



## **APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION WRITING SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **PERSONAL STATEMENT**

This portion of your application is extremely important, and we urge you to take care in the preparation of it. The persons reviewing your application will be assisted in their decisions by a brief and well-written statement from you (no more than two pages in length) which should include the following:

- Various influences that have been important in your intellectual development
- Your academic and professional objectives in applying to the MLS program

The document should be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins. Your full name, title of the document and page number must appear on each page of the document.

### **WRITING SAMPLES**

In addition to the Personal Statement, you are asked to submit three writing samples that demonstrate your ability to think and write critically. The writing samples should:

- demonstrate a coherent and concise argument through well-organized paragraphs;
- provide support for the assertions made;
- lead to a logical, meaningful and clearly stated conclusion;
- when applicable, properly credit all ideas and quotes taken from other sources.

The writing samples must not be edited by anyone other than the applicant prior to submission. You may use resources such as texts, encyclopedias or the internet but all sources must be fully credited. Writing samples will be read by the admissions committee and appropriate faculty as necessary. They will not be returned to you.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Choose one topic from the two options in each of the following three categories:

- Humanities
- Social Science
- Natural Science

Each of the three writing samples must be four to five pages in length. Include citations for all references, typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Your full name, title of the work and page number must appear on each page of the documents. Write on these three topics according to the instructions given below in each section.

### **HUMANITIES**

Address one of the following two topics:

1. Niccolò Machiavelli in his famous work "The Qualities of the Prince" is known for his cynical advice on Princely leadership. Describe Machiavelli's recommendations to the Prince. Next, imagine that you have been elected President

of the United States. You find yourself in a harsh, adversarial political relationship struggling for the success of your political agenda. Describe the pros and cons of adopting the Machiavellian philosophy?

2. The famous speech by Mark Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Act 3, Scene 2 begins:

*Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;*

*I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.*

*The evil that men do lives after them;*

*The good is oft interred with their bones;*

Look up the rest of the speech. For the entire speech describe the background and setting, the roles of the characters mentioned in the speech, and then provide an analysis of what Mark Anthony is trying to accomplish with this speech and give examples, from the speech, of how he goes about doing this. Now put yourself in Mark Anthony's place and tell whether you would have chosen the same course of action and why.

## **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Address one of the following two topics:

1. Shortly after the 2018 election, President Donald Trump endorsed a bipartisan criminal-justice reform bill, a bill that emerged from the work of a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators over the preceding summer. The context of this bill includes the alarming facts that 1) the U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the Western world, 2) despite a minor decrease in recent years, there are still more than 2 million persons in our state and federal prisons, and 3) according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2013 black males accounted for 37% of the total male prison population, white males 32%, and Hispanic males 22%. In light of these points, argue the pros and cons of either 1) one or more theories about how the U.S. came to have this high rate of incarceration, including the high rate of incarceration of blacks, or 2) whether this bill or some other bill (specify its basics) would do more to improve the situation.
2. Checks and balances. Independent branches of government. Phrases like these are part and parcel of contemporary U.S. news cycles. They have a rich history, and behind the history lies some of the greatest theorizing about political philosophy in the Western World, including that of Locke and Montesquieu. Do some research on the thinking of these two figures (and others, if you choose). Give some lines of reasoning behind the view that there should be multiple "branches" of power in a national government rather than a single seat of power. Give your own evaluation of at least one of these lines of reasoning. In light of your research and reflections, comment on at least one of the many contemporary events or issues centrally involving checks and balances between independent branches of the government of the U.S.

## **NATURAL SCIENCES**

Address one of the following two topics:

1. Natural disasters, or potential disasters, have a way of catching the public's attention, and causing more thinking more about scientific questions than is typical. (Think Harvey.) One such potential disaster is a major volcanic event at what is described as one of the last remaining large, nearly intact ecosystems in the northern temperate zone of the Earth, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. How could such a thing happen? How bad could it be? Has it ever happened before? How likely is it?
2. Every evening during the news broadcast, the meteorologist makes predictions of the next day's weather. Some scientists are claiming that the world will be many degrees warmer in the next few decades. Both of these are examples of how computer models are used to understand our world. In an essay, determine the usefulness of these models and consider their limitations and the consequences of their use.