

# MLIS Course Selection Guide

August 2008

URL's pertinent to selecting MLIS courses:

MLIS Academic Advising Page . . . . .

[http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student\\_resources/advising.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/advising.shtml)

(links to orientation materials, program of study forms, graduation applications, information on dual MLIS and school media specialist certification, proposed course schedules, and advising bulletins)

MLIS Advising Bulletins . . . . .

[http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student\\_resources/advising.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/advising.shtml)

(current information on courses, curriculum, registration deadlines, and more)

MLIS Course Descriptions . . . . . <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/courses.shtml>

(all courses listed in numerical order with brief summaries of course content)

MLIS Course Schedules . . . . . <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/schedules.shtml>

(courses to be taught in upcoming semesters with teaching faculty listed)

MLIS Program Overview. . . . . <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/program.shtml>

(numbers of credits needed in core courses, electives and optional tracks)

MLIS Syllabi . . . . . <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/syllabi.shtml>

(syllabi in pdf format for all current and past courses)

Proposed MLIS Courses . . . . .

[http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student\\_resources/advising.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/advising.shtml)

(tentative list of courses projected for two years into the future)

VSU Graduate School Policies and Procedures . . . . .

<http://www.valdosta.edu/catalog/0809/grad/documents/grad001-52.pdf#page=10>

## ◇ Developing Your Program of Study

Planning a program of study is like creating a map of the courses that you want to take. Those courses should relate to your career goals and interests. Other factors that you need to consider are the availability of courses and how many courses per semester are feasible.

**If you entered the MLIS program in the 2007 fall semester or later**, you are required to submit a program of study to your advisor. The forms for listing your courses are on the MLIS website on the “Academic Advising” page under the heading “Program of Study Forms.”

URL: [http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student\\_resources/advising.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/advising.shtml)

**If you entered the MLIS program prior to the 2007 fall semester**, the form called “Blank Program of Study” can be used as a generic form to list your courses. This form is also on the “Academic Advising” page at [http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student\\_resources/advising.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/advising.shtml). The new rules concerning course transfers do not apply to you. The sign-offs on the form do not apply to you. Using the form to track your courses is optional.

## ◇ How Many Courses Are Recommended for a Semester?

This is a question that many new students ask their advisors. Here are some guidelines that we recommend you consider as you plan for the coming semesters.

**Three graduate courses is a full-time load for MLIS students.** The VSU Graduate Catalog states that a normal full load is 9-15 hours per semester. However, this recommendation does not take into consideration the extra time involved in taking online courses.

**If you are working full-time and you want to take a course load in excess of 9 semester hours, you need permission from your advisor or the program director and from the Dean of the Graduate School.** This policy is explained on p. 19 of the 2008-2008 *Graduate Catalog*.

**If you are entering the MLIS program on probation and working full-time, the maximum course load is 6 semester hours in your first semester. To take a course load in excess of 6 semester hours in that first term, you need permission from your advisor and the program director.** This is an MLIS policy.

Members of the MLIS faculty recommend a course load of **no more than 2 courses at a time for students with full-time jobs** and **no more than 3 courses at a time for students not working**. This recommendation is consistent with what the faculty members in the VSU Instructional Technology program recommend to their students. Family obligations and any other ongoing, time-consuming responsibilities should also be factored into your decision about the number of courses you can handle.

**The standard for time spent on a 3-hour graduate course during a standard-length semester is 12 hours per week.** This means that to take a course, you must be willing and able to allocate up to 12 hours per week on it if need be. Some MLIS courses require this, some don't, and some require it during part of the semester. You should plan your course load knowing that 12 hours per week per course is what your instructors have a right to expect.

The 12-hours-per-week standard is consistent with what other graduate-level programs tell their students. Here are two examples from face-to-face programs:

Sam Houston University makes this recommendation to its students: “**While the workload differs with each course, a good general rule is to expect to work at least six to ten hours per week outside of the classroom for each course**” ([http://www.shsu.edu/~grs\\_www/faq/](http://www.shsu.edu/~grs_www/faq/)). That advice converts to 9-13 hours per class per week.

Michigan Technical Institute’s website says: “**Students should multiply the course credits by 3.5 to determine the demands the course will place on their time during a typical week of the semester**” ([http://www.gradschool.mtu.edu/catalog/degree\\_requirements.html](http://www.gradschool.mtu.edu/catalog/degree_requirements.html)). That formula means a 3-credit course requires about 10.5 hours per week of study time.

## ◇ MLIS Course Rotations

A complete list of MLIS courses is available at <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/courses.shtml>. The following is general information on course scheduling. **Course schedules are always subject to change.**

**Core Courses.** Currently, MLIS 7000, 7100, 7200, and 7300 are scheduled to be taught in every Fall and Spring semester. MLIS 7200 and 7300 have been taught in alternating Summer terms. MLIS 7700 is taught in the Fall and Spring semesters when needed. MLIS 7800 is taught in all three terms.

**Elective Courses.** Normally, electives are scheduled to be taught every two years. Exceptions to this rotation schedule occur when demand for an elective is great and faculty are available for teaching that particular course.

**Summer Courses.** Currently, MLIS courses are offered during the term called Summer II. You essentially have seven weeks to fulfill course requirements. Some electives (e.g., MLIS 7130 and MLIS 7440) were created as summer courses. In other cases, you may find the same course requirements for a 15-week course compacted into 7 weeks.

Due to limitations on salaries available for summer teaching at VSU, you can expect to find a much abbreviated schedule of course offerings in the summer term. You should factor this situation into your program of study. *A graduation timeline that depends upon taking two or more MLIS courses during any given summer term is tenuous at best.*

**Other VSU Courses.** There are a number of courses taught in other graduate degree programs at VSU that **may qualify** to be counted in lieu of MLIS courses. Two such courses are listed below. Always **check with your advisor about the applicability of these courses** to your program of study before enrolling.

PADM 7110 – offered through the Political Science program, but is cross-listed as MLIS 7270. It is taught regularly. When taught in the Summer, it is a 9-week course. It is taught online.

ITED 7070 Decision-Oriented Research and Evaluation - offered through the Instructional Technology program. It can be substituted for MLIS 7700. It is an online course.

## ◇ MLIS Proposed Course Schedule

The MLIS Curriculum Committee publishes a list of courses projected out to two years beyond the current semester. Refer to this list to ascertain when a course is expected to be taught. Bear in mind that this **course schedule is subject to change**. The list is revised as changes are verified and re-published on the Academic Advising page at [http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student\\_resources/advising.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/advising.shtml).

## ◇ Declaring a Track

There are five optional “tracks” of concentrated study in the MLIS program:

- Cataloging and Classification
- Health Sciences Librarianship
- Library Management
- Reference
- Technology

A sixth track with a concentration in Youth Services is under development. Declaring a track basically involves discussing this with your advisor and fulfilling the track requirements. The Cataloging, Reference, and Health Sciences Librarianship tracks require completing 120 hours of supervised fieldwork via the MLIS 7960 course.

Full information on tracks is outlined on the MLIS web page at <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/program.shtml> (scroll down to the middle of the page).

## ◇ Guidelines on Independent Study

MLIS 7950 is an Independent Study option. Guidelines for this option are on the MLIS website at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/documents/MLIS7950GUIDELINES.pdf>. Please note that this option is reserved for study in areas of library and information science **not normally available in regular course offerings**. The Banner system currently lists Dr. Koehler as the professor of record for MLIS 7950. In actual practice, you are required to obtain **approval from your advisor before registering for MLIS 7950**.

## ◇ Guidelines on Supervised Fieldwork

MLIS 7960 is a Supervised Fieldwork option. Guidelines for this option are on the MLIS website at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/syllabi/documents/MLIS7960GUIDELINES.pdf>. Please note that this option is **normally taken toward the end of the student’s coursework**. Starting in the 2008-2009 academic year, a designated MLIS faculty member will oversee all fieldwork assignments. In addition to coordinating a fieldwork proposal with the designated professor of MLIS 7960, you are required to obtain **approval from your advisor before registering for MLIS 7960**.