Why a Diploma in Liberal Studies?

- Expand your mind through stimulating coursework
- Improve your communication and research skills
- Enrich your life through a vibrant community of learners

Who Should Apply?

- Those who hold a Master of Liberal Studies degree or an equivalent
- Those who want to hone their interdisciplinary research skills
- Those who want to earn a post-master’s degree from Rice

Application Checklist

- Completed online application for admission (access rice.edu)
- $85 application fee
- Resume or curriculum vitae
- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities you attended, sent directly from the institution
- Two letters of recommendation, one of which should come from your thesis advisor or similar faculty mentor for those with a thesis postgraduate degree
- Proposal for diploma study, including specification of the two main disciplines that you plan to focus on and how you would treat them in an interdisciplinary way
- Personal statement describing your intellectual path during your graduate studies, other education or life experiences, a discussion of how your journey has prepared you for the Diploma in Liberal Studies and the specific interdisciplinary work you propose to do in the program
- Writing samples as evidence of writing ability (see application for details)
- Admission interview

About the Department of Graduate Liberal Studies

The Graduate Liberal Studies program at Rice University is designed for those who crave intellectual challenge at a world-class university. Two unique paths are available: the well-established Master of Liberal Studies degree and a new Diploma in Liberal Studies degree.

Exploring liberal arts at a highly integrated level is not always possible in a career-focused undergraduate curriculum. Both degrees are tailored toward working adults, retirees and other non-traditional university students who wish to broaden their knowledge in fields they may not have studied in their earlier education. Courses are taught by distinguished Rice faculty and invited visiting faculty who maintain the high academic standards of Rice University.

Both paths are designed for those who wish to learn new ideas, explore new worlds and enjoy meeting others who are part of the same expedition. By examining timeless, timely human questions within the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, students satisfy their curiosity about the world through art, literature, science, politics, human nature and history.

About Our School

The Susanne M. Glasscock School of Continuing Studies partners with Rice University’s commitment to educational outreach by providing lifelong personal and professional development opportunities to the greater Houston community and beyond.

- Rice.edu
- Rice@rice.edu
- Facebook/RiceMLS
- @RiceContinuingStudies
- @GlasscockSchool
- YouTube.com/RiceContinuingStudies
Earn a Diploma in Liberal Studies from Rice University.
A 30-hour, part-time, post-master’s interdisciplinary degree, primarily focused on the humanities

OVERVIEW
Offered for the first time in 2017, the Diploma in Liberal Studies (DLS) complements and extends the educational goals of the acclaimed Master of Liberal Studies (MLS). Applicants who are accepted into the program can deepen their interdisciplinary knowledge while honing research and writing skills.

ENJOY A STIMULATING, WELCOMING EXPERIENCE
The classroom experience offers lively discussion among accomplished people who are rich in professional and life experience. Knowledgeable, welcoming instructors present a stimulating range of subjects designed to broaden your intellectual horizons. Previous graduate liberal studies students often describe their experience as one that has changed their lives.

DIVE DEEPER INTO THE HUMANITIES WHILE RETAINING BROAD VIEW
Because you choose the two main disciplines that will ultimately be the focus of your diploma research; the program gives you great flexibility. At least one discipline – and quite often both – will be from the humanities, but it is also possible to select a secondary discipline from outside the humanities. Courses are even more varied than this suggests, covering subjects in the natural and social sciences in addition to those in the humanities. Liberal studies coursework at Rice is exceptionally broad compared to other liberal arts or liberal studies programs, which often do not include the natural sciences.

DEVELOP YOURSELF AND EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF LEARNING
Enhancing your knowledge and written and oral communication skills may have career benefits. You may also choose liberal studies for the chance to expand your mind and experience the sheer joy of learning with like-minded individuals. In addition, you might select the Diploma in Liberal Studies to enhance your research, with an eye toward publishing or greater community contributions. The program also provides excellent preparation for advanced study in a single-discipline Ph.D. program that encourages interdisciplinary approaches, as well as a Ph.D. program in liberal studies.

JOIN A VIBRANT SOCIAL NETWORK OF LEARNERS
In addition to significant personal learning, you gain the advantage of entering into or continuing with a distinctive community of learners at Rice University. The Graduate Liberal Studies program has a vibrant social network and is extraordinarily welcoming to both current students and alumni. Community members share a zest for learning and a readiness to share their thoughts and exchange ideas in a way that is hard to find elsewhere.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?
Tuition for the Diploma in Liberal Studies is charged per course, and students can expect to pay approximately $30,000 for the entire degree. Rice University ranks high in the "Best Value" national rankings, and Graduate Liberal Studies offers an even lower tuition rate than other graduate programs at Rice.

WHERE ARE CLASSES HELD?
All classes are conducted face-to-face on the beautiful Rice University campus. Classes are offered one night per week from 6:15 - 9:30 p.m. in our state-of-the-art Anderson-Clarke Center with nearby parking. Some Saturday sessions can be expected. Classes are offered during the fall, winter and spring terms with no summer courses.

HOW LONG DOES THE DIPLOMA TAKE TO COMPLETE?
The Diploma in Liberal Studies consists of 30 credit hours or 10 classes. A typical student takes one course per term for a total of three courses per year. However, you may choose to take up to two courses per term. Therefore, you can graduate in three to four years. You have up to seven years to complete the degree, if necessary.

WHAT IS THE BASIC COURSEWORK?
The Diploma in Liberal Studies program requires 24 hours of content coursework, beginning with MLSC 750 Introduction to Diploma Research, and followed by seven courses from the Graduate Liberal Studies catalog.

After completing these 24 hours, you will take six hours of research coursework - MLSC 798 Diploma Project I and MLSC 799 Diploma Project II - under the direction of three faculty advisors. The diploma project may take the form of an interdisciplinary diploma thesis but it may also take the form of two interdisciplinary academic papers of publishable length and thesis quality. The program concludes with a public defense of the diploma project.

HOW ARE THE DIPLOMA IN LIBERAL STUDIES AND THE MASTER OF LIBERAL STUDIES DIFFERENT?
The Master of Liberal Studies is a master's program while the Diploma in Liberal Studies is a post-master's program, between a master's and a doctorate. In further contrast, DLS provides an understanding of how interdisciplinary research in your chosen areas is conducted nationally, offering you opportunities to engage in such research.

The MLS ends with a capstone while the DLS ends with a diploma project, which typically is a diploma thesis, including a thesis defense. The MLS is broader in the subject areas that you can choose for your capstone work. The diploma project of the DLS is more focused — still interdisciplinary, but involving deeper research into two main disciplines, typically but not exclusively in the humanities.