This online degree program requires a one-week, intensive course in pastoral counseling skills offered on campus.

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.

Although students in the program may progress through the curriculum completing courses online, they are required to complete the course Pastoral Counseling Skills on campus. This course is offered as a one-week (Monday to Friday) class during the early summer session, usually mid-June, or at times as a 15-week fall or spring course. All other courses can be completed entirely online.

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 lay people 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).