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I started the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program the very first semester it was offered. I had been casually taking classes at the University for enjoyment and I was excited by the prospect of a program that would provide structure and focus to my learning. The MALS program was a wonderful and challenging experience for me: the courses taught me a breadth of subjects and the thesis prompted me to dig deeply into a topic I felt passionate about.

My MALS thesis explored ideas about war as they are exhibited in cultural memories. I examined images, style, and iconography in fine art, literature, war memorials, and film in an attempt to capture society's concept of war and the warrior through time and across cultures. A few years after getting my MALS degree, thirsty for more education and emboldened by my MALS experience, I entered a Ph.D. program in the History Department at UD and received my doctorate in European history in 2006. My dissertation was on burial reform in nineteenth century London—the shift from urban parish burial grounds to general cemeteries in the suburbs.

I can't talk about my MALS experience without mentioning the professors I met through the program. They were expert teachers and fine scholars, engaged, accessible, and understanding. Even now, many years after I was handed my diploma, I count several of them my educational guides and mentors.

The MALS program certainly fulfilled my educational goals, and it also delivered a bonus I had not expected: a fascinating and diverse community of learners. The people in my classes ranged in age from their mid-twenties to early eighties. They were teachers, chemists, homemakers, businesspeople, and artists. And they were interested in every facet of life and learning I could imagine.