

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (M.T.S.)

Overview

The Master of Theological Studies (M.T.S.) degree offers students the opportunity to engage in critical and constructive theological research as part of the department's vibrant community of inquiry. Aimed primarily at students aspiring to deep theological competence and to doctoral education at the highest level, the program provides students both comprehensive grounding in the theological disciplines and rigorous preparation for advanced studies in a concentration of the student's choice.

All M.T.S. students are required to complete 16 courses (48 credit hours). Reflecting our location in a Jesuit, Catholic university, the curriculum includes a foundation in Christian theological studies, including systematics, ethics, history, and bible. To ensure a breadth of knowledge, the program requires that students complete a core of six courses, including the program's interdisciplinary signature course, Context, Theory, and Theology (THEO 5901). In and beyond the core, students have the opportunity to work with faculty in all of the department's areas of research: biblical studies, history of Christianity, Judaism in antiquity, medieval and modern Islam, systematic theology, and theological ethics. At least two of the student's sixteen courses must primarily engage Judaism, Islam, or another non-Christian tradition.

Students immerse themselves in one of two areas of concentration: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Theology/Religion, or Studies in Modern and Contemporary Theology/Religion. Working with a faculty mentor, students select courses that best suit their interests and prepare them for further studies or other careers. They experience the camaraderie of studying with their M.T.S. cohort peers, of taking seminars with the program's doctoral students, and interacting with the faculty of the internationally recognized department.

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

Acceptance into the M.T.S. program will come through a successful application that includes a statement of intent, writing sample, recommendations, and (optionally) GRE scores. The ideal student need not be a theology or religious studies undergraduate major, but may be those with a strong background in the humanities (from disciplines that include theology, religious studies, history, classics, philosophy, languages, or English), or even a background in the sciences (natural or social) who demonstrate the ability to conduct theological research at a high level.

Requirements

Course	Title	Credits
Core Courses		
<i>Bible</i>		
THEO 5820	Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Interpretation	3
or THEO 5890	New Testament Interpretation	
<i>Systematic Theology</i>		
THEO 5620	Introduction to Systematic Theology	3
<i>Theological Ethics</i>		
THEO 5640	Introduction to Theological Ethics	3
<i>Religious History</i> ¹		
Ancient/Medieval Religious History: Choose one course from courses in the early/ancient histories of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, or other traditions, as offered.		3
Modern/Contemporary Religious History: Choose one course from courses in the modern/late histories of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, or other traditions, as offered.		3
<i>Interdisciplinary Course</i>		
THEO 5901	Context, Theory, and Theology	3
Concentration (choose one)		18
<i>Studies in Ancient and Medieval Theology/Religion</i>		
Six Ancient/Medieval or relevant language courses ²		
Proficiency in French or German ³		
Intermediate competency in Ancient Greek, Ancient Hebrew, Latin, or Arabic ³		
<i>Studies in Modern and Contemporary Theology/Religion</i>		
Six Modern/Contemporary courses ¹		
Proficiency in French, German, or Spanish ³		
Electives		
Four elective courses ⁴		12
Final Project		
THEO 0938	Master's Capstone-Theology	0
Total Credits		48

¹ Consult the Course Listings section (p. 2) for Theology courses fulfilling this requirement.

² Consult the Course Listings section (p. 2) for Theology courses fulfilling this requirement. With departmental permission, graduate courses in Medieval Studies and Classics that are relevant to the study of ancient or medieval Christianity may also fulfill this requirement.

³ Proficiency is demonstrated through completion of a departmental exam. Depending on their preparation, students may need to take courses outside of the degree program (i.e. summer institutes) in order to reach this level of competency. Ancient language courses count toward the ancient/medieval concentration, or as electives, subject to Theology Department permission.

⁴ Electives may be taken from departmental offerings (graduate-level courses with the subject code THEO). Courses from other departments, programs, or schools may also count as electives, subject to Theology Department permission.

Students in the Ancient and Medieval concentration may count ancient language courses as electives, subject to Theology Department permission.

Religious Breadth Requirement

At least two of the student's sixteen courses must primarily engage Judaism, Islam, or another non-Christian tradition. Consult the Course Listings section (p. 2) for details.

Final Project

The Theology Department requires that M.T.S. students complete a final project as a "closure exercise" in their final year in the degree program. Students will benefit from this opportunity to reflect in a deliberate way upon the arc of their learning through the M.T.S. program, and the Department's efforts at ongoing assessment of the success of this degree program will similarly benefit from this synthetic exercise. Students may choose between these two options which they must indicate by completing a Department-generated survey form to be filled out by the end of the first week of their penultimate semester of their degree work.

Consult the Final Project Options (p. 4) section for more details.

Course Listings

Ancient/Medieval Religious History courses

Courses in this group have the MTAH attribute.

Course	Title	Credits
THEO 5300	History of Christianity I	3
THEO 5401	Introduction to Islam	3
THEO 6014	Ancient Theological Controversies	3
THEO 6026	Second Temple Judaism	3
THEO 6042	The History of Jerusalem: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives	3
THEO 6192	The Greco-Roman Context of Early Christianity	3
THEO 6193	Law and Theology in Antiquity	3
THEO 6194	History, Theory, and Christianity	3
THEO 6195	Inventing Christianity: Apostolic Fathers, Apologists, and Martyrs	3
THEO 6196	Early Christian Ritual	3
THEO 6198	Self in Early Christianity	3
THEO 6211	Paul, Prisoner and Martyr: Political Theology in Early Christianity	3
THEO 6300	Apostolic Fathers	3
THEO 6305	Introduction to Rabbinic Literature	3
THEO 6360	Alexandrian Theology	3
THEO 6365	Cappadocian Fathers	3
THEO 6367	Byzantine Christianity: History and Theology	3
THEO 6425	St. Augustine in Context	3
THEO 6426	St. Augustine of Hippo	3
THEO 6463	From Lollards to Luther	3
THEO 6465	Asceticism and Monasticism	3
THEO 6466	Hagiography	3

THEO 6480	Christianizing the Barbarians	3
THEO 6490	Christianity and Violence	3
THEO 6661	Ritual Contexts of the New Testament	3

Modern/Contemporary Religious History courses

Courses in this group have the MTMH attribute.

Course	Title	Credits
THEO 5301	History of Christianity II	3
THEO 5400	Topics in Islam: Texts and Traditions	3
THEO 5405	Teaching Buddhism	3
THEO 5500	Religion and American Public Life	3
THEO 5550	New Methods: American Religion History	3
THEO 5690	Graduate Seminar: Church in Controversy	3
THEO 6000	History, Theory, and the Study of Religion	3
THEO 6444	Medieval Modernists: Modern Appropriations of Medieval and Ancient Christianity	3
THEO 6467	Mysticism and Modernity	3
THEO 6485	Doing Theology with Gustavo Gutiérrez: 50 years (1971–2021)	3
THEO 6505	Histories of Colonialism, Empire, Theology	3
THEO 6530	Modern Catholicism & Difference: Negotiating With Cultural & Religious Others (From 1534-Present)	3
THEO 6543	Aesthetics, Religion, and Modernity	3
THEO 6551	U.S. Religious History	3
THEO 6553	Readings in American Religion	3
THEO 6738	The Mystical-Prophetic Turn in Modern Catholic Theology	3
THEO 6740	Catholic Social Thought and Praxis	3
THEO 6757	The Interplay of Ethnography and Scripture in Religion/Theology	3
THEO 6760	Islam, Christianity, Liberalism	3

Religious Breadth Requirement courses

Courses in this group have the MTRB attribute.

Course	Title	Credits
THEO 5025	Exodus in Hebrew	3
THEO 5400	Topics in Islam: Texts and Traditions	3
THEO 5401	Introduction to Islam	3
THEO 5405	Teaching Buddhism	3
THEO 6026	Second Temple Judaism	3
THEO 6031	The Psalms	3
THEO 6042	The History of Jerusalem: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives	3
THEO 6193	Law and Theology in Antiquity	3
THEO 6305	Introduction to Rabbinic Literature	3
THEO 6757	The Interplay of Ethnography and Scripture in Religion/Theology	3

THEO 6760	Islam, Christianity, Liberalism	3
THEO 7742	Shari'ah: Islamic Law	3

Ancient/Medieval Concentration courses

Courses in this group have the MTAM attribute.

Course	Title	Credits
GREK 5001	Introduction to Greek I	3
GREK 5002	Elementary Greek II	3
GREK 5003	Intermediate Greek	3
GREK 5004	Greek Language and Literature	3
GREK 5006	Intensive Ancient Greek	4
LATN 5001	Introduction to Latin I	3
LATN 5002	Introduction to Latin II	3
LATN 5003	Intermediate Latin	3
LATN 5004	Latin Languages and Literature	3
LATN 5006	Intensive Latin	4
LATN 5093	Ecclesiastical Latin	3
LATN 5542	Medieval Latin Literature	4
LATN 6450	Augustine's Confessions	3
THEO 5025	Exodus in Hebrew	3
THEO 5070	Elementary Coptic I	3
THEO 5071	Elementary Coptic II	3
THEO 5072	Christian Texts in Coptic	3
THEO 5075	Syriac Language and Literature I	3
THEO 5076	Syriac Language and Literature II	3
THEO 5080	Introduction to Biblical Greek	3
THEO 5090	Biblical Aramaic	3-4
THEO 5230	Advanced Greek	3
THEO 5300	History of Christianity I	3
THEO 5400	Topics in Islam: Texts and Traditions	3
THEO 5401	Introduction to Islam	3
THEO 5405	Teaching Buddhism	3
THEO 5820	Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Interpretation	3-4
THEO 5890	New Testament Interpretation	3-4
THEO 6026	Second Temple Judaism	3
THEO 6031	The Psalms	3
THEO 6036	Otherness in the Hebrew Bible	3
THEO 6039	Biblical Ethics	3
THEO 6040	The Neighbor: Biblical Witness and Contemporary Ethics	3
THEO 6042	The History of Jerusalem: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives	3
THEO 6130	Matthew Mark and Method	3
THEO 6192	The Greco-Roman Context of Early Christianity	3
THEO 6193	Law and Theology in Antiquity	3
THEO 6194	History, Theory, and Christianity	3
THEO 6195	Inventing Christianity: Apostolic Fathers, Apologists, and Martyrs	3
THEO 6198	Self in Early Christianity	3
THEO 6211	Paul, Prisoner and Martyr: Political Theology in Early Christianity	3

THEO 6300	Apostolic Fathers	3
THEO 6305	Introduction to Rabbinic Literature	3
THEO 6360	Alexandrian Theology	3
THEO 6365	Cappadocian Fathers	3
THEO 6367	Byzantine Christianity: History and Theology	3
THEO 6425	St. Augustine in Context	3
THEO 6426	St. Augustine of Hippo	3
THEO 6445	Affect, Emotion, and Religious Experience	3
THEO 6461	Mystical Theology	3
THEO 6463	From Lollards to Luther	3
THEO 6465	Asceticism and Monasticism	3
THEO 6466	Hagiography	3
THEO 6480	Christianizing the Barbarians	3
THEO 6490	Christianity and Violence	3
THEO 6661	Ritual Contexts of the New Testament	3

Modern/Contemporary Concentration courses

Courses in this group have the MTMC attribute.

Course	Title	Credits
THEO 5301	History of Christianity II	3
THEO 5400	Topics in Islam: Texts and Traditions	3
THEO 5401	Introduction to Islam	3
THEO 5405	Teaching Buddhism	3
THEO 5500	Religion and American Public Life	3
THEO 5550	New Methods: American Religion History	3
THEO 5630	Systematic Liberation Theology	3
THEO 5690	Graduate Seminar: Church in Controversy	3
THEO 6000	History, Theory, and the Study of Religion	3
THEO 6214	Old Testament Theology	3
THEO 6444	Medieval Modernists: Modern Appropriations of Medieval and Ancient Christianity	3
THEO 6485	Doing Theology with Gustavo Gutiérrez: 50 years (1971–2021)	3
THEO 6505	Histories of Colonialism, Empire, Theology	3
THEO 6509	Theology and Religious Pluralism: Christian Tradition in a Religiously Plural World	3
THEO 6510	Socially Engaged Theology	3
THEO 6530	Modern Catholicism & Difference: Negotiating With Cultural & Religious Others (From 1534-Present)	3
THEO 6543	Aesthetics, Religion, and Modernity	3
THEO 6544	Belief and Unbelief, Tolerance, and Intolerance	3
THEO 6551	U.S. Religious History	3
THEO 6553	Readings in American Religion	3
THEO 6560	Writing Religion	3
THEO 6600	Modern Orthodox Theology	4
THEO 6606	Theological Anthropology	3
THEO 6607	Christian Theologies of Salvation	3

THEO 6612	New Methods in Constructive Theology	3
THEO 6615	Rahner, Lonergan, and Transcendental Method	3
THEO 6616	Contemporary Theology of the Trinity	3
THEO 6620	God in Contemporary Theology	3
THEO 6621	Encountering the Divine in Interreligious Perspective	3
THEO 6630	Church in Contemporary Theology	3
THEO 6631	Missiology: Mission of Church in Age of Turmoil and Strife	3
THEO 6634	Black Theologies and the Decolonial Option	3
THEO 6642	Political Theology	3
THEO 6651	The Liturgy: How Christians Worship	3
THEO 6652	The Liturgy: A Work of Praise and Justice	3
THEO 6653	Church as Sacrament: A Study in Christian Sacraments and Ecclesiology	3
THEO 6657	Eucharist and the World Today	3
THEO 6659	Latinx Theology	3
THEO 6671	Contemporary Christology	3
THEO 6674	Ecological Theology	3
THEO 6676	Sexual Ethics	3
THEO 6710	Issues in Fundamental Moral Theology	3
THEO 6721	African American Theological Ethics	3
THEO 6731	Christian Ecological Ethics	3
THEO 6732	Ethics and Economics	3
THEO 6733	Theology and Science	3
THEO 6735	Ecological Ethics	3
THEO 6736	Feminist Theological Ethics	3
THEO 6737	God and the Mystery of Suffering	3
THEO 6738	The Mystical-Prophetic Turn in Modern Catholic Theology	3
THEO 6740	Catholic Social Thought and Praxis	3
THEO 6743	On Race and Coloniality: Decolonial Methods in Theological Reflection	3
THEO 6745	Sociology of Religion	3
THEO 6760	Islam, Christianity, Liberalism	3
THEO 7222	New Perspectives on Paul	3
THEO 7731	Religion and Revolution	3
THEO 7736	Bioethics	3
THEO 7742	Shari'ah: Islamic Law	3

process of revising, expanding and further developing this paper so that the new version brings out more thoroughly valuable interdisciplinary perspectives upon the topic. For example, the content of a paper that the student wrote for an ethics course would be expanded somewhat to include further scriptural or historical insights. Additional scholarly sources might be identified and applied to improve what the paper achieves, though without adding overly much to the length of the paper (a 20-page paper might be extended in this way to a length of 25 pages, but no more than 30 pages).

The student must obtain permission for the participation in this exercise of the professor for whom the original paper was written (or, for good reasons such as faculty absence from campus due to a sabbatical, a substitute faculty member in the same theological sub-discipline) as well as one other professor in the Theology Department whose work is relevant to the revision process. The student will share the original version of the paper with both professors by the middle of that semester (typically fall of the second year in the M.T.S. program) and consult with both professors on subsequent drafts, culminating in a final version to be shared with both professors by the first day of the final month of that semester (typically December 1). The student then arranges a mutually convenient time for the three to meet for 45 minutes to engage in a colloquy on the content and merits of this revised paper. The oral exercise will explore the interdisciplinary and integrative character of the writing project, in light of the methodologies and standards of both sub-disciplines.

At the end of this meeting, each of the faculty members will submit to the Department a brief (five- to ten-sentence) report on the success of the student performance, including both written and oral components, into a combined score. Each faculty member will independently record a grade of Pass or Fail on this project. If either faculty member records a failing grade, the exercise will be repeated in the following semester, proceeding either with the same paper (presumably with substantial revisions and improvements) or with a different paper entirely and with at least one different professor. Students interested in applying to doctoral programs in theology will come away from this exercise (especially if completed in a timely way, typically by exam week in December) with a promising candidate for a writing sample that may comprise part of an excellent application to a doctoral program.

The Department Chair will oversee this process for M.T.S. students and will maintain records of faculty involvement in these exercises, so that no faculty member is unduly burdened by overly frequent service in the mentoring and reading of these final projects for M.T.S. projects. The normal maximum for a given faculty member is three such involvements each academic year.

Final Project Options

Option A—The supervised revision of a research paper, combined with an "exit interview"

This option has two components, the first to be completed in the penultimate semester of a student's M.T.S. work and the second one to be completed in the final semester.

1) By the end of the fifth week of the student's penultimate semester in the M.T.S. program (typically the second Friday of October in year 2 of the student's matriculation in the program), the student will select a research paper previously written for one of their courses and begin the

2) M.T.S. students who select Option A and who have successfully completed item 1 described above will complete their degree closure requirement by participating in a 30-minute "exit interview" with two faculty members of their choosing (ideally, the academic advisor and a second professor who has supervised some previous work of the student) in that student's final semester of degree work. The student takes the initiative of inviting these two professors to meet at a mutually convenient time, which must fall before the beginning of the final exam week of the student's final semester in the M.T.S. program.

The faculty members will question the student regarding the overall experience of the degree program, including: 1) describing major areas of learning; 2) identifying any unanticipated outcomes and benefits of the program; and 3) proposing potential areas for improvement in the curriculum or administration of the M.T.S. degree. The student will

receive a pass or fail grade from each professor, who will then submit the results to the Theology Department along with a narrative of five to ten sentences summarizing the student's oral reflections on the program.

If either professor submits a failing grade on this oral exercise (presumably because the student applied too little effort in fashioning well-considered responses to the questions asked), a new colloquy must be scheduled (unfortunately, this will probably delay the student's graduation date) with two new professors who will follow the same procedures described above. Students who fail to complete successfully either of these two components of Option A will not be awarded the M.T.S. degree.

Option B—Student reflection paper and "exit interview" based upon it

Both components of this option for a closure exercise occur in the final two months of the M.T.S. student's degree program. Notice that there is no research component within Option B.

1) During the penultimate month of the student's final semester in the M.T.S. program (typically in early April, since most students will graduate in May of their second year), the student will invite two professors in the Theology Department to participate in the closure exercise, which may be completed in either of the final two months of that semester (typically April or early May, but certainly before the beginning of final exams week of that semester). Ideally (but not necessarily) one professor will be the student's academic advisor, and the other professor will have supervised some previous work of the student.

The student will then write a reflection essay of 6 to 8 standard double-spaced pages (1500 to 2000 words) addressing the following lines of inquiry: 1) Describe your major learning goals in this degree program, how well they were met and which components of your study contributed most substantially to this success; 2) Describe any shortcomings of the program as offered and propose how they might be addressed; and 3) Describe how well prepared you feel to advance toward your career goals and especially whether you encountered any unanticipated benefits or areas of enrichment in your academic program at Fordham. The student's reflection essay must be written in smooth standard prose and be presented to the two faculty members at least five days before the agreed-upon colloquy meeting.

2) The student and the two professors will participate in a 45-minute colloquy in which the student responds to lines of inquiry offered by the two professors. The content of the reflection essay is the starting point of the conversation, but the discussion may include further considerations beyond what the student has written. At the conclusion of the colloquy, each of the two faculty members will submit to the department (on an independent basis) a report of a grade (simply pass or fail), and an additional paragraph (on the scale of ten sentences) summarizing the most important insights about the program shared by the student in the reflection essay and during the colloquy meeting.

If a student does not receive a passing grade from even one of the two faculty members, a new panel of two different professors will be appointed (by the Department Chair, in conversation with the student) to supervise the writing of an improved reflection essay and to conduct a new colloquy session. If a student requires a second attempt at this closure exercise, it will most likely delay the expected graduation of that student, so careful preparation of the written essay and the oral component of this closure exercise should be a top priority.