PASTORAL CARE (M.A.)

This program is offered online.

The Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in pastoral care is designed to prepare students engaged in ministerial work to be competent and effective pastoral caregivers in their present and future ministries. The program nurtures in-depth study, meaningful reflection, and the interdependence of theory and practice.

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 concentration in Trauma-Informed Care addresses society's growing need for helping professionals who understand the dynamics and effects of trauma on individuals and communities. Topics covered include the neuropsychology of trauma; the effects of early childhood trauma and attachment; historical, intergenerational, and cultural trauma, and the interaction of trauma, faith, and spirituality. Special attention is paid to issues of context, including race, class, gender, and sexuality, and students will be encouraged to bring in issues from their particular settings. The trauma courses in the concentration are offered exclusively through a synchronous, live-online format.

Are you interested in attending the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education? Request more information or schedule an information session today.

CIP Code

39.0705 - Lay Ministry.

You can use the CIP code to learn more about career paths associated with this field of study and, for international students, possible post-graduation visa extensions. Learn more about CIP codes and other information resources.

Requirements

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

Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6386</td>
<td>Pastoral Counseling Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6310</td>
<td>Human Growth and Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6384</td>
<td>Professional Ethics in Pastoral Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6380</td>
<td>Theology of Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Care</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6440</td>
<td>Pastoral Counseling Skills</td>
<td>3</td>
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Two courses from the following:

- PCGR 6410 Psychology and Religion/Spirituality
- PCGR 6420 Marriage/Family Therapy
- PCGR 7420 Death, Dying, and Bereavement

One Religious Education course:

- REGR 6120 Education for Peace and Justice
- RLGR 6031 Theology of the Human Person
- REGR 6202 Young Adult & Adult Ministry
- REGR 6140 Curriculum and Religious Education

One Scripture course:

- RLGR 6010 Old Testament
- RLGR 6011 New Testament

One Theology course:

- RLGR 6030 Christology
- PMGR 6510 Theology of Ministry
- RLGR 6031 Theology of the Human Person

One Spirituality course:

- SPGR 6830 Discernment in the Christian Tradition
- SPGR 6742 The Ignatian Way

Total Credits 36

The M.A. in Pastoral Care is also available with a concentration in Trauma-Informed Care (see requirements below).

Students who complete the Advanced Certificate in Trauma-Informed Care and are later admitted to the M.A. in Pastoral Care may pursue the M.A. in Pastoral Care with a concentration in Trauma-Informed Care. The advanced certificate courses are accepted towards the M.A. as outlined below.

The courses in Trauma in the Trauma-Informed Care concentration are offered exclusively in a synchronous, live-online format.

M.A. in Pastoral Care with Concentration in Trauma-Informed Care

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<td>PCGR 6440</td>
<td>Pastoral Counseling Skills</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6382</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundations of Pastoral Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Trauma Courses

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6610</td>
<td>Trauma &amp; Trauma-Informed Care</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6620</td>
<td>Trauma and Society</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCGR 6630</td>
<td>Trauma, Religion &amp; Spirituality</td>
<td>3</td>
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Electives

One pastoral counseling elective:

- PCGR 6410 Psychology and Religion/Spirituality

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PCGR 6420  Marriage/Family Therapy
PCGR 7420  Death, Dying, and Bereavement

Choose two courses from the below categories:  

Religious Education courses
REGR 6120  Education for Peace and Justice
REGR 6202  Young Adult & Adult Ministry

Scripture courses
RLGR 6010  Old Testament
RLGR 6011  New Testament

Spirituality courses
SPGR 6742  The Ignatian Way
SPGR 6752  Christian Contemplation and Action
SPGR 6792  Contemporary Christian Spirituality

Total Credits  

1  These courses are part of the Advanced Certificate in Trauma-Informed Care.
2  Each of the two courses must be from a different area of study (Religious Education, Scripture, or Spirituality).

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

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 advisor, 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).

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