

LSU New Orleans
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS and EDUCATION
DIVISION of PLANNING and PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN URBAN STUDIES (MSUS)
CURRICULUM OUTLINE & STUDENT ADVISING GUIDELINES

In effect August 2026

OVERVIEW

The MSUS curriculum ensures each student becomes knowledgeable about urban studies, receives training in research methods and develops an area of expertise. The program has thesis and non-thesis options.

Thesis option

- 33 total credit hours
- 15 hours of core curriculum coursework
- 15 hours of specialization coursework
- 3 hours of thesis research
- Thesis

Non thesis option

- 33 total credit hours
- 15 hours of core curriculum coursework
- 18 hours of specialization coursework
- Comprehensive exam

During the first academic year or 15 credit hours, whichever comes first, all students must submit to the MSUS Coordinator in writing a substantive area of concentration and the courses they intend to take. The student may choose from the designated tracks listed below or petition for an individually designed concentration.

Students may not submit or represent work generated, in whole or in substantial part, by artificial intelligence (AI) as their own original work. Any use of AI tools for research or scholarly purposes must be fully disclosed and appropriately cited.

PREREQUISITE COURSES (3 credit hours each)

A graduate level statistics course is required to complete the program. At UNO, the graduate level statistics courses have an undergraduate statistics course as a prerequisite. It is possible to take a prerequisite while attending UNO with the department's permission. Courses can also be taken through community colleges or as an online course offered from different universities. MOOC courses might be acceptable. Please contact the MSUS coordinator prior to taking a MOOC course. The courses may only be taken for undergraduate credit and will not apply to a student's graduate degree program.

REQUIRED COURSES (15 credit hours)

Urban Core:

- URBN 6165 Urban Public Policy Analysis
- DURB 6850 Seminar in Urban Studies

Each student must take **one** additional graduate level urban-focused seminar in the Anthropology department **OR** take **one** urban history course at the 5000-level (or above) offered by the History department.

Courses from other departments can be substituted with permission from the course instructor and the MSUS coordinator. The MSUS coordinator will notify students each semester which course or courses will fulfill this requirement.

Methods:

URBN 6005 Statistics for Urban Analysis or substitute
DURB 7020 Research Design Seminar or substitute

Note: All students will be required to have participated in a course or project in which they have made (or participated in as a team member in making) an oral presentation.

SUBSTANTIVE AREAS (15 and a thesis or 18 credit hours and an exam)

Students must choose five from one of the following substantive areas. Required courses for each substantive area are available from the MSUS coordinator.

- Applied Urban Anthropology
- Geography and Geographic Information Systems
- Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management
- Justice Studies
- Transportation
- *With the graduate coordinator's written consent, a student may submit another substantive area which is subject to approval by the urban studies faculty.*

Applied Urban Anthropology

Required courses

ANTH 5772 Applied Anthropology
ANTH 5775 Urban Anthropology
ANTH 5070 Qualitative Research

Two additional anthropology courses

Geography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Students must take five of the following courses

GEOG 5158 Environmental Impact Assessment
GEOG 5310 Political Geography
HIST 6101 Histories of Space and Place
EES 5560 The Environmental Geology of Coastal Louisiana
*GEOG 5805 Fundamentals of Mapping & GIS
*GEOG 5830 GIS Theories & Concepts
*GEOG 5832 Advanced Techniques in GIS
*MURP 5081 GIS for the Planning Profession
**Required courses for the GIS Graduate Certificate*

Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management**

Students must take five of the following courses

*ANTH 5721 Cultural Resource Management Theory and Practice

ANTH 5991 (3 or 6 credits) Advanced Field Research in Anthropology
ANTH 6201 Analysis and Technical Writing for Cultural Resource Management

*MURP 5010 Introduction to Historic Preservation

*HIST 6008 Introduction to Public History

URBN 5100 Gentrification in Historic Districts

HIST 6101 Histories of Space and Place

** Required courses for the Historic and Cultural Preservation Graduate Certificate plus one other approved course*

***It is recommended that students in this track choose the thesis option.*

Justice Studies

Required courses

JUST 6810 Theories of Justice

JUST 6820 Justice and Law

Three additional courses from the following list

JUST 6900 Special Topics

JUST 6980 Independent Study

POLI 5420 The American Constitution and Civil Liberties

POLI 5440 Criminal Justice and the City

PADM 6160 Law and Ethics of Public Administration

Transportation

Students must take five or six of the following courses

TRNS 6010: Transportation Seminar

TRNS 6020: Intermodal Freight Planning

TRNS 6100: Environment and Energy

TRNS 6200: Transportation Policy and Administration

TRNS 6300: Applied Techniques for Transportation Planners

TRNS 6061: Introduction to Transportation Planning

TRNS 5060: Active Transportation Planning, Policy and Design

THESIS (3 hours)

Students pursuing the thesis option must take 3 credits of thesis research.

URBN 7000 Thesis Research

Please note that students must contact David Lambour, the PLUS Director of Academic Services, and provide an approved copy of the approved ***Thesis Research Agreement Form*** to be able to register for URBN 7000 (this agreement form can be found at <https://www.uno.edu/academics/colaehd/la/planning-and-urban-studies/forms>).

All students pursuing the thesis option, be prepared to defend the thesis to a jury that may consist of both program faculty and outside readers.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

No more than 20% of the total hours required for a degree may be satisfied by coursework completed as independent study. Research conducted towards an independent study course should be distinct from research conducted towards completion of a master's thesis.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS STUDENT

While the program advisors' role is to assist you in planning and carrying out your academic program, it is your responsibility to meet all necessary university, graduate school, and college requirements and deadlines. Students should check the current UNO catalog required prerequisites and course restrictions before trying to enroll in a course.

RECOMMENDED COURSE LOAD

In the fall and spring semesters, taking 9 - 12 credit hours is considered a full-time course load. 6 credit hours is considered a full-time course load for the summer semester. Part-time students generally take 6 credit hours per semester.

6000-LEVEL COURSE REQUIREMENT

UNO requires that at least half of the coursework used for the MSUS degree be completed at the 6000-level (or above). Six hours of thesis credit (URBN 7000) may be applied to this total.

TRANSFER COURSEWORK

A maximum of one third of the credit hours required for the degree may be transferred into a master's degree program from other graduate programs with department approval. You must have completed at least nine hours of graduate residence at UNO with an overall B average for a transfer to be made. The University also requires that all course transfers be at a grade of B or higher. Official transcripts displaying the course(s) to be transferred in must be received by the UNO Office of Admissions before the request for transfer credit can be made. The UNO Graduate School also specifies that all coursework applied toward a master's degree must have been taken within the last six years. To officially transfer coursework, a ***Request for Transfer of Credit*** form is completed at the same time as the student's ***Candidate Plan of Study*** and submitted to the Graduate School.

SUBSTITUTING COURSES

Under special circumstances, you may request the substitution of an elective for a required course. This substitution must be approved by the MSUS Graduate Coordinator prior to enrolling in the course.

WAIVING COURSES

In a very limited number of cases, a required course may be waived if you have demonstrated competence or prior knowledge in an area. Evidence of such competence may be required. You must take an elective in place of each course waived. The waiver must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator.

URBN 7000 (THESIS RESEARCH)

You may enroll in URBN 7000 (Thesis Research) if you are within 12 hours of completing the program. Even though you may enroll in URBN any number of times, you may apply only six credit hours to your degree. Enrollment in Thesis Research must be approved by the chair of your thesis committee.

TIME LIMIT FOR DEGREE COMPLETION

You should be mindful of the six-year limit for completion of the degree program including the thesis or comprehensive exam. This is calculated from the initial date of your admission to the Graduate School at UNO. Transfer credits applied to your degree must also fall within this six-year window.

NOT ATTENDING ONE OR MORE SEMESTERS

Once you have started in the program and you do not register for more than a calendar year, you must complete a simple re-entry form with the Admissions Office. Students should complete the leave of absence request form with the graduate school [Leave of Absence Request Form - Formstack](#). You can sit out the summer semester without having to be formally re-admitted.

CANDIDACY

You must submit a Candidate Plan of Study form to the Graduate School by the semester before the semester you intend to graduate. The Candidate Plan of Study contains the following information: courses completed, courses in progress and remaining, thesis advisor and thesis committee members or members of the comprehensive exam committee. See the academic counselor to complete this form. You only need to complete this form once unless there are any changes in your program of study. If you do not graduate during your intended semester, you do not need to file a new form. The form signals to the Graduate School that you are a potential candidate for graduation in your program.

URBN 7040 (EXAM OR THESIS ONLY)

Students writing a thesis may use URBN 7040 if they have successfully defended their thesis while enrolled in URBN 7000 the previous semester. URBN 7040 is not a requirement and may not even be necessary for you if you can successfully defend your thesis, make any necessary changes, and can meet the deadlines for graduation all in the same semester. If, however, you successfully defend your thesis in one semester, but need time to polish it for final production, you may sign up for URBN 7040 (for a nominal fee) in the following semester, with approval from your thesis committee chair. Students may take URBN 7040 only once.

ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION DATE

You must be enrolled in a course during the semester in which you intend to graduate.

DIPLOMA AND GRADUATION FEES

Remember that you must complete an Application for Degree and pay associated fees at the beginning of your last semester of enrollment (check the registrar's website for official deadlines). If you do not graduate as intended, you file a new application for a degree form and must pay an additional fee at the beginning of the semester in which you graduate. *This is very important.* If you do not file, the university will not know that you are a candidate for graduation.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact Dr. Bethany Stich, the Master of Science in Urban Studies program coordinator, at bstich@lsuneworleans.edu.