
College of Arts and Letters

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[Dr. Jessica R. Adolino](#), Associate Dean,
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MSC: 2105

Location: Harrison Hall, Suite 1109

Website: <http://www.jmu.edu/cal>

[Print Version of Catalog](#)



College of Arts and Letters

Academic Units

[School of Communication Studies](#)

[Dr. Eric M. Fife](#), Director

[Department of English](#)

[Dr. Dabney A. Bankert](#), Head

[Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures](#)

[Dr. Giuliana Fazzion](#), Head

[Department of History](#)

[Dr. Gabrielle Lanier](#), Interim Head

[Department of Justice Studies](#)

[Dr. Glenn P. Hastedt](#), Head

[School of Media Arts and Design](#)

[Dr. Gwyneth Mellinger](#), Director

[Department of Philosophy and Religion](#)

[Dr. Charles Bolyard](#), Head

[Department of Political Science](#)

[Dr. Jonathan W. Keller](#), Head

[Department of Sociology and Anthropology](#)

[Dr. Beth A. Eck](#), Head

[School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication](#)

[Dr. Traci A. Zimmerman](#), Director

Mission Statement

The College of Arts and Letters serves multiple vital needs of JMU students. First, it offers high-quality programs of specialized study in the social sciences, humanities and communication, and in several pre-professional and cross disciplinary areas. Second, the college provides a challenging array of courses designed to promote lifelong learning by sharpening analytical abilities; improving computational and communications skills; cultivating a facility with written expression; enhancing cultural awareness, intensifying moral and aesthetic sensitivity, and fostering awareness of the contingent nature of knowledge. Linking these two missions is a college-wide commitment to free but rigorous and controlled inquiry into human nature.

Goals

In addition to the special goals of each major, all programs in the college are committed to helping the students achieve the following common objectives:

- Improve foundational skills fostered by general education courses: writing, critical thinking, information access through technology and, where appropriate, foreign languages.
- Develop the ability to use writing to acquire knowledge and to communicate ideas effectively through writing-intensive courses required in the major.
- Enrich cultural perspectives essential to effective citizenship in the 21st century, global awareness and appreciation of American cultural diversity.
- Provide significant active-learning experiences through field courses, research projects, internships, studies abroad and simulations.

Majors and Minors

Students may select from a broad spectrum of major and minor programs in the seven departments and three schools. The departments and schools fully describe their programs in the “Academic Units” section.

Cross Disciplinary Activities

In addition to departmental majors and minors, the college offers a wide array of interdepartmental majors, minors, pre-professional programs, general education courses, annual events and supporting services, some of which reach out to the regional community. Information on cross disciplinary programs offered by the College of Arts and Letters may be found in the “Cross Disciplinary Programs” section.

Pre-professional Programs

Pre-law

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Students who plan to apply to law school may select their major from a wide range of fields, depending upon their interests. The scope of the law is broad and offers room for individuals of varied educational and intellectual backgrounds. Students should choose courses that provide them with broad informational and cultural preparation and develop their reasoning abilities.

Especially valuable to a pre-law program are courses in:

- Communication, including composition, language and speech, which enable students to express themselves well.
- The humanities and social sciences, which help students to appreciate and perform effectively in their culture and society.
- Logic, mathematics and the natural sciences, which develop skills of fact discrimination, analysis and synthesis.
- Accounting and economics.

Also important to the pre-law program is Phi Alpha Delta, a student organization that organizes law-related activities.

Pre-theology

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The pre-theology program prepares students to enter professional schools of religion (divinity schools, seminaries, theological schools). These professional schools prepare the student for a variety of careers, such as ministry, religious education and religious work with youth and others. The program at JMU will provide excellent preparation not only for acceptance at these schools but also for enriched professional training.

A student in this program may major in any field he/she chooses, although the American Association for Theological Schools recommends substantial pre-professional training in philosophy and religion. This professional accrediting agency also recommends a broad background in English language and literature; history (American and European); both the physical and the life sciences; the social sciences (particularly psychology, anthropology and sociology); and interdisciplinary studies on the relationship between the "political" and religion(s) (variously defined); biblical and classical (Greek and Latin) languages and, of course, religion, including the sacred scriptures, history of religious traditions and theology.

Resource and Service Centers

Archaeology Collection

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The archaeology collection contains artifacts dating from early in prehistory through the modern era that were excavated from numerous Virginia archaeological sites. It also includes an extensive library of site reports, field records, maps and artifact identification guides. Artifact study collections spanning the 12,000 year occupation of Virginia's Ridge and Valley Province are being developed for teaching and research purposes. The collection is an important teaching and research asset of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Center for Public Broadcasting/ WMRA-WEMC

[Mr. Al E. Bartholet Jr.](#), Director

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Website: <http://www.wmra.org>

The Center for Public Broadcasting's mission is to inform, connect and engage communities through journalism, broadcasting and outreach. It serves over 50,000 listeners in the Shenandoah Valley, Charlottesville and Farmville areas.

The center comprises a network of non-commercial public radio stations, serving Harrisonburg at 90.7 FM, Charlottesville at 103.5 FM, Lexington at 89.9 FM and Winchester at 94.5 FM, and one standalone station, WEMC, serving Harrisonburg at 91.7 FM. The WMRA network stations are licensed to the James Madison University Board of Visitors. WEMC is licensed to Eastern Mennonite University, but is operated entirely by the center. Much of WMRA's programming is rebroadcast by WMLU 91.3 FM, the station owned by Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. WMRA and WEMC are members of National Public Radio, and are affiliated with Public Radio International and American Public Media. The stations broadcast 24 hours per day year-round, offering extensive in-depth news coverage and classical, folk, blues and jazz music. The center also operates Valley Voice Radio Reading Service for the print-impaired. Listeners and local businesses contribute nearly three-quarters of the center's annual budget.

Annual Events

Conference on Global Issues

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The Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures organizes a yearly conference on global issues, held in the spring. The conference brings together

scholars and researchers from a variety of disciplines to address and assess specific global issues, issuing a call for papers in the fall on an announced topic. Proposals for papers, panels and workshops should be sent to the coordinator.

History Day

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[Dr. Alison Sandman](#)

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Each spring JMU hosts the regional competition for National History Day. The contest is open to students in grades six through 12, with categories including media presentations, performances and historical papers. Judging and comments are provided by professional historians. Winners at the state level participate in the National History Day Competition.

Madison Writing Awards

Madison Writing Awards (MWA) is a university-wide biennial competition that celebrates writing across the curriculum in all undergraduate academic programs. Winners are recognized at a spring awards reception and the top papers receive generous cash prizes. These awards reflect the commitment of the School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication and the College of Arts and Letters to promote cross-disciplinary dialogue and engagement as well as to acknowledge the power of writing in all its forms and contexts.

MadRush

The MadRush Undergraduate Research Conference features outstanding work by undergraduate humanities and social science majors. Held every spring, it attracts students from across the eastern United States and has become one of the largest humanities and social science undergraduate research conferences in the region.

Visiting Scholars Program

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The Visiting Scholars Committee organizes campus visits during the year by 12-15 people who have made significant contributions in their fields. The scholars, who represent a wide variety of disciplines, expose students and faculty members to different perspectives and encourage intellectual exploration. During a visit, a scholar meets with at least one group of students in a class or informal setting and gives a public presentation and discussion of his/her work.