

Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures

Distinguished Majors Program

Overview

Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures offers a Distinguished Majors Program (DMP) for students who major in [Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies](#) or [Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literature](#). The program provides qualified majors with the opportunity to pursue in-depth analysis of issues and topics related to the major. To qualify, students must meet the general requirements of their MESALC major with the following modifications. Students must take 12 credits of concentration courses at the 400 level or above, including MESA 497, a six-hour sequence of tutorial work on a senior thesis to be completed over the fall and spring semesters of the fourth year. Students are responsible for obtaining the agreement of a faculty member to serve as thesis advisor and a second faculty member from a different department to serve as second reader. Students are encouraged to use primary language sources in researching their theses. The standards for admission, program requirements, and evaluation procedures are outlined below.

Admission to the Program

Admission into the DMP occurs in the spring semester of the student's third year. Applicants must be in either the [Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies Major](#) or the [Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literatures Major](#), with major and general GPAs of 3.4 or above. DMP application materials should be submitted to the Department Chair by **the second Monday after Spring recess (Monday, March 17, 2008)** of the student's third year. Application materials should include the following:

1. A statement of interest explaining the student's desire to enter the program and his or her general area of research interest;
2. A writing sample, for example, the best paper you have produced so far in one of your courses;
3. One sealed letter of recommendation from a faculty member in the student's concentration either sent directly to the MESALC Chair or sealed and submitted by the student with other application materials;
and
4. A copy of the student's most recent transcript.

The DMP Committee will decide on admissions to the DMP by about April 15. Applicants with a concentration in South Asian studies or languages will automatically be considered for the [MASTERCARD Scholarship](#) as well.

GPA Requirements

Students in the DMP must have a grade point average of 3.4 or better, both cumulatively and in the major, at the time of graduation.

DMP Requirements

Students in the DMP are required to:

1. Satisfy the distribution rules for one of the Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures majors, including 6 credits at the 400-level or above, and
2. Complete a Senior Thesis (AMEL 497)

The DMP Thesis

Students in the DMP are required to write a thesis of high quality. The thesis course, AMEL 497, is a year-long course, carrying 6 credit hours and graded at the end of the second semester. Students are responsible for obtaining the agreement of an MESALC faculty member to serve as thesis advisor and a second faculty member to serve as second reader. Students are encouraged to use primary language sources in researching their thesis. The minimum length of the thesis should be 7500-8000 words.

Program Evaluation

Students who successfully complete the requirements of the DMP program with a minimum GPA of 3.4 will be evaluated for commencement honors of Distinction, High Distinction, and Highest Distinction. Honors are awarded by the Departmental Council on the basis of overall academic performance as well as the recommendation of the first and second readers of the thesis.

Mastercard Asian Studies Scholarship

The Mastercard Asian Studies Scholarship competition is held annually. This scholarship was established by Ms. Rebecca George and H. Eugene Lockhart Jr. to encourage the study of Asia. It is based on merit with a successful candidate showing excellence in language study and creative approaches to topics in South Asian or East Asian studies or languages. The award will go toward the payment of tuition and fees. South Asia studies or language/literature majors who apply for the Distinguished Majors Program will automatically be considered for the Mastercard Scholarship. A separate application is not required.