Media Literacy (MA)

This program is offered by the School of Communications.

Program Description

The master of arts (MA) in media literacy provides students with a critical perspective that will enable them to decipher the information they receive through the channels of mass communications and to develop independent judgments about media content. This degree examines the cultural, political, and economic context of media, which affects media programming.

All students entering this program are required to consult with a School of Communications academic advisor prior to registration. Qualifications and required prerequisite courses will be discussed at this time. Qualifications include a strong educational background in a communications-related field or professional experience in this area. Students without a strong educational background or professional experience are required to enroll in 6 credit hours of prerequisite course work. The selection of prerequisites will depend on each student’s area of academic interest in media literacy.

Students must earn a grade of “B” or better in the prerequisite courses before they are allowed to enroll in graduate courses. The prerequisite courses are not counted toward the 36 credit hours required for the degree, nor are they considered as part of the credit hours required for advancement to candidacy.

Students who earn an MA in media literacy may pursue careers in education, media literacy research, the press, public policy, community-based media and media arts production.

This program is offered at the St. Louis home campus.

Learning Outcomes

Successful graduates of this program will be able to:

- Identify media literacy concepts.
- Understand the impact of the media on the individual and society.
- Apply media literacy concepts to media and media programming.
- Recognize media content as a cultural "text" that provides insight into contemporary society.
- Assess qualitative and quantitative approaches to media literacy.
- Cultivate an enhanced enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of media content.
- In the case of media communicators, produce effective and responsible media messages.

Program Curriculum

The media literacy degree focuses on research strategies for the systematic analysis of content and provides opportunities for fieldwork experiences in different sectors, including education, community, professional, and media arts. In the case of media communicators, the media literacy degree facilitates the ability to produce effective and responsible media messages. Finally, students in the communications arts (MA) program offered by the School of Education may apply approved courses toward an emphasis in media literacy.

MEDC 5000 Media Communications is the requisite course in the media literacy program. It examines communications theory and its application in mass media as well as introduces students to the graduate program, describes program expectations, and discusses academic preparation for MEDC 6000 Seminar in Media Communications. Therefore, students must take this course even if they have academic and/or professional experience in media communications.

The required and elective courses listed may be taken as directed studies, subject to the conditions stated in the Directed Studies section listed under Academic Policies and Procedures and approved by the director of Graduate Studies and the dean of the School of Communications.

Students taking courses that are a part of their approved curricula and are from outside of the School of Communications should verify prerequisites with appropriate school or college.

The course of study for students working toward an MA in media literacy is as follows. Any variation from this curriculum should be approved in advance using a program option request form.

Core Courses (24 credit hours)

- MEDC 5000 Media Communications (Requisite Course) (3 hours)
- MEDC 5310 Media and Culture (3 hours)
- MEDC 5350 Media Organization and Regulations (3 hours)
- MEDC 5360 International Communications (3 hours)
- MEDC 5460 Media Research (3 hours)
- MEDC 5480 Comparative Approaches to Media Literacy (3 hours)
- MEDC 5981 Integrated Studies in Media Literacy (3 hours)
- MEDC 6000 Seminar in Media Communications (3 hours)

Elective Courses

A minimum of 12 credit hours must be completed from the following with no more than 6 credit hours from the 4000-level course work:

- MEDC 5440 Integrated Language Arts (3 hours)
- MEDC 5460 Curriculum Design (3 hours)
- JOUR 4500 Media Criticism for Publication (3 hours)
- MEDC 4220 Genre Studies (3 hours)
- MEDC 4440 Patterns of Media Ownership (3 hours)
- MEDC 5400 Political Communications (3 hours)
- MEDC 5010 Introduction to Graduate Studies: Advanced Thinking and Writing (3 hours)
- MEDC 5370 International Media Literacy (3 hours)
- MEDC 5550 Topics in Media Communications: Campaign Strategy and Political Power (3 hours)
- MEDC 5550 Topics in Media Communications: Video and Media Literacy (3 hours)
- MEDC 5985 Media Literacy Fieldwork (3 hours)
- NPRO 5300 Visual Storytelling (3 hours)
- PSYC 4825 Advanced Research Methods (3 hours)

Admission

Students who are interested in applying to this degree program should see the Admission Section of this catalog for general requirements.

Send all admission materials to:

Office of Admissions
Webster University
470 E. Lockwood Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63119
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Advancement to Candidacy

Students are admitted to their graduate program upon completion of all admission requirements. Students are advanced to candidacy status after successfully completing 12 credit hours of graduate credit, with grades of B– or better. In the MBA program and other specialized programs, courses required as prerequisites to the program do not count toward the 12 credit hours required for advancement. A student who receives one F or two C's before advancement is dismissed. Students admitted on a conditional basis into the School of Business and Technology, the College of Arts & Sciences, or the School of Communications are limited to taking one course per term. Such students who earn one grade of C or below before they are advanced to candidacy will be dismissed without further right to appeal for reinstatement but may apply for readmission after one calendar year from the date of dismissal. Exceptions for international students may apply.