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Introduction

Purpose of Student Handbook

This Student Handbook is a general reference to graduate study in this program. It includes information on academic programs, program requirements and other matters related to your academic progress. It is designed to help you navigate many of the curricular aspects of your graduate study in the Liberal Studies program and the NSSR. This Handbook supplements the NSSR Catalog, which is the official source of information about the rules, regulations, and requirements of the University, and the NSSR.

The information published here represents the plans of the NSSR as of (August 19, 2019). The division reserves the right to change any matter contained in this publication, including but not limited to policies, degree programs, names of programs, course offerings, academic activities, academic requirements, faculty and administrators. Students are required to follow the requirements of their catalog year.

For further assistance, refer to the designated committee contacts below.

About the Committee

Through an open curriculum and transdisciplinary approach, the Masters program in Liberal Studies gives students the intellectual foundation for understanding the powerful ideas and forms of expression that create the backbone of the modern world. Based in the center of New York City, world-class faculty and committed students achieve an in-depth understanding of our global community and our broader place within it.

Through the Liberal Studies program, you will critically explore and intensively examine the core issues of our time. The MA in Liberal Studies offers practical writing tools and guided in-depth study in cross-disciplinary courses taught by renowned faculty, who share the values of rigorous critical inquiry and thoughtful expression.

The program's core courses will ground you in the history of ideas and in the practice of sustained writing, while you develop an intellectual peer community. From there, you can branch out, taking advantage of the rich offerings and distinguished faculty of The New School. Work with both a faculty advisor and a student advisor to create a robust pathway tailored to your individual needs and academic ambitions. We offer a rich selection of courses with world-class professors who can extend your command of critical theory, the history of ideas, aesthetics, philosophy, politics, anthropology, media theory - wherever your curiosity takes you. Courses are available in both the daytime and the evening to fit into even the busiest schedule.
At the heart of the program are two core courses. The first - The Making of the Modern World - considers the origins and fate of modern societies as understood by key thinkers who have explained and championed modern social developments, as well as those who have harbored grave anxieties about the shape of modern life. We cover significant currents in the arts, media theory, gender, social history, cultural theory, literature, politics, and philosophy. Our second core course - the Master's Critical Writing Seminar - helps students work on nonfiction writing and criticism, so that they can better express their own views with clarity and force. Students often use this course to write the required MA thesis, exploring a topic of their choice in-depth and producing a substantive and polished work of prose. Students are also encouraged to avail themselves of any combination of courses offered by the New School for Social Research (NSSR).

Committee Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Senior Secretary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul Kottman</td>
<td>Jeff Feld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:kottmanp@newschool.edu">kottmanp@newschool.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:LibStudy@newschool.edu">LibStudy@newschool.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212-229-8947 ext. 2272</td>
<td>212-229-5100 ext. 3026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 Fifth Avenue(Bldg. G), Room 511</td>
<td>212-229-5473 (Fax)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Student Advisor</th>
<th>Mailing Address &amp; Social Media</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weston Finfer</td>
<td>Committee on Liberal Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:LiberalStudiesAdv@newschool.edu">LiberalStudiesAdv@newschool.edu</a></td>
<td>79 Fifth Avenue, Room 711A-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212-229-2747 ext. 3029</td>
<td>New York, NY 10003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert &amp; Vera List Academic Center (Bldg. D)</td>
<td>Facebook Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 East 16th Street, Room 733</td>
<td>Twitter - @LibStudiesNSSR</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="#">Office Hours Available Here</a></td>
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Committee Faculty

Faculty On Leave

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<th>All Year</th>
<th>Fall Only</th>
<th>Spring Only</th>
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<td>Elizabeth Kendall</td>
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Academic Advising & Other Offices

The Student Advisor

The Student Advisor (SA) is a seasoned Liberal Studies veteran, usually a second-year student, who assists students in making academic decisions. The role of the student advisor is to counsel students about course selection during registration and help students with bureaucratic troubleshooting and academic planning. The advisor can also inform students about MA thesis requirements, deadlines, credit transfers, various academic petitions, etc. The student advisor works part-time, holds regular “open door” office hours, and is also available by appointment.

Every student is required to consult with the student advisor prior to registration. First-term students will meet with their advisor personally, while continuing students will either attend open office hours or register via email.

The Faculty Advisor

The importance of the Faculty Advisor - particularly for a program as protean and nebulous as Liberal Studies - cannot be overstated. The faculty advisor helps the student in making course selections and other academic decisions as well as being an intellectual companion to the student during their time at the University. Students need to consult their faculty advisor at least once during each semester and are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor more often. You should regard your faculty advisor as an essential guide in career and thesis planning - in almost all cases they will also act as first readers for your thesis. Keep in mind that the relationship between advisor and student is not merely academic, but interpersonal as well. A student will want to choose someone that he or she can trust to guide them through their academic progress effectively.

While the default faculty advisor for new students is the Department Chair, we strongly recommend that the student makes a proactive effort to meet with members of staff who they may be considering as early as possible. This is not to say, though, that the relationship should follow a model of acquisition. One should treat potential Faculty Advisors with respect and politeness, organising multiple meetings and building a relationship before they ask whether they would consider advising. Most professors at The New School for Social Research are eligible to serve as a faculty advisor, so long as that professor is willing to take the necessary time and effort.

Students may change their advisor at any point, although any changes should be confirmed to the Student Advisor by both the student and new Faculty Advisor.
Other Offices

While the Student Advisor will work with conviction and diligence to help you as much as they can, there are some aspects of New School life that fall outside of their remit. Contacting the offices directly will be your fastest way of getting issues in the relevant areas dealt with. Please note that the offices deal with a consistently high level of student requests, and therefore the occasional email may fall through the cracks. If you haven’t heard back within a week or so it may be useful to send a reminder.

For any issues with immigration, VISAs, or other issues with being an international student please consult with International Student & Scholar Services.

For any issues regarding registration, including deadlines and policies, please contact the Registrar’s Office.

For any issues with financial aid, please contact Student Financial Services.

For any health issues, please consult with Student Health Services. Information about The New School’s health insurance policy can be found here.
Degree Requirements

Ideal Plan of Full-Time Study (9-credits/semester)

Compared with most other graduate programs, there are not many requirements in Liberal Studies. Still, there are a few basic requirements.

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<th>Graduate Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Complete 30 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete GLIB 5542 - Making the Modern World</td>
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<td>Maintain a B (3.0) Cumulative GPA</td>
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<td>Complete a Thesis Project</td>
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If one is undertaking a typical course of study, these stipulations will be structured as follows:

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<th>First Year</th>
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<td><strong>Fall Semester</strong></td>
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<th>Second Year</th>
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<td><strong>Fall Semester</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Spring Semester</strong></td>
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**Note:** Because there are many variations on this course of study, students would be wise to speak to the student advisor about their plans.

Although it is important to keep your MA Thesis in mind while undergoing your program of study, it is advisable to also take courses outside the topic as Theses often change as one progresses. We recommend taking one course that pertains directly to your thesis in the first year of study, and then to ramp this up as your meetings with your faculty advisor become more pointedly about the completion of the thesis in your second year.

It is also worth keeping in mind that the Liberal Studies program offers unparalleled freedom to explore other areas of study at The New School - and to not exploit this would be unfortunate. As the program focuses on traversing traditional disciplinary boundaries and studying areas that may fall between them, it is advisable to seek out classes in various other departments and
divisions - as well as, perhaps, undertaking classes that do not follow the traditional seminar mode of study.

Core Courses

There is only one required course: GLIB 5542 “Making the Modern World.” It is taught in the Fall Semester, the course presents an interpretation and an evaluation of the fate of modernity, as understood by some of the most influential thinkers of the past 250 years -- and involving different currents in the arts, social history, cultural theory, politics and philosophy. 'Modernity' is understood here to entail such things as the emergence of the nation-state; ambitious claims for the authority of reason in human affairs; the increasing authority of the natural sciences; the advent of a discourse of natural or human rights; aesthetic modernism; capitalism and the free market; globalization and social movements that take up new demands of mutuality, from feminism to the labor movement.

In addition, while writing the Master's thesis in the final semester, students are strongly encouraged to take one of the following:

**GLIB 6301 “Master's Seminar in Critical and Creative Writing.”** Offered every spring as a writing workshop, this class brings together students who have completed 27 credits (three full-time semesters of course work) and are writing their MA theses. The workshop format and pass/fail grading option are meant to encourage students to refine the style and effectiveness of their prose by requiring seminar participants to share revisions of work in progress as well as read and comment on the drafts of others.

**GLIB 6990 “Independent Study”** with his/her thesis advisor. For full-time Liberal Studies students, it is strongly recommended that you take an independent study built around the topic during your third or fourth semester, under the supervision of your thesis advisor. This should facilitate your initial research and get some segments of your MA thesis into a workable rough draft that can be presented and revised in GLIB 6301.

The MA Thesis

Registration

In order to register for the MA thesis, the student must apply six equivalency credits: these allow students to maintain full-time status while working on their thesis so that they can maintain full time status. EQ credits carry no charges and do not count toward your degree. In order to register:

- Contact the Student Advisor, who will release the hold.
- Register with the appropriate CRN and ensure to change the number of credits to 6 by clicking on the red number in the course’s row in the mynewschool portal.
The Proposal

The first step is developing your precise thesis topic and writing a proposal in conjunction with your Faculty Advisor - whom you should have conducted preparatory conversations with. Your thesis proposal should contain a concise statement of your main idea, an indication of how you will go about developing that idea, what work you’ve already done, and a preliminary bibliography. Due to the nature of the program, the potential areas for exploration are wide and varied: many sorts of themes and approaches are possible, as long as you can find someone willing to advise you. However, a successful M.A. thesis generally goes into depth about a fairly narrow topic; you don’t want to spread yourself too thin.

The proposal doesn’t need to be long (3-5 pages, including bibliography, is enough), but it should be clear about both your goal and your methods, and give a sense of the overall structure as you presently envision it. Once you’re actually writing the thesis, your plans may change a bit, but the more specific you can be from the outset, the more smoothly you’re likely to progress. Whatever your topic, your thesis must:

1. Demonstrate substantial knowledge of your subject, reflecting research – whether in the form of reading or of fieldwork;
2. Express and support convincingly a specific claim, interpretive analysis or critical judgment; and
3. Be well organized and clearly written.

Once you have constructed your proposal and it has been approved by the committee chair, you must then find a second reader. When this has been completed, please report back to the student advisor. Next, with their thesis advisor, students should construct an appropriate schedule for submitting drafts and undertaking revisions.

The First & Second Readers

Ideally, your advisor will be involved in all stages of your thesis, recommending relevant literature, providing advice on which ideas are likely to pan out and which should be modified or discarded, and commenting on drafts, as well as reading the final version.

The second reader’s role is usually limited to reading the final or semi-final version and helping your advisor evaluate the thesis. However, if you find a second reader who is willing to work more closely with you, that’s great; the more feedback you get throughout the process, the better.

Most obviously, you want to work with people who are knowledgeable in your area. It’s also a good idea for your advisor to be someone you get along with personally, since the two of you will probably be conferring quite a bit. If you plan to use the thesis as a professional stepping-stone, it’s helpful to have an advisor who is respected in your field. If your topic spans
more than one field, then it’s good to have a second reader who can provide a perspective
different from that of the advisor. Most advisors and readers are New School faculty members,
but it’s not uncommon – again, depending on the thesis topic – for the reader to be from another
university, and some students even work with nonacademic professionals such as journalists,
publishers or political organizers.

Writing Your Thesis

The average Liberal Studies thesis is about 40 pages long, but there is no specific upper or
lower page limit; what’s appropriate will depend on your topic. Quality is more important than
quantity. It is far better to submit 30 polished, cohesive, insightful pages than 100 sprawling,
repetitive, unclear pages. That said, it should also be noted that the thesis is not just a
souped-up term paper. Your topic will probably be something too complex to be covered in 25
pages, and you should be trying to make an original contribution to whatever area you’ve
chosen. Your final draft also ought to represent a great deal of revision, with careful attention
paid to polishing your prose. Theses from previous years are on file, and you should arrange to
look at a few, to get a sense of how other people have approached this project.

The deadline for the completion of the thesis is a little more complex than it may initially appear.
There are several stages in the approval process: you need to get your final draft to your
advisor and reader; they both need to read it, and may then ask you to make some final
changes. You also need to hand in a copy to the chair, who, after consulting with your advisor
and reader, will report the grade to the Student Advisor who will submit it. All this takes time, so
you should set yourself a conservative schedule with the goal of having everything finalized at
least a few days before graduation. Most importantly, you should find out how much time your
reader and advisor will need for their perusal of your final draft, and be sure to get it to them
promptly; the end of the semester is always busy for everyone.

If you do not manage to either pass or complete your thesis, you will have to Maintain Status for
a another semester. The fee for this varies from year to year; for 2019-20 the fee for Maintaining
Status is $100 per semester plus $600 in University Services Fees and $8 in Student Senate
Fees - although there may be further charges if you are an international student or use the
University’s healthcare program. For the most up to date figures, please see the University’s
Fees page here: (https://www.newschool.edu/tuition-fees-billing/current-tuition/). After you have
registered, you will have until the next semester’s deadline to complete the thesis satisfactorily.
However, please note that all course credits for the Master of Arts degree in Liberal Studies
must be earned within five years, unless written permission for an extension is granted by the
Committee and the Office of Academic Affairs.

As with all papers, students are bound by law and academic ethics to scrupulously cite all
material—whether quoted or paraphrased—that is taken from other authors. Not doing so may
expose you to accusations of plagiarism.
The Thesis Grade

The second reader/faculty advisor hold a conversation; they compare notes and recommend a grade to the chair. There are three possible grades: pass with honors, pass, or not pass. It’s unusual, but not unheard of, for people not to pass – invariably because the advisor and second reader request another round of revisions. Still, if you’ve been conferring regularly with your advisor, there should be no unpleasant surprises at the last moment.

Crucially, please advise your readers to communicate the grade to the Student Advisor when they have agreed. The Student Advisor will then enter the final grade into the spreadsheet.
Departmental Procedures & Other Information

Registration
The New School Registrar’s site has detailed information regarding the technical process of registration, and here is the Refund Schedule. However there are some further tips, tricks and pieces of policy worth mentioning.

Add/Drop (Course “Shopping”)
Students in Liberal Studies often pursue a policy of ‘shopping’ in the first week of the semester before financial penalties start to be implemented for changes to course selection. This entails going to the initial lecture of all of the classes you may be interested in so as to acquire a syllabus, get a flavour of other students who may be enrolling, and to see if the professor is someone they could work closely with.

Taking Courses in Other Departments
While Liberal Studies gives more license to take classes in different disciplines than other departments may, this does not mean that permission to do so is automatic. In order to acquire permission for any course outside of Liberal Studies the student must:
- Email the Professor teaching the course in order to explain why it may be beneficial for their studies
- If the Professor agrees to enrolment, the email must be forwarded to the Student Advisor which houses the course with a request to release the hold.
- This Student Advisor will then let you know if the hold can be released. Please note that permission from the Professor is not absolute license, as there may be inner departmental workings such as enrolment numbers that they may be unaware of.
- If the Student Advisor releases the hold, register online as normal.

Special Forms for Registration

Independent Study
In order to register for an independent study please the student should:
- Acquire permission from the Departmental Chair and forward to Student Advisor
- Approach the relevant professor, and email the Student Advisor with the proposed name for the study and the amount of credits.
- The student Advisor will then submit this into the system.
Audits

Students are permitted to audit classes ‘officially’ or ‘unofficially’ at The New School. The difference between the two is that an official audit costs $270 and appears on your transcript, whereas for an unofficial audit the inverse is true. For an unofficial audit, the student must contact the professor in order to inquire if they can ‘sit in’ on the class. For an official audit, the student must:

- Acquire the Professor’s permission to audit the class
- Contact the Student Advisor of the department the course is hosted in in order to release the hold
- Register for the class as normal
- Contact the Liberal Studies Student Advisor letting them know that they wish to audit. The Student Advisor will then submit the relevant paperwork in order to set the audit up.

Language Courses

The New School offers language courses that can be undertaken without charge. In order to enrol in a class:

- Consult the course catalog and identify which level of any given language they wish to pursue.
- Email Academic Affairs with their N0 number and the course that they are interested in
- Wait for the language opening period to begin after NSPE school’s have registered, as they have priority. This will be announced via email by Academic Affairs.
- Register for the appropriate course.
- Please note that interest does not guarantee enrollment - courses are run depending on interest, and this may mean that they required level does not run in the given semester.

Holds

There are various forms of hold that may be put on your account for a variety of reasons to prevent you registering for classes. The quickest way to remove these is to:

- Go to your mynewschool and navigate to the ‘holds’ tab on the right hand side of the screen
- Click on the link and identify the office at The New School that has implemented the hold
- Contact the relevant office to get the ball rolling on removing it.

Graduation Procedures

Coursework

Students are responsible for ensuring that all of their coursework has been handed in, graded, and recorded on their transcript. If all coursework is not completed by the last day of classes of
their final semester, there is a possibility that they will not be able to graduate until the next semester. This is especially important for students who are finishing incompletes. After having turned in the coursework for an incomplete as, for the most part, professors do not know when students intend to graduate and thus may take their time in grading work. You can confirm whether a grade has been submitted or not by checking with your student advisor or by checking your DegreeWorks page accessible via MyNewSchool. Students must identify themselves as graduation candidates through my.newschool.edu at least one semester before their intended graduation date. Degree conferral is contingent upon the fulfillment of all degree requirements by that semester’s conferral deadline. Students who have filed a graduation petition will be contacted at their New School email address with additional information about the degree audit timeline, diplomas, and commencement.

As The New School only hosts one Graduation Ceremony per academic year, which takes place in Spring, students have the option to ‘walk’ (ie, to take part in the ceremony when all of their work has not been completed) so that their parents and friends get the chance to see them graduate in the context of a university-wide celebration. One can walk if they plan to finish all of their work up to two semesters after the ceremony takes place - for example, if a student was planning to graduate in Spring, Summer, or Fall of 2020, they would attend the Spring 2020 ceremony.

Certificate Programs

Liberal Studies students can also pursue certificate programs while completing the MA. Two possible certificates are listed below. Full information can be found here. Be sure to discuss certificate plans with your advisor, as well as the advisor(s) of the respective certificate programs to ensure that you are maximizing the number of credits shared between both programs. This will help keep things on track.

Certificate in Gender & Sexuality Studies:

“The GSS curriculum consists of one course and three electives, which can be chosen from a range of disciplines that include Anthropology, Economics, International Affairs, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, Sociology, Media Studies, Creative Writing, Fashion Studies, Visual Studies, and Art and Design History.”

A statement of intent is necessary to complete before pursuing the certificate.

The certificate is twelve credits. You can find more details at the GSS webpage or by contacting GSS (gss@newschool.edu)

Certificate in Media Management:
“This graduate certificate program provides a strong foundation of management principles and leadership skills for business professionals working or expecting to find work in the ever-changing global media landscape.”

Send a written statement of purpose to Paul Hardart (hardartp@newschool.edu) and Robbie Powers (powersr@newschool.edu). They will review the statement of purpose as it relates to the Media Management Certificate and will also look at your current transcript.

The certificate is twelve credits. You can find more details about this certificate at the MM webpage. Questions about the application can be directed to Admissions (nsadmissions@newschool.edu).

Graduate Minors

Graduate minors are structured study pathways that allow you to immerse you in disciplines outside of your primary field and expose you to new ideas and alternative modes of research and practice from across The New School, broadening your skills and expanding your career options. You can choose to acquire foundational knowledge in a single discipline, such as economics or design studies; investigate emerging interdisciplinary issues, such as migration and capitalism; or develop professional capacities in areas including entrepreneurship and digital storytelling. Learn more on the Graduate Minors webpage.