

CURRICULUM FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

[For students beginning the program in Summer 2017 and thereafter]

CDSP's MTS program provides solid academic grounding in theological disciplines, into which students integrate their interests and often their expertise in other fields, deepening their capacity for their current or envisioned vocation. Additionally, through study, worship, prayer, and service, students in the MTS program are formed as Christian disciples who participate in God's mission and proclaim the Gospel in a context of religious and cultural pluralism.

If undertaken on a full-time basis, the MTS program is designed to be completed in as little as two academic years. The degree may be pursued in residence, online, or in a combination of both modalities.

The Shape of the Curriculum:

The MTS degree requires successful completion of 16 three-unit courses (48 units in total), distributed as follows:

- 1 Old Testament course
- 1 New Testament course
- 2 history courses
- 1 theology course
- 1 ethics course
- 1 liturgics course
- 1 course in a world religion or interfaith relations
- 6 electives
- 2 thesis/project courses

Course selection is worked out with the faculty advisor under supervision of the Dean of Academic Affairs. The student is encouraged to explore tutorials, special reading courses, and programs available in field education. The overall program should be coherent at the same time that it maximizes the interests and freedom of the student.

All work for the program must be completed within a period of eight years beginning with the first work credited toward it, inclusive of transfer credit and leaves of absence.

Students should be aware that taking fewer than four courses each semester does NOT meet the requirements for full-time status as determined for purposes of agencies dealing with financial aid, for purposes of student loans, immigration, and veterans educational benefits. Repayment of student loans is required when a student's course load falls below half-time (two 3-unit courses).

Two 1.5-unit courses cannot normally be counted in place of a 3-unit course unless they are in the same subject. The advisor determines whether such calculation is appropriate in a given instance, and informs the Registrar.

Advanced Standing: Students with previous academic work in a required area will normally take an upper-level course in the same area.

Transfer Credit: Students with official transcripts that (1) reflect completed coursework that did not result in earning a degree and (2) demonstrate successful completion of one or more courses prior to enrolling as a CDSP MTS student that answer to the distribution requirements set out above may, with the formal permission of their academic advisors, and following an evaluation of the transcripts by the Registrar and the Dean of Academic Affairs, both consider the distribution requirement(s) for the area(s) in question to be fulfilled and can apply those credits toward the CDSP MTS requirements, reducing the number of credits to be earned at CDSP. A maximum of eight three-unit semester courses (or the equivalent completed on the quarter system) can be transferred to CDSP from another school. Students transferring work from other schools must complete a minimum of one full year's work (eight 3-unit courses) as a CDSP student in order to be eligible for the MTS degree. In addition, the eight-year clock for completing the degree begins with the earliest units earned toward the degree, whether they were earned at CDSP or elsewhere.

Spiritual Formation: In accordance with the MTS Degree Program Goals and Learning Outcomes (see below), MTS students are required to participate each semester as a cohort in a peer-led, no-credit Spiritual Formation group. Participation in this group introduces MTS students to spiritual practices that allow them to integrate their academic study into their lives of faith and practices of discipleship, and allows them to share work, hold one another accountable to their personal goals and projects, and mentor one another. The instructor of the Spiritual Formation group will supply guidance and direction designed to achieve these purposes.

January Intersession and Summer Coursework: While MTS students are not required to take January or summer courses, they may enroll in courses offered at these times. January and summer courses cannot be combined (1.5 + 1.5) to replace a three-unit course, except as outlined above.

Academic Standards:

CDSP maintains high academic standards for all of its degree programs. This is especially crucial for the MTS program because of its culminating thesis requirement, which must conform to stringent GTU-wide standards for format and use of academic apparatuses, such as styles for footnotes, endnotes, and bibliography. The GTU standard is the Notes–Bibliography Style detailed in chapters 16 and 17 of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 8th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). Students are strongly encouraged to obtain and study this guide, and particularly those chapters, to learn this style long before the work on the thesis begins. **Unless otherwise instructed, all course papers should conform to this style.**

In addition, academic writing is an art unto itself. It is a skill that must be mastered, even if one is already strong in other types of writing. For example, students must grasp how to formulate a thesis statement and how to construct a convincing argument in support of it, how to use sources effectively, and how to quote properly. Students who are not completely comfortable with scholarly writing are highly encouraged to take a theological writing course at the GTU or an academic writing course of another kind elsewhere. There are also resources in print and online for self-study. Print resources include the first half of the volume by Turabian mentioned above, which is an edited version of the classic book, *The Craft of Research* (4th ed., by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb,

Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald [Chicago: University of Chicago, 2016]). Another highly recommended book is Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *"They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015). Note that this text is an excellent guide to academic writing, but that when it comes to references it uses the MLA style and not Turabian style. A much more detailed manual is Lucretia B. Yaghjian's *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers*, 2nd ed. (New York: Bloomsbury–T&T Clark, 2015). Especially useful online resources for academic writing include the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu>) and the Harvard College Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/resources>).

Thesis Requirement:

Thesis/Project Course: A three-unit thesis/project course is taken in each of the two final semesters of the program (six units in total). Successful completion of the first thesis/project course requires (1) identifying the thesis topic or project, (2) forming a thesis committee, and (3) receiving the thesis committee's acceptance of a formal thesis or project proposal. Guidelines for forming the thesis committee and for the thesis proposal are provided below. Successful completion of the second thesis/project course requires submission of the full thesis or project and its oral defense by the student, conducted by the thesis or project advisor and the second reader or advisor.

Formation of a Thesis Committee: During the first thesis/project course, the student chooses a thesis advisor from among the CDSP faculty based on the topic decided upon for the thesis or project. The thesis advisor plus one faculty reader comprise a thesis committee. The second reader may be from outside CDSP; if the second reader is not a member of the faculty at the GTU or a GTU member school, the Dean of Academic Affairs must approve the reader.

Thesis Proposal: The proposal should amount to three to five double-spaced pages, featuring one-inch margins and a 12-point standard font. The proposal must employ appropriate citation, as outlined in the "Academic Standards" section above. The proposal should include the following sections and accompanying headings in the following order:

Title: Provide the full proposed title (i.e., including the subtitle, if one is to be used) of the thesis.

Scope and Nature of Thesis: Define what the project is about, the field in which it is located, the background of the topic, and the thesis' limits (noting matters that the thesis will not cover that might be expected).

Thesis Statement: In one sentence (or two, if absolutely necessary), state the central claim of the thesis. The thesis itself will be an extended argument demonstrating the truth of the thesis statement. This is the spine of the thesis project. It is the statement around which the entire endeavor is organized.

Methodology: Explain the theoretical frameworks and specific methodological tools that will be used for research and/or analysis. This is not a question about how the text/research will be organized but about how it will be conducted.

Significance: Discuss the significance of the work within the discipline(s) engaged by the thesis, and, if applicable, for other communities (religious, local, political, national, etc.), particularly the Episcopal Church or Anglican Communion. Demonstrate the distinctive contribution this thesis will make, including any gap in the current literature that the thesis will attempt to fill.

Chapter Outline: Give a clear indication of what each chapter of the thesis will include. This should provide a clear sense of how the entire work is to be organized and structured and the major moves that you as its author plan to make. Chapter titles are not necessary at this stage.

Short Bibliography: In addition to the three-to-five page proposal, include a short bibliography consisting of at least 15 entries (in proper bibliographic format) representing the most significant works/materials that will be used in the research/work.

Thesis Format: The format of the thesis must conform to regulations required by the GTU Library, where final copies of the thesis are kept. A copy of these regulations is available from the Registrar. Theses are expected to be around 50 pages in length. If a project is done instead of a thesis, the written portion is expected to be 50 pages or somewhat less.

The student is expected to be in regular communication with the thesis committee and to keep the members apprised of progress.

Thesis Deadline: The deadline for submission of the thesis to the committee is the first Monday in April, as published in the yearly calendar. For students completing their program in the fall semester, the deadline for submission to the committee is the first Monday in November.

Oral Defense: A date for an oral defense of the thesis or project is set by the student and committee members. At least the student and the advisor must be physically present for the defense. At this meeting, the thesis advisor completes the form entitled "MTS Thesis/Project Review" and all committee members sign it. This form is available from the Registrar and should be returned to the Registrar once it has been completed.

Post-Defense Submission of Thesis: Four typographically perfect copies of the thesis are due in the Registrar's Office no later than one week before the end of the term, and must be accompanied by the Graduation Check Sheet (available from the Registrar) bearing the signature of a Reference Librarian indicating approval of the format. (This form also requires other signatures indicating that the student's financial obligations have been met.) Two of the four copies are to be submitted unbound, ready for binding and permanent retention by the GTU Library, and must be accompanied by a check (payable to CDSP) to cover the cost of binding. The two remaining copies are to be submitted already bound by a local copy shop, in whichever manner the student chooses (e.g., tape-bound, spiral-bound, comb-bound, etc.) for permanent retention by CDSP. **Students must be registered during the semester in which the thesis is submitted.**

MTS Thesis/Project Extension: Students who have completed all coursework except the thesis must enroll as a continuing student and pay a continuation fee each semester until the thesis is completed, submitted to the thesis committee, and successfully defended.

A student who does not complete the thesis by the submission deadline may request an extension that will allow completion in the following semester **without registering or paying the continuing registration fees for that semester** if all the following conditions are met:

- The advisor and committee members agree to a detailed schedule leading to submission of the thesis and oral review by the end of the late registration period of the following semester.

- The student submits a Thesis Filing/Oral Review Exam Extension Agreement form (available from the CDSP Registrar's Office and on the CDSP website) with the detailed schedule of completion attached.
- The student submits the thesis to the committee before the end of the late registration period of the following semester.
- The student successfully completes the oral defense with the committee before the end of the late registration period of the following semester.
- The student files the thesis by the filing deadline for fall semester, for theses completed before the end of late registration of fall semester, or spring semester, for theses completed before the end of late registration of spring semester.

The intent of this policy is to permit a student who misses the spring thesis submission deadline to submit the thesis and complete the oral defense by the end of late registration the following September, and a student who misses the fall thesis submission deadline to submit the thesis and complete the oral defense by the end of late registration the following February, without payment of additional continuation fees.

Availing oneself of this option will affect student loan repayment. The last month of the previous semester (that is, the last semester of enrollment) will mark the end of status as a student for loan purposes. The six-month grace period before repayment of loans will begin at that time, not at graduation. For further information, consult the Financial Aid Office.

Degree Program Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Degree Goal #1 – Mission

- 1.1 Students will articulate a coherent theological understanding of God's mission, grounded in Scripture and in Christian heritage, particularly in its Anglican distinctiveness as well as its ecumenical comprehensiveness.
- 1.2 Students will demonstrate skill in contextual analysis that informs and deepens the church's commitment to the common good in particular ministry settings.

Learning Outcomes

- 1.1.1 Students will articulate in critically reflective ways how and why views of Scripture have evolved over time and in a variety of contexts, serving as the foundation of Christian understandings of mission, especially in the Anglican tradition.
- 1.1.2 Students will articulate a coherent and critically reflective historical and theological understanding of the nature of the church and of the church's participation in God's mission throughout history, with particular attention to the worldwide Anglican Communion.
- 1.1.3 Students will articulate a coherent, critically reflective and contextually sensitive theological understanding of mission in relation to particular present-day issues and challenges.
- 1.2.1 Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze a wide variety of socio-cultural contexts in which ministry takes place, using tools that include critical theory as applied to class and race.

- 1.2.2 Students will demonstrate the capacity to articulate and use a Scripturally, theologically, and historically grounded Christian ethic that encompasses interpersonal relations, wider social issues, and the church's participation in the common good.
- 1.2.3 Students will demonstrate the ability to identify and offer a Christian critique of the ways in which various forms of moral thinking shape our current culture.

Degree Goal #2 – Discipleship

- 2.1 Students will cultivate spiritual practices that will sustain them in their vocations, and skills that enable them to engage communities in the work of reconciliation, justice, and mercy.

Learning Outcomes

- 2.1.1 Students will articulate a theological and practical understanding of the connections between worship, mission, and the formation of Christian disciples.
- 2.1.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to participate in and shape conversations on contested issues in ways that both express conviction and embody respect for others.
- 2.1.3 Students will demonstrate the capacity to cultivate in themselves and others the habits, dispositions, and imaginative capacities needed for faithful public action in order to participate in God's healing of the world.
- 2.1.4 Students will exhibit knowledge of spiritual practices that sustain them in their Christian faith and mission.
- 2.1.5 Students will demonstrate understanding and practical use of theological reflection in pursuing their own vocations.

Degree Goal #3 – Evangelism

- 3.1 Students will articulate and embody the good news of God in Jesus Christ in coherent and compelling ways, orally, in writing, and through action, communicating the transforming power of the Gospel both within the church and in our pluralistic world.

Learning Outcomes

- 3.1.1 Students will articulate an understanding of the complementary relationship between evangelism and Christian social action, and their respective roles in proclaiming the Gospel and inviting people into Christian discipleship.
- 3.1.2 Students will demonstrate skills in developing contextually sensitive and authentic language, practices, and strategies for witness and evangelism that are usable in a variety of settings, with particular attention to the challenges of the post-colonial and inter-religious context.