

DMin Handbook



Photograph by: Roy Weinstein, 2011

2019 - 2020

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Union Theological Seminary 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.

All information regarding Union Theological Seminary’s degree programs, academic policies, and graduation requirements can be found on Union’s academics website (<https://utsnyc.edu/academics/>). All Union students, including DMin students, should review carefully the current version of the [Student Handbook](#), which includes important policies and procedures. Please note that changes (including modification of policies and cancellation of courses) may be made at any time. Additional information regarding classes and other academic matters may be sent via UTS email accounts to DMin students by the program director or registrar.

1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1.1 Rationale for the Program

The purpose of Union Theological Seminary’s Doctor of Ministry degree is to enhance the practice of ministry among spiritual care providers serving in multicultural and interreligious contexts (Association of Theological Schools [ATS] Standard E.1.1.1; E.1.2.2). The DMin program at Union is focused on Spiritual Care Leadership Education. The Director of the DMin Program oversees the administration of the program in collaboration with the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Union’s DMin program has three audiences (or tracks). The degree is designed primarily for students seeking an academic program to complement the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Supervisory certification process. The program offers advanced study in the disciplines necessary to meet the CPE certification conceptual expectations. A second track is for those seeking to become Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) National Faculty, that is, ACPE Certified Educators who wish to train other supervisors. A third track is under development for religious leaders seeking further training in spiritual care, with an emphasis on clinical leadership (in churches, religious institutions or social service and social justice agencies).

The intersection of theological education with clinical training and educational studies has a long history at Union, beginning with the hiring of George Albert Coe in 1909, a

pioneer in the integration of psychology with a progressive educational philosophy. Coe was a mentor to Anton Boisen, whose vision helped to shape the National Conference on Clinical Pastoral Education in 1954 (now the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education [ACPE]). Union inaugurated its program in Psychiatry and Religion in 1956 (changed to Psychology and Religion in 2014). In 1971, the Seminary integrated this program into its curriculum, with courses offered at the masters and doctoral levels (with approximately 44 Ph.D. graduates since 1963).

Union strongly encourages its masters students to enroll in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE); CPE is a requirement for MDiv and MA students concentrating their studies in Psychology and Religion. The Seminary is a satellite of the ACPE-accredited Center for Pastoral Education at The Jewish Theological Seminary, across the street from Union. The JTS Center offers CPE Levels I and II, as well as Supervisory CPE. In 2014, Union created a distinctive hybrid field education-CPE program, offering the CPE educational model for students in field education. The hybrid CPE program serves as a prototype for an effective learning model that facilitates integration of students' theoretical knowledge and understanding with their practical experience in particular ministerial contexts.

The increasing number of students applying for CPE and the concomitant increase in programs has left the ACPE unable to keep the rate of retirement of supervisors in balance with the certification process of new supervisors. Generally, a supervisory education student (SES) draws upon a guided reading list in order to prepare students to write the three theory papers in theology, psychology, and adult education that are required in the certification process. In contrast to this solitary pursuit, Union's DMin program provides students with courses led by faculty specialists, with a collaborative learning community, and with an array of resources. The coursework will provide ample opportunity for students to "present" in varied modes and to interact with their peers. Moreover, Union's strength in interreligious engagement and in theological-cultural studies contributes significantly to the need for supervisors to respond in learned ways to the complex realities of the diversity that is increasingly characteristic of CPE groups.

1.2 Goals and Learning Outcomes of the Program

The goals of the DMin program reflect the mission and vision of the Seminary in general and the purposes of this doctoral program in particular (ATS E.1.3). The learning outcomes identify advanced and integrated knowledge, skills, and competencies that a graduate of the Union DMin program is expected to be able to demonstrate.

GOAL I: To enable students to acquire comprehensive knowledge of the disciplines necessary for clinical supervision within the broad scope of religious leadership.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will

1. Demonstrate clear professional knowledge in and a general mastery of clinical spiritual care education.
2. Demonstrate expertise in clinical and conceptual supervision.

GOAL II: To provide students with the skills needed to engage in leadership of Clinical Pastoral Education and related fields of professional functioning.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will

3. Demonstrate a capacity to produce original, publication-worthy research and writing that contributes to the knowledge and advancement of the field.
4. Demonstrate an ability to teach effectively for CPE Level I and II, and at the graduate level for Supervisory CPE.

GOAL III: To engage students in a sustained exploration of the connections and interactions between the disciplines of clinical pastoral education and clinical supervision.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will

5. Demonstrate knowledge of the distinction and relation between spiritual care/supervision and methods of theological and religious studies.
6. Demonstrate an ability to engage critically in interdisciplinary discourse.

GOAL IV: To cultivate in students a commitment to communicate their knowledge and to interpret the subject matter of their discipline with sensitivity to particular academic, religious, and cultural contexts.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will

7. Demonstrate an ability to interpret and to communicate their knowledge for different cultures and publics.
8. Demonstrate a facility in working in situations of religious pluralism.

1.3 Design and Delivery of the Program

Union's DMin is a 42-credit, hybrid program consisting of nine (9) credits of in-person, residential instruction in August, twenty-seven (27) credits of online courses, and six (6) credits for the final integrative project. The online courses have both synchronous and asynchronous components. Union does not charge additional fees for identity verification for its online courses (disclosure required by Middle States Commission on Higher Education). An MDiv or its equivalent is a prerequisite for the DMin program (ATS E.4.1).

2. ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

See current information on [Union's Academic Policies & Procedures and the Student Handbook](#).

2.1 Course Credits

Students will complete forty-two (42) credits for the program. The Students in the metropolitan New York area may, with the permission of the DMin program director, enroll in courses at member schools of the New York Theological Consortium. Such courses must be directly linked to their DMin program of study. To apply for such a course, see [Cross Registration Application](#).

With the prior permission of the DMin program director and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, a student may take a course at another accredited seminary or graduate school (outside of the NY Theological Consortium) and transfer the credits to Union. A course previously taken at another institution may also be transferred. Such courses must be directly linked to their DMin program of study. They also must be at the graduate level and not counted toward another degree or certificate program. Union does not pay for the costs of these courses. Instead, the student covers all costs. See Union's [transfer of credit policy](#) for more information.

See also Union's [credit hour policy](#) for more information about expectations of workload per credit hour.

2.2 Class Assignments and Extensions

All assignments must be original and submitted on time as determined by the course syllabus (see section 4.2 on plagiarism). If there is a need for additional time to finish final written assignments, a student may apply for an extension. Please note that Union allows for limited time for the completion of extensions and does not grant a grade of incomplete. Instructors set the dates on which papers and other requirements, apart from final examinations, are due. The latest date that may be set in the semester is prescribed by the [Academic Calendar](#).

For good and sufficient cause (such as personal illness or other serious circumstances beyond the student's control) a student may request an extension of the due date from the instructor. Instructors may grant extensions of up to one week at their discretion; this request must be made before the work is due. Late work completed with the instructor's permission should be given directly to the instructor by the date agreed upon.

Students who need more than a one-week extension to complete final course assignments must apply in writing using the [form](#) provided by the registrar's office.

1. Students complete a form that is sent to the instructor and then to the Academic Dean (see link below).
2. Students taking courses at other institutions are subject to the rules of that institution with respect to extensions. It is recommended that Union students do not request extensions for courses at other institutions.
3. A temporary final grade of Extension (EXT) is assigned for the course until the actual final grade is submitted.
4. If the assignments are not submitted to the instructor and registrar by the deadline, a grade of No Credit (NC) is recorded as the final grade for the course.

5. Extensions are not allowed in the spring for graduating students.
6. After submission of the approved form by faculty, the registrar requests approval from the Academic Dean.

2.3 Policies and Procedures for Leave of Absence

Students are generally required to be enrolled continuously from admission to graduation. However, students who are faced with extraordinary personal circumstances may be eligible for a leave of absence. Leaves of absence are negotiated through the office of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and approved by the Academic Dean. See “Policies and Procedures for Leave of Absence,” “The Process for Withdrawing from Union,” and the “Procedures for Re-Admission” that are found in the [Student Handbook](#).

2.4 The Doctor of Ministry Project

Normally, the project proposal is submitted during the middle of the last academic year (third year). The student drafts a proposal, which the program director and first reader examine.

All projects must fulfill the standards mandated by the [Association of Theological Schools](#):

E.2.4: The program shall include the design and completion of a written doctoral-level project that addresses both the nature and the practice of ministry. This final summative project should be of sufficient quality that it contributes to the practice of ministry as judged by professional standards and has the potential for application in other contexts of ministry or presentation in professional forums.

E.2.4.1: The project should demonstrate the candidate’s ability to identify a specific theological topic in ministry, organize an effective research model, use appropriate resources, and evaluate the results. It should also reflect the candidate’s depth of theological insight in relation to ministry.

E.2.4.2: Upon completion of the doctoral project, there shall be an oral presentation and evaluation. The completed written project, with any supplemental material, should be accessioned in the institution’s library.

If the projected research involves work with live human subjects (e.g., interviews, focus groups), the student should review Union’s [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) guidelines and complete an IRB [application form](#) as needed (see IRB [FAQ](#)).

There are three options by which the Doctor of Ministry culminating project may be completed:

Option 1: Extended Essay on Spiritual Care Education

Designed particularly for persons in the process of becoming an ACPE Certified Educator

This extended essay of ca. 70 pages synthesizes the study undergirding the three theory papers required by the ACPE on theology/spiritual perspectives, personality theory, and education.

It should consist of at least five chapters and a bibliography.

1. Introduction, including a description of the context in which this essay is being formulated, a clear synthesis statement, and an overview of the essay.
2. A theological / spiritual/ personal sacred meaning perspective most pertinent to spiritual care: description and analysis
3. A personality theory or theories most pertinent to spiritual care: description and analysis
4. An educational theory or theories most pertinent to spiritual care: description and analysis
5. Conclusion, including ways in which the three theories interact and affect one's practice of spiritual care and ministerial/pastoral practice more generally.

Option 2: Preparation of 2 articles of publishable quality

This culminating project involves preparing two articles that take up specific issues in spiritual care that will be submitted to refereed journals in the areas of spiritual care, ministerial practice, adult education, etc.

Each article should be approximately 3,000 words and follow the format of the journal to which the candidate plans to submit it.

Option 3: Thesis

This culminating project involves preparation of an academic paper of ca. 100 pages that explores in-depth a particular issue in spiritual care education. It includes a description of the context in which the issue arises and is being addressed, analysis of the issue based on research, and a proposal of ways this issue might most adequately be approached.

2.5 Completion of the Program

Students can finish the DMin program in three years (ATS E.3.2). However, a student may be granted an extension by an appeal to the Director of the DMin Program, with the approval of Dean of Academic Affairs. An extension may be granted for one year at a time, recorded in the Academic Office. If after six (6) years the student has not completed the DMin program, he or she may be dismissed.

3. ADVISEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

3.1 Advisement

The DMin program director serves as the academic advisor for all DMin students. Because the majority of course work in the DMin program is done online, it is vital that

students in the program meet each semester with the program director; for students at a distance, this should be done via videoconference. This conference provides an opportunity not only to discuss academic progress, but also to raise any personal matters that affect their studies. At the conclusion of each term, the program director will report to the academic dean about each student's progress in the program.

3.2 Course Registration

The registrar's office registers DMin students in the summer for the summer and fall semesters and in the fall for the spring semester via email communication, which serves to document student consent. All official communications with students are conducted via their UTS email accounts so consult your UTS email account regularly or set it up to forward to an account that you check regularly.

For the policy and procedures regarding dropping and/or adding courses, please see the Course Catalog or Student Handbook. To add or drop a course with your advisor's approval, use the [Add-Drop Form](#). Consult the [academic calendar](#) for deadlines on dropping and adding courses and withdrawing from courses.

3.3 Mentoring and Assessment of Students

At least once each academic year, the program director should meet with all DMin students, preferably in person or via videoconference. These meetings are occasions for the advisor and student to assess progress in course work and skill acquisition, and to explore topics for the focus of the DMin project.

Assessment of student learning is a continuous and integral part of the DMin program from matriculation to completion. Upon admission, each DMin student will be provided with an ePortfolio into which they will place significant evidence of their learning as they progress through the program. At the end of each semester, students should deposit at least one assignment per course into their ePortfolio. (It is expected that faculty will create assignments and apply grading rubrics that address both course and program goals and learning outcomes. Program goals and learning outcomes should be referenced on syllabi.) During the student's final semester (in March or April), the program director and a member of the Assessment Committee will conduct an assessment conference with the student to provide feedback to the student and to solicit feedback from the student. After the final, integrative project is completed, the program director and member of the Assessment Committee will complete a final assessment report based on the student's demonstrated achievement of program goals and learning outcomes as evidenced directly by course papers, performance-based CPE supervisor evaluations, final grades with narrative evaluations, and indirectly by the student's self-assessment survey (to be completed prior to the conference). The program director and Assessment Committee will review annually the aggregated data from the final assessment reports.

4. REVIEW OF STUDENTS

4.1 Good Standing (Satisfactory Academic Progress—SAP)

Students remain in good standing in the program as long as they have finished all coursework in a timely fashion and have received a grade of “CR” or “CD” in their courses. Students receiving a grade of “MC” or “NC” will be reviewed by the Committee on Standing, which meets in January and June each year. See the [Student Handbook](#) for policies and procedures related to good standing, academic warning and probation.

4.2. Plagiarism

Students at Union are expected to observe the highest standards of integrity and honesty in their academic work. A critical part of such honesty consists of proper acknowledgement of the ideas of others and the complete absence of plagiarism in submitted work. See the discussion of plagiarism in the [Student Handbook](#) for definitions and consequences. All students at Union are expected to understand what plagiarism is and to avoid it in all circumstances.

4.3. Dismissal from the Program

A student who fails to meet stated expectations that are stipulated during probation or warning is subject to dismissal from DMin program. Dismissal may be appealed to the via the procedures outlined in the [Student Handbook](#).

5. OTHER MATTERS

5.1. Behavioral Standards

Union recognizes the importance of student academic progress and personal wellbeing. Bearing in mind the safety and wellbeing of all members of its community, the Seminary may take the following actions against a student who is manifesting behavioral issues that may impede their safe and successful participation in the academic program, or that threaten the safety or well-being of others. Consult the [Student Handbook](#) for more information about behavioral standards and potential consequences. The handbook also contains information regarding withdrawals, leaves of absence, satisfactory academic progress.

5.2. Access to Records and Privacy Rights

Under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), students registered at the Seminary have the right to review their educational records. View the Access to Education Records portion of this webpage: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/students.html?>

Union Theological Seminary defines directory information as outlined on this webpage: <https://utsnyc.edu/academics/registrar/ferpa-facts-figures/>. More information about FERPA including directory information is also available via the above page.

Complaints regarding alleged violations of a student's rights under the Act should be sent to the Academic Dean. They may also be submitted in writing to the:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
[400 Maryland Avenue SW](#)
[Washington, D.C. 20202](#)-8520

Additional information on FERPA may be accessed through the webpage and the Department of Education website.

5.3. Disability Services and Accommodations

Union admits students regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin, gender identity and expression, or disability to all the rights, privileges and programs generally accorded or made available to students at the seminary. Union does not discriminate on the basis of any of these in the administration of its educational and admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, or other programs administered by the seminary.

Students with disabilities are afforded full participation in the seminary's programs and activities. In response to a request made by a qualified student with a documented disability, the seminary will provide disability-related services, including reasonable academic accommodations, in order to ensure students with disabilities have equal opportunity to attain the same quality of education as students without disabilities.

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs (212) 280-1396 or studentaffairs@uts.columbia.edu coordinates services for students with permanent and temporary disabilities, in accordance to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Consult the Student Handbook for details on requesting disability services and accommodations.

5.4 Library Resources

All Union students, including DMin students, have access to the Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, which is part of the Columbia University Libraries system (ATS E.3.3.3). In addition, students have access to borrowing consortia, including Borrow Direct, which includes Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Princeton, University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale. Several Borrow Direct schools (Duke, Harvard, Princeton, University of Chicago, and Yale) support graduate degrees in religious and theological studies.

The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary is world renowned, containing rich collections for theological study and research with holdings of over 700,000 items including unique and special materials. Throughout its long history, the Burke Library has maintained its commitment to the needs of both teaching and research, serving the faculty, students, and staff of Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, as

well as a wide spectrum of national and international scholars and researchers. For more information, please visit: library.columbia.edu/burke.

The Columbia University Libraries (library.columbia.edu) system is one of the top five academic research library systems in North America. The collections include over 12 million volumes, over 160,000 journals and serials, as well as extensive electronic resources, manuscripts, rare books, microforms, maps, and graphic and audio-visual materials.

6. OVERVIEW OF DMIN CURRICULUM

Summer Semester

2 weeks
August Residency
Courses

Fall Semester

15 weeks
Online Courses

Spring Semester

15 weeks
Online Courses

Year 1	<p>Orientation</p> <p>Wellness & Self Care (1 cr.)</p> <p>Theological Issues for Spiritual Care and Supervision (2 cr.)</p>	<p>Professional and Clinical Ethics (3 cr.)</p> <p>Adult Education Theories: Best Practices (3 cr.)</p>	<p>Psychodynamic Theory for Supervision (3 cr.)</p> <p>Interreligious and Intercultural Engagement (3 cr.)</p>
Year 2	<p>Research Literacy (1 cr.)</p> <p>Group Development and Process (2 cr.)</p>	<p>Research Methods and Process (3 cr.)</p> <p>Contextual Perspectives on Culture and Justice (3 cr.)</p>	<p>Systems, Organizations, Leadership, and Administration (3 cr.)</p> <p>Guided Reading in Clinical Supervision (3 cr.)</p>
Year 3	<p>Research Integration Seminar (2 cr.)</p> <p>Theory and Practice of Teaching (1 cr.)</p>	<p>Independent Thesis/Project Work (3 cr.)</p> <p>Guided Reading/Elective (3 cr.)</p>	<p>Independent Thesis/Project Work (3 cr.)</p> <p>Guided Reading/Elective (3 cr. if not completed in fall)</p>