

**MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY**  
**ACADEMIC PROGRAM GUIDE**



Photograph by: Roy Weinstein, 2011

**2019 - 2020**

# **Master of Sacred Theology (STM) Program Guide**

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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.*

### **I. OVERVIEW**

#### **Description and Purpose**

The Master of Sacred Theology (STM) is an advanced full-time, residential, one-year graduate degree primarily oriented toward theological research and teaching. The purpose of the degree is to provide “a fuller mastery of one area or discipline of theological study than is normally provided at the MDiv level” (ATS Standard I.1.1.1). The program serves a variety of aims, including further graduate study at the doctoral level, preparation for some forms of teaching, the scholarly enhancement of ministerial practice, or disciplined reflection on a specialized function of ministry.

The STM program has three goals (ATS Standard I.1.2)

1. To acquire advanced mastery of a focused area or discipline in the context of general theological study;
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.

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. The MDiv or the MA in theological studies 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 the Union doctoral program.

Possible areas of focus for the STM degree are:

- Bible/Cross-Testament
- Bible/Old Testament
- Bible/New Testament
- History
- Religion & Society
- Preaching, Arts & Worship
- Psychology & Religion

- Social Ethics
- Systematic Theology
- Philosophy of Religion
- Interreligious Engagement

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 to shape 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 selected courses at Columbia University. Students taking courses at other institutions in the consortium are responsible for following policies and procedures outlined on this webpage: <https://utsnyc.edu/academics/registrar/course-registration-grades/cross-registration/>.

## **II. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (ATS Standard I.2)**

### *(1) Coursework*

The STM degree normally takes a minimum of one year to complete and requires satisfactory completion of 24 points taken for credit in advanced courses (200 level and higher) and in faculty-directed independent study. An area of focus must be selected as part of the degree requirements.

### *(2) Extended Paper*

In consultation with the faculty, students write an extended research or thesis-driven paper (30-40 pages) on a special research topic as an extra assignment in one of the student's courses. This extended paper carries no additional credit, but is graded and evaluated. Details including submission instructions and deadlines are available on this webpage: <https://utsnyc.edu/academics/registrar/course-catalog-academic-policies/s-t-m-extended-paper-application/>. Students should complete this form by early November. See the academic calendar (<https://utsnyc.edu/academics/registrar/academic-calendar/>) for specific deadlines, which vary slightly from year to year.

### *(3) Language Exam*

Students must also pass a translation exam in a modern language (typically German, French, or Spanish) or provide documentary evidence of having passed Hebrew or Greek in Seminary.

## **III. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING (ATS Standard I.1.3)**

As outlined in the following chart, 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 program planner, a 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.

### GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS</b>	<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT DATA</b>
<b>I. To acquire advanced mastery of a focused area or discipline in the context of general theological study</b>	I. 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 course evaluations (narrative) and grades (qualitative) 4. STM extended paper with instructor's comments
<b>II. To develop an ability to formulate productive research questions and to use research resources and methods in the chosen area or discipline</b>	II. 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 course evaluations and grades 2. STM extended paper with instructor's comments
<b>III. To improve language proficiency</b>	III. Demonstrates reading proficiency in a modern language (German, French, of Spanish) and/ or a biblical language	Modern language exam and/ or seminary transcript

## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A: STM Degree Program Planner

AREA OF FOCUS \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SEMESTER \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS	GRADE

JANUARY INTERSESSION

NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS	GRADE

SECOND SEMESTER \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS	GRADE

EXTENDED PAPER IN COURSE \_\_\_\_\_  
WITH PROFESSOR \_\_\_\_\_

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT MET BY \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**MASTER OF  
SACRED THEOLOGY**

**PROGRAM PLANNER**

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:

**24 POINTS** REQUIRED FOR STM (ANY COURSES TAKEN FOR R CREDIT OR AUDIT WILL BE IN ADDITION TO THE 24 POINTS THAT ARE REQUIRED.)

YOU SHOULD ENROLL IN COURSES NUMBERED 300 OR ABOVE, BUT SOME 200 COURSES ARE ALSO APPROPRIATE. NO 100-LEVEL COURSES.

AN **EXTENDED PAPER** (30-40 PP) ON A TOPIC OF YOUR CHOICE IS WRITTEN AS AN EXTRA OR ENLARGED ASSIGNMENT IN ONE OF YOUR COURSES, AS AGREED BY THE PROFESSOR.

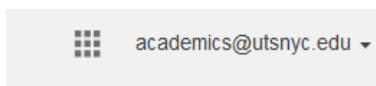
YOU MUST PASS A **UNION TRANSLATION EXAM IN FRENCH, GERMAN, OR SPANISH** (OR IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE APPROVED BY YOUR ADVISOR) OR GIVE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE (TRANSCRIPT) OF HAVING PASSED HEBREW OR GREEK COURSES IN SEMINARY.

## UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

### 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.

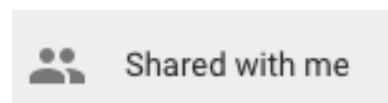


Click on the "Google Apps" icon. A menu of apps will appear including the Google Drive icon.



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."



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.



#### 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.



## Appendix C

### Rubric for Program-level Assessment of the STM Extended Thesis-Driven Research Paper

**Assessment of STM Learning Outcome II:** 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>					