

THEOLOGY (PH.D.)

Overview

The Ph.D. is designed for the preparation of scholars: not simply competent teachers of theology, but ones who can also communicate with and contribute to the academic community more broadly. Upon entry, students in Fordham's Ph.D. program select one of five fields of study:

- Bible
- Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity
- History of Christianity
- Systematic Theology
- Theological and Social Ethics

All doctoral students receive five years of full funding (tuition remission and living stipends) to support their work, and all students are eligible to compete for internal and external fellowships for additional support. Fordham doctoral students are active scholars, presenting at major conferences and publishing their work on a regular basis. During their third year of study (and with the supervision of a faculty mentor), they begin teaching their own undergraduate courses.

CIP Code

39.0601 - Theology/Theological Studies.

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.

Admissions

Candidates for the Ph.D. in theology are expected to have a GPA of 3.5 or higher. Completed applications will include each of the following items:

Official transcripts

Official degree transcripts confirming prior degree conferral should be ordered at least one month prior to the application deadline. Please ensure that they are sent directly to the Office of Admissions (fuga@fordham.edu) via secure electronic delivery. If electronic delivery is not available, please request that your transcripts be submitted directly via post, in a sealed envelope, to: Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Office of Admissions, Fordham University, 441 E. Fordham Rd., Bronx, NY 10458. Please note: You may upload unofficial copies of your transcripts to your application while the Office of Admissions awaits receipt of your official transcripts.

Official GRE scores (should be sent directly by the testing service to the Office of Graduate Admissions, Fordham University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences – code #2259).

Resume/CV (submitted electronically via the online application)

Statement of intent (up to 500 words, submitted electronically, via the online application)

Writing sample (5 - 20 pages submitted electronically, via the online application)

Three letters of recommendation (submitted directly by referees via the online application)

International Students

Please ensure that all official transcripts from previously attended post-secondary institutions are submitted in English, or are accompanied by a certified English translation. Transcripts and credentials conversion information is available on the GSAS International Students page.

English Proficiency

International applicants whose native language is not English are required to complete and submit to GSAS prior to matriculation their official scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). GSAS will also consider a student's International English Language Testing System (IELTS)—Cambridge English Proficiency Level language testing results. Please utilize the instructions on the GSAS English Proficiency web page to transmit your TOEFL or IELTS scores. Please note: Exemptions from this requirement can be requested by the applicant in her/his application, or can be made in writing by the applicant to fuga@fordham.edu. Kindly consult the GSAS English Proficiency web page for exemption guidelines.

Please contact fuga@fordham.edu with any admissions-related questions.

Requirements Advisor

Upon entering the Ph.D. program, a student will be assigned an advisor working in the student's intended Field of Study. This advisor will assist in the selection of courses, monitor the progress of language acquisition, and fill all additional roles necessary for good progress. By the conclusion of the first year of coursework, students may choose another member of the department to fulfill this role. Students certainly may, but are not required to, ask their advisor to serve as the mentor for the dissertation.

Curriculum

With the consultation of an advisor, students will take responsibility for planning a curriculum of study that is both broad and specialized. Coursework at the doctoral level, even outside of seminars, demands a more active role on the part of the student: rather than simply absorbing information, the student is expected to contribute to the encounter with texts and ideas, to design projects, and to pursue independent study. A list of offerings for the current semester can be found on our page on the Fordham website. Students must complete at least 36 credits of coursework to earn the Ph.D., with a minimum accumulative GPA of 3.5.

The only general requirement is that students must complete a zero credit course, THEO 5015 Teaching Theology, before they are permitted to teach courses for the department. The department will offer this course at least once every four semesters.

Language Proficiency

In the course of doctoral studies, all students will be called upon to demonstrate reading proficiency in two modern languages and will be expected to use these linguistic skills in reading for classes and papers. Unless otherwise specified, the two required modern languages are French and German (Students in Systematic Theology may substitute

Spanish for French or German). This can be completed by taking a reading exam (ZZGA 0941) or by completing reading courses (FREN 5090 or GERM 5001). For some students, a similar knowledge of ancient languages will need to be demonstrated. Check your proposed Field of Study for more information about language requirements.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

As part of the Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) program, every second-year Ph.D. student will have an opportunity to work with at least one faculty member in a Fordham undergraduate classroom prior to teaching on his or her own in the third year.

Comprehensive Exams

The student is required to choose two general areas of research within his or her primary field of study and one area in a related field of study, which will constitute the minor exam. The fourth exam will be more narrowly focused and should reflect the student's intended subfield of dissertation research. Ordinarily, a student will take the exams (THEO 0930) during the sixth semester.

Dissertation

A doctoral dissertation is the literary exposition of a thesis. The thesis is the theological proposition for which one marshals evidence and arguments. Although scholarship may be focused in different ways in the various field specializations, every dissertation will include some degree of research, at least into the state of a question; and every thesis will include some degree of argument and judgment, at least regarding the theological relevance of one's data. The dissertation must be methodologically self-conscious. It must justify its method and structure and continually demonstrate their presence. Students must develop a proposal (THEO 0950), have the proposal accepted (THEO 0960), and have continued direction (THEO 0970) from your faculty advisor(s).

Concentrations

Bible

The program in Bible equips students with a sound linguistic and exegetical training for research and teaching. Reading courses in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek are fundamental to the program, and study of other ancient languages relevant to the student's area of research are available through the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium and the New York Theological Group.

In addition to French and German, students in Bible must demonstrate proficiency in Hebrew and Greek through departmental exams and proficiency in Aramaic through a course or tutorial.

A student whose field of study is Bible will take his or her two major exams in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and New Testament. The dissertation area exam will focus on the testament in which the student is concentrating.

Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity

Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity is a field of study for doctoral training that enables students to understand the encounters of Jews and Christians with other cultures of the Greco-Roman world.

Fordham's program promotes immersion in the rich diversity of ancient communities and traditions, from the Levant and Asia Minor to North Africa and Rome. It provides advanced instruction in the methods,

issues, and resources of Second Temple Judaism, New Testament, Rabbinics, and early Christian studies. Our faculty members embrace interdisciplinary research into literary sources, material artifacts, and ritual practices in order to explore theological themes and diverse constructions of identity.

As part of the courses required of all Ph.D. students in theology, students are required to take one course in Second Temple Judaism (THEO 6026) and one course in Greco-Roman World (THEO 6192 The Greco-Roman Context of Early Christianity).

Students select two general exams from the following list of five options. Some restrictions apply. See appendix 4 in the Graduate Student Handbook. The five options are, The Standard New Testament exam offered in Bible, The Standard Patristics/Early Christianity exam (which covers ca. 250-600 CE) offered in History of Christianity/Historical Theology, An Ante-Nicene Christianity Exam, A Second Temple Judaism Exam, and A Greco-Roman World Exam.

In dissertation research, students are encouraged to push the current boundaries of topics and methods in their chosen fields. Our faculty members embrace research into practices and artifacts, as well as the customary literary sources, in order to explore theological themes and diverse constructions of social identity.

History of Christianity

Faculty members and students in history of Christianity/historical theology examine the ways in which Christians, through the centuries, have engaged their tradition, its beliefs and practices, and the world in which they live. Theology and doctrine, devotional life and practices, liturgy, institutions, cultural productions, and lived religion are all foci for study. Faculty and students focus on specific theologians in particular contexts (e.g., Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, Henri de Lubac), on historical periods and/or regions (e.g., the early Byzantine era, the medieval west, the United States, 20th century Europe), or on themes throughout Christian history (e.g., asceticism, the papacy, heresy, Jewish-Christian relations, mysticism, gender, embodiment, sacred space).

In addition to French and German, students in historical theology/history of Christianity who intend to write a dissertation in a pre-modern period for which Latin and/or Greek is necessary must demonstrate proficiency in the relevant language(s) by the successful completion of the relevant exam(s).

At the current time, the faculty in historical theology/history of Christianity define the possible areas of research in which a student may select a major or minor exam as follows: Early, Medieval, and Modern. Each area of research has its own bibliography selected by the faculty. A student whose field of study is historical theology/history of Christianity will select two of these areas of research for his or her major exams.

Systematic Theology

Systematic theology engages Roman Catholic theology in historical and contemporary eras, while also facilitating the study of Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and other religious traditions and worldviews. In addition to classical topics (such as theologies of God and Christ), the Systematic theology program enables students to focus on ethics, ecclesiology, ecological theology, feminist theology, liberation theology, liturgical theology, Orthodox theology, philosophical theology, and Catholic social thought.

In an effort to bring more precision and, indeed, comprehensiveness to the comprehensive exams in systematic theology, each student in the field of study will adhere to the following principles concerning the two major exams. The first topic that all students in systematic theology will propose is an overview of 20th and 21st century theology. A bibliography of "Paradigmatic Works" is available as the basis for this question.

The second topic that each student will propose is one of the areas of the "grid" in systematic theology. At the current time, these areas are identified as follows: fundamental theology, theology of God, Christology, theological anthropology, ecclesiology, sacramental theology, and moral theology.

Theological and Social Ethics

This newly launched field of study in the Department of Theology enables students to develop rigorous and robust scholarly expertise in theological and social ethics, informed by attention to theory, context, and practice. This field of study integrates and amplifies existing departmental and university strengths in the contemporary and historical study of ethics. Faculty members bring particular acumen in Catholic traditions, feminist and liberationist ethics, bioethics, economic, and environmental ethics.

As part of the courses required of all Ph.D. students in theology, students must enroll in the annual *designated doctoral seminar* (identified from among annual departmental course listings) and in a one-time *praxis-based tutorial* (to amplify the student's experience in considering issues of theological, social, and ethical significance by attending to context and praxis).

All students in TSE are required to pass language exams in French and German. Students may elect to substitute Spanish, depending upon the student's scholarly research agenda.

The structure of the doctoral exams follows established procedures for the department. The first major exam must be "Major Texts in Theological and Social Ethics." The second major exam addresses key themes, texts, methods, and/or figures in a particular area but must be sufficiently distinct from the dissertation topic. Students may choose among the options that include: philosophical sources and theological ethics; foundational theological ethics; Catholic social thought; topical exams (bioethics, economic ethics, gender and sexuality, liberationist and feminist, race and white privilege, environmental ethics); and theological ethics in comparative and historical contexts. The minor exam is chosen from existing exams offered by the other fields of study and must be sufficiently distinct from the dissertation topic.