



# OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

Master of Arts in Humanities

Program Handbook

2025–2026

College of Arts & Letters

3041 Batten Arts and Letters  
(757) 683-3821 (Main Office)  
(757) 683-6191 (Fax)

*Empowering the World with the Human Experience.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Contents                                                             | Page # |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Master of Arts in Humanities at Old Dominion University .....        | 2      |
| ODU Mission Statement .....                                          | 3      |
| Institute for the Humanities Mission Statement.....                  | 3      |
| Master of Arts in Humanities Program Expected Student Outcomes ..... | 3      |
| Program Core Faculty and Office and Program Manager.....             | 4      |
| Definition of Humanities .....                                       | 5      |
| Master of Arts in Humanities Curriculum.....                         | 6      |
| Core Courses in the MA Humanities.....                               | 8      |
| Master of Arts in Humanities Thesis and Non-Thesis Options .....     | 10     |
| Advising and Graduate Student Toolbox .....                          | 11     |
| Graduate Assistantships .....                                        | 12     |
| Partnerships .....                                                   | 12     |
| Graduate Scholarships .....                                          | 13     |
| Matriculation and Graduation Requirements .....                      | 14     |
| Appendix: Forms .....                                                | 15     |

## MASTER OF ARTS IN HUMANITIES AT OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

We are a collaborative research, creative, and social innovation institute in the College & Arts and Letters at Old Dominion University. We help foster synergies among activists, artists, scholars, engaged global citizens, and local community stakeholders who are searching for meaningful ways to reshape people's lives.

Above all else, we are humanists, which means that we believe that people - when given access to critical tools, skills, and literacies - can become agents of transformation in our society. We serve as stewards of such critical sensibilities, seeking creative, innovative, and multidisciplinary opportunities to engage students, serve our communities, and participate as citizens. In short, we aim to provide future leaders in the arts, the humanities and in public service with the knowledge, skills, and training they need to become global innovators and implement sustainable change.

One of the ways we accomplish these goals is through our interdisciplinary Master of Arts degree (MA) program in the Humanities.

We also serve as a key community outreach and engagement arm for the University, sponsoring and hosting an array of speakers, performers, and public forums as part of our Humanities in Hampton Roads initiative.



*Design Your Future in the  
Humanities at ODU*

## **ODU Mission Statement**

Old Dominion University, located in the City of Norfolk in the metropolitan Hampton Roads region of coastal Virginia, is a dynamic public research institution that serves its students and enriches the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world through rigorous academic programs, strategic partnerships, and active civic engagement.

## **Institute for the Humanities Mission Statement**

The Master of Arts in Humanities program fosters cross-disciplinary learning, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research outcomes with a primary focus on humanistic methodologies. Our goal is to prepare students to engage global concerns in the arts, culture, equity, and historic narratives at a local, national, or international level. The program seeks to provide students with these skills through an interdisciplinary core curriculum that culminates with the development of a thesis or capstone project. In alignment with the mission of the college and university, the program aims to develop students' skills in critical thinking, effective communication, and creative problem solving. Students will become engaged citizens and stewards of the value of the human experience to transform the world and improve their own lived experiences. Above all else, as humanists, we accomplish these goals with empathy.

## **Master of Arts in Humanities Program Expected Student Outcomes**

Upon graduation, Master of Arts in Humanities students will be able to:

1. Think critically, analytically, independently, and innovatively about the humanities in addressing real-world problems and issues.
2. Develop persuasive arguments about the humanities from a cultural and global perspective.
3. Write clear and convincing scholarly research.
4. Communicate complex ideas in written and verbal platforms with clarity and accessibility to a wide demographic.
5. Apply and cultivate empathy in daily personal and professional lives.

## **Program Core Faculty**

Anne H. Muraoka, PhD, Associate Professor of Art History, Director – Institute for the Humanities, [amuraoka@odu.edu](mailto:amuraoka@odu.edu).

Andrew Kissel, PhD, Associate Professor of Philosophy & Religious Studies, [akissel@odu.edu](mailto:akissel@odu.edu).

David Metzger, PhD, Professor of English, [dmetzger@odu.edu](mailto:dmetzger@odu.edu). (Spring 2026)

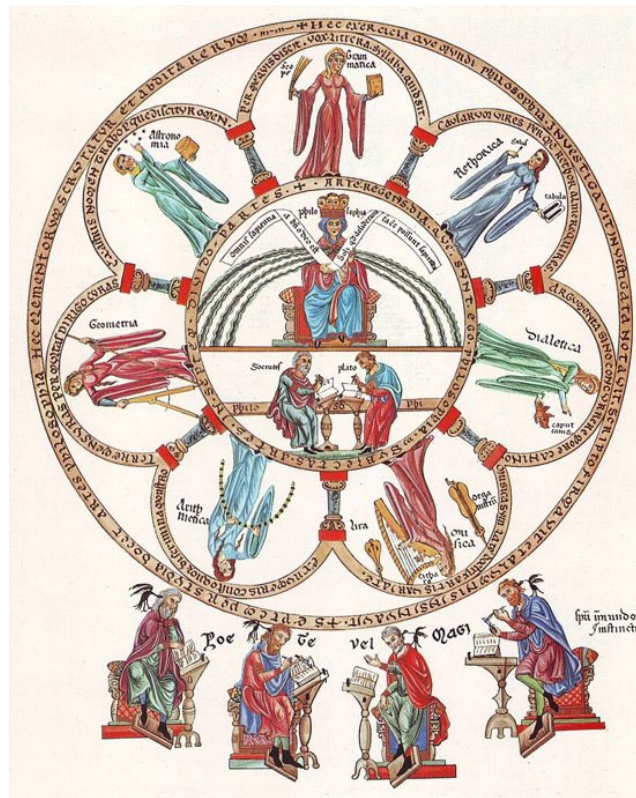
## **Office and Program Manager**

Terri Hughes. BAL 3041, (757) 683-3821, [tjhughes@odu.edu](mailto:tjhughes@odu.edu).

## Definition of Humanities

In the West, the Humanities originated in the classical Greek world in what Plato and others referred to as the Liberal Arts. “Liberal” did not have the political association as it does today. Nor did “Arts” refer to the Fine Arts. Instead, the “Liberal Arts” denoted a concern and quest for knowledge. Originally there were seven liberal arts, which included: Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic (Logic), Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy. These fields of knowledge were all interrelated and considered essential for any citizen to participate actively, productively, and effectively in society.

Medieval scholars and universities embraced the seven liberal arts, and later, in the Renaissance, expanded and transformed into the *Studia Humanitatis*, or the “study of humanity” today known as the Humanities. Its function and importance in the Renaissance did not change from its origins in the classical past, nor has it even to this day. This is the narrative that the Institute for the Humanities fosters and promotes. The skills and knowledge that the Humanities provide is not secondary to any discipline, but rather essential and necessary in every aspect of life and in every profession.



*Philosophia et septem artes liberales* (Philosophy and the seven liberal arts), from the *Hortus deliciarum* of Herrad of Landsberg, ca. 1180. Illuminated manuscript.

## Master of Arts in Humanities Curriculum

The Master of Arts in Humanities is a 36-credit degree program, 18 credits of which are core classes in the humanities and the remaining 18 credits in flexible electives that students work with the Director of the Institute for the Humanities to customize to their particular goals and needs. Students may take at most 12 hours at the 500 level. The core classes provide students with transferable knowledge and skills critical for any profession.

### Sample Two-Year Plan (Full-Time) – Thesis Option

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 1                                              | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 1                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| HUM 601 Introduction to the Humanities (3 credits)                 | HUM 602 Critical Methods in Humanities (3 credits) |
| HUM 603 Strategic Professional Development Pro-Seminar (3 credits) | HUM 704 Technology and the Humanities (3 credits)  |
| Elective (3 credits)                                               | Elective (3 credits)                               |
| <b>9 credits</b>                                                   | <b>9 credits</b>                                   |

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 2                                               | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 2    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| HUM 698 Capstone Project and Thesis Preparation Seminar (3 credits) | HUM 699 Thesis (3 credits) |
| Elective (3 credits)                                                | Elective (3 credits)       |
| Elective (3 credits)                                                | Elective (3 credits)       |
| <b>9 credits</b>                                                    | <b>9 credits</b>           |

### Sample Three-year Plan (Part-Time) – Thesis Option

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 1                              | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 1                            |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| HUM 601 Introduction to the Humanities (3 credits) | HUM 602 Critical Methods in Humanities (3 credits) |
| Elective (3 credits)                               | Elective (3 credits)                               |
| <b>6 credits</b>                                   | <b>6 credits</b>                                   |

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 2                                              | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 2                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| HUM 603 Strategic Professional Development Pro-Seminar (3 credits) | HUM 704 Technology and the Humanities (3 credits) |
| Elective (3 credits)                                               | Elective (3 credits)                              |
| <b>6 credits</b>                                                   | <b>6 credits</b>                                  |

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 3                                               | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 3    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| HUM 698 Capstone Project and Thesis Preparation Seminar (3 credits) | Elective (3 credits)       |
| Elective (3 credits)                                                | HUM 699 Thesis (3 credits) |
| <b>6 credits</b>                                                    | <b>6 credits</b>           |

### Sample Two-Year Plan (Full-Time) – Non-Thesis Option

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 1                              | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 1                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HUM 601 Introduction to the Humanities (3 credits) | HUM 602 Critical Methods in Humanities (3 credits)                 |
| Elective (3 credits)                               | HUM 603 Strategic Professional Development Pro-Seminar (3 credits) |
| Elective (3 credits)                               | Elective (3 credits)                                               |
| <b>9 credits</b>                                   | <b>9 credits</b>                                                   |

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 2                                               | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 2                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| HUM 698 Capstone Project and Thesis Preparation Seminar (3 credits) | HUM 704 Technology and the Humanities (3 credits) |
| Elective (3 credits)                                                | HUM 693 Capstone Project (3 credits)              |
| Elective (3 credits)                                                | Elective (3 credits)                              |
| <b>9 credits</b>                                                    | <b>9 credits</b>                                  |

### Sample Three-year Plan (Part-Time) – Non-Thesis Option

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 1                              | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 1                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HUM 601 Introduction to the Humanities (3 credits) | HUM 602 Critical Methods in Humanities (3 credits)                 |
| Elective (3 credits)                               | HUM 603 Strategic Professional Development Pro-Seminar (3 credits) |
| <b>6 credits</b>                                   | <b>6 credits</b>                                                   |

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 2 | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 2                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Elective (3 credits)  | HUM 704 Technology and the Humanities (3 credits) |
| Elective (3 credits)  | Elective (3 credits)                              |
| <b>6 credits</b>      | <b>6 credits</b>                                  |

| FALL SEMESTER, YEAR 3                                               | SPRING SEMESTER, YEAR 3              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| HUM 698 Capstone Project and Thesis Preparation Seminar (3 credits) | Elective (3 credits)                 |
| Elective (3 credits)                                                | HUM 693 Capstone Project (3 credits) |
| <b>6 credits</b>                                                    | <b>6 credits</b>                     |

Students are required to complete their graduate work within a 8-year period. Students will need permission from the Director of the Institute for the Humanities and the Dean's Office to continue in the program beyond eight years. If approved, students will need to revalidate credits for classes that have expired.

## Core Courses in the Master of Arts in Humanities

The core classes provide students with transferable knowledge and skills critical for any profession.

### **HUM 601 Introduction to the Humanities (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. **(Fall semesters)**

### **HUM 602 Critical Methods in Humanities (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. **(Spring semesters)**

### **HUM 603 Strategic Professional Development Pro-Seminar (3 credits)**

This seminar will guide students pursuing academic or non-academic professions to prepare and to build a professional development strategy for various careers using their humanities degree.

#### **(Fall semesters)**

The pro-seminar prepares Humanities graduate students to teach discipline-specific college-level introductory courses from an interdisciplinary perspective, to guide Humanities students to engage new scholarship across a range of disciplines, and to prepare them to present their own research in public.

#### **(Spring semesters)**

The pro-seminar guides Humanities graduate students in building a professional development strategy that identifies their knowledge, skills, interests, and values, and short-term and long-term goals, and resources and organizational support needed to achieve goals. Strategies and skills on how to navigate the job market, how to present yourself, prepare a resume/CV and Cover Letter, and/or portfolio to best leverage their knowledge, skill sets and interests.

### **HUM 704 Technology and the Humanities (3 credits)**

A seminar providing foundations for and experience in the critical examination of technologies and their human and social impact. Topics will vary and may include AI, innovation, social media, robotics, healthcare, gaming, art, and music. **(Spring semesters)**

### **HUM 698 Capstone Project and Thesis Preparation Seminar (3 credits)**

A graduate writing seminar dedicated to workshoping and developing and finalizing students' required long-term creative and research projects. Students should take HUM 698 at least one-two semesters prior to graduation. **(Spring and Fall semesters)**

### **HUM 693 Capstone Project (3 credits)**

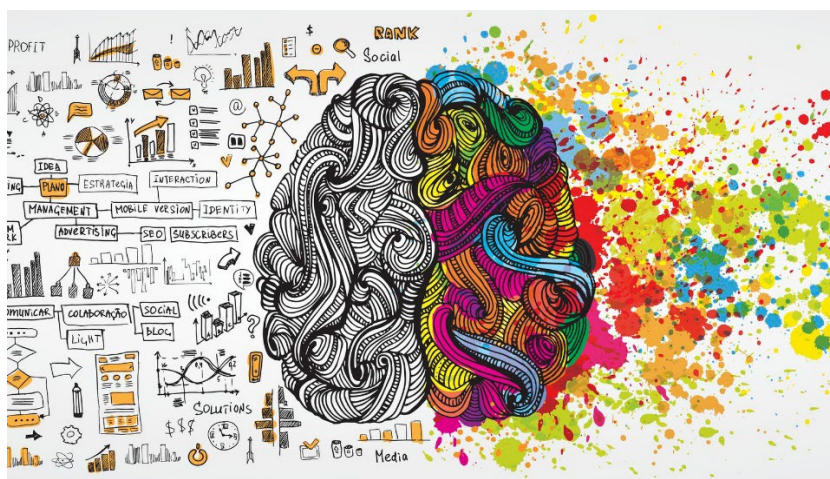
Option for students who do not want to pursue a traditional thesis. The program director must approve individual projects. The capstone project requires a scholarly written paper (approximately 30 pages), with a related project, which can take the form of creative works, art installations, film and video, interactive and born-digital works, as well as other forms of community engagement. Students will develop projects with the help of a graduate-teaching faculty advisor. Students should take HUM 693 in their final semester.

### **HUM 699 Thesis (3 credits)**

This is an option for students who want to pursue a traditional thesis and/or plan to pursue an academic profession. Theses should be approximately 75-120 pages in length. The thesis option requires a thesis committee and a chair (preferably the student's thesis director) who have graduate-teaching certification, a thesis defense, and the submission of the thesis via ProQuest, after the receipt of committee and style approvals. Students should take HUM 699 in their final semester.

### **The Institute for the Humanities Statement about AI.**

The Institute for the Humanities acknowledges the potential of AI in our everyday lives and professions. However, as humanists, we do not promote generative AI over our own human abilities to think, analyze, question, problem solve, and create. Students must adhere to each professor's position/statement about AI in their respective classes.



# **Master of Arts in Humanities Thesis and Non-Thesis Options**

## **Thesis Option**

Students pursuing the Thesis must take HUM 698 Capstone Project and Thesis Preparation Seminar (3 credits), and HUM 699 Thesis (3 credits). HUM 698 will prepare students through peer-reviewed assignments scaffolded throughout the course of the semester. The thesis (HUM 699) must be based on original scholarly research and should reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the Humanities degree. Thesis students must attend a Thesis and Dissertation Style Workshop no later than the term before they defend. Each student will choose a graduate-teaching certified faculty advisor who will chair a thesis committee approved by the Director of the Institute for the Humanities. The thesis committee will direct and evaluate the student's work and must consist of graduate-teaching certified faculty members from at least two different Arts & Letters disciplines (complete M1 form). Upon completion of the thesis, the student will defend the thesis before the committee and must successfully pass (complete M2 form). Students must circulate their thesis to the committee at least 3–4 weeks prior to the oral defense. As the committee may suggest some revisions after the defense, students should plan to defend at least two weeks prior to the style-editing deadline. Students must submit their final thesis manuscript for style editing by April 1 (spring semester), July 15 (summer term), or November 1 (fall semester) along with the M3 form (all signatures must be completed except for "Dean or Designee"). Once the thesis has passed style standards, students must upload their thesis to ProQuest.

## **Non-Thesis Option**

Students pursuing the Non-Thesis Option will take HUM 698 Capstone Project and Thesis Preparation Seminar (3 credits) and HUM 693 Capstone Project (3 credits). HUM 698 will prepare students through peer-reviewed assignments scaffolded throughout the course of the semester. Students must work with an Old Dominion University graduate-certified faculty who will serve as their capstone advisor and guide and evaluate their work. It is the responsibility of the student to locate, contact, and gain the commitment of the advisor (complete Capstone – Advisor-Student Agreement form). The student in collaboration with the advisor and the Director of the Institute for the Humanities will decide on a topic to ensure the interdisciplinary and humanistic scope of the project. Capstone projects must include a scholarly paper (approximately 30 pages in length) combined with either a creative, experiential community event, or digital project. The length, content, and direction of the project will be determined by the student in coordination with the faculty advisor and the Director of the Institute for the Humanities. After completing HUM 698, Capstone students will take HUM 693

Capstone Project in the semester they plan to complete and submit the Capstone Project (complete M2 form). Students must upload their Capstone Projects to ODU Digital Commons.

## **Advising**

Master of Arts in Humanities students must meet with the Director of the Institute for the Humanities the semester prior to the semester of registration. Pre-registration advising for Spring/Summer semesters occurs after Fall Break, and after Spring Break for Fall semesters.

## **Graduate Student Toolbox**

The Graduate Student Toolbox is a new online resource designed to support graduate students by providing centralized information about university services, academic support, professional development opportunities, and more.

The Graduate School encourages graduate students to enroll, as this new online resource serves as a helpful guide throughout your graduate student career.

You can enroll in the Graduate Student Toolbox via Canvas:

<https://canvas.odu.edu/enroll/H99FXY>.

## Graduate Assistantships

The Institute for the Humanities offers 6 assistantships: Baron and Ellin Gordon Galleries (2), Women's and Gender Studies (1), Women's and Gender Studies/Gay Cultural Studies (1), Strome Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (1), and the Institute for the Humanities (1). Students must be enrolled full-time (9-hours in fall and spring semesters, unless they need fewer than 9 hours to complete the program in their final semester), and must commit to working up to 20 hours per week. To apply, please complete an Application for Graduate Assistantships to the Director of the Institute for the Humanities, Dr. Anne H. Muraoka ([amuraoka@odu.edu](mailto:amuraoka@odu.edu)) and the Institute's office manager, Terri Hughes ([tjhughes@odu.edu](mailto:tjhughes@odu.edu)). All full-time M.A. students in the Humanities program are eligible to apply.

## Partnerships

Potential research and administrative opportunities at The Virginia Modeling, Analysis, and Simulation Center (VMASC) are available for students who have research or professional interests that center on the development of new digital technologies and STEAM initiatives through the Institute for the Humanities and VMASC partnership.



# Graduate Scholarships

## HUMANITIES SCHOLARSHIPS

### **The Susan Rowell Graduate Scholarship in Humanities**

The Susan (Merendino) Rowell Graduate Scholarship in Humanities was established in 2004 by Mrs. Susan S. Rowell to assist a graduate student majoring in humanities. The recipient must have a GPA of 3.4 or higher. This scholarship is renewable and preference will be given to students with full-time enrollment status.

### **The Louis I. Jaffe Memorial Scholarship – Art History & Humanities**

The Louis I. Jaffe Memorial Scholarship supports a graduate student from South Hampton Roads studying Humanities at Old Dominion University or studying art history at any university. **Deadline: March 1.** Visit: Hampton Roads Community Foundation: <https://hamptonroadscf.org/scholarships/graduate-medical-theological-scholarships/available-scholarships>.

## THE GRADUATE SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

### **The Alumni Association Outstanding Scholar Fellowships**

The Alumni Association Outstanding Scholar Fellowships were established in 1984. The fellowships are awarded to two graduate students in good academic standing who are attending Old Dominion University on a full-time or part-time basis. One fellowship must be awarded to an Old Dominion University alumnus/alumna who has been admitted as a full-time student to a graduate program at the University.

### **The Graduate School General Scholarship**

The Graduate School General Scholarship was established to assist a full-time student in the Graduate School. The recipient must demonstrate extraordinary academic merit and must maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

### **The Meredith Construction Company Scholarship**

The Meredith Construction Company Scholarship is made possible by an endowment given by the Meredith Construction Co. Inc., Meredith Realty, et al., and members of the Meredith family. The award is given to a graduate student demonstrating academic merit in their chosen curriculum.

**\*See Graduate Catalog for more information and additional scholarship opportunities:** <https://catalog.odu.edu/graduate/graduatefinancialaid/>.

# Matriculation and Graduation Requirements

Please note that students are responsible for reading and knowing the contents of the Graduate Catalog. The links provided below are only for key sections within the catalog that addresses frequently asked questions.

Graduate Policies and Procedure

<https://catalog.odu.edu/graduate/graduatepoliciesandprocedures/>

University Requirement for Graduate Degrees & Certificates

<https://catalog.odu.edu/graduate/universityrequirementsforgraduatedegrees/>

**\*Note:** A student who is suspended from the program by the Registrar's Office due to failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA and who is *not* reinstated into the program by the Director of the Institute for the Humanities will be dismissed. Determinations for the reinstatement of students into the program will be made on a case-by-case basis. Students must maintain a level of excellence in all coursework and make timely progress in their degree program.

## **Appendix: Forms**

1. The Institute for the Humanities Advising Worksheet
2. The Institute for the Humanities Application for Graduate Assistantship
3. The Institute for the Humanities – MA Humanities Capstone Project Agreement
4. Graduate School – Master’s Level Forms – M

## **Graduate School – Master’s Level Forms - M**

- I. The Graduate School – M1 – Appointment or Change of Master’s Thesis Committee (thesis students only):  
<https://www.odu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/m1-appointment-of-masters-thesis-committee.pdf>
  
- II. The Graduate School – M2 – Result of Master’s Examination or Requirement (required for both thesis and capstone project students):  
<https://www.odu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/m2-result-of-masters-examination-or-requirement.pdf>
  
- III. The Graduate School – M3 – Master’s Thesis Acceptance and Processing (thesis students only):  
<https://www.odu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/m3-masters-thesis-and-acceptance-processing.pdf>