The Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in Pastoral Care requires 36 credits for completion.

At the core of the Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in pastoral care are philosophical, theological, historical, psychological, sociological, and cultural foundations. Various modalities of theological reflection are utilized: pastoral and practical theology, psychology, developmental theory, spirituality, and cultural and multicultural perspectives.

The students enrolled in this program are clergy and laypeople involved in ministry of many kinds: parish ministry, chaplaincy in hospitals or other settings, youth ministry, work with the elderly or with at-risk populations. Those interested in chaplaincy may use this degree to seek certification from the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) or the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC).

The Ignatian Way
Discernment in the Christian Tradition
Theology of the Human Person
Theology of Ministry

Final Paper
All Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in pastoral care students are required to complete a final paper as part of the degree requirement. The final paper allows students the opportunity to integrate, reflect, expand, and apply their coursework. It should be noted that there is no registration fee for this component of the program. Additionally, no credits are awarded for the paper. However, students are required to register for maintenance and matriculation if not currently registered for classes.

All students in the 36-credit program have two options for the final paper. Students are to choose the option in consultation with a final project mentor of their choosing. A mentor can be chosen at any point during the program.

Option 1: Complete a 30- to 40-page pastoral care project with a for-ministry focus.

Students choosing this option are asked to draw upon their current or future pastoral care ministry and, informed by psychological and spiritual scholarship, write a final project that addresses an identifiable issue/concern. The paper is to include three parts:

1. A written discussion of the purpose of the project, including a description of the pastoral care need that will be addressed by your project and your goals for the project

2. A detailed description of the pastoral care project

3. A reflection on the psychological and spiritual dynamics of your project

Option 2: Complete a 30- to 40-page major paper.

Students choosing this option will have the opportunity to explore a pastoral care issue and the implications of this issue in depth. The major paper may take the following form:

1. Identify a significant pastoral care issue

2. Provide an account of why this is an important issue today

3. Discuss the issue drawing from psychological and spiritual resources

4. Explore some of the pastoral, clinical, and ethical dimensions or implications of the issue

Mentorship

Ordinarily, mentors of the final project are any of the full-time faculty in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education in pastoral care and counseling that the student chooses. With permission, students may work with contingent faculty. It is the role of the mentor, who need not be one’s faculty adviser, to help the student develop a proposal for the paper, to approve that proposal, to offer suggestions, to give feedback on the writing as needed, and to approve the final copy. It is not the role of the mentor to correct for grammar, spelling, and the manual of style.
Manual of Style
The final paper needs to be written according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA style).