



UNION
2021 - 2022

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.

This 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 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 select courses at Columbia University. Students taking courses at other institutions are responsible for following policies and procedures outlined on this [Cross-Registration webpage](#).

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Coursework

The Master of Sacred Theology (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 generally limited to twelve credits (four courses) each fall and spring semester with overloads approved by the Academic Dean in rare circumstances. The STM includes combination of 200-level, 300-level, and 400-level courses. An area of focus must be selected as part of the degree requirements.

Students may propose a guided reading for one, two, or three credits with approval and under the direction of a member of the faculty. Students must complete and submit a specific *Guided Reading* form found on this Registrar [Course Registration webpage](#) of the Registrar website. View the full policy, including an established limit and deadlines, in the academic catalogue.

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)

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), Integrative and Field-Based Education (FE), 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 [Language Substitution Request 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 [Extended Paper form](#). In the semester this is written, students must also self-register for the equivalent 0-credit course, UT 433. Normally completed in the Spring semester, students should complete this form by mid-November.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

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. (*ATS Standard 2.6*)

PROGRAM GOALS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT DATA
To acquire advanced mastery of a focused area or discipline in the context of general theological study	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 comments
To develop an ability to formulate productive research questions and to use research resources and methods in the chosen area or discipline	Demonstrates a capacity to conduct original research on a chosen topic of interest with appropriate resources and scholarly research and writing competence.	Student ePortfolio contents: 1. Advanced-level grades and course evaluations 2. Extended paper with instructor comments
To improve language proficiency	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 must be taken for full credit, not as audit or reading credit. See below for each focus area including a description and specific requirements.

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

- Anglican Studies
- Bible: Hebrew Bible
- Bible: New Testament

- Bible: Cross-Testament
- Buddhism and Interreligious Engagement
- Church History/ Historical Studies
- Interreligious Engagement
- Psychology and Religion
- Religion and Black Experience
- Religion and Society
- Social Ethics
- Theological Studies

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)*
- AS 212-*Discernment of Call* (formerly PT 202), and AS 302-*Capstone in Anglican Studies* are recommended

Extended Paper Requirement

An extended paper on a related topic, 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
- 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
- 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 (HB/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 Church History/Historical Studies 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 Black Experience

This concentration is for students who intend to deeply engage with and learn more about the religious experience of the people of the African diaspora. As a transdisciplinary concentration, students have the opportunity to study a wide range of religious ideas and practices of the African diaspora. Students are exposed to the transnational, multifaith and gendered dimensions of Black religious practices and theologies of African and African-descended people in the fields of *Bible/Sacred Texts*, *Interreligious Engagement*, *Practical Theology*, *Psychology and Religion*, *Religion and Society*, and *Theology and Ethics*.

Course Requirements

- Advanced course in African or African diasporic religion (e.g. BX/IE 321-*Bible and West African Religions*, IE/RS 335-*African Religions in the Americas*) outside the Christian tradition – minimum 3 credits
- Advanced course in Black Christian thought or practice (e.g., CH/SE 257-*Black Social Gospel, 1870-1940*, CH/SE-*Black Social Gospel, 1940-Present*, CW 339-*Proclamation and Black Experiences*) – minimum 3 credits
- Advanced course with attention to race, gender and sexuality (e.g., TS 214-*Womanist Theology*, RS 262-*Methods in the Study of Urban Life and Religion*) – minimum 3 credits

Courses identified with the course type of RBE (Religion and Black Experience) in the online registration system (NetClassroom/SSO) fulfill a concentration requirement.

Extended Paper Requirement

An extended paper on a 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

- Foundational Social Ethics 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.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Degree Planner

Appendix B: Extended Paper Evaluation Guidelines

Appendix C: ePortfolio Access Instructions

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.
 - In the semester this is written, students must also self-register for the equivalent 0-credit course, UT 433
 - 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

APPENDIX B – EXTENDED PAPER EVALUATION GUIDELINES

*The below is meant to serve as a general guide for components of an extended paper.
Faculty may use their own discretion in adapting this rubric to the assignment.*

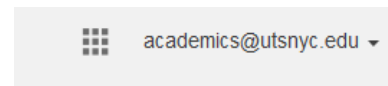
	Credit with Distinction (CD)	High Credit (CR)	Low Credit (CR)	Marginal Credit (MC) /No Credit (NC)
Thesis Question/Topic	Clearly stated; addresses a new question/important problem within area of study	Clearly stated; addresses a question/problem of some significance within area of study	Identifiable; addresses a question relevant to area of study	Missing, unclear, or irrelevant
Research	Thorough 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	Adequate with data from most important sources; footnotes may contain errors but sufficiently identify sources	Poor; fails to include most important sources of data with inadequate citation of sources
Analysis	Demonstrates focused, logical, sharp, critical, and creative thinking	Demonstrates clear, coherent, critical, and often creative thinking	Demonstrates mostly coherent, critical thinking	Displays significant incoherence and a lack of critical thinking
Argument	Very well organized, clear, concise, flows seamlessly; persuasively supports the thesis	Well organized and persuasive; little repetition or inclusion of unnecessary material	Discernible structure generally supporting the thesis; unnecessary or repetitious material diminishes clarity and persuasiveness	Unclear; has little or no discernible structure; is unpersuasive
Writing	Extremely well written in terms of clarity, engaging style and vocabulary; perfect grammar and spelling	Well written in terms of clarity, style, and vocabulary; few errors in grammar and spelling	Adequate with some lack of clarity and style; more than a few grammatical or spelling errors	Poor due to lack of clarity and style; multiple errors in vocabulary, grammar, or spelling
Overall Mastery of Subject Matter/Topic	Very advanced, comprehensive knowledge and understanding of research topic	Advanced knowledge and understanding of research topic	Somewhat more than basic knowledge and understanding of research topic	Little knowledge or understanding of research topic
Theological/Spiritual/Ethical Integration	Appropriately substantive and sophisticated	Reasonably substantive	Some attention given	Minimal, inadequate or irrelevant
Significance	Highly original contribution to the field; raises important questions for further research	Some original ideas, or insights that raise some questions for further research	Interesting results but of limited originality and of limited value for further research	Unoriginal results and of little value

HOW TO ACCESS YOUR ePORTFOLIO

Every Union student has an ePortfolio: a folder created by the Academic Office. That folder lives in the student's Google Drive associated with 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 or write to academics@utsnyc.edu for assistance.

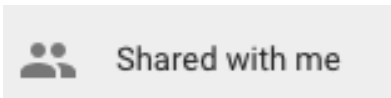
To access your Google Drive, go to your utsnyc.edu email inbox. In the upper right hand corner of the screen there is an icon of nine small squares. Float your mouse over the icon to see "Google Apps" icon.

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.



Follow this **Naming Convention** for academic work files uploaded to the ePortfolio:

Last Name First Name Course # Instructor Name Genre/title

(example): *Mirando Nicole 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.