THEOLOGY (M.A.)

Academic Year

2013-2014

School

Graduate SchoolSchool Web site

School Dean

Aaron M. Tyler, Ph.D.atyler@stmarytx.edu

Department

Theology

Program Director

Andrew Getz, Ph.D.agetz@stmarytx.edu

Program Specific Admission Requirements

Admission into the program for the M.A. in Theology may be granted to those who have completed an undergraduate degree and show high promise for success in graduate study. Applying for the program requires submitting an application, undergraduate transcripts, and a departmental writing sample. Students are expected to demonstrate sufficient background knowledge and academic skills in order to be admitted to graduate course work. Generally, those without a prior degree in theology must earn at least an A- in a total of three prerequisite courses (nine hours) in undergraduate theology from courses at St. Mary's University. Like the graduate courses, the undergraduate prerequisite courses are available to distance learning students. Equivalence for a portion of these hours may be awarded for work and ministry experience, or high potential for academic success based on previous academic work in a closely related field such as religious studies, literature, history, or philosophy.

Prerequisite courses may be taken in three ways: 1) Enroll in any undergraduate TH course on campus, 2) Enroll in any 5000/6000 level TH course for undergraduate credit on campus or via distance learning, or 3) If the student is in the distance learning program he or she may enroll in a DL section of any undergraduate TH Course. It may be possible for students to attend some of these courses via Skype or other appropriate technology.

Contact the Graduate Program Director for more information.

Nature and Purpose of the Program

The Master of Arts in Theology is a 36 semester-hour thesis or non-thesis program that produces a broad foundation in the academic study of theology, particularly in the three areas of scripture, systematic theology, and Christian life and practice within the context of a constructive analysis of the Catholic faith, informed by Marianist principles of education, and contextualized by a world of religious pluralism. The Department of Theology at St. Mary's University seeks to educate students to meet the high academic standards that prepare them for both further academic study and for service to the Church and community.

Degree Requirements

Theology (36 hrs)

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Area of Study	Hours Required	Fulfilled by:
Scripture	9 hrs	One course in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (TH6311, 6314, 6317) One course in Christian Bible/New Testament (TH6320, 6321) One second-level course in Scripture (TH6312, 6313, 6322, 6323, 6324, 6325, 6326) (prerequisite: One first-level course in Scripture)
Systematic Theology	9 hrs	God Triune and Incarnate (TH6333) One course chosen from: i. Sacraments and Liturgy (TH6337) ii. Church and the Human Person (TH6336) One course chosen from: i. Faith, Reason, and Theology (TH6334) ii. Survey in Systematic Theology (TH7382)
Christian Life and Practice	9 hrs	One course from the following: i. Christian Social Ethics (TH6352) ii. Sin, Conscience, and Conversion (TH6354) One course from the following: i. Christian Medical Ethics (TH6356) ii. Theology of Human Sexuality, Marriage, and the Family (TH6355) iii. Contemporary Issues in Christian Ethics (TH6359) One course from the following: i. Spirituality and Christian Practice (TH6357) ii. Theology in the Southwest United States (TH6360) iii. Theology and Lay Ministry (TH6361) iv. Theology and Catechesis (TH6362)
Electives	6 hrs	Fulfilled by any TH63xx or TH73xx not fulfilling another requirement
Capstone	3 hrs	Fulfilled by Capstone (TH7391)

Candidacy

Once admitted into the program, students must submit a written application for candidacy after completing 9 hours of coursework for graduate credit. The student's application for candidacy must be approved in order to continue course work past 12 credit hours. The procedures regarding candidacy are located in the Academic Policies and Regulation for the Graduate School.

Thesis

Students choosing to write a thesis must follow the guidelines set out in the Manual of Standards and Policies of St. Mary's University Graduate School. They must complete TH 7390 Research Practicum as well as TH 7399. The thesis and defense will substitute for the general examination requirements (both written and oral) in the subject area most closely associated with its topic.

General Examination

In addition to the goals set out by the Graduate School for general examinations, the student earning the M.A. in Theology is expected to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and habits of the program. These objectives emphasize the academic abilities a student will need to pursue advanced study as well as professional skills needed for careers and service in theological and ecclesiastical areas. Generally, students must have completed 33 graduate credit hours before taking the general examination. Students wishing to take the examination shall request permission to do so from the Graduate Director. The request should be submitted in writing a semester prior the one in which the student wishes to take the exam.

The Graduate Learning Community Experience

All students graduating with the M.A. in Theology will have participated in interactions with their peers and professors outside of normal course requirements. The minimum requirement will be 10 clock hours over the course of the degree program. These requirements may be fulfilled in a variety of ways such as attending academic lectures that have been approved by the Department, participating in academic gatherings of the graduate students sponsored by the faculty, or by attending gatherings on or off campus as facilitated by course instructors and approved by the Graduate Director.

Department Courses and Descriptions

TH 6311 **The Pentateuch** (3 hrs)
This course surveys the first five books of the Bible, known as the Pentateuch, in the historical contexts of their composition, and through the history of interpretation in Judaism and Christianity. Special attention is paid to the variety of methods of interpretation, including historical-critical (modern), traditional theological (pre-modern), and contemporary-critical (post modern) methods.

TH 6312 **Prophets and Visionaries** (3 hrs)
This course studies the theology of revelation as understood in ancient Israel and the early Jewish and Christian traditions, in the context of the ancient Near East and Mediterranean. In addition to the three major and twelve minor prophets, the course considers other prophets, claims of prophecy, and views of prophecy in the Hebrew and Greek Bibles, apocalypses, Dead Sea Scrolls, New Testament, early church, and rabbinic literature. Prerequisite: one first-level Hebrew Bible or New Testament course.

TH 6313 **Wisdom Literature** (3 hrs)
This course examines the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible (Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes) and the Greek Bible (Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon). The course also considers the context of wisdom in Ancient Israel, the Ancient Near East, and the Hellenistic world. Additional concerns include the relationship of the conventional wisdom books with the pedagogic exhortations in Psalms, and revealed wisdom in apocalyptic literature. The primary focus is the literary study of each book on its own and in conversation with the tradition. Additional foci include the historical and social context of the composition of each book, the influence of the literature on Jewish and Christian thought, and the relevance of the literature in the life of the church today, including personal spirituality and social concerns. Prerequisite: one first-level Hebrew Bible or New Testament course.

TH 6314 **Law of Moses** (3 hrs)
This course focuses on the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament from the perspective of law and government. This course seeks appreciation of the Law of Moses in four contexts: the original context of its development in the Ancient Near East, the history of interpretation in Judaism and Christianity, contemporary ethical and religious questions, and the relationship between the principles of biblical law and American law. The course will encounter specific legal issues and underlying questions of how a society orders itself around common understandings of national identity, duty to God and neighbor, and principles of justice inherent in tradition. While much of the Torah is recognizable as "law" in the modern sense, the entire Torah, including narratives and exhortations, is studied with respect to underlying questions of how a society orders itself around common understandings of national identity, duty to God and neighbor, and principles of justice inherent in creation.

TH 6317 **The Interpretation of the History of Israel** (3 hrs)
This course studies the history of how Israelites and their successors have articulated understandings of the meaning of history and particularly the role of God in salvation history. The period from the national origin of Israel through the Babylonian exile is studied from a wide variety of viewpoints. These viewpoints include early national hymns, the Deuteronomists' retelling, the Chroniclers' retelling, apocalyptic retellings, Midrashic retellings, the modern history of religions school, archaeology, other historical-critical methods, and postmodern contemporary-critical methods such as post-colonial interpretation.

TH 6320 **The Gospel of Matthew** (3 hrs)
This course introduces students to the Gospel according to Mathew through an exegesis of select texts and an application of various hermeneutical methods of understanding to the gospel. It will cover topics that are especially distinctive to Matthew such as the Jewishness of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount, discipleship, ecclesiology and eschatology. Special attention is paid to a variety of methods of interpretation including historical, literary, social-scientific and feminist criticisms.

TH 6321 **The Gospel of Mark** (3 hrs)
This course introduces students to the Gospel according to Mark through exegesis of select texts and an application of various hermeneutical methods of understanding to the gospel. It will cover topics that are especially distinctive to Mark such as the messianic secret, the reign of God, the suffering servant, eschatology and the theology of the cross. Special attention is paid to a variety of methods of interpretation including historical, literary, social-scientific and feminist criticisms.

TH 6322 **The Gospel of Luke and the Acts** (3 hrs)
Drawing on a variety of methods of interpretation and approaches to scripture, this course studies Luke-Acts with a view to distilling Luke's theology and his message for the world today. It will cover topics that are especially distinctive to Luke-Acts such as the infancy narratives, the Holy Spirit, women, the poor, prayer, the journey to Jerusalem, ecclesiology, Saul/Paul, and mission. Prerequisite: one first-level Hebrew Bible or New Testament course

TH 6323 **Johannine Literature** (3 hrs)
Drawing on a variety of methods of interpretation and approaches to scripture, this course studies the Gospel according to John, the Letters of John and the Book of Revelation, with emphasis on discerning the relevance of these different works for the world today. It will cover topics that are especially distinctive to this corpus such as higher Christology, signs, the Advocate, the glorification of Jesus on the cross, the birth of the new household of God, the theology of love and suffering, realized and future eschatology, and worship. Prerequisite: one first-level Hebrew Bible or New Testament course.

TH 6324 **Theology of Paul** (3 hrs)
This course draws on a variety of methods of interpretation and approaches to scripture for an intensive study of the life of Paul and the Pauline literature in its approximate historical sequence in its relevance to the world today. It will cover topics that are especially distinctive to this corpus such as Christology, the body of Christ, justice and justification, the cross and resurrection, redemption, salvation, spiritual growth, and the cosmic Christ. Prerequisite: one first-level Hebrew Bible or New Testament course.

TH 6325 **Original Language Tools for Biblical Studies** (3 hrs)
This course builds toward a general knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages necessary to understand brief quotations and distinctions common among biblical commentaries and scholarship. The course emphasizes how to quickly find information, rather than memorization. Students learn how to use electronic tools to identify forms, definitions, and other occurrences of the root. Select examples illustrate the significance of philology for biblical interpretation.

TH 6326 **Psalms and Passion Narratives** (3 hrs)
This course builds around the center of the way the early Christian evangelists used the Psalms to understand and articulate the significance and resolution of the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Toward this end, the course studies the context of Israelite and Jewish understandings of the messiahs, sons of God, sons of David, sons of man, and eschatological prophets. The course, as did early interpreters, draws from diverse passages in canonical and traditional literature. The course traces the historical development of ideas and interpretations across historical circumstances. Prerequisite: one first-level Hebrew Bible or New Testament course.

TH 6327 **Advanced Special Topics in Scripture and Antiquity** (3 hrs)
These courses build on special areas of expertise among the scripture faculty and have a solid foundation in the academic study of biblical literature and its contexts. Prerequisite: one first-level Hebrew Bible or New Testament course.

TH 6331 **Biblical Hebrew** (3 hrs)
This course builds toward a reading knowledge of the Hebrew Bible through memorization of the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of classical Hebrew.

TH 6332 **Biblical Greek** (3 hrs)
This course builds toward reading knowledge of the Septuagint and New Testament through memorization of the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of common Greek.

TH 6333 **God Triune and Incarnate: Historical and Contemporary Theology** (3 hrs)
The central theological claim of Christianity is that the creative source, ground and end of all reality is revealed as the Triune God of love through the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. This course examines the historical development of this claim, especially in the first five centuries of church history. The course also examines in detail some of the major questions raised about the plausibility and significance of this claim in the modern period and some representative Christian theological responses to these questions. This course is required of all students.

TH 6334 **Faith, Reason, and Theology: Historical and Contemporary Models** (3 hrs)
This course introduces students to the discipline of theology, with a particular emphasis on what has come to be called systematic theology in the contemporary academy. To this end, students study both historical and contemporary examples of systematic theology in order to understand more clearly how theology 1) is related to ecclesial and personal faith in God’s revelation; 2) calls upon human capacities for reason; 3) utilizes texts, traditions, experiences, and practices as sources, and 4) serves the church, academy, and society by presenting a plausible description of Christian faith and practice in response to contemporary questions and problems.

TH 6336 **Church and the Human Person: Historical and Contemporary Theology** (3 hrs)
This course focuses on two important and interrelated Christian theological claims, particularly as they have been understood in the Roman Catholic tradition. First, that human beings are created in God's image and destined for complete fulfilment in relationship to their divine ground. Second, that the church is the historical community through which God brings human beings toward this fulfilment. The course examines the historical development of these key theological ideas, with a particular emphasis on the Catholic theology of sin, grace and sacraments. The course also examines in detail contemporary questions in ecclesiology and theological anthropology, with a particular emphasis on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the Catholic understanding of person and church in today’s complex cultural situation.

TH 6337 **Sacraments and Liturgy** (3 hrs)
This course examines Sacramental and Liturgical Theology and their practices, from biblical, doctrinal and pastoral perspectives. It examines biblical and historical roots and developments, and is especially attentive to the texts for the Second Vatican Council.

TH 6352 **Christian Social Ethics** (3 hrs)
This course deals with the question of how Christian faith relates to the economic, social and political dimensions of human life. It addresses fundamental issues, examples of which could be: the church’s relationship to the world and role in the public sphere, the relationship between church and state, and Catholic social theory, economic justice, and peacemaking in a violent world. The course surveys the methods and content of the discipline of Christian social ethics, and makes connections to social

ministry. The development of the modern tradition of Catholic social teaching receives special emphasis.

TH 6354 **Sin, Conscience and Conversion** (3 hrs)
This course is an in-depth study of the theological realities of sin, conscience, and conversion with an analysis of their ethical implications. The course examines original sin, personal sin, social sin, conscience as moral development and the concept of conversion in both a religious and a moral sense.

TH 6355 **Theology of Human Sexuality, Marriage and the Family** (3 hrs)
In this course students explore the theological understanding of the nature of human sexuality; the biblical, theological, and psychological dimensions of marriage; and the Christian understanding of family. The course concentrates on the following topics: human sexuality as a fundamental element of human existence, marriage as a sacramental and social reality, God and marriage, and the theological and social significance of family.

TH 6356 **Christian Medical Ethics** (3 hrs)
This course explores methods of moral theology and how they impact the praxis of ethical evaluation and moral judgement in the realm of medicine. This includes a focused consideration of health care in general as well as the relation of Christian faith to certain selected moral issues of a medical nature.

TH 6357 **Spirituality and Christian Practice** (3 hrs)
This course introduces students to the discipline of Christian Spirituality and the practice of Christian life in community. It examines how biblical spirituality formed the basis of Christian Spirituality during one or more periods of Christian history by making an in-depth study of how spirituality was influenced by and/or influenced some of the main theological movements of the period. It includes a consideration of living a life in faith in Christian community and initiates students into methodologies and research techniques appropriate to this interdisciplinary field.

TH 6359 **Contemporary Issues in Christian Ethics** (3 hrs)
This course is an in-depth consideration of how Christian faith and belief impact ethical evaluations regarding selected moral issues in contemporary society. This includes a survey of the historical foundations of Roman Catholic moral theology, the role of scripture and natural law, moral norms, conscience, moral responsibility, sin, and contemporary approaches to moral development as they pertain to the specific issues identified.

TH 6360 **Theology in the Southwest United States** (3 hrs)
This course examines the theological questions arising from the experience of Christian life and worship in the Southwest. The sources of this study are directly applicable to this unique region and, in addition to theology, may include cultural and sociological studies related to identity formation, practices that uniquely manifest faith and worship, and a study of the historical development of the Christian tradition in this area.

TH 6361 **Theology and Lay Ministry** (3 hrs)
In this course students explore the role of lay ministers in the Catholic Church by examining the biblical and theological understandings of ministry and their relation to various interpretations of the Church's mission. Topics may include the roles played by ecclesiology, pneumatology, culture, and interdisciplinary models of leadership.

TH 6362 **Theology and Catechesis** (3 hrs)
This course examines the relationships of theology to catechesis and of catechesis to the Church's understanding of its mission and identity. It explores the biblical and theological foundations for catechesis, a critical and constructive reading of Church documents, and a theological exploration of the relationship of catechesis to Christian salvation. Additional topics may include the distinctions between evangelization and catechesis, the role of culture, educational theory, or parish structures on catechesis. Additionally, students may be asked to reflect on the practical application of theology to the ministry of catechesis.

TH 7382 **Survey in Systematic Theology** (3 hrs)
This survey investigates a doctrine or topic in systematic theology and shows the interpretation(s) it has received as a result of varied theological methods and historical context. The course is explicitly both historical in its approach and demonstrative of the critical role played by the interaction of faith, reason, and theology. Topics may vary. Students may repeat the course for credit when topics differ.

TH 7391 **Capstone** (3 hrs)
This seminar is designed to be the culminating experience of a student's courses. As such it seeks to integrate learning in different areas of theology and prepare the student to continue theological inquiry and application after coursework. Specific topics vary with the expertise of the instructor.

TH 7388 **Special Topics in Religious Studies** (3 hrs)
Topics vary from semester to semester.

Department Faculty

Theology (M.A.) Faculty Website

Department Website

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