MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

2017-2018
OVERVIEW

Reflecting the recommendations of *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, the curriculum of the M.A. in Theology and Ministry is designed as a broad-based degree to prepare people, theologically, pastorally and spiritually, to engage effectively in various functions of ecclesial ministry and faith based service to the mission of the Church as a sacrament of God’s reign in the world.

Upon graduating with this M.A. degree, a person will be able to:

- bring informed theological, biblical, and pastoral resources to interpret and to enhance the life and ministry of faith-based communities and programs of service;

- embody the pastoral and spiritual formation that is needed to provide leadership and empowerment to communities of faith through various functions of ministry and service;

- develop effective programs of ministry and service that are well grounded in theological and pastoral studies and that enable persons and communities to integrate life and Christian faith in the context of their everyday lives.

In addition, dual degree students will demonstrate the ability to integrate their studies in pastoral ministry with their other fields of study. Please consult the appropriate dual degree handbook for details.

This 48-credit degree combines the four most effective resources of theological education for ministry. First, it lends a thorough grounding in *sacred scripture and theology* with a view to ministerial practice or faith-based service. Second, its courses in *pastoral studies* provide graduates with the conceptual frameworks needed to mediate effective ministry in the life of a faith community or in faith based service. Third, its *contextual education* places students in apprenticeship with experienced supervisors and mentors, and in conversation with fellow students, to develop the practical arts and reflective skills of ministry. Fourth, its curriculum of *spiritual formation* lends access to traditions of prayer and spiritual practices that can sustain a life-long vocation in ecclesial ministry and faith based service. Graduates with this degree are ideally prepared – theologically, pastorally, and spiritually – to work in varied functions of ecclesial ministry in parish, campus, or health care, or to intentionally put their faith to work in contexts of social service.

In consultation with their faculty advisors, students may choose a particular focus within the M.A. in Theology and Ministry by a strategic use of their electives and of their contextual education. Students who need to meet certification requirements for dioceses in which they wish to work should be aware of those requirements and communicate them to their advisors as early as possible in their programs.
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 the following elements: the Theology/Scripture Core; Pastoral Studies for Ministry Core; Formation for Ministry; Electives, and Thesis.

**Hispanic Ministry Track**
Within the M.A. in Theology and Ministry degree, students interested in working with Latino/a populations and communities of faith may choose the Hispanic Ministry track. Graduates of this track within the M.A. in Theology and Ministry demonstrate particular competence in leading and resourcing the pastoral life of communities of faith which serve the Latino/a population in the United States. Please see the Hispanic Ministry Track curriculum worksheet for details.

**Religious Education/Catechesis Track**
Within the M.A. in Theology and Ministry degree, students interested in being involved in religious education either within the parish or in Catholic Schools may select this track. Graduates of this track demonstrate competence in the area of the theory and practice of religious education/catechesis as it responds to the pastoral needs of the church today. Please see the Religious Education/Catechesis Track curriculum worksheet for details.

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The degree requires 48 credits. It may sometimes be necessary, however, to accumulate more than this number of credits to fulfill the degree requirements. Dual degree students should consult their dual degree handbooks for specific information on how credits and requirements are shared between their two degrees.

**Theology/Scripture Core**
Studies in theology and scripture cover foundational issues of theological and scriptural scholarship in the following areas/topics:

- Foundations (TMST 7057–Theological Foundations in Practical Perspective)
- Christology
- Ecclesiology
- Sacraments or Theology of Ministry or Theological Anthropology or Church History (Students should consult with their advisor to choose the most appropriate course to serve the focus of their degree.)
- Ethics
- Old Testament
- New Testament
A student with no previous background in theology should take introductory courses. Students with backgrounds in theological studies may look for more advanced or specialized courses to fulfill requirements in the Theology/Scripture Core.

TMST 7057 *Theological Foundations in Practical Perspective* introduces the student to the study of theology for ministry on a graduate level and in the U.S. context. This is required of all M.A. students, unless exempted from it explicitly by one’s admission letter. Students exempt from this requirement take an elective in its place.

**Pastoral Studies for Ministry Core**
The following areas are considered essential to the practice of ministry:

- Religious Education
- Pastoral Care
- Spirituality
- Practical/Pastoral Theology/Liturgy

**Electives**
Students may choose, in consultation with their advisors, courses in theology, scripture, education and/or ministry in order pursue particular interests or to round out their program of study. Students who wish to pursue a particular function of ministry can focus the degree through strategic use of their electives.

**Historical Perspective**
In order to give students an understanding of the rich traditions that inform their studies, one course taken must be taught from a historical perspective.

**Academic Policies & Procedures**
For complete information on the STM Academic Policies and Procedures (including information about academic integrity; grading standards; course loads; credit transfers; and non academic graduation requirements, etc.,) please visit the STM website: [http://www.bc.edu/schools/stm/acadprog/acadpol.html](http://www.bc.edu/schools/stm/acadprog/acadpol.html).

**FORMATION FOR MINISTRY**

**Spiritual Formation Program**
The Spiritual Formation Program for M.A.T.M. students consists of two parts: 1) Spiritual Formation for Ministry Seminar; and 2) Spiritual Formation Plan.

The *Spiritual Formation for Ministry* seminar (TMPS 7080) is a one credit, year-long seminar. During the first year of studies, students participate in this small group seminar, led by an experienced facilitator, which allows them to integrate spiritual growth with their academic work in a supportive and prayerful atmosphere. Small groups meet six times per semester and students remain with their cohort and facilitator on the same day and at the same time for the full academic year. At the end of the
year, 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 Spiritual Formation for Ministry seminar. A student creates a Spiritual Formation Plan in consultation with one’s advisor and one’s Spiritual Formation for Ministry facilitator, each one indicating approval of the student’s plan on the Spiritual Formation Program worksheet. Students may fulfill the components of their SFP during the duration of their degree program at STM. When a student has completed the Spiritual Formation program, i.e. both the SFP and the Spiritual Formation for Ministry seminar, the student informs his or her academic advisor, who will then sign off on the Spiritual Formation Program worksheet. The student leaves a copy of the signed form in the mailbox of the Associate Director for Spiritual Formation. Upon receipt of this form, the Associate Director 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 two (2) options from the following three (3) areas during the course of their studies. *Examples of options are listed below. Instructions on how to craft a Spiritual Formation Plan will be provided to students during the first few sessions of their Spiritual Formation Seminar.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area 1*</th>
<th><em>Includes:</em> Spiritual Direction; Counseling</th>
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<tr>
<td>Area 2</td>
<td><em>Includes:</em> Retreats; Immersion Experiences</td>
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<td>Area 3</td>
<td><em>Includes:</em> monthly volunteer experiences; participation in STM and/or BC committees (e.g., Faith and Justice; Liturgy; Women’s Groups; Lumen et Vita, Gaudete, Corazon Latino, Prison Ministry, etc.).</td>
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*A regular practice of spiritual direction is strongly encouraged for one’s life in ministry. The STM provides a listing of seasoned spiritual directors in the BC vicinity and beyond. If a student feels that s/he would benefit from engagement in counseling or pastoral counseling rather than spiritual direction, this too remains an option.*

**Contextual Education**

Students in the M.A. in Theology and Ministry program are required to enroll in TMPS 8007, Contextual Education approximately halfway through their program. The purpose
of Contextual Education is to enable students to explore the work of pastoral ministry and to develop the skills for theological reflection on that experience. With the exception of dual M.A./M.A., M.A./M.S.W., and M.A./M.S. students, all M.A. students are required to take Contextual Education. (M.A./M.B.A. students should consult the M.A./M.B.A. prospectus for specific information about this requirement.)

Contextual Education is a two-semester commitment of eight hours per week (total of 28 weeks), for which students earn five credits. Students engage in a supervised field experience, designed in consultation with the Faculty Director for Contextual Education in the Department of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. Students also participate in a practicum with others enrolled in the course. 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 three credits in the spring.

THESIS

Upon completion of coursework, students write a thesis that provides them the opportunity to: 1) creatively synthesize their studies in theology, 2) address a question about their particular concentration in pastoral ministry and 3) outline a pastoral program appropriate to their own ministerial context. Students discuss their project 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 M.A. theses. For additional details on guidelines and procedures, see the M.A. and M.Ed. Thesis Packet available at the STM Service Center at 9 Lake Street and consult the STM Academic Calendar for workshop dates.