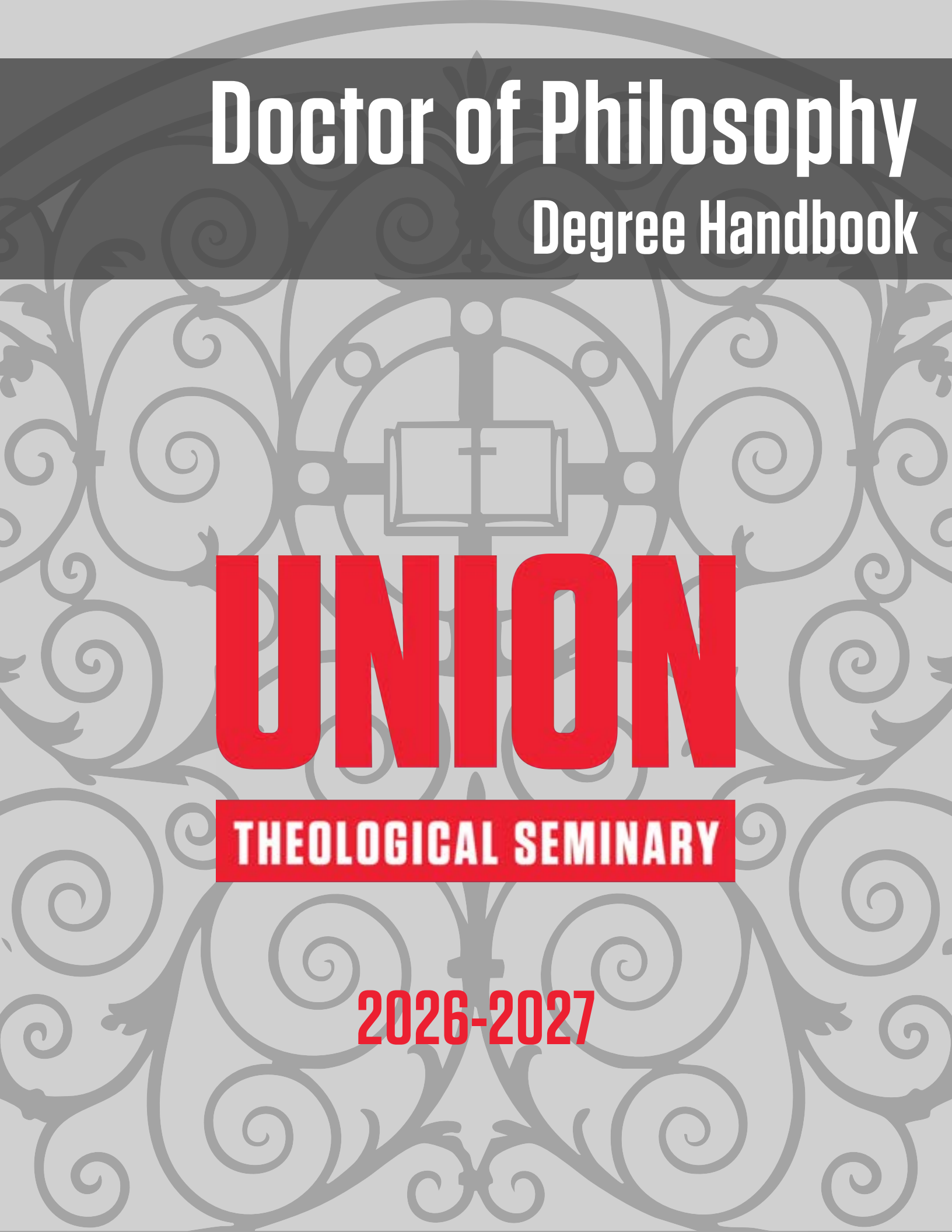


Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Handbook



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

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Union Theological Seminary offers the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree for students who want to teach in colleges, universities, and seminaries, or to hold positions of leadership in churches, religious institutions or social service and social justice agencies. The PhD program offers advanced study in theological disciplines, with major concentration in one of the following fields.

1.1. Fields

- Bible: Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Cross Testament
- Historical Studies
- Interreligious Engagement
- Theology and Ethics: Philosophy of Religion, Social Ethics, Theological Studies
- Practical Theology: Psychology and Religion, Religion and Education, Religion and Society, Worship, Preaching, and Arts

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 (BU), Islam (IS)

Practical Theology: Communication Arts (CA), Worship, Preaching, and Arts (CW), Denominational Studies (DS), 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)

1.2. Interdisciplinary Study

Students select a minor concentration in either a second field or academic discipline relevant to their research. The concrete form and implementation of the major-minor structure varies by field. This structure is designed to enable interdisciplinary cross-fertilization and “mutual illumination” that is intended to generate original scholarship. This structure also equips graduates with the academic versatility and expanded teaching competency that will serve to optimize their employability in a competitive market.

The interdisciplinary nature of the Doctor of Philosophy program is enhanced by a two-year long doctoral seminar that gathers students across fields and prepares graduates to teach and to lead in the diverse, multireligious, and multicultural contexts of today’s world.

1.3. Goals and Outcomes

The goals of the PhD program reflect Union’s mission and vision, and the particular purposes of the doctoral program. The learning outcomes identify advanced and integrated knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of a graduate of the Union PhD program.

Goal One: To enable students to acquire comprehensive knowledge of the disciplines of study with specialization in a particular field. Students will develop an expert’s knowledge of the specific topic of their research and of the subject matter of the dissertation. They will be able to do research at the highest level in that field.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge in and a general mastery of their major field.
2. Demonstrates expertise in the specific area of the minor field.

Goal Two: To provide students with the skills needed to engage in original research, writing, learning, and teaching at the college, university, and seminary level in their field, and to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field through research and publications.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrates a capacity to produce original, publication-worthy research and writing that contributes to the knowledge and advancement of the field.
2. Demonstrates an ability to teach effectively at the graduate and undergraduate level.

Goal Three: To engage students in a sustained exploration of the connections and interactions between the objective disciplines of religious studies and the more existentially engaged disciplines generally described as Christian theology.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrates knowledge of the distinction and relation between the subject matter and methods of theological and religious studies.
2. Demonstrates an ability to engage critically in interdisciplinary discourse.

Goal Four: To equip students with a dual competency that enables them to teach undergraduate courses in a field other than the area of their specific expertise.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrates advanced knowledge of contents and methods in a field other than their own.
2. Demonstrates an ability to teach effectively at the undergraduate level in a field other than their own.

Goal Five: 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 Outcome:

1. Demonstrates an ability to interpret and to communicate their knowledge for different cultures and publics.

1.4. Faculty and Administration Authorship

The description of the PhD program that follows, with its procedures, policies and protocols, is authored by the faculty of Union Theological Seminary. A majority vote of the full-time faculty of the Seminary is needed for major revisions. The Director of the program assists the Dean/Vice President for Academic Affairs in overseeing the administration of the program. The Committee on Standing addresses and reviews deficient grades including appeals, as well as other issues that may arise with students in the program. The Doctoral Admissions Committee assists in selecting students for admission into the program.

STUDENT PROGRESSION

2.1. Major and Minor Concentration

Applicants to the Doctor of Philosophy program identify and describe the rationale for their choice of the major field of specialization and, if established, minor field. According the major-minor structure, students usually have two advisors, pursue course work and comprehensive exams in both areas, and write a dissertation in one area in a way that integrates the other into the research. Mastery of the subject matter is expected to qualify candidates for doing research and teaching on the graduate level in their major, and undergraduate teaching in their minor.

2.2. Program Planning and Advising

First-year doctoral students are required to have a program planning conference with their primary advisor prior to course registration for the Fall semester. This conference frames an overall vision of the program, reviews the student's preparation for the program, and outlines a course of study. The advisor then submits the program plan: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/phd_program_plan

During residency, students meet with their advisors at least once each semester, prior to registration, to assess their progress and plan for the next semester. Once students have completed residency, they continue to meet at least once a semester to review progress on the comprehensive exams or dissertation. This is also an opportunity to raise any personal matters that may significantly affect their studies and to discuss their calendar for completing the program.

If at the end of a given semester, a student has not met the expected timeline of the program, the advisor will indicate to the Director of the program, the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Registrar that the student has met the conditions to be placed on warning (see below).

2.3. Residency Requirements and Extended Residence

Students admitted to the doctoral program should pursue advanced study for two academic years of residency (coursework) at the Seminary, while working under the advisement of their primary and secondary advisor.

Union's Master of Sacred Theology (STM) program offers advanced-level coursework designed to prepare students to "study more deeply a theologically related discipline, often in preparation for doctoral studies" (ATS Standard 4.12), therefore, graduates may apply up to half of the required PhD credits towards the minimum for the degree. Such credits should be directly relevant to the student's major or minor concentration decided with the advisor(s) in the Program Planning Conference.

After completing the residency requirements, PhD students must register for Extended Residence (UT 400) every semester they are active in the program, and pay the reduced Extended Residence tuition. During Extended Residence students may not take any courses for credit.

2.4. Course Credits

Students complete 43 credits of coursework, ordinarily divided as 27 credits in the major, 12 credits in the minor, and 4 credits of the required doctoral seminars (UT 550 and UT 551), which are one credit each semester. The ratio between major-minor credits may be adjusted in consultation with the advisors in either direction for reasons that are particular to each student and their project, provided that the purposes of having a major and minor are served.

During residency students should take 3-12 credits at another institution. Candidates majoring in Bible or focusing their studies on Early Christian History may take up to 16 credits to accommodate the need for study of ancient languages, and candidates in Bible may exceed the 16-credit limit with written approval from their advisor. Institutions with which Union has a cross-registration agreement include: Columbia University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Teacher's College at Columbia University, General Theological Seminary, Jewish Theological Seminary, Fordham University's Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, Drew University Theological School, and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary.

2.5. Doctoral Seminar

The 1-credit doctoral seminars, UT 550 — *Doctoral Seminar I* (Fall) and UT 551 — *Doctoral Seminar II* (Spring), are taken by PhD students in their first two years of study. The seminars help integrate students into a community of learning that connects them across different fields of specialization.

2.6. Language Examinations

Each candidate must become proficient in reading scholarly materials in two modern languages other than English. Students may meet the language requirement by passing examinations in Spanish, French, and/or German administered by Union on dates stated in the academic calendar. Both modern language requirements should be completed before a student begins comprehensive exams.

Other modern languages may be substituted for Spanish, German or French if the student and his/her advisors make the argument that they are more useful for the student's scholarly research. Such substitutions are approved by the program Director and the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs. Students with native language other than English may request to waive **one** of the two modern language requirements with submission of this **Language Substitution Request Form**: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/lang_substitute.

Certain fields may also require proficiency in ancient languages in addition to this requirement such as Hebrew, Greek, or Latin.

2.7. Workshops and Social Gatherings

Doctoral students participate in activities and events that are part of the PhD community and designed to contribute to a strong and vibrant communal life of doctoral students Union Theological Seminary. These activities and events may include practical workshops, social gatherings, panel discussions, communal dinners and the like. They are coordinated by the Director of the program, with the help of a student assistant.

2.8. Comprehensive Examinations

The functions of the comprehensive exams (comps) are:

1. to ensure broad knowledge of the major field of specialization and competency in the minor field of concentration
2. to test the student's academic skills in research and writing
3. to provide knowledge and resources that inform the student's dissertation topic and proposal

PhD students are expected to begin their comprehensive exams after they have finished their coursework and completed their modern language requirements. They should pass their four comprehensive examinations by the end of a twelve to fifteen-month period after coursework, that is, by September 1 of their fourth year.

The faculty of each field of study sets the requirements for the comprehensive examinations and determines its own pattern according to the exigencies of the discipline. The fields are to review the templates for comps on a regular basis, revise them as necessary and submit an electronic copy to the Director of the program, who makes them available on the Union website.

Comps may be completed in various modes including timed exams, oral exams, take-home exams, essays, or combinations of these. At least one exam should have a major oral component. No comprehensive examination constitutes a proposal for the dissertation. However, comprehensive examinations are normally meant to lead into writing the dissertation, in consultation with the advisor. Since comps should be completed in 12-15 months, this means that on average each exam should be able to be completed in three months or, if longer, another exam may be completed in less than three months. Advisors who assist students in designing their comps should be attentive to the balance of the scope and time of each comprehensive examination.

The student initiates the planning of the Comps Prospectus with the advisor. Readers for each exam should be chosen by the student and the advisor in consultation with other faculty as needed. The faculty advisor, in collaboration with the student, designs the overall plan of the comps, presents the Comps Prospectus to the field for review and approval, and reports the approval in writing to the Director of the program. It is then uploaded to the student's ePortfolio.

The four comprehensive examinations are distributed among their major and minor as follows:

- A. Three (3) comprehensive exams in the major field; one (1) comprehensive exam in the minor field **OR**
- B. Two (2) exams in the major field; one (1) exam in the minor field; one (1) exam that combines the major and minor fields

Comprehensive exams are graded pass/fail.

The faculty members in the fields in which they are taken approve the Prospectus for the comprehensive examinations. The student's faculty advisor(s) supervises the comprehensive exams and reports the results **within one week** using the **Comprehensive Exam** form: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/comp_exam_phd. The evaluation of the first reader should clearly note the relevant identifiers of the exam. If the student has not passed, the specific grounds for failure should be clearly stated.

If a student does not pass a comprehensive examination, it should be administered again. As appropriate, the first reader may include in comprehensive exam form a note on any special factors that may have played a role in the first exam, and any specific measures that will be taken in the second administration of the second exam to respond to those factors. Normally the second exam should be analogous to the first. A third reader should be involved in this second exam.

Should a student fail the same comprehensive examination a second time (as determined by a majority of the readers), both the student and the readers should prepare a report for the Director of the program for submission to the Committee on Standing, which review whether the appropriate procedures were followed in designing, administering and evaluating the first and second exams. The options of the committee are a) on the basis of evidence provided by the relevant major and minor fields, give the student a pass on solid grounds, other than the exam itself, supporting the student's knowledge; b) with approval of the relevant field, decide that a third exam should be administered, possibly involving a different constellation of readers; or c) decide that the student should be dismissed from the Union Doctoral Program. In the event of a third exam, two of the three readers must agree on a pass, and its results will determine whether the student remains in the Union Doctoral Program. The results of this process following a second failure of a field exam will be final and not subject to further appeal.

2.9. Master of Philosophy

After satisfactorily completing the four comprehensive examinations and all other requirements stated above, the candidate is awarded the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) at the next commencement. Students must complete all the requirements **a month prior to graduation** in order to participate in the ceremony.

2.10. Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

After the MPhil requirements have been completed, the student becomes a candidate for the PhD and begins the dissertation process.

2.11. Dissertation Proposal

Students write their dissertations in their major field. The dissertation is enhanced by the minor field or involve some kind of dialogue among fields. Normally, the dissertation proposal is submitted **within six months following the completion of the comprehensive examinations**. The student drafts a proposal, which the principal advisor examines. When the advisor believes the proposal is ready for formal review, a hearing is set up with the student and at least two other members of the dissertation committee. The committee is chosen by the student in consultation with the advisors. It is usually made up of three Union faculty members, including the student's advisor(s), and one outside reader from another school who is especially competent in the topic of the dissertation.

After this committee approves the proposal, the primary advisor completes the **Doctoral Dissertation Proposal** form: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/dissertation_proposal_phd and submits **within one week** after the proposal's approval.

2.12. Dissertation

The student writes the dissertation under the direction of the advisors and the professors on the dissertation committee. While working on the dissertation, candidates are obliged to develop with their advisors a calendar of regular contact and a timetable for completion of their work. The advisors, in turn, have the responsibility to set up with the student the procedures and schedule of writing to be followed in developing the dissertation: i.e., meetings, completion of drafts, etc. The advisors assume responsibility for working out difficulties should they arise.

2.13. Dissertation Defense

When the advisor, in consultation with the student, agree that the dissertation is ready for defense, they contact the members of the dissertation committee and determine the date. The student should send the completed dissertation to the committee members at least three weeks prior to the defense. The latest possible date to defend each spring is provided in the Academic Calendar, as is the latest possible date to deposit the dissertation. It is important that the revision and submission process be calculated in scheduling the defense.

After the defense, the primary advisor must submit the **Dissertation Defense** form within one week: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/dissertation_defense_phd.

2.1. Submission of Dissertation to the Library

After the dissertation is successfully defended, the final copies of the dissertation are submitted electronically to the ProQuest dissertation and thesis database. This is a requirement for the degree program. At least a month prior to the submission deadline, students should meet with the Head of the Burke Library to discuss the ProQuest submission process, copyright, trends in scholarly communication and other ways to disseminate your research (e.g., institutional repositories). Librarians receive specialized training in these fields and are valuable partners in the dissertation writing process.

Students should prepare their dissertations for deposit to ProQuest by saving the final copy, with revisions, as a PDF. After submission by the student, the Associate Dean receives notification of the deposit and confirms submission. No diploma is issued until this submission process is completed. Students may also submit their dissertations to Academic Commons, Columbia University's institutional repository.

2.15. Completion of the Program

Students can finish the PhD program in four to five years. They are expected to finish within seven years. However, a student who has not defended the dissertation after seven years may submit an appeal for a one-year extension to the Director of the program **by June 30** of the seventh year. The appeal needs to be supported in writing by the student's dissertation director and be approved by the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs. Extensions may be renewed up to the tenth year. If after ten years the student has not presented the dissertation for defense, they are dismissed from the program.

2.16. Assessment

Assessment of student learning and progress through the program is a continuous and integral part of the doctoral program from inception to completion. Students regularly maintain ePortfolios (see Appendix A) that provide direct (performance-based) and indirect (perception-based) evidence of their learning and academic success as well as their progress through the stages and requirements of the program. The ePortfolios contain the student's admission essay, program plan, yearly *Student Self-Assessment*, yearly *Advisor Assessment*, a

substantial paper written each year, the comps prospectus, evaluations of teaching fellowships, evaluations of the comprehensive exams, and the dissertation prospectus. A full list is available in Appendix B.

Throughout the program, ePortfolios are continually updated and reviewed in accordance with an outcome and evidence-based assessment process. The process begins in the first semester with the deposit into the student's ePortfolio of the curriculum vitae and application essay. The advisor reviews these documents in preparation for the program planning conference. The student then deposits the program plan filed by the advisor. The student and advisor may update or modify the program plan and deposit updates into the ePortfolio as warranted.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

3.1. Advisors

Faculty members act as primary or secondary advisors, usually according to the major-minor structure of the respective PhD student. After completion of the comprehensive examinations, the director of a student's dissertation, who may or may not be one of the student's initial advisors, becomes his or her advisor. Normally, the director of a student's dissertation will be a full-time Union faculty member. The primary and secondary advisors will agree on which one takes the lead for the dissertation.

3.2. Program Planning Conference

In the first semester of residency the advisors of each new student have a conference with their advisee to frame an overall vision of the student's program, review the student's preparation for it, and outline a course of studies to submit a **Program Plan**: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/phd_program_plan. If any aspect of the student's educational preparation for the doctoral program at Union so warrants, the faculty members conducting the conference may recommend or stipulate remedial courses. Such a stipulation must be put in writing and be part of the PhD program plan. This Conference should decide how the two advisors cooperate in the advising of the student.

3.3. Yearly Assessment

At least once each semester, advisors are to meet with their advisees. These meetings are occasions for the advisors and students to assess progress in course work and language acquisition, and to explore topics for comprehensive examinations and the focus of the dissertation.

At the end of each academic year that the student is in coursework (**no later than May 31**), students must complete an annual **Self-Assessment**: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/phd_yearly_assessment_self. A hold is placed on the student's registration if the self-assessment is not completed. The self-assessment requires that students evaluate the proficiencies identified in the program's desired learning outcomes. Thereafter, **no later than September 15**, students confer with advisor(s) in a *Student Progress Conference*. The advisors review the current contents of the ePortfolios, assess the student's proficiencies in light of the learning outcomes, and determine if the student is progressing through the program in a timely manner. They then prepare the annual **Advisor Assessment**: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/phd_yearly_assessment_advisor, which is submitted into the ePortfolio **no later than September 30**.

If an advisor believes that a student is not in good academic standing or is concerned with a lack of progress or achievement, the advisor should note the student's lack of progress in the **Advisor Assessment**. The advisor should indicate whether or not the student should be placed on warning, pending review by the Committee on Standing (as applicable – see appropriate section below).

After coursework is concluded, advisors and students are still expected to confer at least once a semester. Students complete an Extended Residence Semester Report at the beginning of each semester: https://utsnyc.formstack.com/forms/extended_residence_semester_report, which is then reviewed and

approved by the advisor, with comments. This allows the advisor, PhD Director, and the Academic Office to track a student's progress. If the dissertation director becomes aware of any impediments to timely and satisfactory completion of the program, the program Director must be notified. In response, the program Director may consult with the advisor(s) and/or student or initiate action before the Committee on Standing.

3.4. Change of Primary Advisor

In the event of a faculty member's departure from Union or their withdrawal of support for a student, the field, after consultation with that faculty member, recommends to the Director of the program and the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs arrangements for the student. The Dean, however, is not bound by the field's recommendation. Students may also petition the Director of the program for a change of advisor. The petition should include, a) the reasons for making the change, and b) the name of the faculty member who has expressed his or her availability to assume the position. The Program Director consults with the Committee on Standing and recommends that the Dean appoint another faculty member as advisor, in consultation with the student and the new advisor.

3.5. Committee on Standing

The Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Director of the program, convenes the Committee on Standing (CoS) for situations that require review of program policies and procedures, and issues pertaining to any students' failure to maintain good academic standing (see appropriate section below) after completion of coursework. The Director of the program serves on the CoS when PhD students are involved.

3.6. Doctoral Admissions Committee

The Doctoral Admissions Committee is composed of one faculty person from each of the fields of study, one additional faculty member elected at large, and the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs and President serving ex officio. The task of the Doctoral Admissions Committee is to create two ranked lists of students from those who have applied for admission, 1) a ranked list of the top tier students corresponding to the number of available slots for doctoral admission in the given year, with the President and Dean publicizing to the faculty the number of available slots before the admissions process begins; and 2) a ranked waiting list of students who can be contacted in the order of their ranking upon the withdrawal of candidates from the first tier list. If an available slot is not filled in a given year by a student in the top tier list or the waiting list, that open slot shall be added to the available slots the following year if financial resources suffice.

Members

Each field, in whatever manner it decides, selects its own representative. The representative of each field need not have read the files of all the applicants in the other areas, but must read the files of all the applicants short-listed by all other fields before the committee selects the students to whom admission may be offered.

Procedures

Two weeks before the meeting for the ranked nomination of candidates for admission, the fields decide upon a short list of their top candidates, ideally sharing with their colleagues their judgment of those candidates' ranking. At a maximum a field submits a short list of candidates not greater than or equal to the total number of slots available for doctoral admission in a given year. A field is not required to recommend a candidate.

Timeline

The deadline for applications is **January 1** of the year of entry. Faculty members read the folders during the month of January, and candidates for each field should be decided during the first field meeting of the semester. The member of the Doctoral Admissions Committee selected by each field should read the folders of the applicants short-listed by the other fields in mid-February, as the Committee meets during the fourth week of February to make the decision on applicants following a general faculty discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates short-listed by each field.

3.7. Teaching Fellow/Class Assistant/Research Assistant

Teaching Fellow

The rationale for teaching fellowships is primarily pedagogical, to support PhD students in gaining training and experience in teaching. The assignment of teaching fellows (TF) should be congruent with the pedagogical content and methods of individual faculty members' courses. Budgetary constraints, availability of doctoral students, and a fair distribution among faculty members are also factors that must be considered.

Eligibility of PhD Students:

A PhD student is eligible to accept a teaching fellowship upon the following:

1. The student's advisor in consultation with the student must assess and approve the student's pedagogical readiness and availability in relation to other work and progress in the program overall.
2. Every TF must successfully complete a PhD teaching colloquium course during the first two years of residency. RE 504-Theology and the Educational Process is preferred; another graduate education course may be substituted.

Faculty Request for Teaching Fellow:

Should occur in the semester prior to, but no later than the first week of the semester the course is taught, following this sequence:

3. Approach the student to inquire about interest and availability, and negotiate an appropriate job description. If the student agrees...
4. The student arranges a meeting with their advisor to initiate the advisor-student consultation as described above. If the advisor agrees...
5. The faculty member submits a request in writing to the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs, including the course description and a job description for the TF. Teaching fellows can never be given final responsibility for grades, and faculty should be the only one to enter/submit official final grades; professors are expected to closely supervise the TF's participation in grading.

Professors cannot make any promises to students about TF appointments until this formal request has been approved. Upon approval by the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs, the student must accept this appointment in writing (email is acceptable) to the Dean and the professor of the course.

Eligible Courses:

Courses should normally have a projected enrollment of twenty students or more to receive a TF. A second TF may be requested following the above process if enrollment reaches thirty-five or more. Requests for more than two TF's cannot normally be honored.

Compensation:

Teaching Fellows receive \$3,000 per course (\$1,500 salary + \$1,500 scholarship). The scholarship portion for this appointment is credited to the student's account at the Seminary when they register at the beginning of the semester of the appointment. The TF's salary is paid through the Seminary's bi-weekly payroll. The Business Office manages the payroll and salary checks are spread throughout the duration of the semester. First semester pay runs from September through December; second semester pay runs from February through May. Every TF's salary is subject to payroll deductions for taxes as required by the law. The student is responsible for filing a W-2 form with the appropriate office. **The student must initiate this before beginning the semester, consulting the academic office budget coordinator first**, who then notifies the financial aid office.

Conferences and Evaluation:

- A. Faculty should schedule regular conferences with their TF throughout the semester. A minimum of 3 meetings (once before classes begin, once approximately at midterm to assess progress, and prior to final grading for the course) should occur.

- B. Teaching fellowships are an important part of the student's overall vocational preparation, therefore faculty are expected to write a brief evaluation of the TF's performance. A *Teaching Fellow Teaching Evaluation* (see also Appendix G) is submitted to the Director of the program, added to the student's e-portfolio, and emailed to the Registrar for the permanent academic folder – no later than the start of the subsequent semester. This is considered evidence for the student's overall progress, but an official grade is not recorded. Faculty should also provide TF's with student feedback from the course evaluations, and should summarize this in their own evaluation.

If no Union PhD student is available as TF:

Full-time faculty may request an outside person with appropriate pedagogical experience and training in the field to be hired as a "Visiting Assistant Instructor." Once identified, follow the same approval process (see above). Compensation is \$3,000 per course.

Class Assistant

Normally PhD students hired on an hourly basis to assist with clerical, technological, and other logistical work for a course. CA's have no role in teaching or evaluating students in the course, nor in performing personal duties for faculty members. The request process is the same as for TF's (see #2 above). Priority is given to requests for CA's for new courses or courses with heavy administrative needs.

Compensation:

CA's are paid on an hourly basis at \$20/hour, with timesheets submitted through the Seminary's bi-weekly payroll, and may work up to a maximum of \$1,320 per semester. **The student must initiate this before beginning the semester, consulting the academic office budget coordinator first.**

Research Assistant

Normally PhD students who can be assigned as allowed within each faculty member's contract. RA's have no role in teaching or evaluating students in a course, nor in performing personal duties for faculty members. The request process is the same as for TF's (see #2 above), minus submission of a course description. To ensure the fair distribution among faculty, a faculty member is not normally assigned more than one RA per semester.

Compensation:

RA's are paid on an hourly basis at \$25/hour, with timesheets submitted through the Seminary's bi-weekly payroll, and may work up to a maximum of \$1,875 per semester. **The student must initiate this before beginning the semester, consulting the academic office budget coordinator first.**

ACADEMIC REVIEW

4.1. Good Academic Standing

Good academic standing is defined in a number of ways. Students are considered in good academic standing in the program as long as one of the following developments does not occur:

- a student has not received a course grade below Credit (CR) in any course in a given semester
- a student has not successfully completed all required coursework and fulfilled the requirements of two modern languages by the beginning of the fifth semester in residence
- comprehensive examinations have not been completed by fifteen months after a student has successfully completed all required coursework
- a dissertation proposal has not been approved by one year following awarding of the MPhil

4.2. Warning

For students still in coursework, good academic standing in the program is affected by deficient grades (grades below CR). Students who receive a grade of marginal credit (MC) or no credit (NC) in one or more courses are subject to review by the Committee on Standing. View the complete Committee on Standing policy in the academic catalogue including criteria for warning, probation, and dismissal.

For students who have completed coursework, when any of the other above eventualities occurs student status is reviewed by the Committee on Standing (see appropriate above section) with possibility of being placed on warning for one semester. When the Committee places a student on warning, it must outline measurable, time-limited benchmarks for the student to complete in order to be restored to good academic standing.

Federal regulations require that Union Theological Seminary monitor the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) of degree-seeking students to determine their eligibility for federal financial aid programs. A student who fails to maintain SAP is first placed on financial warning. Students are expected to review the full policy in the academic catalogue.

4.3. Probation

If the student has **not** met the requirements to be removed from warning, and on the petition of the advisor within ten (10) days after the end of a semester on warning, accompanied by a rationale, the Committee on Standing (CoS) as applicable, may allow a student to continue in the program for one more semester on probation following a semester of warning. Normally this additional semester in the program is not granted without evidence of sufficient progress being made towards remedying deficiencies, or unless extraordinary circumstances warrant an additional semester in the program (on probation). The CoS must state measurable, time-limited benchmarks for removal of probation and restoration to good academic standing. Probation may continue for one additional semester upon further appeal by the student's advisor. If satisfactory progress cannot be made during a second semester on Probation, the student is automatically dismissed from the program.

Based on federal requirements, students who fail to meet SAP for a second consecutive semester or reach the end of their maximum time of completion, are no longer eligible to receive federal financial aid and have their aid suspended. Students have the right to appeal the suspension of their financial aid. Students are expected to review the full policy in the academic catalogue.

4.4. Dismissal

A student who fails to meet stated benchmarks while on warning or probation is liable to dismissal from the PhD program upon review by the Committee on Standing. Additionally, it is within the power of the Committee on Standing to dismiss a student, following a semester on probation. At the end of the probationary period, the CoS shall recommend either removal of probation, continued probation, or dismissal from the Seminary. Students are expected to review the full policy in the academic catalogue.

OTHER MATTERS

5.1. Housing

Doctoral students are eligible for five years of Seminary housing (two of which must be during Residency), with two one-year extensions for students who are making good progress in meeting degree requirements. In addition, under special circumstances, a student may apply for an additional one-year extension at a higher rate. The Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs, in conversation with the Director of Housing & Campus Services, makes this decision upon the recommendation of the program Director. This policy applies to new students and students currently living in Seminary housing.

The procedures for applying for an extension are as follows:

1. The basis for housing extensions is academic progress in the degree program. That is, it must be evident that the student requesting the extension has made reasonable progress in meeting degree requirements and further access to Seminary housing facilitates further progress.
2. The student must send a letter to the Director of Housing & Campus Services by March 1 that has been endorsed by the student's major advisor. Students must give their letters to faculty advisors by February 1 to obtain the necessary endorsements before the March 1 deadline. Housing extensions are normally considered only at the February field meetings.
3. The student's letter must give the reasons for requesting a housing extension and give complete details of the student's progress to date in meeting degree requirements and what requirements they intend to meet in the following year.
4. The Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs, in conference with the Director of Housing & Campus Services, approves the request for an extension only if the faculty advisor or dissertation director and the field have endorsed the request on the basis of academic progress.
5. If for any reason the Dean/Vice President of Academic Affairs is unable to approve the request, the matter may be referred to the Committee on Standing.
6. The Director of Housing & Campus Services informs students and faculty advisors of the outcome of extension requests no later than March 31.

5.2. Leave of Absence

The requirement to be enrolled in the Seminary continuously until graduation is normative. Students who are faced with extraordinary personal circumstances, however, should consult the rules and provisions for a leave of absence from the Seminary. View the complete policy in the academic catalog.

5.3. Dossier Service

Prior to graduation, PhD students are encouraged to set up a portfolio with "Interfolio," a dossier service that will store information that can be used in applying for jobs. The electronic address is <http://www.interfolio.com>. One may gather letters of recommendation and other files into packets that may be sent out by the service.

APPENDIX A – EPORTFOLIO ACCESS

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 Tim Halvorsen at thelvorsen@uts.columbia.edu or academics@utsnyc.edu for assistance. Access to your ePortfolio is available any time.

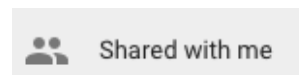
1. To access your Google Drive, log into your utsnyc.edu email inbox. In the upper right corner of the screen, there is an icon of nine small squares. Float your mouse over the icon to see "Google Apps" icon.



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 - (2026) LastName, FirstName - ab1234

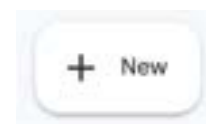
(your entrance year)

(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 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.

APPENDIX B – EPORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

The follow items are to be deposited in each student's ePortfolio:

- Admissions Essay – deposited by the academic office
- Program Plan – deposited by the student within one week after the program planning conference
- Self-Assessment – deposited annually by the student by May 31
- Advisor's Assessment – deposited annually by the academic office due September 30
- At least one substantial paper written in the past year – deposited annually by the student by May 31
- Comps Prospectus – deposited by the academic office within one week of approval
- Teaching Fellow Evaluation – deposited by the academic office at the end of each semester
- Comprehensive Exam Report – deposited by the academic office within one week of exam
- Dissertation Proposal – deposited by the academic office within one week of approval
- Dissertation Defense – deposited by the academic office within one week of defense
- Current Curriculum Vitae – deposited in advance of MPhil and PhD graduation by the student
- Request for Extension – deposited by the academic office within one week of approval

Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree Audit

Student Name: _____

Degree Audit Date: _____

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Forty-three (43) Credits** of coursework, ordinarily divided among nine courses/twenty-seven credits in the major, four courses/12 credits in the minor, and four credits of the doctoral seminar UT 150 and 151 (1 credit each semester over four semesters).
 - Graduates of Union's STM program can transfer up to half of the required minimum credits (that is to say, twenty-one) to the PhD coursework
- **Two modern languages** (generally French, German, and/or Spanish; other languages may be approved by the advisor, Program director, and Dean/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Students whose native language is other than English may request to waive one of the two languages.
- **Four Comprehensive Exams**

COURSEWORK

Credits Applied from STM (if applicable)			
Course #	Credits	Course #	Credits

Credits Accumulated During Residency							
Fall Year One		Spring Year One		Fall Year Two		Spring Year Two	
UT 550	1	UT 551	1	UT 550	1	UT 551	1

MODERN LANGUAGES

Language 1: _____

Exam Waived

Exam _____
Semester/year

Language 2: _____

Exam Waived

Exam _____
Semester/year

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

1. _____
Semester/year

2. _____
Semester/year

3. _____
Semester/year

4. _____
Semester/year