

MASTER OF EDUCATION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Students can choose to do the MEd without a concentration, which gives them the flexibility to become an overall generalist in the field, or they can choose to pursue the MEd with a concentration in School Religion Teaching, Total Community Catechesis (parish religious education), Catholic School Leadership or Interreligious Understanding.

These guidelines are designed to deepen the quality of studies of Religious Education. They serve students by providing structure to the Master of Education program. Requirements are designed to ensure that students are familiar with the foundational methods, ideas and literature of the interdisciplinary studies that constitute the ideal formation of the religious educator.

Without prejudice to these guidelines, a student's program of studies is developed in consultation with an academic advisor with attention to the student's background and aspirations. The curriculum is composed of six elements: courses in Theological and Scriptural Foundations, Pastoral Studies for Religious Education, Contextual Education, Electives, Holistic Formation and Synthesis Project (comprehensives).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

35 credit hours for summer-only students

44 credit hours minimum for academic-year students

1. THEOLOGICAL AND SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS

Studies in theology and scripture cover foundational issues of theological and scriptural scholarship. With the exception of the Interreligious Understanding and Catholic School Leadership concentrations, the foundational requirements will include one course each in sacraments, ethics, Christology, ecclesiology and two courses in scripture (Old and New Testament). *In order to give students an understanding of the rich traditions that inform their studies, one theological foundations or pastoral studies course must be taught from a historical perspective.*

A student with no previous background in theology should take introductory courses. A student with a background in theological studies may look for more advanced or specialized courses to fulfill Theological and Scriptural Foundations requirements.

TM 644 Theological Foundations in Practical Perspective introduces the student to the study of theology on a graduate level and in the U.S. context. This is required of all MEd students, unless exempted from it explicitly in one's admissions letter. Students exempt from this requirement take an elective in its place.

2. PASTORAL STUDIES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Courses in religious education deal with essential ideas and literature from the disciplines of education, theology, philosophy, history and social science (especially psychology and sociology). Study of these essential ideas and literatures enables students to understand the purposes of religious education more fully and provides greater depth to pastoral practice. Students who choose to do the MEd without a concentration fulfill the following requirements:

Area I: Foundations of Religious Education

Two courses that provide conceptual clarity about the field of religious education in relation to theology, philosophy and scripture

Area II: Teaching, Leadership and Religious Education

One course that centers on the art of facilitating the learning process

Area III: Religious Education Informed by Spirituality Studies and Social Sciences

One course that draws on spirituality studies or the social sciences that is relevant to the student's vocational goals

CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CONCENTRATION

(see worksheet for specific Theological and Scriptural Foundations requirements)

Area I: Foundations of Religious Education

One course that provides conceptual clarity about the field of religious education in relation to theology, philosophy and scripture

Area II: Teaching, Leadership and Religious Education

One course in principalship or administration of schools

Area III: Religious Education Informed by Spirituality and the Social Sciences

One course in life span and faith development

INTERRELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING CONCENTRATION

(see worksheet for specific Theological and Scriptural Foundations requirements)

Area I: Foundations of Religious Education

One course that provides conceptual clarity about the field of religious education in relation to theology, philosophy and scripture

Area II: Teaching, Leadership and Religious Education

One course that critically surveys existing texts in world religions/comparative theology from the point of view of the pedagogy of interreligious understanding
One course that centers on the art of facilitating the learning process

Area III: Religious Education informed by Spirituality and the Social Sciences

One course that draws on spirituality studies or the social sciences that is relevant to the student's vocational goals

SCHOOL RELIGION TEACHING CONCENTRATION

Area I: Foundations of Religious Education

Two courses that provide conceptual clarity about the field of religious education in relation to theology, philosophy and scripture

Area II: Teaching, Leadership and Religious Education

One course in curriculum and/or classroom management

Area III: Religious Education Informed by Spirituality Studies and Social Sciences

One course in adolescent psychology or adolescent counseling

TOTAL COMMUNITY CATECHESIS CONCENTRATION

Area I: Foundations of Religious Education

One course in history of religious education

One course that provides conceptual clarity about the field of religious education in relation to theology, philosophy and scripture

Area II: Teaching, Curriculum and Religious Education

Total Community Catechesis Seminar

Area III: Religious Education Informed by Spirituality Studies and Social Sciences

One course that draws on spirituality studies or the social sciences that is relevant to the student's vocational goals

3. CONTEXTUAL EDUCATION (FIELD EDUCATION)

Students in the MEd program are required to enroll in TM 530, Contextual Education (field education). The purpose of Contextual Education is to enable students to explore the work of religious education and to develop the skills for theological reflection on that experience. It is comprised of two parts: a supervised field experience and a practicum.

For *academic year* students, Contextual Education is a two-semester commitment of eight hours per week (total of 28 weeks), for which students earn four credits. Students engage in a supervised field experience, designed in consultation with the Faculty Director for Contextual Education in the IREPM Department. Students also participate in a practicum with others in the

MEd and MA programs. The practicum meets 8 times each semester. Students register for Contextual Education in the fall and are billed for two credits in the fall and two credits in the spring.

Summers-only students fulfill their Contextual Education experience over two summers and the interim academic year, for which they earn two credits. They are required to do five hours per week of a supervised field experience during the academic year (total of 28 weeks) at a location convenient to their home. The field experience is designed in consultation with the IREPM Faculty Director for Contextual Education. Students are also expected to participate in the Contextual Education practicum with other students, which takes place during the summers before and after the field experience, as well as online during the academic year. Summers-only students register during the first summer and are billed for two credits at that time.

4. ELECTIVES

Students may choose courses in theology, scripture, education or ministry in order to pursue particular interests or to round out their program of study.

5. HOLISTIC FORMATION

MEd and MA students participate in the one-credit Holistic Formation program (TM 730). This program consists of two parts: a Holistic Formation group and a Spiritual Formation Plan.

During the first year or summer of studies, students participate in small groups facilitated by experienced facilitators, which allow them to integrate spiritual growth with their academic work in a supportive and prayerful atmosphere. During the academic year, the groups meet six times per semester; during the summer, groups meet once each week. At the end of the year or summer, students receive a J grade (course extension) until they have fulfilled the components of their Spiritual Formation Plan.

Students are required to create a personalized Spiritual Formation Plan (SFP) as a component of the Holistic Formation experience. A student creates a Spiritual Formation Plan in consultation with one's advisor and one's Holistic Formation facilitator. Students may fulfill the components of their SFP during the duration of degree program at STM. When a student has fulfilled the components of the plan, the student informs his or her academic advisor, who will then sign off on that portion of the student academic worksheet. The student leaves a copy of the signed form in Jim Mongelluzzo's mailbox. Upon receipt of this form, Jim will change the grade from a "J" to a "P" (Pass).

The purpose of the SFP is to establish a *habitus* of spiritual practice, one which is discerned and consciously chosen, one that corresponds with the uniqueness of persons and establishes a solid spiritual foundation for reflective ministry. Students choose and complete ONE OPTION from TWO of THREE AREAS during the course of their studies.

AREA I

- Spiritual Direction (six month experience or more)*

AREA II

- Retreat experience (e.g., STM retreat, silent directed retreat, guided retreat, annotated Exercises of St. Ignatius)
- Immersion experience (STM or equivalent)
- Intentional Christian community experience

AREA III

- Monthly volunteer experience with journal reflection (six month experience or more)
- Spirituality and the arts experience with journal reflection (six month experience or more)
- Liturgical Preaching and Presiding workshop (CE)**
- Ways of Christian Prayer workshop (CE)
- Navigating Spiritual Paths for the Parish and Pastoral Minister workshop (CE)
- Participation in STM Faith and Justice Committee with journal reflection (one semester)
- Participation in the STM Liturgy Committee with journal reflection (one semester)
- Boston College Women's Resource Center Volunteer with journal reflection (six month experience or more)

6. SYNTHESIS PROJECTS

Upon completion of course work, MEd students write a synthesis project that provides them the opportunity to: 1) creatively synthesize their studies in theology, 2) address a question about religious education and 3) outline a pastoral program appropriate to their own educational or ministerial context. Students discuss their essays with two faculty members in a subsequent oral examination.

Preparatory seminars, topic brainstorming sessions, writer's labs and consultants are available to assist students with the research, writing and oral defense of synthesis projects. For additional details on guidelines and procedures, see the *Master's Synthesis Project Packet* available at the STM Student Service Center at 9 Lake Street and consult the STM Academic Calendar for workshop dates.