

CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY (M.A.)

Overview

The Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in Christian spirituality provides preparation for work in general Christian ministry, campus and retreat ministry settings, mission offices, in spiritual direction, or in preparation for an academic career in teaching. The program can also assist those wishing to complement their spiritual journey with an academic foundation in scripture, theology, and spirituality. Graduates of the program will have a competent understanding of methods of studying Christian spirituality along with its biblical, scriptural, and theological foundations.

Each student must pick one of three concentrations: spiritual direction, generalist, or research. Students in any concentration may complete their degree entirely online, on campus, or as a hybrid program. Intensive summer courses are also available. Scholarships and grants are available for qualified applicants.

Programs in Christian spirituality are also available at the advanced certificate and Doctor of Ministry levels.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate facilities with methods of research in specific theological disciplines for post-graduate and doctoral studies.
2. Students will communicate the Christian story competently to make it accessible through a variety of means (e.g. teaching, writing, dialogue, personal consultation).
3. Students will articulate the relationship between the Christian tradition and their professional practice and spiritual development.
4. Students will articulate a well-rounded knowledge and critical appropriation of Jesuit Spirituality and the Catholic intellectual tradition.
5. Students will use tools of literary, cultural, historical, and social analysis in the interpretation of various cultures and their relationship to the Christian tradition.

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 Christian spirituality requires 36 credits for completion, including the selection of a concentration.

Course Requirements (All Concentrations)

Course	Title	Credits
SPGE 6834	Methods in Christian Spirituality	3
SPGE 6702	History of Christian Spirituality I	3
SPGE 6703	History of Christian Spirituality II	3
SPGE 6830	Discernment in the Christian Tradition	3
RLGE 6010	Old Testament	3
RLGE 6011	New Testament	3
One course in Theological Anthropology or Christology:		3
RLGE 6030	Christology or RLGE 603 Theology of the Human Person	3
One course in Sacramental Spirituality or Ecclesiology:		
SPGE 6720	Sacramental Spirituality or RLGE 603 Church and Society	3
Completion of a Concentration		
Total Credits		36

Thesis Capstone or Comprehensive Examination Requirement (All Concentrations)

Students in the Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in Christian spirituality program may choose to pursue either a thesis capstone or comprehensive examination option to complete their degree.

About the Thesis Capstone

Students contemplating post-M.A. studies in Christian spirituality or theology are encouraged to consider the M.A.-C.S. Thesis Capstone option. This capstone component involves completing a major research paper in the academic discipline of Christian spirituality under the guidance of a Christian spirituality faculty mentor. The research paper is typically 60 pages (including bibliography) and must conform to the most recent *Turabian* stylebook.

M.A.-C.S. students must apply for acceptance into the thesis capstone option. The student application includes a completed M.A. (C.S.) Thesis Capstone Submission Form, a completed Research Readiness Review [RRR] form along with the original 20-page research paper under review, and proof of competency in a research language other than English, typically one of the following: French, German, Spanish, Latin, or Greek. Approval for any exceptions to the language policy will be made by a vote of the Christian Spirituality faculty at an area meeting during the Fall and Spring semesters only. Students may petition for faculty permission to substitute an alternate research language. Translation knowledge of a research language may be indicated by exam (see the assistant academic dean for possible dates and locations) or coursework (two semesters of university-level courses within the past six years with a grade of B+ or higher). Proof of competency in a research language requires a letter from the assistant academic dean indicating that you have shown competence in an approved foreign language by examination or review.

Students graduating in May must submit their M.A.-C.S. thesis option application on or before November 1. Students are advised to first

consult with a Christian spirituality faculty member well in advance of the application deadline.

The M.A.-C.S. Student Review for Research Readiness [RRR] form and the M.A.-C.S. Thesis Capstone Submission Form are available in the "Academic Forms" section of the GSE-Students Organization in Blackboard.

Comprehensive Examination Capstone

The M.A.-C.S. comprehensive examination typically takes place over two days in April or May of each year. There are written and oral components to the examination. The materials below provide an overview of the kind of materials usually covered on this exam; they are not a definitive list of what your examination will encompass.

The capstone requirement for M.A.-C.S. students pursuing a terminal degree in Christian spirituality is a comprehensive exam, which is based on M.A.-C.S. course requirements and students' course selections. The comp exam is divided into three parts: (I) the history of Christian spirituality (broad themes); (II) either spiritual direction or spiritual discernment; and (III) oral exam on parts I and II (including questions from Friday morning that were not answered and are related to student's course selections). In preparation for the exam, students receive a M.A.-C.S. general bibliography including suggested readings in the following areas of competency:

- A. Historical Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality, which are divided into four general periods (ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary). This bibliography includes primary and secondary resources.
- B. Spiritual Direction
- C. Ignatian Spirituality and Discernment
- D. Topics in Christian Spirituality

Bibliography A: As explained in the bibliography, M.A.-C.S. comps exam students select any three primary authors/texts from each historical period (ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary)—for a total of 12 authors/texts—that each student is prepared to be examined upon. Please note that all secondary texts listed in this bibliography offer background and contextual reading for the authors/texts each student selects. Students are not asked to indicate what secondary texts they have read. The secondary texts offer an overview of materials students have read in various M.A.-C.S. courses.

Bibliographies B and C: M.A.-C.S. students admitted into the practicum in spiritual direction are held responsible for material listed in Bibliography B. These students will be given a spiritual direction case study in Comps II of the M.A.-C.S. exam (Friday afternoon). All other students are held responsible for material listed in Bibliography C: Ignatian Spirituality and Discernment. These students will be given a spiritual discernment case study in Comps II of the M.A.-C.S. comps exam (Friday afternoon).

Bibliography D: All citations herein are from M.A.-C.S. required and elective courses. When answering Comps Exams I & III questions, students are encouraged to draw from any of the materials listed in Bibliography D. Again, this bibliography is offered as a review of course materials. Students do not indicate which texts they are responsible for knowing.

M.A.-C.S. General Comprehensive Exam Organization

The M.A.-C.S. Comprehensive Exam typically will be held in April or May at locations to be announced on the Fordham University's Rose Hill campus. Distance students unable to travel to campus for the comp exam must make alternate arrangements with the assistant dean's office for completing all three components of the M.A.-C.S. comp exam. The comp exam is usually organized as follows:

- Friday
 - Exam Part I: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. – Written
 - [Lunch Break 12 – 1 p.m.]
 - Exam Part II: 1 – 4 p.m. – Written
- Saturday
 - Exam Part III – Oral (a sign-up sheet will be provided)

M.A.-C.S. Comprehensive Exam Overview

- Exam Part I (Friday, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.) is a written exam covering the 12 authors/texts each student selects from "Bibliography A" (primary texts). From a pool of six previously distributed general themes, the faculty presents each student with three general themes. The student writes an essay response to one of these general themes.
- Exam Part II (Friday, 1 – 4 p.m.) is a written exam based on a verbatim or case study. Students accepted into the M.A.-C.S. spiritual direction concentration and who have participated in the practicum courses in spiritual direction, respond to a spiritual direction verbatim. All other students respond to a spiritual discernment case study.
- Exam Part III (Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.), is an oral exam focused upon the 12 authors/texts each student previously selected, student's written responses to Exam Parts I & II, and unanswered questions from Exam Part I that relate to student's coursework. A sign-up sheet will be provided so that students can choose a 30-minute slot during this time.

Preparing for the Capstone Exam I

In preparing for this part of the Capstone Exams, students should prepare essay responses for the six general themes previously distributed. The content of each essay should (a) address the general theme selected and (b) focus upon at least four or more of the 12 authors/texts selected by each student. On the day of the exam, the faculty presents each student with three essay options. The student then writes an essay response to one.

Preparing for the Capstone Exam II

Review the sample case study or verbatim appearing in the "MA_Christian_Spirituality: COMP EXAM MA CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY" Organization in Blackboard. On the day of the exam, students respond to a similar case study or verbatim.

Preparing for the Capstone Exam III

This part of the exam is entirely oral. Students are asked questions about their responses to Exams I & II. At the time of this oral exam, faculty may also question students about any of the other Exam Part I questions that the student chose not to answer but are related to that student's coursework—for example, either Christology or Theology of the Human Person and either Church or Sacraments.

Further Information

A student may take the M.A.-C.S. Comprehensive Exam no more than three times. The M.A.-C.S. Comprehensive Exam will only be offered in the spring. Students who wish to retake the Comprehensive Exam will be

required to pay a Maintenance of Matriculation fee during the intervening fall semester to remain in good standing.

M.A.-C.S. Comprehensive Exam Deadlines

- Students must register for the Comprehensive Exam SPGE 8500 Comprehensive Exam MA Christian Spirituality) during the registration period prior to the beginning of the spring semester and no later than the Add/Drop deadline for spring courses.
- January 20: All M.A.-C.S. students intending to take the Capstone Exams must submit to the M.A.-C.S. faculty (fmcagoon@fordham.edu, coltanderson@fordham.edu, and smcalister@fordham.edu) a completed M.A.-C.S. Exam Entry Form in which they indicate the following: (1) their intention to take the M.A.-C.S. Capstone Exam in that spring semester; (2) their qualification either for the spiritual direction verbatim or spiritual direction case study; and (3) their list of the 12 authors/texts from Bibliography A for which they will be held responsible in Exams I & III. The M.A.-C.S. Exam Entry Form is available in the Academic Forms section of the GSE-Students Organization in Blackboard.

Students who register and submit the required paperwork for the Comprehensive Exam capstone will receive further information and guidance.

Concentrations

Spiritual Direction Concentration

Coursework in the spiritual direction concentration prepares you for work in retreat, campus ministry, and spiritual direction settings. It allows students to use electives to prepare for ministry as a spiritual director. Students also have access to Fordham's excellent retreat and campus ministry programming. In addition, it may be completed on campus, online, or as a hybrid program.

In the second year of the program, students must be available one Saturday per month for a practicum class that meets September through May to complete the program. In addition to the general requirements for the Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in Christian spirituality, students must also complete:

Course	Title	Credits
SPGE 7870	Spiritual Direction: Theology and Practice	3
PCGE 6440	Pastoral Counseling Skills	3
SPGE 7740 & SPGE 7741	Spiritual Direction Practicum I and Spiritual Direction Practicum II	6
Total Credits		12

¹ Registration requires approval from the spiritual direction committee and your SPGE 7740 instructor, and successful completion of SPGE 7740 Spiritual Direction Practicum I.

In addition, concentrators must complete a comprehensive examination or M.A. thesis (please see the Requirements section (p. 1) to understand the language/submission/length requirements for the thesis option).

The decision to continue with the practicum is based on the student's performance in the initial courses and on interviews with the practicum directors during the application process for the practicum sequence. Students not admitted to the practicum may decide to resign from the

program or ask to be considered for another certificate program. The practicum is a yearlong experience; students gather one Saturday per month from September to May and also complete field placements and phone/hybrid meetings between campus visits.

At the end of the supervised practicum, the supervisor works with the student to assess any particular needs for developing the necessary knowledge base in theology, psychology, or scripture based on the intern director's experience working with directees.

Participation in monthly spiritual direction with a credentialed spiritual director for at least one year is normally a prerequisite for admission to the spiritual direction concentration and for admission into the practicum. Students are expected to continue in spiritual direction throughout their course of studies. Resources regarding spiritual direction can be found at Fordham's campus ministry website. You might also wish to consult the resources offered by Spiritual Directors International, e.g. "Questions to Ask a Prospective Spiritual Director."

Students are required to complete the following prerequisite courses before starting the yearlong practicum sequence that begins every fall semester only:

- SPGE 7870 Spiritual Direction: Theology and Practice
- SPGE 6830 Discernment in the Christian Tradition
- PCGE 6440 Pastoral Counseling Skills

Students should enroll as soon as registration opens since these courses are in demand across multiple degree programs.

As noted, admission to the practicum sequence will be based on a student's satisfactory completion of the prerequisite courses and successful interviews with the practicum directors.

The practicum sequence includes the following courses:

- SPGE 7740 Spiritual Direction Practicum I
- SPGE 7741 Spiritual Direction Practicum II

(Admission to Practicum II is conditional upon the judgment of the Practicum I instructor.)

Students should apply for admission to Spiritual Direction Practicum I in the spring semester prior to their intended start date. Students who are not admitted to the practicum sequence may either withdraw from the program or seek admission to another certificate program. Admission to Practicum II is conditional, based upon the decision of the Practicum I instructor. Contact the assistant dean for any questions and further assistance regarding the application process.

For a detailed description of Practicum requirements, see the information provided in the Bulletin under the Advanced Certificate in Spiritual Direction.

Generalist Concentration

This concentration allows for a broad program of study in Christian spirituality for those who do not wish to focus on research or spiritual direction. This concentration may be completed entirely online, entirely on campus, or through a mix of both.

In addition to the general requirements for the Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in Christian spirituality, students must also complete:

Course	Title	Credits
Two Spirituality electives ¹		6
Two general electives ²		6
Total Credits		12

¹ Spirituality electives are any course with the subject code SPGE.

² A general elective is any non-restricted course at GSE. In addition, with the permission of the designated faculty and/or department, students may enroll in courses offered at other Fordham University graduate schools, and the member schools of the New York Theological Consortium.

In addition, concentrators must complete a comprehensive examination or M.A. thesis.

Research Concentration

The research concentration prepares students for doctoral programs and careers in higher education teaching Christian spirituality. Students have access to renowned faculty and all the resources of Fordham's other schools, centers, and institutes. In addition, this concentration may be completed entirely online, entirely on campus, or through a mix of both.

In addition to the general requirements for the Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in Christian spirituality, students must also complete all the requirements for the generalist concentration, with the following additions:

Completion of an M.A. Thesis

Requires students to complete a master's thesis. The research paper is typically 60 pages.

Demonstrated Ability in a Second Language

Requires students to demonstrate competency in a second language in preparation for the research of the thesis. The master's thesis must employ a language that is relevant to the subject being researched and a language that is a second language for the student. Language competency is demonstrated by the successful completion of a language examination. The language is typically one of the following: French, German, Spanish, Latin, or Greek. Students may petition for faculty permission to substitute an alternate research language. Approval for any exceptions to the typically approved language list will be made by a vote of the Christian Spirituality faculty at an area meeting during the Fall and Spring semesters only. Translation knowledge of a research language may be indicated by exam (see the assistant academic dean for possible dates and locations) or coursework (two semesters of university-level courses within the past six years with a grade of B+ or higher). Proof of competency in a research language requires a letter from the assistant academic dean indicating that you have shown competence in an approved foreign language by examination or review.