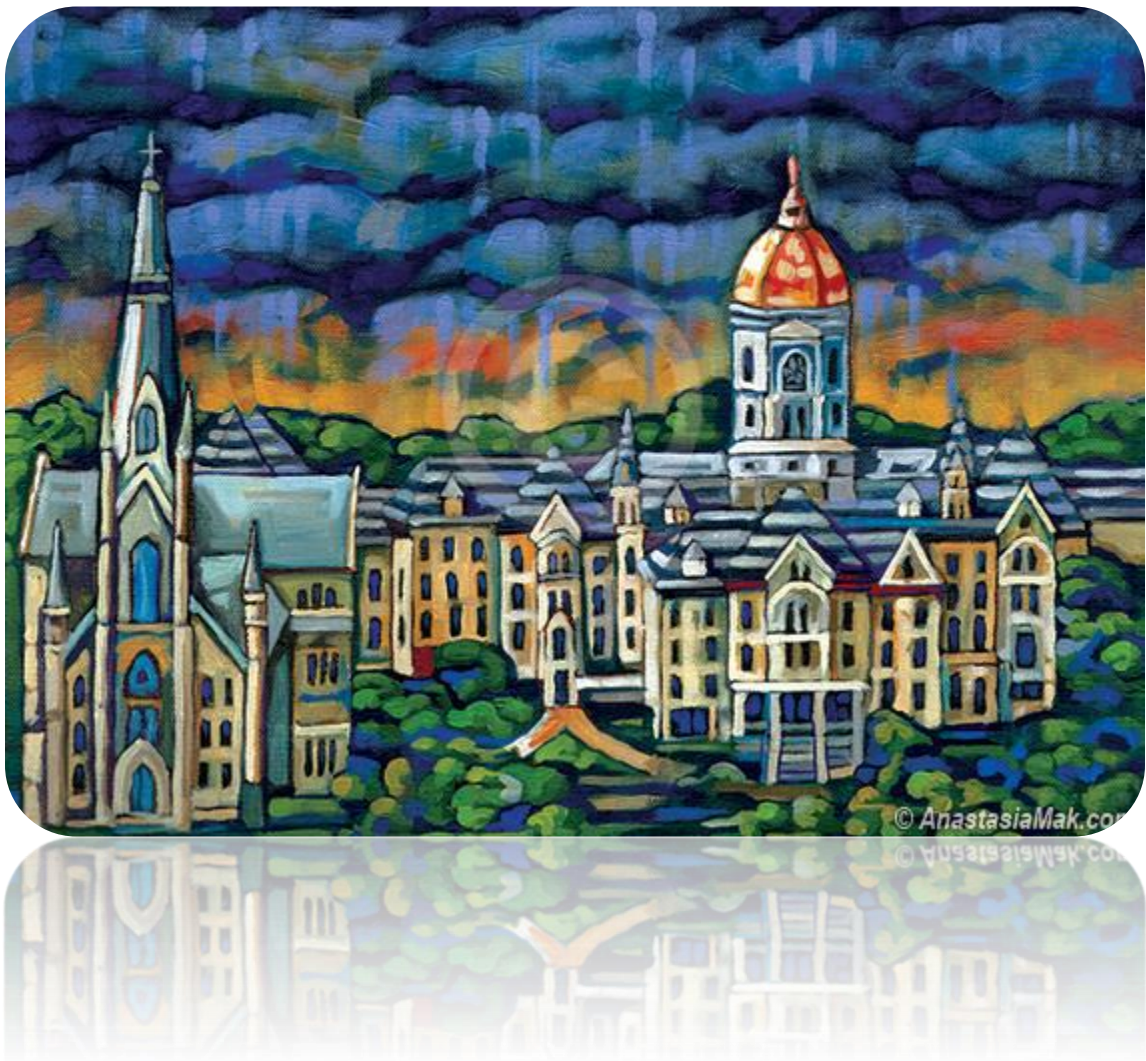


Master of Theological Studies Program

Student Handbook

Fall 2021



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PART ONE: ACADEMIC POLICIES

1. Enrollment

Once admitted, all degree and non-degree graduate students must enroll before each semester at the times and locations announced by the University Registrar. This is a two-step process that consists of Roll Call and Registration. ND Roll Call is a required process that informs the University that a student is attending a particular semester. This is different from registration, which is adding courses to a student's schedule. Enrollment dates are published in the Graduate School Calendar. Any admitted student who fails to enroll for one semester or more must apply for readmission upon return.

1.1 Full-Time Status

The Department of Theology considers study in the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program a full-time occupation. For this reason the Department does not admit part-time students to the MTS program. The only exception to this rule is for University of Notre Dame employees (faculty and staff) who make use of their tuition remission benefit to pursue the MTS degree on a part-time basis.

Normally, a full-time student is one who registers for twelve credit hours of required course work per semester in the academic year. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the MTS Director (henceforth Director).

1.2 Continuous Enrollment

All students are expected to complete Roll Call and register each semester for four contiguous semesters (excluding summer) beginning with the fall semester of their matriculation and concluding with the spring semester of their graduation. Any exception to this rule, including a leave of absence, must be approved by the Graduate School. (See "Leave of Absence" immediately below [1.3].)

1.3 Leave of Absence

For exceptional reasons and on the recommendation of the Department (i.e., the Director), a student in good academic standing may request a leave of absence for a maximum of two consecutive semesters. A request for a leave of absence must be made before the semester in which the leave is taken, and all leaves of absence must be approved by the Graduate School (see the Academic Code of the Graduate School: 2017–2018, 5.1 [page 9]: https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/255298/academic_code_2017_2018.pdf). If, for some urgent reason, a student is allowed to leave the University after the beginning of the semester, the withdrawal procedure below must be followed. If at the end of the leave of absence period the student does not return, the student is considered terminated. Application for readmission is required if the student wishes to return. In the case of a medical leave of absence, clearance from the University Health Center is required prior to readmission.

1.4 Medical Separation from Academic Duties

Students enrolled in the Notre Dame Graduate School who wish to temporarily interrupt their programs for medical reasons must apply to the Graduate School (see the Academic Code of the Graduate School: 2017–2018, 5.2 [page 10]: https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/255298/academic_code_2017_2018.pdf). Students are eligible under this policy if they have a “serious medical condition.” For purposes of this policy, “serious medical condition” means a medical condition that (1) requires multiple-day hospitalization OR (2) renders the student unable to engage in coursework and all other Graduate School-related duties for a period of at least ten (10) calendar days. Written certification by a physician that the student has a serious medical condition as defined in this policy must be submitted to the Graduate School as soon as the need arises. (For situations involving childbirth and adoption, see “Childbirth and Adoption Accommodation Policy” below [1.5]).

In all cases, regardless of the nature of the medical condition, the duration of the separation will be as certified by the physician up to a maximum of 6 weeks. Students may utilize this medical separation policy two non-consecutive times during their graduate studies. Should students need more than 6 weeks at any one time, they must withdraw from the University.

Leaves of absence for one semester or more for medical or other reasons are governed by the Graduate School Leave of Absence policy. Students also will be deemed “continuously enrolled” at the University during the entire period of separation. Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant duties will cease at least during the period of separation. Students are responsible for making arrangements, through their departments, to cover their duties. Students taking classes will be required to make arrangements with individual course instructors for completion of any courses in progress during the leave. Students will be granted the option to re-schedule exams, extend candidacy deadlines, or other deadlines not discussed herein. Students are responsible for making arrangements to reschedule exams, extend deadlines, and to make up other work not discussed herein.

1.5 Childbirth and Adoption Accommodation Policy

The childbirth and adoption accommodation policy is intended to assist graduate students who are new parents. Unlike the medical separation policy that covers any medical condition, this accommodation policy addresses a single set of circumstances: new parenthood. It is not a leave of absence; it is an accommodation. Students maintain their standing as students, are provided relief from full-time responsibilities and academic deadlines for up to one semester, and are eligible for financial support. Programs are encouraged to work out specific arrangements with students on a case-by-case basis within the broad framework of this policy. The full Graduate School Childbirth and Adoption and Accommodation policy may be found at: http://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/40607/family_accommodation_policy.pdf.

1.6 Withdrawal from the Program

To withdraw from the University before the end of the semester, a student must inform the Department (i.e., the MTS office) and the Graduate School, as well as complete the Separation

E-form through the Office of the Registrar’s website (<http://registrar.nd.edu/>). For information on refunds, refer to the “Tuition and Expenses” section of the Graduate School Bulletin of Information https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/255551/bulletin_2017_2018.pdf). Upon approval of the withdrawal, the University enters a grade of “W” for each course in which the student was registered. If a student drops out of the University without following the procedure described above, a grade of “F” is recorded for each course. The credit for any course or examination will be forfeited if the student interrupts his or her program of study for five years or more. The University reserves the right to require the withdrawal of any student when academic performance, health status, or general conduct may be judged clearly detrimental to the best interests of either the student or the University community.

1.7 Maximal Registration

During each semester of the academic year, a graduate student should not register for more than 12 credit hours of graduate courses, i.e., courses numbered 60000 and higher. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Director.

1.8 Changes in Student Class Schedule

A student may add courses only during the first six class days of the semester. A student may add courses after this time only on the recommendation of the Department and with the approval of the Graduate School. A student may drop courses during the first six class days of the semester. To drop a course after this period and up to the mid-semester point (see the Graduate School Calendar for the exact date), a student must have the approval of the chair of the department offering the course, of his or her advisor, and of the Graduate School; however, no tuition adjustment will be made after the sixth class day of the semester. A course may be dropped after the mid-semester point only in cases of serious physical or mental illness. Courses dropped after this date will be posted on the student's permanent record with the grade of “W.” A course taken for credit can be changed to an audit course after the mid-semester point only in cases of serious physical or mental illness.

1.9 Transfer of Credits

The MTS program does not normally transfer credits earned at another institution. Exceptions require the approval of the Director and the faculty advisor of the student’s area of specialization. All exceptions must follow the guidelines set out by the Graduate School and require the formal approval of the Graduate School. See the Academic Code of the Graduate School: 2017–2018, 4.6 [pages 8–9]: https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/255298/academic_code_2017_2018.pdf.

2. Evaluation of Students

2.1 Graduate Grades

Listed below are graduate grades and the corresponding number of quality points per credit hour.

- A 4
- A- 3.667
- B+ 3.333

B 3
B- 2.667
C+ 2.333
C 2
C- 1.667
D 1
F 0
I 0 (Until Incomplete is removed)
NR None = Not reported
S None = Satisfactory
U None = Unsatisfactory
V None = Auditor (graduate students only)
W None = Discontinued with permission

Quality point values are used to compute the student's G.P.A. The G.P.A. is the ratio of accumulated earned quality points to the accumulated earned semester credit hours. G.P.A. computation takes into account only those grades earned in Notre Dame graduate courses by students with graduate status at Notre Dame. For courses taken in a department or college in the University but outside the Graduate School, or taken outside the University, the grade will not be included in the G.P.A. computation.

The grades of C- and D are awarded in the Graduate School, but they do not count towards the fulfillment of degree requirements.

A grade of "Incomplete" (I) should be given only in exceptional circumstances and only for compelling reasons. When a student receives a grade of I, he or she has 30 days from when grades were due (for the semester in which the Incomplete was given) to complete the coursework for a grade. If the coursework is not completed by this date, the grade of I will be changed permanently to a grade of F. Extensions for Incompletes require formal approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Graduate School.

The grades of S and U are used in courses without semester credit hours, as well as in research courses, departmental seminars, colloquia, workshops, directed studies, field education and skills courses. These courses, if given the grade of S, do figure in a student's earned semester credit hour total but do not figure in the computation of the G.P.A. A grade of U will not count toward the student's earned semester credit-hour total, nor will it figure in the computation of the G.P.A. The grade of V has neither quality-point nor credit-hour value. It is the only grade available to the registered auditor who requests at the beginning of the semester that it be made part of his or her permanent record and who attends the course throughout the entire semester. The grade of V cannot be changed to a credit-earning grade. The grade of W is given for a course that a student is allowed to drop after the mid-semester point.

2.2 Examinations and Academic Accommodations

Unexcused absence from a scheduled final examination results in an F. An absence excused in advance results in an Incomplete (I).

Students who think they may be eligible for academic accommodations through the Office of Disability Services should make an appointment with that office to confirm eligibility and obtain an accommodation. See <http://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu/>.

2.3 Academic Good Standing

- **Criteria**

Good standing in a graduate degree program and eligibility for graduation from the University require the maintenance of at least a 3.0 (B) cumulative grade point average (G.P.A.). Students may be dismissed if their cumulative G.P.A. is below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters, or if their semester G.P.A. for any one semester is below 2.5. Students may be placed on probation if their cumulative G.P.A. is below 3.0 in any two non-consecutive semesters. While an adequate G.P.A. is one important factor taken into consideration in determining a student's qualifications for an advanced degree, there are other factors that may, in the discretion of the Department, jeopardize a student's standing, including a failure to make progress toward degree requirements or to fulfill language requirements.

- **Loss of Academic Good Standing**

The Department may place a student on restricted financial eligibility (up to loss of all financial aid) or academic probation (a warning that the student has lost good standing and faces possible dismissal).

- **Termination**

The Department reserves the right to dismiss a student who fails to maintain academic good standing or who, in the collective judgment of the faculty, has little or no chance of successfully completing the program.

3. Financial Support

3.1 Principle

All full-time students in the MTS program should have a full tuition-remission scholarship. The source of their funding may come from outside the University in the form of a scholarship or support from a religious order, but typically the University of Notre Dame funds the students.

3.2 Financial Packages

With limited exceptions the Department will provide full tuition-remission to all students admitted to the MTS program. In select cases the Department may also offer merit-based stipends. Students may have the opportunity to work as a Graduate Assistant (a broad term that includes positions as a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant) for one semester or more during the program.

3.3 Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistants (GA's) are expected to work between eight and twelve hours per week during the semester. Vacation time does not count: students receive all the normal breaks and holidays of the academic calendar. No work outside the University is to be required of GA's. GA's should be protected against last-minute assignments. They are to be used for academic purposes only.

3.4 Other Employment

No degree student may hold a job, on or off campus, without the express permission of the Director and the Graduate School. Employment other than work for the Department must be cleared in advance or forfeiture of all financial support from the University may result. In any case, no student may work more than a specified number of hours per week whether that work is as a GA, on campus, off campus, or any combination thereof. The precise number of hours a student may work depends on a variety of factors. Since the Director must approve all paid employment, students should consult with the Director concerning any employment opportunities they wish to pursue or offers they receive.

3.5 Outside Sources of Funding

Students are encouraged to seek grants and fellowships from external sources of funding. Subject to approval by the Director, students may use such funding to augment any stipend offered by the Department.

3.6 Compliance with Federal Aid Regulations

Recipients of federal financial aid must comply with the standards of progress set by their respective departments for their particular programs of study. The Office of Financial Aid will notify students in writing when failure to maintain progress results in the possible loss of federal aid eligibility. Appeals indicating any mitigating circumstances must be made in writing to the associate director of financial aid.

4. Academic Integrity

Integrity in scholarship and research is an essential characteristic of the academic life and social structure in the University. Any activity that compromises the pursuit of truth and the advancement of knowledge besmirches the intellectual effort and may undermine confidence in the academic enterprise. A commitment to honesty is expected in all academic endeavors. Mentors and academic leaders should continuously emphasize this to students, research assistants, associates, and colleagues. Violation of integrity in research/scholarship includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism; deliberate fabrication or falsification in proposing, performing, or reporting research; or other deliberate misrepresentation in proposing, conducting, reporting, or reviewing research.

Classroom-type misconduct includes the use of information obtained from another student's paper during an examination, plagiarism, submission of work written by someone else, falsification of data, etc. Misconduct in research/scholarship does not include errors of judgment; errors in recording, selection, or analysis of data; differences in opinions involving interpretation; or conduct unrelated to the research process. Misconduct includes practices that materially and adversely affect the integrity of scholarship and research.

Plagiarism is a form of misconduct. A person's words and ideas are his or her own; they belong to the individual and should be considered the individual's property. Those who appropriate the words and/or ideas of another, and who attempt to present them as their own without proper acknowledgement of the source, whether intentional or not, are committing plagiarism or intellectual theft. It is assumed that all work submitted by a student represents the student's own ideas and work. Verbatim copying, paraphrasing, adapting or summarizing the work of another, regardless of the source—whether books, journals, periodicals, websites, or other forms of media—must be properly cited. Any representation of the work of another that is not properly referenced is considered to be plagiarism. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not a defense against an allegation of a violation of the academic integrity policy. It is the responsibility of students to familiarize themselves with this definition of plagiarism and to learn proper citation techniques.

In sum, violation of integrity in research/scholarship is deliberate fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reporting research or other deliberate misrepresentation in proposing, conducting, reporting, or reviewing research. A violation of academic integrity is a serious accusation. The punishment of a student who is found to be in violation should be determined by a graduate committee of a student's program. If a student is charged with a violation of academic integrity, he or she may appeal the program's decision.

4.1 Academic Integrity Appeal Process (as reflected in the Graduate Bulletin)

Any person who has reason to believe that a violation of this policy has occurred shall discuss it on a confidential basis with the department chair or director of the appropriate program or institute. If a perceived conflict of interest exists between the chair/director and the accused, the next highest academic officer shall be notified of the charge.

The chair/director shall evaluate the allegation promptly. If it is determined that there is no substantial basis for the charge, then the matter may be dismissed with the fact of dismissal being made known to the complainant and to the accused if he or she is aware of the accusation. A written summary of charges, findings, and actions shall be forwarded to the dean of the Graduate School as a matter of documentation.

If the charges are deemed credible, the chair will select an impartial panel consisting of three members, one of whom may be a graduate student, to investigate the matter. The chair will inform the accused of the charges. The panel will determine initially whether to proceed directly to a hearing to further investigate the case, or to dismiss the charges. If the panel decides to proceed directly to a hearing, the hearing will be held within 10 business days of the original notification. If the panel decides that further investigation is necessary, it shall immediately notify the chair. If it decides that a hearing is not warranted, all information gathered for this investigation will be destroyed. The utmost care will be taken to minimize any negative consequence to the accused.

The accused party must be given the opportunity to respond to any and all allegations and supporting evidence at the hearing. The response will be made to the appointed panel. The panel

will make a final judgment, recommend appropriate disciplinary action, and report to the chair in writing. The report will include all of the pertinent documentation and will be presented within 30 days after meeting with the accused. Copies of the report are to be made available to the accused, the chair, and the dean of the Graduate School. If a violation is judged to have occurred, this might be grounds for dismissal from the University; research/scholarship violations might be reported to the sponsor of the research effort (e.g., NSF, NIH, Lilly Foundation, etc.), if appropriate.

5. Policies on Harassment and Other Aspects of Student Life

5.1 Policy

Sexual and discriminatory harassment as well as harassment in general are prohibited by the University. Definitions and policies regarding all forms of harassment and other aspects of student life and behavior are described in *duLac: A Guide to Student Life*, which is the University's description of student life policies and procedures (see <https://dulac.nd.edu/>). The codes, rules, regulations and policies that establish the official parameters for student life at Notre Dame are contained in *duLac*. Unless otherwise noted, the policies and procedures in *duLac* apply to all students, undergraduate, graduate, or professional, whether the behavior occurs on or off campus. Copies of *duLac* are provided to all students at the time of their enrollment and may also be obtained from the Office of Residential Life, located in room 202 of the Duncan Student Center.

PART TWO: DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

1. Areas of Study

1.1 Six areas

There are six areas of study designated within the program. Each area operates independently.

- **Biblical Studies (BS)**
Biblical Studies covers four disciplines; the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament and the Ancient Near Eastern World; Judaism, especially Second Temple and early Rabbinic Judaism; the New Testament and Greco-Roman World; and other Christian sources through Late Antiquity.
- **History of Christianity (HC)**
History of Christianity explores the study of the history of Christianity in all its rich complexity. The program historically focuses on three major periods: ancient, medieval, and Reformation/modern.
- **Liturgical Studies (LS)**
Liturgical Studies seeks to advance the study and understanding of the worship life of the Christian church in its various traditions. It integrates three subdisciplines: liturgical history, liturgical theology, and ritual studies.
- **Moral Theology/Christian Ethics (MT)**

Moral Theology/Christian Ethics comprises a number of sub-disciplines, including foundational, medical, and social ethics. The program encourages interaction with philosophical ethics. While the program concentrates on the Roman Catholic tradition, it engages and is open to a variety of religious and intellectual traditions.

- **Systematic Theology (ST)**

Systematic Theology engages in the disciplined and critical inquiry into the major tenets of the Christian faith, especially as understood within Catholicism. The program addresses a wide range of concerns including the historical development of theology, constructive issues, and comparative theology.

- **World Religions World Church (WRWC)**

World Religions World Church is dedicated to the study of global religions and the global Church. It researches world religions in all of their dimensions, examines the Church's theological expressions in diverse cultural settings, fosters dialogue between the global Church and world religions, and advances inter-religious understanding.

1.2 Transferring to a Different Area of Study

MTS students are admitted to a specific area, not to the Department of Theology or to the MTS program in general, and they normally remain within that area of concentration for the duration of their studies. In exceptional cases the MTS program committee (in consultation with the faculty in the proposed area of study) will consider a request for a transfer to another area. Such requests should be made before the end of the first semester of study but, in rare cases, may be granted up to the end of the second semester of study.

2. Advisors

2.1 Academic Advisor

Each of the six concentrations has its own Academic Advisor who serves as the primary academic guide for MTS students in that concentration. Academic Advisors are expected to meet with all students in their program at least once per semester, but ideally as often as they, in consultation with their advisees, determine is appropriate to keep track of student progress toward successful completion of degree requirements. If significant issues arise in Academic Advisors' consultations with their advisees that extend considerably beyond the practical concerns of the program or reasonable questions about professional or vocational direction, Academic Advisors should refer students to the Director or to other resources available at the University. Academic Advisors are expected to attend all MTS program committee meetings unless prevented by another significant academic or personal scheduling conflict.

2.2 Director

The Director is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the program. While the Director is available to meet with students regarding academic matters, the Director is not the primary academic guide for MTS students and will not overrule recommendations made by the area Academic Advisors to their students so long as those recommendations are within the stated policies of the MTS program.

2.3 Responsibility

Students bear the sole responsibility for ensuring that they satisfy all program requirements.

3. Course Work

3.1 Requirements

All MTS students are required to take sixteen three-hour courses (forty-eight credits) during the two-year program, which is usually accomplished by taking four courses a semester for four contiguous semesters (excluding summers). Students are encouraged to engage in language study during the summer. Reading courses in both French and German are typically offered every summer, and the Department of Classics normally offers Greek and Latin courses at various levels each summer. Students may also take non-language courses during the summer as long as such courses are approved by their Academic Advisor and the Director.

3.2 Distribution

Course distribution requirements differ by area and are as follows:

- **Biblical Studies (BS)**

The concentration in Biblical Studies requires 15 credit hours in Biblical Studies, 3 credit hours in History of Christianity, 3 credit hours in Liturgical Studies, 3 credit hours in Moral Theology, 3 credit hours in Systematic Theology, and 3 credit hours in World Religions World Church. Students concentrating in Biblical Studies are also required to take 12 credits (four semesters) in ancient languages and to know both Hebrew and Greek. They must have at least an intermediate knowledge (four semesters) of one of these languages and at least an elementary knowledge (two semesters) of the other. Students who enter the MTS program without a good knowledge of ancient languages will need to devote their electives (6 credit hours) to language study.

- **History of Christianity (HC)**

The concentration in History of Christianity requires 15 credit hours in History of Christianity, 6 credit hours in ancient languages, 3 credit hours in Biblical Studies, 3 credit hours in Liturgical Studies, 3 credit hours in Moral Theology, 3 credit hours in Systematic Theology, and 3 credit hours in World Religions World Church. The remaining 12 credit hours are electives and may include courses outside the Department of Theology, provided that students have the prior approval of the area advisor for the History of Christianity concentration and the MTS Director.

- **Liturgical Studies (LS)**

The concentration in Liturgical Studies requires 15 credit hours in Liturgical Studies, 6 credit hours in ancient languages (typically Greek or Latin), 3 credit hours in Biblical Studies, 3 credit hours in History of Christianity, 3 credit hours in Moral Theology, 3 credit hours in Systematic Theology, and 3 credit hours in World Religions World Church. The remaining 12 credit hours are electives and may include courses outside the Department of Theology, provided that students have the prior approval of the area advisor for the Liturgical Studies concentration and the MTS Director.

- **Moral Theology (MT)**

The concentration in Moral Theology requires 15 credit hours in Moral Theology, 3 credit hours in Biblical Studies, 3 credit hours in History of Christianity, 3 credit hours in

Liturgical Studies, 3 credit hours in Systematic Theology, and 3 credit hours in World Religions World Church. The remaining 18 credit hours are electives; of these electives, no more than three courses (9 credit hours) may be taken outside the Department of Theology. One Theology elective (3 credit hours) may be devoted to an ancient language. Students who take three courses in another area of the MTS program may designate that area as a minor area of concentration.

- Systematic Theology (ST)

The concentration in Systematic Theology requires 15 credit hours in Systematic Theology, 3 credit hours in Biblical Studies, 3 credit hours in History of Christianity, 3 credit hours in Liturgical Studies, 3 credit hours in Moral Theology, and 3 credit hours in World Religions World Church. The remaining 18 credit hours are electives and may include courses outside the Department of Theology, provided that students have the prior approval of the area advisor for the Systematic Theology concentration and the MTS Director.

- World Religions World Church (WRWC)

The concentration in World Religions World Church requires 15 credit hours in World Religions World Church, 6 credit hours in Biblical Studies, 6 credit hours in History of Christianity, 6 credit hours of a foreign language, 3 credit hours in Liturgical Studies, 3 credit hours in Moral Theology, and 3 credit hours in Systematic Theology. The remaining 6 credit hours are electives and may include courses outside the Department of Theology, provided that students have the prior approval of the area advisor for WRWC and the MTS Director.

3.3 Courses

- Appropriate Levels

MTS students are expected to take courses at the 60000 level. With the permission of his or her advisor, a MTS student may take some course work at the 40000 level to fill lacunae, in which case the student must come to an agreement with the instructor on appropriate work load for a master's student. Students may take only two such courses during the program. With the permission of both the instructor and his or her advisor a MTS student may take one or more course at the 80000 (doctoral) level.

- Directed Readings and Special Studies Courses

A student who wishes to take for credit a course that is not offered in that semester may take it as an independent research and writing course (known as Directed Readings and Special Studies courses), but he or she must first obtain the consent of the instructor. Students should realize that such courses are uncompensated, additional workloads for faculty members, who may decline the request. When a student and a member of the faculty have agreed to a Directed Readings or Special Studies course, the student must obtain a special form from the office of the Director. This form specifies the requirements of the course and serves as a contract between a student and the instructor. The form must be approved and signed by the Director. The number of Directed Readings and Special Studies courses that a student takes may vary; however, only in exceptional circumstances will students be allowed to take more than two such independent research and writing courses over the duration of their program.

- Auditing Courses

Students are allowed to audit courses with the approval of the advisor and the instructor.

3.4 MTS Colloquium

All MTS students are required to register each semester for the non-credit MTS Colloquium, which meets several times during the semester and contributes to the community atmosphere of the program. Some colloquia are designed as information sessions, and others are devoted to particular topics, such as applying for doctoral programs. Most colloquia, however, involve student presentations, with a student from one area presenting a paper, a student from another area responding to the paper, and a student from a third area presiding. Students thereby develop the ability to deliver professional talks on their original research and learn how the areas of theology are integrated.

MTS students who fail to register for the MTS Colloquium are not eligible to serve as Graduate Assistants and may forfeit any and all stipends from the MTS program. In cases where there is a temporal conflict between the meeting time of one of the student's regular courses and the MTS Colloquium, students should notify the Director, who will normally approve registration for both courses, with the understanding that the student will attend the Colloquium only if and when possible.

4. Foreign Language Requirements

4.1 Modern Language Requirement

Inasmuch as the MTS is a degree that requires research, all MTS students need to demonstrate facility in reading at least one modern language relevant to theological research. Therefore, in addition to earning the necessary number of credits, all MTS students must pass a Graduate Reading exam in either German or French in order to graduate. Students who already know one of these languages upon admission to the program should take the Graduate Reading exam in that language in their first semester and acquire a second language during their time in the program, in order to pass an exam in that language as well.

In order to encourage and facilitate reading knowledge of modern languages commonly needed for research, the University offers intensive, tuition-free language courses in German and French every summer, with exams given at the end of the course. These summer reading courses are offered only on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) or pass/fail basis.

With the permission of the student's advisor and the Director, another modern language (such as Spanish) may be substituted in the place of French or German according to the student's research interests. Students who are native speakers of either French or German, or already have studied six or more semesters (or the equivalent) of either French or German, are strongly encouraged to take the exam in another language. All students are expected to pass the modern language examination before the end of the third semester of study.

4.2 Certification at the University of Notre Dame

This language requirement must be met by passing examinations offered each year by the appropriate department at the University of Notre Dame or by the Theology Department. We do not accept language examinations from other institutions.

4.3 Area Language Requirements

Knowledge of at least one ancient language is required by three areas of concentration: Biblical Studies, History of Christianity, and Liturgical Studies. Students in World Religions World Church may also satisfy their foreign language requirement by studying an ancient language.

Students concentrating in Biblical Studies are also required to take 12 credits (four semesters) in ancient languages and to know both Hebrew and Greek. They must have at least an intermediate knowledge (four semesters) of one of these languages and at least an elementary knowledge (two semesters) of the other. Students who enter the MTS program without a good knowledge of ancient languages will need to devote their electives (6 credit hours) to language study.

Students in History of Christianity and Liturgical Studies must complete six credits in one ancient language, typically Greek or Latin. A different language (such as Syriac) may be substituted with the approval of the student's advisor and the Director.

In order to count toward the fulfillment of degree requirements, summer language courses in Greek and Latin must be taken for a standard letter grade, not on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis.

5. Residency

MTS students are to be in residence during all four academic semesters of the program.

6. Pedagogical Training

MTS students may have the opportunity to serve faculty as Graduate Assistants (GA's), working eight to twelve hours per week in that capacity. This will normally include work as an assistant in an undergraduate course. Work as a GA is neither required nor expected of MTS students. Advisors should inform students that this work should only be taken on by students with no academic difficulties.

7. Comprehensive Oral Examination

7.1 Structure of the Comprehensive Examination

Toward the end of the final semester of course work, all MTS students must pass an oral exam with a board of three faculty members. The exam measures students' competency in their area of concentration and their ability to think theologically, creatively, and synthetically. The topics of the exam are based on materials the students themselves submit: a list of four to five questions that reflects the student's theological interests and reveals the direction of their theological inquiry, a statement of intent for applications to PhD programs (or for other professional pursuits), and two papers from the student's coursework. One of these is a major research paper (typically 10–20

pages) written in the student's area of concentration, developing more fully the kinds of questions the student is especially interested in pursuing. The other paper (approximately 5–10 pages) is to be in an area outside the student's concentration and on a different topic, yet one that is still relevant to the student's theological interests. It should exhibit how she or he brings other disciplines of theology to bear on her/his major area of concentration.

Students must submit four copies of all material. Students who do not submit their examination material on time are ineligible to take the examination, and thus ineligible for graduation, in the spring semester. The Director will arrange for a board of three faculty members for the student's exams. At least two of the board members must be from the Department of Theology, and at least one of the board members must be from the student's area of concentration. The exam will last one hour and will explore the student's competency in the area of concentration, and the student's ability to think creatively and synthetically. At the end of the hour the board will determine whether the student receives a grade of pass or fail. Students must have a passing grade in order to graduate from the program.

7.2 Failures

In the case of a failure on the comprehensive examination the student may petition the chair of the department for a re-examination, with an entirely different board, in the same semester. If the chair accepts the petition, the Director will assemble a new board and set an exam date. The same material will be used as the basis for the new examination.

8. Dismissal Appeal Process

If a student is dismissed for academic reasons, he or she may appeal the program's decision. Complaints must be initiated by a written statement from the student to the Director with a copy to the chair of the department within 10 business days from the time when the student is informed of dismissal. To hear the appeal, the Director appoints an ad hoc committee composed of three members: the Director, and at least two faculty members unconnected factually with the case or the reasons for the appeal. A graduate student can replace one of the two appointed faculty members on the committee if the nature of the appeal warrants such. The Director will serve as the committee's chair. If the Director has been involved in the case, the chair of the department should appoint the committee and designate the person to serve as its chair. If the Director and the chair of the department have both been involved in the case, then the appropriate associate dean of the College of Arts and Letters should appoint the committee and designate the person to serve as its chair.

The student's statement should indicate details on the nature of the problem, the date(s) the problem occurred, the grounds upon which the appeal is based, background information that the student considers important, and the relief requested. The appeals committee will promptly and thoroughly investigate the appeal to determine whether the relief requested is warranted. The investigation may include interviews and/or written statements from the student, any student witnesses, faculty or staff members who may be able to provide pertinent information about the facts, as well as a review of any pertinent documents.

In most situations, the appeals committee will complete the investigation in 30 business days. There may be some reports that cannot be investigated within 30 business days. In such cases, the chair of the appeals committee will communicate to the student that the investigation is going to take longer than 30 business days and will also include a statement indicating when the committee anticipates completing the investigation. The chair of the committee will provide written notification of the committee's decision to the Director and the chair of the department, as appropriate. The chair of the department will then notify the student in writing of the committee's decision. A further appeal may be made to the Dean of the Graduate School, as detailed on the Graduate School website: https://graduateschool.nd.edu/assets/9047/info_appeal_procedure.pdf.