

# **LETTERS ARTS & SCIENCES**



# **STUDENT ADVISING GUIDE**

## **LETTERS ARTS & SCIENCES (LASAL)**

Penn State Altoona's Bachelor of Arts in **Letters Arts & Sciences (LASAL)** allows students to design a course of study centered on their individual interests and career plans. Working closely with an academic advisor, students select courses focused on a particular theme and then structure their own multi-disciplinary major.

Penn State stipulates that students who major in LASAL must investigate a theme "from the viewpoint of at least three different subject areas," each of which must be represented in the student's 400-level coursework.

They then take their major courses of 36 credits as follows:

- Twelve credits in Research Methods/Projects, Critical Analysis, Theory/Application, and Communication Skills;
- Fifteen credits at the 400-level; and
- Nine additional credits.

*NOTE: Nine credits of the LASAL major must be taken in the Humanities or Social Sciences.*

### **CAN YOU SELF-DESIGN A MAJOR IN ANYTHING?**

Theoretically yes, but in all practicality, you are limited by the upper level courses offered at Penn State Altoona, unless you are willing to drive to University Park or other campus for specific courses that we do not offer.

Penn State Altoona offers an excellent variety of upper level courses in Business, Communications, Criminal Justice, Education, Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology, English, Environmental Studies, Integrative Arts, Human Development & Family Studies, Nursing, Psychology, and Science.

### **CAN STUDENTS TRANSFER THIS MAJOR FROM THE ALTOONA COLLEGE TO THE UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS?**

Yes. But if you expect to transfer to University Park, you should discuss your proposed LAS major with the Program Coordinator at that campus.

## **ACADEMIC MINORS**

Six (6) credits at the 400-level for a minor can be double-counted for the LASAL major. Use of minor credits in the LASAL Core is permitted without restriction.

## **THE ACADEMIC PLAN**

Once admitted provisionally to the major, and after earning 60 credits, you must work with your advisor to write a specific, thoroughly explained Academic Plan. **Students whose Academic Plan is not submitted on time will have a hold placed on their registration.**

Your advisor will give you instructions for writing the Academic Plan, and she can also share samples of Plans written by other students.

If you make changes to your LAS program, then you'll need to revise your Academic Plan accordingly. Depending on how late you make these changes, your graduation date might be delayed.

## **SENIOR CAPSTONE COURSE**

Penn State Altoona requires all students who graduate from the college to take a Capstone course, preferably in their senior year. In your Academic Plan, you'll designate which of your 400-level courses will serve as your Capstone.

The college's Faculty Senate has determined that Capstone courses should achieve most of the following goals:

- 1) synthesize the learning that has been delivered in the major program;
- 2) include a significant writing component;
- 3) provide students with an opportunity to place themselves in a scholarly or professional context;
- 4) provide a transition to post-graduation goals, either academic or vocational;
- 5) ensure significant individual interaction between student and professor.

Capstone courses include those classes such as special topics, independent studies, directed internships, student teaching experiences, clinical work, and traditional classes that combine a number of the items listed above, including writing and individualized instruction in a specific field of study.

You and your advisor should discuss which course would be an appropriate capstone for your unique LASAL program. Then you and your advisor should make the instructor aware

that this course will serve as your Capstone course; s/he should ensure that the course does in fact fulfill the goals of a capstone course.

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

No student may complete the LASAL major primarily through Independent Learning.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All 36 credits of the LASAL requirements are selected with the approval of your academic advisor. There are no required courses per se, but all of your major courses must fit the objectives and framework described in your Academic Plan and be approved by your advisor.

The Core Requirements Description defines and provides examples of courses that satisfy the LASAL Core requirements. This list is only partial, however, and other courses may better suit your individual needs, so you should review all courses for your major subjects as described in the *Undergraduate Degree Programs* bulletin.

## **THE DEGREE AUDIT**

You can review your progress toward graduation at any time by viewing your degree audit at < <https://elion.oas.psu.edu/>>.

## **GRADUATING**

By mid-term during your last semester, your advisor will send a copy of your final degree audit to the LASAL Program Coordinator, who will review it to ensure that all graduation requirements have been satisfied. Once approved, the degree audit will go to the college Registrar. You will be notified by the Registrar when your graduation status has been approved.

## **INDEPENDENT STUDY**

Students may use 6 credits of independent study numbers (296, 496) within the major.

## **INTERNSHIPS**

A key feature of the LASAL program is the opportunity for a student to expand knowledge, gain practical skills, and learn about future career opportunities through internships.

Although internships are not required in this major, you are encouraged to consider taking these kinds of focused courses, which can be counted in the 400-level Major Requirements.

Students may use only 3 credits of internship numbers (295, 395, 495) within the LAS major.

If you're interested in an internship experience, you should ideally begin planning it one year ahead of time. For information regarding internship opportunities, contact the college's Academic Internship Coordinator, Mr. Tom Shaffer (202B Eiche Library, 949-5789, [tls24@psu.edu](mailto:tls24@psu.edu)) and visit the internship web site at [www.aa.psu.edu/internships](http://www.aa.psu.edu/internships).

## **SIMULTANEOUS AND MULTIPLE MAJORS WITHIN LASAL**

Students may declare a simultaneous or multiple major with LASAL only if there is no cross-counting of coursework between the major requirement areas.

## **TRANSFER CREDITS**

Only 3 credits of transferred courses may be counted as 400-level courses in the major, and you must provide documentation of the upper division nature of that work.

