

Sacred Heart University

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November 29, 2016

State Approves Media Literacy and Digital Culture Program for Professional Certification

Bill Yousman



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Sacred Heart University has gained state approval for its Media Literacy and Digital Culture (MLDC) graduate program, which enables new teachers to meet their professional certification requirements. Candidates will be eligible to apply for this top-level certification upon degree completion and three years of successful teaching.

The state's approval affirms MLDC as a "rigorous, relevant and professional program," according to William Yousman, program director. "Teachers will be able to advance in their careers after they graduate from our program in just one year if they enroll full time, or in two years if they enroll as part-time students," he says.

The program, which is in its second year at SHU, is "the only graduate program devoted to action as well as analysis" in this area, according to the Global Critical Media Literacy Project. "Because media plays such an important role in education, politics, culture, work, home, relationships and more, it is absolutely essential for all citizens to develop a high degree of media literacy that goes beyond traditional approaches to literacy skills," Yousman adds. "This need applies to teachers as well as students. We hope to train the next generation of educators who can reach the young people who are growing up in this unprecedented environment."

The announcement of state approval was well-timed, falling during Media Literacy Week, Oct. 31-Nov. 4. The previous week, Yousman and Lori Bindig, MLDC program creator and communication and media arts professor, represented SHU as a leader in critical media literacy education at the Project Censored Media Freedom Summit.

The MLDC program has concentrations in children, health and media, and media and social justice, as well as a new track in political action and media production.