

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#"><u>Mission</u></a>	1
<a href="#"><u>Core Values</u></a>	1
<a href="#"><u>Description and Purpose</u></a>	1
<a href="#"><u>Program Objectives</u></a>	2
<a href="#"><u>Program Requirements</u></a>	2
<a href="#"><u>Advisement and Course Registration</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>Assessment and Evaluation</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>Appendix</u></a>	5

## MISSION STATEMENT

Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York is a seminary and a graduate school of theology established in 1836 by founders “deeply impressed by the claims of the world upon the church.” Union prepares women and men 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. Grounded in the Christian tradition and responsive to the needs of God’s creation, Union’s graduates 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 Interreligious Engagement (ACIE) allows students to explore the intersection between interreligious engagement and the ongoing struggle for a more just society. The twelve-credit, four-course program 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, looking to pursue advanced study.

Many courses applicable to program requirements occur 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 for ethical interreligious engagement.

### **Transfer/Degree Admission**

The advanced certificate may lead to interest in a degree program. Following admissions criteria and pending acceptance, up to twelve credits from the ACIE 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](mailto:admissions@utsnyc.edu) for further questions.

### **Academic Progress**

As an advanced certificate, as opposed to an academic degree, students are exempt from certain policies and related administrative procedures. Unlike full-time degree programs, students in the Advanced Certificate in Interreligious Engagement (ACIE) are not required to follow continuous registration. This part-time program has a more flexible time-to-completion and students may choose to not register for a fall or spring semester (Summer/January optional), without requesting an official leave of absence from the Seminary. Still, it is strongly encouraged that students take at least one course each fall and spring semester to maintain academic progress toward certificate completion. ACIE students have a maximum of two years to completion. Those not registered for two consecutive fall/spring semesters are withdrawn and must reapply to the program.

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 an alumni/ae, as only academic degree-seeking candidates result in official graduation from the Seminary. View the academic catalog on this webpage: <https://utsnyc.edu/academics/registrar/course-catalog-academic-policies/> for more details; certain policies are applicable to advanced certificate students.

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

In keeping with the vision of Union's founders that 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 for all programs intentionally engage unjust disparities in society based on gender, race, class, sexuality, religion and other divisive or marginalizing forces.

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

- To develop awareness of central concerns, approaches, and methods of interreligious engagement
- To expand knowledge of diverse religious traditions, including but not limited to, Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam
- To develop skills for ethical interreligious engagement in a variety of professional contexts

The Advanced Certificate in Social Justice (ACIE) assesses student academic progress based on the above objectives as refined by particular courses taken in certain fields of study, as identified in the following section.

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The Advanced Certificate in Interreligious Engagement (ACIE) requires completion of twelve credits with one to two years of part-time study. Students are limited to advanced, 200-level or higher courses; 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 total of twelve credits, or four courses, are required as follows:

- Three credits (one course) in theories and methods of Interreligious Engagement
- Six credits (two courses) in two different religious traditions, or comparison of traditions
- Three additional Interreligious Engagement credits (one course)

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), Denominational Studies (DS)

**Interreligious Engagement:** Interreligious Engagement (IE)

**Practical Theology:** Communication Arts (CA), Worship, Preaching, and Arts (CW), Psychology and Religion (PS), Practical Theology (PT), Religion and Education (RE), Religion and Society (RS)

**Theology and Ethics:** Philosophy of Religion (PR), Social Ethics (SE), Theological Studies (TS)

### Credit Distribution Requirements

The following table outlines the requirements for the program:

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS	
	Credits Required
Interreligious Engagement (IE) course in theory and methods (ACIE-TM)	3
Course in a religious tradition or comparison of traditions (ACIE-TC)	3
Course in <i>another</i> religious tradition or comparison of traditions (ACIE-TC)	3
Additional Interreligious Engagement (IE) course	3
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	12

Courses fulfilling a specific distribution requirement are indicated in the Notes portion of applicable course descriptions in the academic catalogue with the specific code as reflected in the above table.

Assessment of progress throughout the program is evaluated based on the above requirements. View the appropriate section below for more details.

### Course Load and Planning

Students are generally limited to two courses or six credits in each fall and spring semester, and one course or three credits in the optional January and Summer sessions. ACIE students are expected to complete the degree in no more than two years.

### 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.

### Supplemental Co-Curricular Courses

Some *Supplemental Co-Curricular* courses (SU 150 and SU 190) provide opportunities for specialized knowledge in social justice areas. ACIE students may **audit** up to three one-credit SU 150/SU 190 courses at no additional charge during their enrollment in the program.

## ADVISEMENT AND COURSE REGISTRATION

Consultation with program advisor takes place for a variety of purposes and students are strongly encouraged to seek advisement as needed. However, established advising requirements must occur prior to the course registration period. Students are responsible for keeping their advisors informed about any changes of plan that may take place along the way, and for seeking advisement as needed.

Incoming Advanced Certificate in Interreligious Engagement (ACIE) students are **required** to meet with the program advisor prior to each course registration period. First semester advisement usually occurs during new student orientation.

The course registration periods normally are as follows:

- Summer opens in February
- Fall opens in April
- January and Spring open in November

Students in the ACIE are expected to regularly read their @utsnyc emails. Each semester, the Registrar sends detailed information about the course registration process including self-registration instructions. Questions should be directed to the program advisor or [registrar@utsnyc.edu](mailto:registrar@utsnyc.edu) as appropriate.

## 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

ACIE 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** from each of the following:
  - Interreligious Engagement (IE) course in theory and methods
  - Each course (two) in a religious tradition or comparison of traditions
  - Additional Interreligious Engagement (IE) course

## **APPENDIX**

### Appendix A: ePortfolio Access Instructions