

For Immediate Release

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Three new master's degrees begin this fall at YSU

Youngstown State University will launch three new master's degree programs at the start of the fall semester in August.

The new degrees in financial economics, American Studies and computer/information systems were recently approved by the Ohio Board of Regents.

The following short news releases describe each program:

Financial economics

Let's say you work as a financial consultant at a local bank, or maybe you're an investment advisor at a local financial services firm.

You've been at the same job for five years, you're doing a good job and you want to advance your career. But first, you need to get an advanced degree.

Youngstown State University's new master's degree in financial economics might be just right for you.

"It's a perfect match of finance and economics for anyone who's looking for advanced training," said Pete Woodlock, professor and chair of YSU's accounting and finance department.

Tod Porter, professor and chair of YSU's economics department, said YSU already offers a master's degree in economics, as well as a master's degree in business administration. The new program provides a more specialized course of study.

While other universities in Ohio offer master's degrees in economics with tracks in finance, none have a master's in financial economics like the one at YSU, he said.

"It's an opportunity for students to get a unique combination of economics and finance that will open up many opportunities in the job market," he said.

The number of financial managers employed in Ohio will grow by 14.6 percent between 2001 and 2010, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services projects. The

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YSU master's degrees/Add 1

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook says the median annual earnings of financial managers were \$67,020 in 2000.

“Candidates with expertise in accounting and finance, particularly those with a master's degree, should enjoy the best job prospects,” the Handbook says.

Woodlock said the new degree was developed after leaders of the local banking and financial services industries expressed interest in such a program.

For more information, contact Porter at 330-941-3431 or Teresa Riley, professor of economics, at 330-941-1675.

American studies

YSU's master's degree in American Studies has the community at heart.

The new program, which begins this fall semester, includes a thesis project that will have students working on various community projects, from designing an exhibit for a local museum to writing a grant application for a local non-profit organization.

“It will have a research, scholarly component, but it doesn't stop there,” said Stephanie Tingley, English professor and director of the new program. “We also want to connect to the campus and to the community.”

YSU currently offers an undergraduate degree in American Studies, an emerging discipline which is generally defined as the exploration of the literature, art, pop culture, history and ideas about the culture and social institutions in America.

The new, 36-credit master's program includes a mix of existing classes from eight university departments, including classes in English, sociology, political science, fine arts and education. Each student chooses a focus area from one of four broad domains – cultural studies, American history, working-class studies and public history.

Tingley said she likes the interdisciplinary nature of the program. “That's what's fun for me,” she said. “I like stepping out of my box, learning something new.”

The program will be crafted for each student, Tingley said. “One of the strengths is the flexibility,” she added.

Although there are other master's programs in American Studies in the United States, the community experience component makes YSU's program unique in the region, Tingley said.

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YSU master's degrees/Add 2

In collaboration with YSU faculty, the community projects will be overseen by a committee of individuals that represent organizations such as the Butler Institute of American Art, the Public Library of Youngstown & Mahoning County, the YSU Center for Urban and Regional Studies, and Youngstown 2010.

Prospective students include area teachers working in the field of language arts or social studies, undergraduates nationwide who are planning continued study, and other working professionals who need academic credit and come with a lot of real world experience, Tingley said.

For more information, contact Tingley at 330-941-3404 or satingley@ysu.edu.

Computing and information systems

The new master's degree in computing and information systems that begins this fall at YSU is unlike any other in Ohio, said John Sullins, associate professor of computer science and information systems.

"There are a lot of computer science master's degrees that focus on the theoretical aspects of computers and those that focus on the management of technology in Ohio," he said.

"But there are really none that focus on applied computing, involving some theory and some administration, like our new degree program. The main focus will be to teach professionals how to design, implement and maintain a large-scale information system."

The 33-hour program is also unique, Sullins said, in that it doesn't require an undergraduate degree in computer science, just a background in the field either through education or work experience.

Sullins projects that many of the potential students will be in healthcare, education and business, as well as computer information systems and technology.

"This program is appropriate for almost anyone who needs to know this material to get a promotion in their jobs," said Sullins, who has been developing the graduate program since he came to YSU in 1993.

The program is designed for full-time working adults, who could finish the degree in two or three years. If a student went full time, the program could be completed in one year.

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YSU master's degrees/Add 3

At least 24 to 30 students are expected to sign up for the first course, with a goal of about 70 new students each semester. Students will take core courses, such as theory and practice of information systems and advanced network design and, as well as electives from departments other than computer science. "I want to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of the program," Sullins said.

Sullins said graduates from the program will have skills that could attract high-tech companies to the area. "It is important because a workforce like the one that could be created because of this program is an incentive for companies to expand or relocate to the Valley," he said.

For more details, visit <http://www.cis.ysu.edu/graduate/index.htm>.