

Master of Divinity (MDiv)

Purpose

The 82 semester-hour Master of Divinity program is the basic graduate professional degree program in the seminary and is designed to provide the foundational academic preparation for an educated ministry.

The focus of the MDiv program is on pastoral ministry, but the curriculum is organized to provide ample opportunities for students to explore and develop interests and competences in other forms of service, including more specialized ministerial vocations in Christian education, college and seminary teaching, campus ministry, institutional chaplaincy, care and counseling, administration of church-related and non-profit agencies, music ministries, social work, and global mission.

Program Goals

In harmony with the seminary's mission to make the Christian faith effective in human life and society, upon completing the MDiv program, students will be able to:

1. act as a responsible, critical thinker and biblical interpreter informed by current historical, literary, and theological scholarship in the field of biblical studies;
2. articulate an understanding of individuals, groups, and cultures that is informed by contemporary cross-disciplinary studies;
3. construct a guiding theology for ministerial practice that takes into account a liberative hermeneutic and is responsive to key themes in Christian theology, biblical exegesis, Christian history, and each student's own denominational heritage and polity;
4. preach, teach, plan and preside in public worship, offer care and counsel, and lead faith communities and church-related institutions in ways that integrate contemporary biblical, historical, and theological scholarship;
5. demonstrate an understanding of the spiritual life, individual and corporate, that integrates biblical studies, history of Christianity, Christian theology and the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Evaluation of Learning

There are two formal and overlapping assessment processes for student academic achievement in the MDiv program. The first involves grading evaluations given in each course for the quality of the student's academic achievements, including work with mentors in supervised ministry settings. The second involves a portfolio strategy. Entering students are given a portfolio holder, a list of course assignments to be collected with the instructor's evaluative comments, and a schedule of required periodic reviews of their educational goals and experiences, theological development, and vocational clarity.

Online Coursework

Many of the required and elective courses which contribute to the MDiv degree program at PTS may be taken online as well as on campus. Online course projections are available well in advance. The seminary may privilege enrollments in some online courses of students who must travel more than 150 miles one-way to campus. In accord with current ATS accreditation standards, a minimum of 24 semester-hours of the coursework required for an MDiv degree (the equivalent of one year of full-time academic study) must be completed "in residence" (i.e., in a classroom setting on our Tulsa campus, or elsewhere). However, those hours may be completed in a number of convenient formats—week-long

concentrated courses, weekend courses, weekly seminars, or arranged courses—scheduled in the January term, the fall and spring semesters, or in the summer.

In accord with policies adopted by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church, United Methodist students who first matriculated at PTS, or any other Senate-approved non-UMC seminary, prior to January 1, 2011, may only take a maximum of one-third of their degree program online: (i.e., 27 of the 82 semester-hours for an MDiv degree; 16 of the 48 semester-hours for an MAMC degree). In other words, United Methodist MDiv students who matriculated prior to the Spring 2011 semester must take a minimum of 55 semester-hours in residence and MAMC students a minimum of 32. Furthermore, United Methodist students enrolled in an ordination track degree program (MDiv or MAMC) and who first matriculated at PTS January 1, 2011 or later, are limited to “in-residence” courses only and may not register for online distance education courses offered by PTS or any other non-UMC seminary.

Degree Requirements

The Master of Divinity degree requires the completion of 82 semester-hours with a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher. Of the 82 semester-hours, 61 must be taken to fulfill particular requirements distributed among the six divisions of the curriculum. The remaining 21 semester-hours are elective hours (unless a student’s denominational requirements exceed 3 semester-hours) and may be used to broaden a student’s understanding of the Christian tradition and the nature of the Christian witness in the contemporary world, and to develop specific professional competences that will contribute to current or projected ministries.

Curriculum

The MDiv curriculum is divided into six divisions. Each student must successfully complete required courses in all divisions. Required introductory courses in a division normally function as prerequisites for advanced work in that division.

Because the prior academic preparation of students varies considerably, students with previous academic work in specific areas of study may, upon consultation with their advisers, petition the dean for permission to bypass certain basic required courses and to register for more advanced coursework instead.

Normally, required courses may not be taken as guided readings courses. Required courses, as well as courses which meet requirements, may be taken for elective credit.

The semester hours required in each division are as follows:

- Division I. Vocational and Theological Formation for Ministry (13 semester-hours)
- Division II. Biblical Studies (12 semester-hours)
- Division III. Historical and Denominational Studies (9-12 semester-hours)
- Division IV. Theological and Ethical Studies (9 semester-hours)
- Division V. Practical Theology (12 semester-hours)
- Division VI. Global Realities and Cross-cultural Issues (6 semester-hours)

Requirements in Division I. Vocational and Theological Formation for Ministry (13 semester-hours)

1. All MDiv students must complete the following 9 semester-hour sequence of courses: (a) CD 502 Vocation and Theology I: Introduction to Theological Education for Master’s Students

- (which is designed as a first-semester course and must be completed successfully within the first 13 semester-hours); (b) PT 571 Vocation and Theology II: The Art and Practices of Ministry (which normally should be taken as a middler student); and (c) TE 621 Vocation and Theology III: Constructive Theology (which normally should be taken as a senior student after the completion of 60 semester-hours). Note that CD 502 is a prerequisite for PT 571, which, in turn, is a prerequisite for TE 621.
2. In addition, each student must complete a supervised "Ministry Year" in an approved setting. During the academic year, students register for two Supervised Ministry courses that constitute a sequence in contextual theology: (a) SM 505 Reflection on Ministry Experiences (2 semester-hours), followed the next semester by (b) SM 510 Integrating the Theory and Practice of Ministry (2 semester-hours).
 3. MDiv students who intend to enroll in the "Ministry Year" must have an approved ministry site. Please note in "Courses of Instruction in Master's Programs" that both supervised ministry courses have prerequisites and limited enrollment. Students who wish to petition for approval of their ministry site must complete and submit all relevant forms to the director of supervised ministries by the announced deadlines. Students who fail to do so will be dropped from the course.

Requirements in Division II. Biblical Studies (12 semester-hours)

1. The twelve required semester-hours in Biblical Studies include six hours in Hebrew Bible and six hours in New Testament.
2. In the field of Hebrew Bible, students are required to take HB 500 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (3 hours) plus one advanced exegetical course (3 hours). HB 500 is considered a prerequisite for all further coursework in the field, except for Hebrew language study. Unless otherwise noted on the class schedule, all courses in Hebrew Bible beyond HB 500 require exegetical papers and satisfy the divisional requirement for advanced coursework in HB, including HB 643 Biblical Hebrew II: Exegesis.
3. In the field of New Testament, students are required to take NT 500 Introduction to the New Testament (3 semester-hours) plus one advanced exegetical course (3 semester-hours). NT 500 is considered a prerequisite for all further coursework in the field, except for Greek language study. Unless otherwise noted on the class schedule, all courses in New Testament beyond NT 500 require exegetical papers and satisfy the divisional requirement for advanced coursework in NT, including NT 644 Biblical Greek II: Exegesis.
4. A 3 semester-hour course in Biblical Theology (BT) may satisfy a requirement for an advanced exegetical course in either Hebrew Bible or New Testament, as announced on the course schedule.

Requirements in Division III. Historical and Denominational Studies (9-12 semester-hours)

1. A minimum of 6 semester-hours is required in the History of Christianity. Each student is required to take HS 502 History of Christianity I: Early and Medieval and HS 504 History of Christianity II: Reformation and Modern. Normally, one of the courses is taken in the first semester of study; they may be taken in any order.
2. In addition, each MDiv student is required to take at least one 3 semester-hour course in the history and polity of his or her own church tradition.
 - a) Disciples of Christ students must take HS 530 History and Polity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
 - b) Presbyterian students must register for either HS 536 Presbyterians in the United States, HS 537 Reformed Theology, or HS 538 Presbyterian Polity and Worship.
 - c) United Methodist students are required to take a total of 12 semester-hours: 9 semester-hours in three denomination-specific courses, including HS 531 United Methodist History,

HS 532 United Methodist Doctrine and HS 533 United Methodist Polity, plus the 3 semester-hour course: PT 672 The Church and Evangelism. However, they need to complete only 6 semester-hours in Division III: HS 531 United Methodist History and HS 533 United Methodist Polity. Note that HS 532 meets a requirement in Division IV and PT 672 in Division V. (See below).

- d) Students from all Baptist traditions must take HS 534 Baptist History and Polity.
- e) United Church of Christ students are required to take HS 539 History and Polity of the United Church of Christ.
- f) Unitarian Universalist students are required to take HS 541 Unitarian Universalist History and Polity.
- g) Students who are members of denominations not specifically mentioned above, or are members of non-denominational churches, may satisfy the denominational studies requirement by (a) enrolling in HS 518 Christianity in the United States, or (b) with the dean's permission, taking a 3 semester-hour guided readings course (under HS 546 Readings in Denominational History) on the history and polity of the particular denomination in which they intend to practice ministry.
- h) Students in the MDiv program are required to notify the Office of Admissions and Student Services at the earliest possible date if, during their program of studies, they propose transferring their membership to a denomination or religious community other than that which supported their application to the MDiv degree program and in which they originally expected to serve in ministry. They must also notify PTS denominational formation directors of the respective traditions.

Requirements in Division IV. Theological and Ethical Studies (9 semester-hours)

1. TE 500 Introduction to Theology. This 3 semester-hour course is normally taken in the second or third semester of study. Prerequisite is one of the following courses: HB 500 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, NT 500 Introduction to the New Testament, HS 502 History of Christianity I: Early and Medieval, or HS 504 History of Christianity II: Reformation and Modern.
2. One 3 semester-hour advanced theology course is also required (e.g., TE 600 Doctrine of God, TE 602 Christology, TE 606 Doctrine of the Church, TE 624 Feminist Theology, TE 625 Comparative Theologies, TE 627 Black and Womanist Theologies, HS 550 Introduction to Christian Theologies of Religions, or another approved theology course). This requirement is normally fulfilled in a student's middler year. United Methodist students in the MDiv program normally satisfy this requirement of one 3 semester-hour advanced theology course by taking HS 532 United Methodist Doctrine.
3. TE 512 Ethics, Culture, and the Mission of the Church, a 3 semester-hour course normally taken in a student's middler year.

Requirements in Division V. Practical Theology (12 semester-hours)

1. All MDiv students must complete a minimum of 12 semester-hours in the division (in addition to PT 571 The Art and Practices of Ministry, included in Division I).
2. Nine of these semester-hours are required in the following areas of ministerial practice and are met by taking three specific courses: PT 500 Introduction to Preaching, PT 520 Care in Christian Communities, and PT 540 Theology and Practice of Public Worship.
3. In addition to these three specified courses in Practical Theology, each student is required to take one additional introductory or specialized 3 semester-hour course of their choice in Division V, either in the fields of Preaching, Christian Education, Pastoral Leadership, Care and Counseling, or Worship.

4. United Methodist students, in order to meet requirements in the current *Book of Discipline*, satisfy the curricular demand for a fourth course in the division by taking PT 672 The Church and Evangelism.

Requirements in Division VI. Global Realities and Cross-cultural Issues (6 semester-hours)

In consultation with their advisers, students will select two 3 semester-hour courses from any division which focus on distinctly different, although perhaps interrelated, sets of issues in contextual theology (e.g., cross-cultural or interreligious understanding; ethnicity and race; gender and religion; migration issues; global Christianity, etc.)

Elective Courses (18-21 semester-hours)

An elective course is any course that does not meet a specific requirement in a student's degree program. Most MDiv students have 21 semester-hours of elective coursework. Because of additional requirements in denominational studies, UMC students have 18. Students should consult with their faculty advisers about selecting elective courses that are likely to broaden and deepen their learning and enhance their preparation for projected forms of ministry. Caution is advised about taking too many elective courses in the earliest stages of program.

Independent Research

Students may pursue special interests in advanced research in any division of the curriculum by requesting a guided readings course for 1-3 semester-hours credit. Normally, required courses may not be taken on an independent research basis. Moreover, only those students who have completed the basic introductory courses in the relevant curriculum division and who have shown evidence of a capacity for independent study will be allowed to enroll. Forms for independent study may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. The enrollment must be approved by the instructor who will direct the research and by the dean. Normally, no more than one independent study may be taken in any one semester and no more than 6 semester-hours of independent study may count toward the MDiv degree. The independent study request form must be filed in the Office of the Registrar with all appropriate signatures by the first day of class of the semester or summer session in which the independent study course is to be taken.

Theses

Although a thesis is not required of MDiv students, a thesis option is available. MDiv students who wish to write a thesis must have completed at least 50 semester-hours with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher prior to the year the thesis is to be written. The thesis should be written during the last two semesters of the student's enrollment in the MDiv degree program. Students should enroll for TS 695 and TS 696: MDiv Thesis Research and Writing I and II, respectively, in their last two semesters.

No more than two semesters may be used to complete the thesis. Completion of a satisfactory thesis counts for 6 semester-hours credit. Failure to complete the thesis in the required time may result in no credit and no grade for any part of the student's research. Each MDiv thesis will be evaluated by two professors: an adviser and a reader. The adviser must be a member of the regular PTS faculty. The thesis proposal should be prepared in consultation with the faculty adviser and reader, who should normally approve it no later than November 30, if the student plans to register for TS 695 the following spring semester, or March 31, if the student plans to register for TS 695 the following fall semester. After the proposal is approved by the faculty adviser and reader, the student must submit the thesis proposal to the dean for administrative approval.

An MDiv thesis proposal form is available from the Office of the Registrar. The thesis proposal should include the following information:

- a. proposed subject of the thesis;
- b. range of research anticipated;
- c. educational and professional goals the student expects to accomplish in the thesis; and
- d. a preliminary bibliography.

Theses must be prepared according to form guidelines in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, or other guidelines specified on the PTS website. Two bound copies of the thesis will be placed on deposit in the Phillips Theological Seminary library. An MDiv thesis shall be between 50 and 80 printed pages. A standard administrative fee (\$75 in 2011-2012) is charged for all master's theses at the time of enrollment in TS 696. This fee covers binding two copies for the library and other related administrative expenses. Students must submit to the library two copies of the final thesis on acid-free document bond or 100% cotton bond paper. They may submit additional personal copies for binding for a fee.