

Master of Divinity Degree Program

The following is a basic description of what is needed to complete the Master of Divinity Degree. Applicable courses are taught in the fall, spring and summer semesters.

Biblical Courses	9 Credits
Historical Courses	6 Credits
Theological Courses	6 Credits
Arts of Ministry Courses	6 Credits
Field Education	6 Credits
World Religions	3 Credits
“The District” Courses	6 Credits
Thesis/Senior Project	6 Credits
Preaching	9 Credits
Electives	20 Credits

Total credits needed for graduation are 77 credits.

Within the above course schedule, the learner must complete certain foundational work. The completion of this foundational work will equip the student for closer and more specialized study of other subjects in the curriculum. The description of this required foundational work follows.

However, in individual cases; upon the written recommendation of the convener of a field; the vice president may allow substitution of courses in the field for foundation courses. Approved substitutions must be filed with the registrar.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Master of Divinity

Biblical Courses

Old Testament, New Testament and three credits in a biblical exegesis course are required. Students may opt-out of these courses by passing the Bible Content exams, given prior to registration in the Fall.

introductory sequence must be met by the end of the candidate's first year. Introductory courses in the biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek) are not counted toward meeting the distribution requirements of the field. However; all students, no matter what form of ministry is contemplated, are urged to elect study of at least one of the biblical languages.

Historical Courses

Six credits are required in Church History.

Theological Study Courses

Six credits are required, with at least 3 credits earned in a Systematic Theology. Students whose college work in philosophy is not strong are advised to select Philosophy of Religion. This course can be counted toward meeting the requirement for the M. Div.

Arts of Ministry Courses

Six must be earned in two courses.

Students are expected to write the M. Div. thesis in the specialized areas and are advised to follow the sequence of courses prescribed as prerequisite for this.

Field Education

The six credits of credit in Field Education are ordinarily satisfied in the middle year. This course is taken concurrently with a supervised field placement of 12-15 hours per week that has been approved by the Vice President. The other option is a full-time supervised internship for students not in residence at the Seminary.

The World Religions Course

Every candidate for the M. Div. or the M.A. degree must complete three hours in World Religions.

"The District" Courses

As part of WBS effort to place the M. Div. curriculum firmly in the Washington urban and social context of metropolitan Washington, each M. Div. student will be required to take six credits of course work in "The District" courses, which will explore the historical, theological and cultural contexts of selected Christian communities, and study both continuities and changes as churches have adapted to life of this world capital.

Electives and Program Focus

Twenty credits earned in elective courses will count toward the 77 credits required. These courses should not normally be taken in a given field until after progress has been made in meeting that field's distribution requirement.

A Thesis or Senior Project or Additional Elective Course

In the senior year, the candidate will complete six credits for a thesis or a senior project. The student will declare the option chosen for fulfilling this final six-point requirement during the semester of the senior year. Obviously the means for completing this final requirement—thesis or senior project— is best considered in advance of registration. Ideally this is done in the latter part of the student's middle year. A thesis or a senior project must be approved by two members of the faculty, and by the vice president.

Biblical Courses

BS500 The Five Scrolls of the Jewish Festivals, 3 hrs.

A literary and theological study of Esther, Ruth, Lamentations, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes both as canonical books and as festival readings in the Jewish liturgical year.

BS501 The Bible and Hermeneutics, 3 hrs.

A history of Old and New Testament interpretation, specifying a particular period for study. Examining modern and post-modern hermeneutical theory and its relevance for biblical interpretation.

BS502 The Bible and Ethics, 3 hrs.

A critical examination of topics relating to the Bible and ethics—for example, violence, sexuality, social justice, exercises of authority, and economic practice.

Historical Courses

H601 The Baptist Church USA: History, Doctrine, and Polity, 3 hrs.

Concentrates on the ways in which the transplanting of the Baptist Church in North America was transformed by the American Revolution, the establishment of the United States, and the general context of American religious experience, particularly in the colonial and Federal periods. Attention is paid to the contributions of the Baptist Church to the subsequent development of Comparative American Religion during the national and global periods. Specific foci include controversies in doctrine and worship, the development of various mission strategies, and the Baptist Church's engagement of social and ecumenical issues. Consideration of basic documents, including the Constitution, serve to ground students in the ethos and practice of American Baptist..

H602 History of the African American Religion from 1714-Present, 3 hrs.

An ecclesial study of more or less resolved fusions and fissions between representatives of various ethnicities and religious perspectives as they encounter representatives of the Gospel and each other as Christians. Analyzes the African American Church's division into Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, Pentecostal, and Methodist traditions; challenges presented by the rise of historical consciousness, with its concomitant pluralism and nascent secularism; and the formation and development of the African American Church as an English-speaking Christian culture impinges upon a larger world and ecumenical opportunities during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Theological Study Courses

TS500 Old Testament Theology, 3 hrs.

This course examines the major theological themes of the Old Testament based upon the biblical text and the writings of major Old Testament theologians. The course will also examine the nature, history, and method of Old Testament theology.

TS602 New Testament Theology, 3 hrs.

This course examines the major theological themes of the New Testament based upon the biblical text and the writings of major New Testament theologians. The course will also examine the nature, history, and method of New Testament theology and the interrelationship of major theological themes between the Old and New Testaments.

TS501 Special Studies In Early Christianity, 3 hrs.

Topical studies in early Christian history and literature, both canonical and non-canonical. Topics studied may include gender in early Christianity, early Christianity and their Scriptures and Early Christianity Asceticism and other related topics to Early Christianity.

P500 Homiletics and Worship, 3 hrs.

Provides instruction in the preparation and delivery of sermons in the context of worship. Attention is given to the history of Christian preaching, to techniques of effective biblical interpretation for preaching and to the development of a theology of proclamation.

P501 Preaching from the Old Testament, 3 hrs.

This course exposes students to the vast possibilities for proclamation afforded by the Old Testament. Students are required to prepare and deliver sermons in class from the Torah, the prophetic books and other writings of the Old Testament. Attention is given to the theology of the Old Testament and to the relationship between the Old and New Testaments.

P502 Homiletics and History, 3 hrs.

Focuses on the role and implications of preaching in America from the eighteenth centuries. Special attention is given to those preachers whose sermons addressed the controversial social issues of their day.

TH600 Theological Ethics, 3 hrs.

This major course explores central themes, thinkers, methodologies, and topics in Christian ethics principally around the themes of justice and love. It begins with an excursus into the Scriptural themes (e.g., creation, imago dei, sin, imitatio Christi, redemption), experiential dimensions (e.g., freedom, conscience, law, otherness, responsibility) and classic theological articulations (Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Catholic social teaching) that characterize the Christian moral life and illuminate the complex relationships between love and justice. Students will engage in a critical reading of four Christian ethicists: Lisa Sowle Cahill, Margaret Farley, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Samuel Roberts. They will explore their central theological loci, normative ethical presuppositions, and commitment to concrete practical moral problems. Students will answer these questions: What are the primary tasks of Christian ethics, What are the strengths and weaknesses of their method, How do they address the relationship between love and justice, What theoretical and practical aspects of their approaches would you adopt to develop your own constructive Christian ethics.

TH 610 Faith and Justice: Liberation Theologies in the United States, 3 hrs.

Liberation theologies are widely acclaimed as the principal forms of prophetic thought and action in our contemporary age. Simply put, these are modes of theological discourse that rethink the meaning(s) and purpose of faith, the Christian doctrines, and overall religious or church practice by placing attention on the non-subjects of history--those who have been oppressed and been denied voice and positive identity in history. This course considers the emergence and development of some of the different kinds of liberation theologies that have come into existence in the United States. Black/African American, Feminist, Hispanic/Latino(a), and ecological theologies, among others, are examined.

TH 612 Theological Reflection In and Through Film, 3 hrs.

Highlighting the possibility and potential of a relevant theology of culture, this course explains the ways in which recent Hollywood movies can be used as resources to think about and even to think over the meanings of key theological concepts such as ideas of God, human nature, sin, Christ, redemption, and eschatology. Through lectures, reading materials, the viewing of movies, and class discussion, students will be encouraged to consider how an appreciative and critical engagement with popular culture can allow for a relevant and contemporary practical theology.

Arts of Ministry Courses

AM 620in Worship, 3 hrs.

This course is designed to study the development of liturgical church forms of Christian worship, correlated with sacred music. A survey of contemporary worship practices will also be studied including field experiences in various forms. semester hours.

AM 630Music Administration, 3 hrs.

This course is a study of administration, processes, procedures, and policies concerning the church music ministry. The course will focus on practical matter to prepare the student to become an effective church music administrator.

Field Education Courses

MA 638Study in Fine Arts, 3 hrs.

Selected topics in fine arts that require travel abroad.are approved by the program dean.

World Religions

WR500 World Religions, 3 hrs.

An examination of the ideas and practices of major religious traditions in their historical and cultural contexts. The primary focus is on the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, the religions of China and Japan, and Islam.

I500 Islam, 3 hrs.

An examination of the origins and development of Islam. Particular attention is given to the formation of Islamic faith and practice, as well as contemporary manifestations of Islam in Asia, Africa, and North America.

"The District" Courses

DC600 Local Religions, 3 hrs.

This course opens the horizons on various religions in the greater Washington area. Study the basic teachings and practices of religions through reading their texts and participating in their worship services.

DC612: Theology in the Global Context, 3 hrs.

An interdisciplinary study of some major trends in contemporary global Christian theology that are present in the Washington area. Specific attention will be given to issues such as religious pluralism, gender, wealth, ecumenism, enculturation and mission. These will be examined in the light of the fact that Christianity is today a global rather than a uniquely Western religion.

Electives

E500 The Use of the Small Groups in Christian Education, 3 hrs.

Addresses the use of small groups for educational development in a local church. An exploration is made of the ways to use groups for personal and community learning.

E501 Christian Education in the Black Church, 3 hrs.

This course explores practices and theories of religious education that aim to form, renew, and transform Christian faith in persons and communities, with particular attention to religious education in the Black Church in the U.S.

GS500 Greek I, 3 hrs.

This course gives an introduction to the grammatical elements of Koine (New Testament) Greek using brief passages from throughout the New Testament as a basis for developing proficiency in translation. Three semester hours

BT544 Greek II, 3 hrs.

This course provides a continued study of New Testament Greek grammar with further reading of selected portions of the Greek New Testament.

MC603 Family Counseling Foundations, 3 hrs.

This course thoroughly surveys theological and biblical concepts, family systems, and psychodynamic ideas, and integrates these ideas into the groundwork for a narrative approach to entering into helping conversations. Issues covered include: the debate around the integration of biblical and psychological ideas; an understanding of human psychological nature; the development of behavioral, relational, and emotional "problems" from a systemic perspective; the goals of counseling; and the use of narrative ideas to guide the nature of therapeutic conversations.

MC615 Counseling, 3 hrs.

This course offers a study of the dynamics of the premarital relationship and of the tools available for premarital counseling and post-marital follow-up. This includes gender issues, human sexuality, communication, conflict resolution, treatment of the wedding ceremony, the pastor's role, and special circumstance marriages.

CL610 Setting and Problem Solving Processes, 3 hrs.

This course is designed to help students understand the perspectives, procedures, and processes helpful in institutional and personal problem solving and vision setting. Emphasis is given to problem identification, problem explanation, generation of alternatives for solutions, selection of solutions, and consolidation of a possible solution. Attention is also given to "visioneering."

CL612 Development and Advancement, 3 hrs.

This course is an examination of the purposes, processes, and procedures to produce reflective and energetic institutional development and renewal. The course examines and applies institutional development patterns, principles, and processes.

IS 600 INDEPENDENT STUDY, 3 hrs.

Students wish to fulfill a special need, they may request an independent study course through the program dean.

Thesis Development**TD600 Research Methods, 3 hrs.**

This course examines the procedures for theological research. Qualitative and quantitative research designs are studied. This course requirement will be engaged with the student's Thesis Advisor. A student will not be expected to register for this course until such time as they have selected a Thesis Advisor.

TD610 Thesis Development, 3 hrs.

In this course, students produce a scholarly work on an approved subject, which gives evidence of their ability to do independent research and think creatively. The thesis must meet the expectations of a faculty thesis committee. Students must obtain a 3.5 GPA in previous course work in order to receive approval to write a thesis.