

MASTER OF DIVINITY

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OBJECTIVES

The three-year Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree provides a strong theological and practical foundation to those preparing for the priesthood or for full-time lay ecclesial ministry in the Catholic Church. It accomplishes this goal through an integrated core curriculum designed to ensure appropriate academic, ministerial, and spiritual formation. Since leadership in ministry today requires collaboration between women and men, religious and secular, ordained and lay, the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry M.Div. program promotes collaborative learning as an appropriate means of preparing for ministry in all its forms. Building upon the previous theological and pastoral experience of the student, the program fosters the desire for lifelong learning and development in and through ministry.

ACADEMIC FORMATION

Shaped by Boston College's commitment to excellence, the M.Div. program supports the student's academic formation through disciplined theological study. Priests and lay ministers must be able to interpret the meaning and relevance of Christian revelation and the Church's tradition for today's world. To do this requires the mastery of basic and advanced courses in Scripture, Church History, Historical-Systematic Theology, and Moral Theology.

MINISTERIAL FORMATION

The ministerial formation of the student is a basic goal of the entire curriculum, as reflected by the pastoral context and orientation of the courses. The ability to engage in personal theological reflection and the cultivation of ministerial skills through practice and regular supervision are integral components of a comprehensive preparation for ministry. Required seminars and courses in pastoral studies address specific issues of formation for ministry.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

M. Div. students participate in a comprehensive program of formation that expresses the STM's commitment to the formation of the whole person for effective ministry. For lay students, the development of a formation portfolio under the guidance of a Spiritual Formation advisor fulfills the degree requirements for formation. For students who are members of religious orders or candidates for ordination, participation in the formation program of a religious order or diocese fulfills this requirement.

John Baldovin, S.J. is the Director of the M.Div. program.

NOTE: STM's three-year M.Div. program does not fulfill the requirement that all candidates for the priesthood complete four years of theology as set forth in the Program of Priestly Formation of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Jesuits and other candidates for ordination at STM spend an additional year in theological study after earning the M.Div. degree. For Jesuits, the Regional Order of Studies for the American Assistancy stipulates an advanced master's degree or a Licentiate in one of the programs offered by one of the theological centers of the United States Assistancy or Canada.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To make the best use of STM's academic resources, applicants to the M.Div. program should have achieved a high level of intellectual, social, and religious maturity.

A. Applicants should follow the general admissions procedures found on STM's website, www.bc.edu/stm.

B. Previous Educational Experience

1. Applicants should possess intellectual inquisitiveness and imagination, and the ability to communicate effectively in speech and in writing. Consequently, they are required to give evidence of a bachelor's degree gained with above average grades from an accredited college or an equivalent degree or certificate, if the applicant is an international student. Applicants are encouraged to submit scores on the Graduate Record Examinations or Miller Analogies Test. In some cases, the Admissions Committee may request scores from applicants not already in possession of a graduate degree.

2. Applicants should be broadly acquainted with the disciplines classified under liberal arts and humanities. Ordinarily, one third of the applicant's undergraduate program should, therefore, have been comprised of courses in philosophy, religious studies, literature, history, social and behavioral sciences, and foreign languages. Applicants with an undergraduate major or concentration in the natural sciences, engineering, business, music, or the performing arts may have to supplement their previous work with further study in the humanities.

Within the framework of the humanities, it is important that the applicant have well-developed reasoning and analytical skills and be well acquainted with the history of Western philosophy; competence in this regard should ordinarily be demonstrated by at least twelve semester credits in philosophy. Students admitted to the M.Div. program whose background in philosophy is weak are urged to take additional courses in the Philosophy Department at Boston College. Such courses may not be counted toward the M.Div. degree. Jesuits are expected to have completed thirty-six graduate credit hours of philosophy and twenty-four graduate credit hours of theology during their First Studies Program.

3. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will consider an applicant's request that up to twenty-four credit hours for graduate courses in theology taken elsewhere be applied to the M.Div. program, provided that these courses:

- are judged to be equivalent to STM courses;
- have been taken at an accredited institution on a graduate level;
- have been taken within the preceding six-year period;
- have not already been applied to a degree received;
- have received a grade of B or higher.

C. Personal and Social Qualities

Applicants should manifest the faith and religious commitment, the self-reliance and resourcefulness, and the integrity and personal maturity that a program of preparation for professional ministry presupposes. To help determine whether applicants possess these qualities to a satisfactory degree, proof of at least one year of full-time, self-supporting work after college in a ministerial setting or similar service role is preferred for admission to the M.Div. program.

D. Applicants may be asked to come for an interview with the Admissions Committee.

E. Seminarians/members of religious orders must submit a letter of approval from their bishop/major superior.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete eighty-one credit hours of academic course work with a G.P.A. of at least 3.0. The program is designed so that a full-time student can complete it in three years, taking twenty seven credits during each academic year. Depending on the kind of ministry involved, some students prefer to do the Professional Ministry Practicum during the summer. Courses taken at other institutions during the summer may be considered for transfer credit according to the guidelines stated above. Part-time students may take a maximum of six years to complete the program—from the time of matriculation in the degree program.

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION FOR COURSEWORK

Eighty-one credit hours of course work must be completed in the following areas:

Biblical Studies: fifteen credit hours

Students should learn to use the methods of modern biblical interpretation. Specifically, they should become knowledgeable about the practice and applicability of exegesis; they should also develop a deep acquaintance with the biblical theology of the Pentateuchal, Prophetic, and Wisdom books in the Old Testament and of the Synoptic, Johannine, and Pauline literatures in the New Testament. The credits are to be distributed as follows: six credits of Old Testament; six credits of New Testament; and three credits in either Old Testament or New Testament.

Church History: six credit hours

Students should acquire a knowledge of historical method, an ability to use historical documents critically, and a broad acquaintance with the major periods (early, medieval and Reformation, and modern) in the social, cultural, and institutional development of Christianity.

Historical-Systematic Theology: fifteen credit hours

Students are expected to learn sound theological skills and methods, become familiar with the history and development of the Church and its doctrines, and develop an internalized appropriation of the core mystery of faith expressed in these doctrines, in a way that relates them to Christian life and ministry.

Required: Theological Synthesis (six credits)

Moral Theology: six credit hours

Students should acquire the ability to deal systematically with ethical issues in a Catholic theological context. Work should be done in areas such as social ethics, sexuality and marriage, and bio-medical ethics.

Pastoral Studies: twelve credit hours

Students should be effective in various areas of pastoral life, including pastoral care, spiritual direction, religious education, social ministry, and pastoral administration and be able to interpret faithfully and compassionately the pastoral law of the Church. *Required: canon law, pastoral care and/or counseling and professional ministry practicum.*

Word and Worship: six credit hours for lay students; twelve for students preparing for ordination

Students preparing for ordination or lay ecclesial ministry are expected to prepare themselves in ways appropriate to these ministries, to preach effectively the Good News, and to preside prayerfully at the Church's worship. *Candidates for lay ecclesial ministry must take a sacrament course and a course in liturgical practice (e.g., Preaching, Presiding). Candidates for ordination must take Eucharist, preaching, and the confession/sacramental practicum for presbyteral ministry (which counts as one of the allowed electives), and a course on the theology of the priesthood.*

Electives: eighteen credit hours**M.Div. Closure Seminar: three credit hours****FORMATION FOR MINISTRY**

While the STM does not certify anyone for ministry, it is committed to providing the best possible opportunities and guidance to help students begin a process of education, formation, and professional development that must become a life-long endeavor. For this reason, appropriate, substantive, and intentional participation in a spiritual formation process is an expectation.

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) underscores the fact that formation of the whole person is essential for effective ministry. At STM, it is a requirement for all entering M.Div. students. Participation in the formation program of a religious order or diocese fulfills this requirement. For lay students, participation in the Lay Formation Program fulfills this requirement.

Lay Formation Program

The program of formation for lay students is overseen by members of the Spiritual Formation Committee, a standing committee of the Academic Council. Each student will meet with a member of the committee who will serve as the student's spiritual formation advisor. The spiritual formation advisor will meet with the student during the first semester of each academic year to explain and coordinate the formation process. The formation program for each student will be flexible, while addressing the standards approved by the U.S. bishops in the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (National Association for Lay Ministry, National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, and National Conference for Catechetical Leadership): **1.** personal and spiritual maturity; **2.** lay ecclesial ministry identity; **3.** Catholic theology; **4.** pastoral praxis; and **5.** professional praxis.

Students consult with their spiritual formation advisor to plan a process of suitable spiritual formation to address area (1). They consult with their academic advisors to plan a suitable course of studies to address area (3). They consult with the Professor of Pastoral Care and Contextual Education to plan pastoral courses and ministerial placements to address areas (2, 4, and 5). The student's spiritual formation advisor maintains oversight of the whole process and will verify to the department chair when each student has fulfilled the formation requirement for graduation.

Students are expected to be proactive, adult learners who, with the advice of their advisors, will be able to choose among multiple options to develop an appropriate formation program. Students will keep a formation portfolio to document their participation in, completion of, and reflection upon various elements of their formation process.

First Year of Residency

The focus of the first year is to establish a theological and professional foundation for ministry and to help students begin to form an approach to ministry. The goal is a mastery of basic courses in church history, scripture, moral theology, and historical-systematic theology. In addition to standard introductory courses, courses in the following areas are particularly helpful as a preparation for the Theological Synthesis in the second year: Christology, God, Church, and Early Church History.

In the first semester, lay students meet with a member of the Spiritual Formation Committee.

Second Year of Residency

The focus of the second year is to develop theological and professional competencies. The goals are to deepen the students' familiarity with scripture in a way that prepares them for effective preaching; to deepen familiarity with the Church's moral and theological teaching; and to deepen the formation process of ministerial identity and personal spirituality.

Theological Synthesis – six credits

Theological Synthesis is a second-year course to which students bring a familiarity with scripture, history, and basic issues in the development of doctrine. The goal of the course is to foster an internalized appropriation of the central doctrines of the Church in a way that relates them to Christian life and ministry. Lectures treat the basic doctrines of the Christian faith in a systematic fashion. Weekly small group work is designed to form and develop the skills necessary for sound theological and ministerial judgment.

Qualifying Examination

The final weeks of the Theological Synthesis course are dedicated to the composition of a 3000 word "Short Statement of the Christian Faith" that serves as the basis of a one-hour oral exam with a board of two examiners. This examination is called "qualifying" to suggest that this course and successful completion of this examination signify that one has an integrated, foundational knowledge of Christian doctrine, allowing one to move forward in more specialized or applied study.

Third Year of Residency

The focus of the third year is to own and articulate an integrated, collaborative theology of ministry. The goals are to further and enhance integrative studies through advanced course work, seminars, and ministerial experience; to demonstrate competency in the areas of preaching, liturgical presiding and prayer leadership; and to identify and acquire other pastoral skills for collaboration in team ministry.

M.Div. Closure Seminar – three credits

This seminar promotes the integration of theory and practice, as well as formation, for collaboration and partnership in ministry. The seminar ordinarily should be taken during the final semester of the student's M.Div. program. Discussions, group work and team projects are some of the components of the seminar, which concludes with the M.Div. Convocation. The seminar brings closure to the M.Div. program by providing a structured forum for collectively exercising and applying the skills and knowledge acquired during the degree program. The Director of the M.Div. program oversees the seminar.

THE PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY PRACTICUM

Candidates are required to complete six credit hours of a Professional Ministry Practicum. The Professional Ministry Practicum is an integral part of ministerial formation at STM, and is designed specifically for M.Div. candidates who have been active in ministry prior to their admission. For this reason, the practicum emphasizes ministerial professionalization. The main objective of the practicum is to foster a ministerial identity that is formed by the study of theology, the practice of theological reflection, and the exercise of ministerial responsibilities in a setting where well-defined professional objectives can be achieved and evaluated. Basic competencies associated with ministerial practice and human services are presupposed.

The specific terms of the practicum are proposed by the student and agreed to by the on-site supervisor/mentor, the academic advisor, and the Faculty Director of Contextual Education for the Weston Jesuit Department. The selected practicum site and the on-site supervisor/mentor must meet the professional criteria set by the WJ Faculty Director of Contextual Education.

The Theological Reflection Practicum, though not required, is recommended for all M.Div. candidates.

Other Ministry Practica

In addition to the required, six-credit-hour Professional Ministry Practicum, students in the M.Div. program may choose up to six credit hours to fulfill elective requirements from among the following practica: PS 385/386 (Advanced Professional Ministry Practicum); PS 387/388 (Diaconate Practicum); or PS 351/352 (Supervised Practicum in Spiritual Direction). A maximum of twelve credit hours of ministry practica may be used in fulfillment of the requirements of the M.Div. degree.

Jesuit Candidates for Ordination

In order to fulfill the canonical requirements for ordination and the norms established by the United States Assistancy of the Society of Jesus, Jesuits must complete an additional eight graduate courses in theology in addition to the M.Div. degree. Ordinarily, this is accomplished by one full year of theology during First Studies and three full years of study and residency at a theology center. In planning a course of studies at STM and in consultation with their academic advisors, Jesuits may choose among three options to complement the M.Div. degree: (1) the S.T.L.; (2) the Th.M.; or (3) eight additional electives. In addition to the general requirements for ordination already noted above, Jesuits must take at least one course that explores contemporary justice and/or human rights questions and one course with an ecumenical or interreligious focus.

Candidates for Ordination to Diaconate and Priesthood

Candidates for ordination in the Roman Catholic Church must complete four full years of theological studies, including the successful completion of the M.Div. degree. In addition, they must show competence in a number of specific pastoral and liturgical areas as specified in the *Program of Priestly Formation* of the

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Boston College School of Theology and Ministry provides several measures of such competence as may be required by the Ecclesiastical Ordinary through courses offered in its Department of Pastoral Studies. Certification of competence in the administration of the sacraments is given through successful completion of the Rites Practicum. Competence in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is assured through the Examinatio Ad Audiendas Confessiones, which is offered within the Confession Practicum, or which may otherwise be specially arranged. Competency in preaching is demonstrated through successful completion of a course in preaching. Competence with regard to the pastoral law of the Church is attested to by successful completion of one or more courses in Canon Law.