

## The Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

### Purpose

The purpose of the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree program, which requires the completion of 48 semester-hours, is to develop broad theological understandings for general education purposes.

The MTS degree program has two distinct tracks:

**Track I: General Theological Studies** is designed for persons who seek through an engagement with contemporary biblical, theological, and historical studies to become better educated about important religious and ethical issues in our religiously plural world and/or to serve as more effective lay leaders in church and society.

**Track II: Pre-doctoral Theological Studies** is specifically designed for persons who are preparing for further academic coursework in other institutions of higher education leading to a research doctorate in a specialized discipline of Religious Studies.

For most denominations, the MTS, standing alone, does not include either a sufficient number of hours or an adequate emphasis on ministerial formation and practice to meet the requirements for denominational certification or ordination. Moreover, The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) has determined that this degree is not designed to prepare students for the practice of ministry.

### Program Goals

Upon completing either track of the MTS program, students will be able to:

1. Act as responsible biblical interpreters critically informed by current historical, literary and theological scholarship in the field of biblical studies.
2. Articulate substantive issues in Christian theology in a manner that takes into account a liberative hermeneutic responsive to key themes in biblical exegesis and Christian history.
3. Articulate understandings of individuals, groups, and cultures that are informed by conversation between the theological disciplines and critical studies in arts, culture, and the sciences.
4. Demonstrate an ability to conduct advanced research by:
  - a. In Track I, producing an integrative paper in which the student engages in critical reflection on an interpretive issue or set of issues that has emerged in her or his course work with relevant biblical, theological, ethical, historical or cultural materials as articulated in the previous goals; or
  - b. In Track II, producing a master's thesis in which the student presents a sustained argument on a particular interpretive issue or set of issues with relevant biblical, theological, ethical, historical or cultural materials as articulated in the previous goals.

### Evaluation of Learning

In the MTS program, each student's coursework is carefully evaluated. Furthermore, along with MDiv and MAMC students, MTS students keep a portfolio of their academic work, which is periodically reviewed with faculty advisers. Finally, there is a thorough evaluation of a required integrative senior paper (in Track I), or a master's thesis (in Track II), both of which require advanced research and writing skills.

## **Online Coursework**

Many of the required and elective courses which contribute to the MTS 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, 24 semester-hours of the coursework required for the MTS degree, i.e., the equivalent of one year of full-time academic study, must be completed on our Tulsa campus or in a classroom setting elsewhere (as with a faculty-led travel course, for example.) However, those hours may be completed in multiple 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.

## **Degree Requirements**

The MTS degree requires the completion of 48 semester-hours with a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher. All students must take 30 semester-hours of foundational courses. Students in Track I must complete 15 semester-hours of elective coursework plus a 3 semester-hour independent study course in which they produce an integrative research paper. Students in Track II must complete the 30 semester-hour requirement in foundational courses, 12 semester-hours in specialization courses, and 6 hours of thesis work. MTS students should work closely with their advisers in selecting the courses that best prepare them for the research and writing requirements of their particular track.

### **Track I: General Theological Studies**

#### **Foundational Courses (30 semester-hours)**

Division I. Vocation and Theological Formation for Ministry: (3 semester-hours)

CD 502 Vocation and Theology I: Intro to Theological Education for Master's Students, or ITEMS

Division II. Biblical Studies: (9 semester-hours)

HB 500 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

NT 500 Introduction to the New Testament

Plus one additional advanced course in Division II

Division III. Historical Studies: (6 semester-hours)

HS 502 History of Christianity I: Early and Medieval

HS 504 History of Christianity II: Reformation and Modern

Division IV. Theology and Ethics: (9 semester-hours)

TE 500 Introduction to Theology

TE 512 Ethics, Culture, and the Mission of the Church

Plus one additional advanced course in Division III

Division VI. Global Realities and Cross-Cultural Issues: (3 semester-hours)

Any course in Division VI.

#### **Elective Courses (15 semester-hours)**

Courses and independent research in one, or an approved combination of, the following divisions:

- II. Biblical Studies
- III. Historical Studies
- IV. Theology and Ethics
- VI. Global Realities and Cross-Cultural Issues

### **Integrative Paper (3 semester-hours)**

MTS degree students in Track I General Theological Studies are normally required to enroll in IP 674 MTS Integrative Paper Research and Writing (3 semester-hours) in their final semester. The paper should demonstrate the student's ability to conduct advanced research and engage in critical, integrative reflection on an interpretive issue or set of issues that has emerged in his or her coursework.

No more than one semester may be used to complete the integrative paper. Failure to complete the paper successfully in the required time may result in a grade of "F," requiring the student to re-enroll in IP 674 in order to graduate.

Each integrative paper will be evaluated by an adviser who must be a member of the regular PTS faculty.

A proposal for an integrative paper should be prepared in consultation with the faculty adviser who should normally approve it no later than November 30, if the student plans to register for IP 674 the following spring semester, or March 31, if the student plans to register for IP 674 the following fall semester.

A proposal form for an MTS integrative paper is available from the Office of the Registrar. The proposal should include the following information:

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

The integrative paper, which shall be approximately 30 printed pages, 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.

### **Track II: Pre-doctoral Theological Studies**

#### **Foundational Courses (30 semester-hours)**

Same as in Track I

#### **Specialization Courses (12 semester-hours)**

Courses and independent research in one, or an approved combination of, the following divisions:

- II. Biblical Studies
- III. Historical Studies
- IV. Theology and Ethics
- V. Global Relations and Cross-Cultural Issues

### **Thesis (6 semester-hours)**

MTS students in Track II Pre-doctoral Theological Studies are normally required to enroll in TS 675 MTS Thesis Research and Writing I (3 semester-hours) and TS 676 MTS Thesis Research and Writing II (3 semester-hours), in their final two semesters. The thesis should demonstrate the student's ability to conduct advanced research, formulate a thesis, and present a sustained argument on a particular interpretative issue or set of issues in contemporary religious studies sufficient to promise success in subsequent doctoral studies leading to a Ph.D. or Th.D. degree.

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 thesis will be evaluated by two professors: an adviser and a reader. The adviser must be a member of the regular PTS faculty. Normally, the adviser and reader will conduct an oral defense of the thesis.

A 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 675 the following spring semester, or March 31, if the student plans to register for TS 675 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.

A 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, which shall be between 50 and 80 printed pages, 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.

A standard administrative fee (\$75 in 2011-201) is charged for all master's theses at the time that approval is requested. 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.