



# UNION

## 2020 - 2021

# Master of Sacred Theology

## Academic Program Guide



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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*

## OVERVIEW

### *Description and Purpose*

The Master of Sacred Theology (STM) is an advanced full-time, one-year, graduate degree primarily for students already awarded an MDiv or other graduate theological degree. The purpose of this academically-oriented degree is to prepare individuals to, “study more deeply a theologically related discipline, often in preparation for doctoral studies” (ATS Standard 4.12). The STM degree includes advanced-level coursework, a language requirement, and culminating scholarly research (ATS Standard 4.13).

The STM program has three goals (ATS Standards 4.12 & 4.13):

1. To acquire advanced mastery of a focused area in a theologically related discipline;

2. To develop an ability to formulate productive research questions and to use research resources and methods in the chosen area or discipline;
3. To improve language proficiency appropriate to the field of specialization.

The Master of Sacred Theology (STM) degree offers an opportunity for a relatively open structure of advanced theological study for those who already have theological degrees. A previous graduate theological degree (MA or MDiv) is a prerequisite for admission to the STM program. At Union, this degree has been particularly valuable in bringing a wide range of international students to the campus. The STM does not necessarily lead to admission to Union's doctoral program.

Union's curricula intentionally engage disparities in society based on gender, race, class, sexuality and other marginalizing forces. This is both a strength and challenge of studying in this environment. The goal is to provide the tools to respond with both analytic rigor and ministerial compassion. The Seminary's urban location and university affiliation also help shapes study at Union.

Union Theological Seminary is a member of the New York Theological Consortium. Students may take courses at other schools in the consortium and select courses at Columbia University. Students taking courses at other institutions are responsible for following policies and procedures outlined on this webpage: <https://utsnyc.edu/academics/registrar/course-registration-grades/cross-registration/>.

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

### *Coursework*

The STM degree is normally completed in one year and requires satisfactory completion of a minimum of twenty-four (24) credits in advanced courses (ATS Standard 4.12). Students are expected to take a combination of 200-level, 300-level, and 400-level courses with optional faculty-directed guided reading(s). An area of focus must be selected as part of the degree requirements. A summary of fields and associated course subject codes is as follows:

**Bible/Sacred Text:** Cross-Testament (BX), Old Testament (OT), New Testament (NT), Sacred Text (STX)

**Church History/Historical Studies:** Church History/Historical Studies (CH), Denominational Studies (DS)

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

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

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

### *Language Exam*

Students must pass a translation exam in a modern language (typically German, French, or Spanish) appropriate to their field of study (ATS Standard 4.13), or provide evidence of passing equivalent coursework to Union's first theological degrees, in Hebrew or Greek in another seminary/graduate theological program. Requests for a modern language substitution, if the native language is one other than English, are reviewed. STM students (domestic and international) who meet the criteria may request to substitute this degree requirement. Students should complete [this form](#) by the end of the add/drop period of the first semester; the form is submitted to the faculty advisor then academic dean.

### *Extended Paper*

In consultation with the faculty, students write an extended research paper (30-40 pages) on a certain topic as an extra assignment in one of their courses. This extended paper carries no additional credit, but is graded and evaluated. Details including submission instructions and deadlines are available on [this webpage](#). Normally completed in the Spring semester, students should complete this form by mid-November.

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING (ATS Standard 2.6)

As outlined in the following table, each of the program goals has a corresponding learning outcome, which is measured using direct and indirect evidence, including an admissions or application essay, a degree planner, official transcript, a language exam or equivalent, an extended paper, a student self-assessment survey, and a final assessment report completed by the student's advisor.

PROGRAM GOALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT DATA
<b>To acquire advanced mastery of a focused area or discipline in the context of general theological study</b>	Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of a focused area or discipline within the context of advanced courses and independent study in a specialized field.	Student ePortfolio contents:  1. Admissions essay 3. Transcript with advanced- level grades (qualitative) and course evaluations (narrative) 4. Extended paper with instructor's comments
<b>To develop an ability to formulate productive research questions and to use research resources and methods in the chosen area or discipline</b>	Demonstrates a capacity to conduct original research on a chosen topic of interest with appropriate resources and scholarly research and writing competence. [I.1.3.1]	Student ePortfolio contents:  1. Advanced-level grades and course evaluations 2. Extended paper with instructor's comments
<b>To improve language proficiency</b>	Demonstrates reading proficiency in a modern language (German, French, Spanish) or biblical language	Modern language exam or seminary transcript

## AREAS OF FOCUS

An area of focus, with a minimum of nine credits at the 200-level or higher, is required. Courses fulfilling an area of focus must be taken for full credit, not as audit or reading credit.

Possible ***Areas of Focus*** for the STM degree are:

- Bible: Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- Bible: New Testament
- Bible: Cross-Testament
- Church History/ Historical Studies
- Interreligious Engagement
- Psychology and Religion
- Religion and Society
- Social Ethics
- Theological Studies
- Anglican Studies (EDS at Union)

See below for each focus area including a description and specific requirements.

### *Anglican Studies*

This focus area is intended for students with a previous theological degree (MA or MDiv) to deepen their knowledge and skills in Anglican theology, history, and liturgy in preparation for doctoral study and/or the Episcopal Church's annual General Ordination Exam.

#### **Course Requirements – minimum 9 credits**

- Advanced Anglican Studies courses, examples include CH 314-*Church, State and Empire: Anglicanism in Britain and America*, ST 244-*Modern Anglican Theology*, AS 201-*Anglican Liturgy (Historical)*, AS 202-*Anglican Missions and Social Justice*, AS 203-*Anglican Liturgy (Practical)*
- PT 202-*Discernment of Call*, and AS 302-*Capstone in Anglican Studies* are recommended

#### **Extended Paper Requirement**

An extended paper on a topic related to Anglican Studies, chosen in consultation with a faculty in the field, is required.

### *Bible*

This area of focus is primarily intended for students preparing for further academic study (e.g. doctoral work) or teaching positions (e.g. Bible at religiously-affiliated secondary schools). Students immerse themselves in at least one ancient language and refine their skills in exegesis and interpretation. Students normally take a combination of courses in Old Testament and New Testament for a Cross-Testament declaration, but students may specifically elect to have their area of focus designated as either Hebrew Bible/Old Testament or New Testament if a minimum of twelve credits including respective language is taken.

Substantial introductory-level historical-critical work in Bible is expected as a prerequisite, usually including basic language training in Greek and/or biblical Hebrew.

#### **Course Requirements – minimum 12 credits**

##### *Old Testament Research:*

- Two or more courses in biblical Hebrew – minimum 6 credits
- Two or more courses in Bible that are exegetical in nature (focused on a book or block of text in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament) – minimum 6 credits
- An advanced course in biblical Greek (or approved Hebrew substitute) recommended – minimum 3 credits
- RE 319-*Teaching Theology and Religion* recommended for students who anticipate teaching

##### *New Testament Research:*

- Two or more courses in biblical Greek – minimum 6 credits
- Two or more courses in Bible that are exegetical in nature (focused on a book or block of text in the New Testament) – minimum 6 credits
- An advanced course in biblical Hebrew (or approved Greek substitute) recommended – minimum 3 credits
- RE 319-*Teaching Theology and Religion* recommended for students who anticipate teaching

##### *Cross Testament Research:*

- Two or more courses in biblical Hebrew or Greek – minimum 6 credits
- Two or more courses in Bible (OT/NT/BX) exegetical in nature (focused on a book or block of text in the Bible) – minimum 6 credits
- RE 319-*Teaching Theology and Religion* recommended for students who anticipate teaching



### *Church History/Historical Studies*

This area is aimed at students who intend for their work to deepen knowledge and skills in the study of historical processes that have shaped Christian churches. Many students consider doctoral study in history in a context of seminary theological education, religious studies, or religious history as practiced in history departments.

Students have the opportunity to acquire specialized knowledge of a particular historical period or area of interest and assess scholarly arguments and theories with critical acumen and nuance.

#### **Course Requirements – minimum 9 credits**

- Advanced CH courses in one or more of the historical periods regularly taught at Union of a) Ancient, b) Reformation and Early Modern, or c) Modern Christianity and other historical studies

Courses not identified as Historical Studies/Church History (CH) with substantial related content may count towards this concentration. Consult your faculty advisor or academic office for review/approval.

#### **Extended Paper Requirement**

An extended paper on a topic related to the historical study of Christianity, chosen in consultation with a faculty in the field, is required.

### *Interreligious Engagement*

This area is intended for students planning to pursue advanced studies, teach, or work in applied contexts that require competency in interreligious engagement (IE). Students with an IE focus cultivate:

- (1) competence in fostering meaningful and ethical interactions amidst religious diversity
- (2) understanding of and competence in the theories and methods of interreligious engagement
- (3) substantial knowledge of and familiarity with at least two religious traditions

#### **Course Requirements – minimum 9 credits**

- IE 102-*Religions in the City: Introduction to Interreligious Engagement* is strongly recommended
- Advanced courses in three broad IE areas:
  - theories and methods
  - tradition-specific (e.g. IE/STX 242-*The Qur'an: Engaging a Sacred Text*, IE 240-*Socially Engaged Buddhism*)
  - comparison (e.g. IE/RE 344-*Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations*, IE/TS 326-*Comparative Feminist Theology: Islam and Christianity*, IE/TS 313-*Hindu-Christian Dialogue*)

#### **Extended Paper Requirement**

An extended paper on an interreligious engagement topic chosen in consultation with a faculty in the field is required.

### *Psychology and Religion*

This area of focus is intended for students with a strong interest in pursuing a deeper understanding of a dialogue/integration between psychoanalytic theory and religion (with Christian and Jewish roots, but also embracing the study of the religious and philosophical roots of a range of spiritual traditions). As a concentration in an academic master's degree, this is neither a clinical training program for counseling licensure, nor an empirical religious studies research program. The focus is theoretical and theological. Psychology and religion concentrators develop the ability to deploy in their research, writing, and chosen professional or advanced academic contexts the basic content, perspectives, and analytical tools of both psychoanalytic theory and theology, with an accent on the student's own religious tradition, and to bring the disciplines of psychology and theology into fruitful intellectual dialogue. Students become familiar with foundational models for both theory and practice.

Students are expected to have completed introductory pastoral and spiritual care and pastoral listening practicum courses or equivalencies.

**Course Requirements – minimum 9 credits**

- One basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) to understand theory and pastoral theology from within a supervised practice experience
- Additional advanced Psychology and Religion courses
- PS 415-*Readings in Psychoanalysis: From Object Relations to Relationality* is strongly recommended for students focusing on psychological theory

Some Practical Theology (PT) courses with substantial related content may count towards this concentration. Consult the faculty advisor or academic office for review/approval.

**Extended Paper Requirement**

An extended paper on a psychology and religion topic chosen in consultation with an advisor in the field is required.

*Religion and Society*

This is intended for students with further interest in the intersectionality of religion and society. The role of religion in relation to structures of oppression and struggles of liberation constitutes the main focus of this study. The impact of religion in personal, socio-political, spiritual, and ecological dimensions of those structures and struggles is explored. The intersection of religion and the social sciences are an indispensable part of this study. The religious and denominational diversity of the students, including racial/ethnic/gender/sexual/economic class, is a resource for learning and a strength of this program. The belief that theory should respond to human experience and that academic scholarship must address contemporary issues is emphasized. Sociological theories of religion and theological studies are also studied. Students strengthen their analytical skills with regard to sociological analyses of religion, as well as writing and research. The City of New York offers fertile ground for the study of religion, and students are uniquely positioned to make use of an abundance of available resources.

Previous coursework in sociology, religious studies and/or professional experience in church/religious work is expected.

**Course Requirements – minimum 9 credits**

- RS 262-*Methods in the Study of Urban Life and Religion*
- RS 325-*Liberation Theologies and Pentecostalism*
- RS 335-*African Religions in the Americas*
- Additional advanced Religion and Society courses

**Extended Paper Requirement**

An extended paper on a topic relevant to the intersectionality of religion and society (e.g. poverty, gentrification, race/racism, gender, church growth, marginalized religions and immigration) chosen in consultation with an advisor in the field is required. Students make use of sociological theories of religion acquired in their coursework in conjunction with qualitative methodology. The extended paper should deepen student's understanding of current religious beliefs and practices, generating broader awareness of the multifaceted, bidirectional impact of these upon the lived realities of individuals and communities.

### *Social Ethics*

This area of study equips students to identify multiple sources, methods, and norms for social ethics. Some Theological Studies (TS, formerly ST) courses with substantial ethics content may count towards a Social Ethics (SE, formerly CE) focus area. Consult the faculty advisor or academic office for review/approval.

#### **Course Requirements – minimum 9 credits**

- A foundational Social Ethics (SE) course
- Advanced Social Ethics courses – minimum 3 credits
- Additional advanced course(s) as approved by the faculty advisor – minimum 3 credits

#### **Extended Paper Requirement**

An extended paper on a social ethics topic chosen in consultation with a faculty in the field is required.

### *Theological Studies*

This area of study is intended for students planning to pursue advanced studies, teach, or work in applied contexts enriched by critical reflection in theological studies.

Students are expected to have taken introductory theological studies courses equivalent to TS 103 or TS 104.

#### **Course Requirements – minimum 9 credits**

- Advanced course in the discipline of Philosophy of Religion (PR) or Social Ethics (SE) – minimum 3 credits
- Advanced course in comparative theology, Islamic theology, or theology outside the Christian tradition – minimum 3 credits
- Advanced Theological Studies (TS) courses preferably on a major theologian or theological loci – minimum 3 credits

#### **Extended Paper Requirement**

An extended paper on a theological studies topic chosen in consultation with an advisor in the field is required. The paper is graded on the extent to which a compelling and focused argument is developed, integrates language appropriately, and demonstrates knowledge or and engagement with relevant secondary literature.



## Master of Sacred Theology (STM) Degree Planner

*Applicable to Entrance Year 2020-21*

### DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Twenty-four (24) Credits** of advanced level courses at 300-level or higher; some 200-level courses are also appropriate.
  - 100-level courses are not applicable for the degree.
  - Courses taken as Audit (AU) or Reading Credit (R) are in addition to the minimum of 24-credits for the degree.
- **Extended Paper** (30-40 pages) on an approved topic written as an extra or lengthened assignment in the same semester as the course.
  - Faculty teaching the course/reading the paper approves the topic.
- **Modern Language Exam** in French, German, or Spanish, or equivalent as approved by advisor.
  - Students with a native language other than English may submit a request to substitute this requirement (see appropriate section).
  - The equivalent of Union's Hebrew or Greek courses (two semesters/two parts) may also substitute for this requirement with evidence of a Seminary's official transcript.

**AREA OF FOCUS:** \_\_\_\_\_

*FIRST FALL SEMESTER* \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS

*JANUARY* \_\_\_\_\_ *INTERSESSION*

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS

*SECOND SPRING SEMESTER* \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS



<b>Rubric for Program-level Assessment of the STM Extended Thesis-Driven Research Paper</b>					
<b>Assessment of STM Learning Outcome II:</b> Demonstrates a capacity to conduct original research on a chosen topic of interest with appropriate resources and scholarly research and writing competence.					
	<b>Outstanding (4 pts)</b>	<b>Very Good (3 pts)</b>	<b>Acceptable (2 pts)</b>	<b>Not Acceptable (1 pt)</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Thesis</b>	Thesis is clearly stated; addresses a new question or important problem within the area of focused study	Thesis is clearly stated; addresses a question or problem of some significance within the area of focused study	Thesis is identifiable; addresses a question that is relevant to the area of focused study	Thesis is missing, or unclear, or irrelevant	
<b>Research</b>	Thoroughly researched with highly relevant data from multiple sources; footnotes are informative and in proper form	Well researched with relevant data from multiple sources; footnotes are mostly in proper form	Adequately researched with data from the most important sources; footnotes may contain multiple errors but sufficiently identify sources	Poorly researched; fails to include the most important sources of data; inadequate citation of sources	
<b>Analysis</b>	Demonstrates focused, logical, sharp critical and creative thinking	Demonstrates clear and coherent critical and often creative thinking	Demonstrates mostly coherent critical thinking with	Displays significant incoherence, a lack of critical thinking	
<b>Argumentation</b>	Argument is very well organized, clear, concise, flows seamlessly, and persuasively supports the thesis	Argument is well organized persuasive; little repetition or inclusion of unnecessary material	Argument has a discernible structure that generally supports the thesis but unnecessary or repetitious material diminishes clarity and persuasiveness.	Argument is unclear; has little or no discernible structure; is unpersuasive	
<b>Writing</b>	Extremely well-written in terms of clarity, engaging style, vocabulary; perfect grammar and spelling	Well-written in terms of clarity, style, vocabulary; few errors in grammar or spelling	Adequately written with some lack of clarity and style; more than a few grammatical or spelling errors	Poorly written due to lack of clarity; multiple errors in vocabulary, grammar, or spelling	
<b>Significance</b>	Results are highly original, raise important questions for further research, and/or have important implications for ministry	Results contain some original ideas, insights, or observations that raise some questions for further research and/or have some implications for ministry	Results are interesting but of limited originality and are of limited value for further research and/or for ministry	Results are unoriginal, and of little value to ministry or the academy	
<b>Overall Mastery of Subject Matter</b>	Demonstrates very advanced, comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the research topic	Demonstrates advanced knowledge and understanding of the research topic	Demonstrates somewhat more than basic knowledge and understanding of the research topic	Demonstrates little knowledge or understanding of the research topic	
<b>Total Score</b>					

## HOW TO ACCESS YOUR ePORTFOLIO

Every UTS student has an ePortfolio: a folder created by the Academic Office. That folder lives in the student's Google Drive associated with her or his utsnyc.edu email address (not the Drive connected to any personal Gmail account). If you cannot access your ePortfolio after following these instructions, contact Chris McFadden at [cmcfadden@utsnyc.edu](mailto:cmcfadden@utsnyc.edu) or write to [academics@utsnyc.edu](mailto:academics@utsnyc.edu) for assistance.

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



academics@utsnyc.edu ▾



Drive

Click on the "Google Apps" icon. A menu of apps will appear including the Google Drive icon.

Click on the Drive icon. Your list of Google Drive folders is displayed.

On the left of this screen, click on the folder named "Shared with me."



Shared with me

Look for your ePortfolio in the "Shared with me" folder. The folder is named like this:

[Your degree] ePortfolio - (2017) LastName, FirstName - ab1234

(your entering year) your name  
- your UNI)



Click on the ePortfolio folder to open the contents of your ePortfolio.

### How to Upload a Document to Your ePortfolio

Click on your ePortfolio to open it. In the upper-left corner of the screen, find the "NEW" button. Click the "NEW" button, and click "File upload" from the pull-down menu. Browse for and select your file. In a few moments, an upload status box will say "1 upload complete" and you're done! Your uploaded file will be shared automatically with your Assessment team.



New

### Please follow this **Naming Convention** for academic work files uploaded to the ePortfolio:

Last Name First Name Course # Instructor Name Genre/title; for example, *Bidlack, Beth NT101 Niang Exegetical Paper (or Revelation Paper)*

You may access your ePortfolio at any time.

### Warning for device users:

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.