

Advanced Certificate

Program Guide



UNION

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

2026-2027

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MISSION STATEMENT

Progressive theology has long taken shape at Union, where faith and scholarship meet to reimagine the work of justice. Grounded in the Christian tradition and responsive to the needs of God's creation, a Union education prepares its students for committed lives of service to the church, academy, and society. A Union education develops practices of mind and body that foster intellectual and academic excellence, social justice, and compassionate wisdom. Union forms courageous faith leaders who make a difference wherever they serve.

CORE VALUES

Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, founded in 1836, is a historically progressive Christian seminary with increasing commitment to interreligious engagement and spirituality. Our mission is encapsulated by the phrase: "where faith and scholarship meet to reimagine the work of justice." This quest for justice is broad and includes social justice and activism, responsive care for communities and individuals, the pursuit of collective well-being, and of human and planetary flourishing. In particular, exploring the religious and spiritual dimensions of this quest defines our distinctive mission.

These commitments have allowed defining of "core values" that express this mission and guide our teaching and learning. They are what we aim to teach our students:

- To grasp the substance of the Christian tradition and the other primary traditions of students through the study of scripture/sacred texts, theology, history, and tradition-specific practices
- To be in continued dialogue with other religious traditions on those traditions' own terms and to dialogue with the spiritually non-affiliated with respect and care
- To develop the ability to theologically engage the human quest for meaning and spiritual connection
- To develop the capacity for self-reflection as well as the capacity to respond to others in ways that are compassionate and open-hearted
- To develop capacities for critical analysis of the ecological, social, and cultural systems in which persons, communities, and traditions exist, recognizing that spiritual and religious beliefs and practices are expressed in ways determined by conditions of time and place
- To cultivate a theological understanding of the earth and its diverse ecosystems in a manner that fosters an informed commitment to planetary well-being and justice
- To form a secure base for both ethical decision-making and spiritual wisdom in service to the needs of the world
- To educate impassioned, informed, and wise leaders and community members capable of engaging the pressing issues of our day with integrity and courage

Developed and approved by the faculty in academic year 2019-2020

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

The Advanced Certificate in Social Justice explores the intersection between social ethics, religion and spirituality, and the ongoing struggle for a more just society. It is a twelve-credit, four-course program that can be completed between nine and twenty-four months. This program is designed to meet the needs of part-time students with professional and personal commitments who are looking to pursue advanced study.

Many courses applicable to program requirements occur online on weekday evenings and/or weekends, with some online courses. Students may complete the program completely online based on coursework interests, scheduling flexibility, desired time-to-completion, and semesterly course offerings. Students able to attend daytime on-campus courses have a greater selection of offerings and can complete the program in an expedited manner.

A goal of this program, within Union's broader mission to be the place "where faith and scholarship meet to reimagine the work of justice," is for students to develop competencies in their specific field of study.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

In keeping with the vision of Union's founders, Union students should be equipped by their education to "respond to the claims of the world" with "intellectual and academic excellence, social justice, and compassionate wisdom". Union's curricula intentionally engage unjust disparities in society based on gender, race, class, sexuality, religion and other divisive or marginalizing forces. The goal is to cultivate the ability to respond to these disparities with analytic rigor, historical consciousness, sensitivity to tradition, and equanimity and compassion. Student academic progress is assessed based on program objectives as refined by particular courses taken in certain fields of study.

Advanced Certificate in Social Justice

The overall objectives of the program, refined during coursework within several fields of study, are as follows:

- To develop competencies in understanding social and cultural contexts significant for contemporary theology and ethics, the life of religious institutions and community organizations, and the promotion of justice in the world
- To cultivate a vision of professional identity and a pattern of ministry (broadly defined as spiritually grounded service and leadership) appropriate to student abilities, vocational goals, organizational context(s), and faith tradition(s)
- To develop capacity to listen to, interpret, express, and/or critique the transformational goals of a community or organization in public and communal contexts

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Advanced Certificate program requires completion of twelve credits with one to two years of part-time study. Students are limited to advanced, 200-level or higher courses; introductory 100-level courses are not permitted to be taken for credit towards program requirements. Generally, each semester consists of one to two courses or three to six credits.

A summary of fields and associated course subject codes is as follows:

Bible/Sacred Texts: Cross-Testament (BX), Hebrew Bible (HB), New Testament (NT), Sacred Texts (STX)

Historical Studies: Historical Studies (HS),

Interreligious Engagement: Interreligious Engagement (IE), Buddhism-focused courses (BU), Islam-focused courses (IS)

Practical Theology: Anglican Studies (AS), Communication Arts (CA), Worship, Preaching, & Arts (CW), Denominational Studies (DS), Integrative & Field-Based Education (FE), Psychology & Religion (PS), Practical Theology (PT), Religion & Education (RE), Religion & Society (RS)
Theology and Ethics: Philosophy of Religion (PR), Social Ethics (SE), Theological Studies (TS)

Credit Distribution Requirements

Students acquire basic social justice knowledge in the theological discipline with a required three credits in a foundational Social Ethics (SE) course as specified below. Additionally, students select three credits in either Social Ethics (SE) or Religion and Society (RS), as well as a total of six elective credits (two courses) from at least two of the following areas:

- Theological Studies (TS), Historical Studies (HS), or Bible/Sacred Texts (BX/HB/NT/STX)
- Interreligious Engagement (IE) of non-Christian tradition
- Practical Theology (PT), Worship, Preaching and Arts (CW), or Religion and Education (RE)

The following table outlines the **Credit Distribution Requirements** for the ACSJ:

	Credits Required
FOUNDATIONAL COURSE	3
Social Ethics: • SE 208 – <i>Moral Traditions and Social Ethics</i> OR • SE 322 – <i>Social Ethics in the Making</i> OR • UT 103 – Introductory Colloquium	
CORE ELECTIVE COURSE	3
• Social Ethics (SE) OR Religion and Society (RS) course	
DISTRIBUTIONAL ELECTIVE COURSES	6
<i>Students choose a course in two of the three areas below</i>	
a) Bible, Historical Studies, Philosophy of Religion, or Theological Studies	
b) Interreligious Engagement, Buddhist Studies, or Islamic Studies	
c) Psychology & Religion, Practical Theology, Worship, Preaching and Arts, or Religion & Education	
TOTAL CREDITS	12

POLICIES

General academic policies can be found in Union’s Academic Catalog. The policies below are specific to the Advanced Certificate.

Degree Admission/Transfer

The advanced certificate may lead to interest in a degree program. Following admissions criteria and pending acceptance, up to twelve credits from the Advanced Certificate may be applied to one of Union’s degree programs, depending on degree requirements. Students may apply for a degree program after the completion of at least one semester in the advanced certificate. Admission to an Advanced Certificate program does not guarantee admission to a degree program. Contact the Admissions Office at admissions@utsnyc.edu for further questions.

Academic Progress

It is strongly encouraged that students take at least one course each fall and spring semester to maintain academic progress toward certificate completion. Students who choose not to enroll in any courses for a fall or

spring semester must formally request a leave of absence. Advanced Certificate students have a maximum of two years to completion.

Advanced Certificate students are assessed against program objectives, but are not subject to official assessment measures required of degree candidates. Successful completion of an Advanced Certificate does not result in classification of alumni/ae, as only academic degree-seeking candidates result in official graduation from the Seminary.

Academic Standing

Awarding of the Advanced Certificate occurs with successful completion of at least 75% of the program at average or above-average performance. Students who receive more than one deficient final grade (MC/NC) in a course are not eligible to continue in the program. View the academic catalogue for more details on the official Seminary grading scheme.

Auditing

Advanced Certificate students may not audit courses while enrolled in the Advanced Certificate. After they have completed their program, they are welcome to audit courses

ADVISING AND COURSE REGISTRATION

All Advanced Certificate students are assigned an advisor to provide academic support, guidance toward program completion, and assistance in achieving curricular and individual learning goals. Academic advising may occur at any time, and students are strongly encouraged to seek advising as needed and to develop and maintain a relationship with their faculty advisor.

Incoming Advanced Certificate students receive advising from the Academic Office over the summer, and are **required** to meet with their advisor following the group registration session to confer about their individual course plans. Students are required to consult with their advisor prior to registration in subsequent semesters of study, and will have a registration hold placed on their account until lifted by the advisor. Each semester, the Registrar sends detailed information about the course registration process including self-registration instructions. Questions should be directed to the advisor or registrar@utsnyc.edu as appropriate.

Students are responsible for keeping their advisors informed about any changes to their academic or vocational plans. In addition to a student's assigned advisor, all faculty members, the Dean/Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Assistant Dean for Academic Administration are ready and willing to offer advising in their areas of expertise and competency.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment of student learning at Union is a continuous process that takes place at both the course level and program level, with two main objectives:

1. to provide students with feedback on their progress toward and achievement of personal, course, and program objectives
2. to provide administration and faculty with a means to continually evaluate program effectiveness so that modifications and improvements can occur

Students are provided with an ePortfolio to deposit evidence of their fulfillment of program requirements and achievement. The ePortfolio is accessed through Google Drive affiliated with the @utsnyc.edu email (not

personal Gmail accounts). See appendix for more information and instructions. The current assessment plan requires the following documents be deposited into the ePortfolio as specified:

Preliminary Documents – *deposited one week before advisement/orientation*

1. Admissions essay – by Academic Office staff
2. Current résumé or CV as available/updated – by Academic Office or student

Registrar's Documents – *deposited by final semester*

3. Unofficial transcript with narrative evaluations – by Academic Office

Academic Work – *deposited by student during final semester*

4. At least one assignment **with instructor comments** (if available) from each of the four courses taken for the certificate.

APPENDIX A

How to Access Your ePortfolio

Every Union student has an ePortfolio: a folder created by the Academic Office. That folder lives in the student's Google Drive associated with their @utsnyc.edu email address (not the Drive connected to a personal Gmail account). If you cannot access your ePortfolio after following these instructions, email Chris McFadden at cmcfadden@utsnyc.edu or academics@utsnyc.edu for assistance. Access to your ePortfolio is available any time.

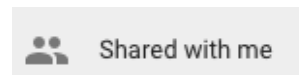
1. To access your Google Drive, log into your utsnyc.edu email inbox. In the upper right corner of the screen, there is an icon of nine small squares. Float your mouse over the icon to see "Google Apps" icon.



2. Select the "Google Apps" icon. A menu of apps appears including the **Google Drive** icon. Select the **Drive** icon to display your list of Google Drive folders.



3. On the left side of the screen, select the folder "Shared with me".



4. Look for **your ePortfolio** in the "Shared with me" folder, named like:
[Degree] ePortfolio - (2023) LastName, FirstName - ab1234

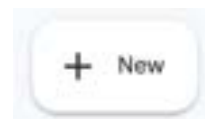
(your entrance year)

(your UNI)

5. Select the folder to open the contents of your ePortfolio.

How to Upload a Document to Your ePortfolio

1. Follow the above to access your ePortfolio
2. In the upper-left corner of the screen, select the "**NEW**" button
3. Select "**File upload**". Browse for your file on your computer and select it your file. In a few moments, an upload status box reads "1 upload complete"
4. Your uploaded file is shared automatically with your Assessment team



Follow this **Naming Convention** for Academic Work to Upload Files:

Last Name First Name Course # Instructor Name Genre/title

(example): *Mirando Nicole NT101 Niang Exegetical Paper (or Revelation Paper)*

Device Warning:

- If you are using Gmail in a web browser on a device such as a smartphone or tablet, you may not have access to Google Apps (you won't see the Google Apps square icon in your inbox).
- If you download the free Google Drive app for your device and sign in to your UNI Gmail account, you can access your Drive and ePortfolio directly.