

# Advanced Certificate Program Guide

# UNION

WHERE FAITH AND SCHOLARSHIP MEET  
TO REIMAGINE THE WORK OF JUSTICE

2024 - 2025

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## 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

Union Theological Seminary offers four Advanced Certificate programs. 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. View the description, objectives, and credit distribution requirements for each program below.

Many courses applicable to program requirements occur online on weekday evenings and/or weekends. 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.

### ***Advanced Certificate in Interreligious Engagement***

Students explore the intersection between interreligious engagement and the ongoing struggle for a more just society.

### ***Advanced Certificate in Religion and Black Experience***

Students examine the religious experience, ideas and practices of the African diaspora in multinational, multifaith and gendered contexts.

### ***Advanced Certificate in Social Justice***

Students explore the intersections between social ethics, religion and spirituality, and the ongoing struggle for a more just society.

### ***Advanced Certificate in Spirituality***

Students engage in spiritual reflection to cultivate critical awareness with particular attention to the interreligious engagement work of the field.

## 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.

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

### ***Advanced Certificate in Interreligious Engagement***

- 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

### ***Advanced Certificate in Religion and Black Experience***

- To develop a multidisciplinary understanding of the history, practices, ideas, and religious experiences of the African diaspora.
- To expand knowledge of the entangled relation between race and religion in the modern world, especially in the US.
- To explore groundbreaking contemporary scholarship and literature in black religion that has emerged from Union’s legacy as the birthplace of black liberation and womanist theologies.

***Advanced Certificate in Social Justice***

- 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

***Advanced Certificate in Spirituality***

- To cultivate critical self-awareness and emotional and spiritual maturity
- To engage in spiritual self-reflection with particular attention to interreligious engagement
- To respond to others with empathy and self-awareness

**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:** Communication Arts (CA), Worship, Preaching, & Arts (CW), 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)

***Advanced Certificate in Interreligious Engagement***

A total of twelve credits, or four courses, are required as follows:

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

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

	Credits Required
Interreligious Engagement (IE) course in theory and methods	3
Course in a religious tradition or comparison of traditions	3

Course in <i>another</i> religious tradition or comparison of traditions	3
Additional Interreligious Engagement (IE) course	3
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	12

### ***Advanced Certificate in Religion and Black Experience***

A total of twelve credits, or four courses, focusing on the Black Experience are required across the following fields:

- Three credits (one course) in Philosophy of Religion (PR) or Theological Studies (TS)
- Three credits (one course) in History (HS) or Social Ethics (SE)
- Three credits (one course) in Worship, Preaching, Arts (CW) or Bible (BX, HB, NT)
- Three credits (one course) in Religion and Society (RS) or Interreligious Engagement (IE)

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

	<b>Credits Required</b>
Philosophy of Religion (PR) or Theological Studies (TS) course	3
History (HS) or Social Ethics (SE) course	3
Worship, Preaching, Arts (CW) or Bible (BX, HB, NT) course	3
Religion and Society (RS) or Interreligious Engagement (IE) course	3
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	12

### ***Advanced Certificate in Social Justice***

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:

	<b>Credits Required</b>
<b>FOUNDATIONAL COURSE</b>	3
Social Ethics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SE 208 – <i>Moral Traditions and Social Ethics</i> <b>OR</b></li> <li>• SE 322 – <i>Social Ethics in the Making</i></li> </ul>	
<b>CORE ELECTIVE COURSE</b>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Social Ethics (SE) <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Religion and Society (RS)</li> </ul>	
<b>DISTRIBUTIONAL ELECTIVE COURSES</b> ( <i>Indicated in Notes of applicable course descriptions in the academic catalogue</i> )	6 (from two different field areas below)
a) Designated course in either Bible, Historical Studies, Philosophy of Religion, or Theological Studies	
b) Designated Interreligious Engagement (IE) course of non-Christian tradition	
c) Designated course in Psychology & Religion, Practical Theology, Preaching, Arts, & Worship, or Religion & Education	
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	12

### **Advanced Certificate in Spirituality**

A total of twelve credits, or four courses, are required as follows:

- Three credits (one course) in Psychology and Religion (PS)
- Three credits (one course) in Interreligious Engagement (IE)
- Three credits (one course) in Worship, Preaching, Arts (CW)
- Three general elective credits relevant to the student's goals

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

	<b>Credits Required</b>
Psychology and Religion (PS) course in spiritual care	3
Interreligious Engagement (IE) course	3
Worship, Preaching, Arts (CW) course	3
General elective course	3
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>12</b>

### **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](mailto:admissions@utsnyc.edu) for further questions.

### **Academic Progress**

As the Advanced Certificate is not a degree, students are exempt from certain policies and related administrative procedures. Unlike full-time degree programs, students in the Advanced Certificate program 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, 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. Advanced Certificate 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 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.

### **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. Advanced Certificate students may **audit** one one-credit SU 190 course at no additional charge each semester they are enrolled in classes. Other courses are not eligible for audit.

## ADVISEMENT AND COURSE REGISTRATION

Consultation with the advisor takes place for a variety of purposes and students are strongly encouraged to seek advisement as needed. 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 students are **required** to meet with their assigned advisor prior to registering for their first semester, and are strongly encouraged to meet with their advisor during each subsequent advising period before registering. The course registration periods normally are as follows:

- Summer: February- April
- Fall: April-September
- January: November-December
- Spring: November-January

Students 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.

## Registration Limits

Advanced Certificate students generally take three or six credits a semester, and limited to the following credit totals:

- First semester: no more than 8 credits
- Subsequent fall/spring semesters: no more than 11 credits (NOTE: the 11 credit limit for spring is a total cap of 11 credits across January and spring, combined)
- January term: no more than 3 credits
- Summer term: no more than 6 credits

## 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*

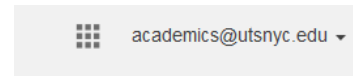
4. At least one assignment **with instructor comments** from each course taken towards the certificate.

## 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](mailto:cmcfadden@utsnyc.edu) or [academics@utsnyc.edu](mailto:academics@utsnyc.edu) for assistance. Access to your ePortfolio is available any time.

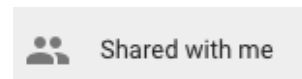
1. To access your Google Drive, log into your utsnyc.edu email inbox. In the upper right corner of the screen, there is an icon of nine small squares. Float your mouse over the icon to see "Google Apps" icon.



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

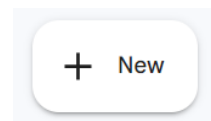
(your entrance year)

(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.