in print and electronic media, and leading a life made richer by the literary arts.

Develop your writing skills to express your thoughts and feelings in an imaginative way.

Learn the craft and art of creative writing from master writer-teachers.

Read, draft and revise fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and children's writing.

Nurture and hone your talent in the company of equally devoted students and teachers.

Learn how to write creatively for multiple audiences and in multiple genres.

Develop the ability to read critically; learn how to analyze and edit your own and others' work.

Gain valuable experience in the world of publishing, both as writer and editor, by working on Haute Dish, Metropolitan State's award-winning online literary magazine. Creative Writers such as novelists, poets, and short story writers are usually self-directed and self-disciplined artists. However, excellent writing skills are valuable in other writing-intensive work such as editing, grant writing, multimedia writing, employee communications, and speech writing.

### **Related minors**

English Minor

History Minor

Psychology Minor

Screenwriting Minor

Sociology Minor

Studio Arts Minor

Theater Minor

**The Theater program** is designed to provide students with an understanding of and critical appreciation for the basic elements of theater, including acting, directing and playwriting. This program does not emphasize specific tracks in theater, and among the hallmarks of the theater degree is an emphasis on students creating original work, allowing valuable insight into the creative process and its practical applications. Additionally, a study of the great traditions of theater and the development of skills can empower students toward their own clear and original voice--a valuable asset in any profession. For this reason, the program encourages the integration of theater skills and theory within other disciplines and individual studies. Students are welcome to contact a theater program advisor to better focus this integration. **[taught by RF: GS/JBeller]**

This program also values prior learning. Students at Metro State may continue to build upon previous learning experience in theater, in keeping with our tradition of alternate learning strategies. A number of past and current students have worked professionally and semi-professionally in the theater for years, and are now committed to an academic qualification.

### **Related minors**

Advertising Minor

Child Psychology Minor  
Creative Writing Minor  
Disability Studies Minor  
Educational Psychology Minor  
English Minor  
English as a Second Language Minor for K-12 ESL licensure  
Humanities Minor  
Mental Health Psychology Minor  
Psychology Minor  
Public Relations Minor  
Screenwriting Minor

**The Screenwriting program** focuses on exceptional visual storytelling and inspirational content, the Screenwriting Program at Metro State teaches artistic individuals how to create commercially viable, socially conscious media (scripts, films, TV shows, documentaries, web series, etc.) by building creative & technical skills, offering critical perspectives, and providing practical preparation for a career in professional screenwriting, filmmaking and/or media production. **[taught by RF: JBandow]**

The only of its kind in the state of Minnesota, our Screenwriting BA Program is unique because it covers every step in the creative process. Led by diverse, award-winning faculty, students learn to harness their imaginations and write original screenplays; collaborate, produce, direct, shoot, and edit films; and then exhibit and share their films with audiences in Metro State University's 320 seat digital cinema, Film Space, located on the Saint Paul campus.

Students attend film festivals, screenplay readings, panels, and other professional development events in the Twin Cities as part of normal course work. This community engagement is woven into the curriculum and offers valuable networking and learning opportunities. Each student completes multiple screenplays and short films that are both important creative accomplishments and professional portfolio samples. A required internship helps bridge the gap from college to career.

For a look at some of the work of students and alumni in the program, check out the Lakes List, a collection of exemplary screenplays for movies, short films, web series and TV shows, written by the screenwriting students and alumni of the Screenwriting BA program.

#### Student outcomes

Development of original cinematic voices as demonstrated by writing non-derivative, boundary-breaking, market-ready screenplays, professionally presented, with identifiable themes and compelling stories as demonstrated within the written screenplays

Understanding of craft tools, including but not limited to concepts of character development, character journey, and story structure as demonstrated by effective use of these within the written screenplays

Preparation for a career in screenwriting, filmmaking, and/or entry level positions in film, video and TV production, related media fields within a corporate or nonprofit environment, and/or graduate school

Understanding of the film and TV industry, including but not limited to national and local filmmaking and screenwriting community resources (grants, fellowships, etc.)

#### Related minors

Creative Writing Minor  
Digital Media Minor  
Game Studies Minor  
Public Relations Minor  
Technical Communication Minor  
Theater Minor

**The Studio Arts program** at Metro State University gives students the opportunity to cultivate their creativity while developing marketable skills. A core curriculum in drawing, painting, and digitally-based arts is supplemented by other media and techniques, community-based internships, and coursework in related disciplines. **[taught by RF: ER/AS]**

Under the guidance of accomplished arts faculty with national and international exhibition histories, students will prepare for graduate school and/or careers in the visual arts.

#### Student Outcomes

Program Student Learning Outcome 1: Apply language common to the visual arts. More specifically, students will be able to:  
demonstrate comprehension of art vocabulary

produce various types of written documents that support their ideas

Program Student Learning Outcome 2: produce a cohesive body of art or craft. More specifically, students will be able to:

compile a suite of works that have formal and/or conceptual similarities  
assemble a digital portfolio

Program Student Learning Outcome 3: generate documents designed for the creative arts industry. More specifically, students will be able to:

write artists' statement that address the form and content of their work  
create exhibition resumes that highlight their creative achievements

#### Related minors:

Digital Media Minor  
Technical Communication Minor

### 3. Timeline and Focus Areas for Creative Track

For this section of the proposal we all want to think of what kind of student project(s) can we focus on for this creative track. When Margaret says timeline I am thinking she's talking about

when we would be prepared to get this moving. So could Spring 2023 be open to a creative MLS 620 like the book and paper making class by Erica?

### **Description**

The MLS Explorations, a requirement within Metropolitan State's MLS degree program, brings students and faculty together to explore topics of consequence that relate to a common theme. The MLS program requires an introductory seminar, MLS 600 that introduces students to graduate study and helps them formulate a focus in the MLS program. Students then complete at least three MLS 620 explorations that, with electives and a capstone, comprise their MLS program.

First day attendance is mandatory.

Note: Graduate students admitted to other Metro State programs may register for MLS 620, with the director's permission. See the Liberal Studies MA webpage for the director's contact information: <https://www.metrostate.edu/academics/programs/liberal-studies-ma> This course uses combined on-campus in-person meetings with remote synchronous and/or asynchronous online options. Intermediate computer/Internet skills required. For online learning and course access information go to [www.metrostate.edu/solr](http://www.metrostate.edu/solr). This course is offered as HyFlex /FlexSynchronous. You will have the option of attending the class in-person or remotely via Zoom.

Course Description: Rhetoric, Research, and Writing in a Post-Truth Era: Every Master of Liberal Studies student must complete a Capstone Project. This final product is neither a compilation of facts nor a synthesis of others' research. It is an original inquiry unified by a thesis, an assertion buttressed by a unique argument. As three noted rhetoricians put it, "Scholarship uses argument, and argument uses rhetoric." Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, and MLS students will use rhetorical tools to convince readers of their scholarly argument. This exploration scrutinizes the rhetorical structure of each student's Capstone Project (thesis). The course is suitable for beginning, intermediate, or advanced graduate students.

Note: Information explaining the differences between course types and the in-person instruction plans can be found at: [www.metrostate.edu/deliverymethods](http://www.metrostate.edu/deliverymethods)

## **4. Program Design and Course Sequence**

I think we need a creative MLS for everyone. We can use the MLS 620 framework (above).

Currently the MLS program requires:

Introductory seminar

3 MLS 620s Explorations

3 Independent or supporting studies

Capstone