



WESTERN SEMINARY



2010-2011 Academic Catalog Gospel-Centered Transformation

Master of Theology (Th.M.) Program

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Master of Theology (Th.M.) at Western provides advanced training in biblical and theological studies to people with a variety of interests: pastors seeking to deepen their ministerial foundation, graduate students wanting to prepare for further postgraduate study, or other graduate students simply desiring to devote some time to developing a specialized interest in a particular field of study.

The Th.M. program at Western places a high value on...

- **MINISTERIAL VITALITY:** Recognizing that biblical and theological research should take place primarily in the service of the church and its ministry in the world, the program continually challenges students to address the ministerial significance of their academic pursuits.
- **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE:** At every phase of the program, Th.M. students will develop all the skills necessary to achieve a high level of academic success. To that end, our Th.M. program provides ample opportunities for the students to sharpen their critical thinking, researching, and writing skills through both coursework and research.
- **FLEXIBILITY:** A highly flexible degree program, our Master of Theology encourages you to customize the program to meet your needs and interests as you prepare for leadership in the church, further study, a career in teaching, or whatever task God has laid before you.
- **INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERACTION:** We understand the value of each of the various biblical and theological disciplines and, consequently, we encourage students to draw on the resources that each provides in their research and coursework.

The Th.M. program is designed to allow significant flexibility at nearly every phase. The core of the program revolves around Th.M. seminars offered in various biblical and theological disciplines, a research project that can consist of a Th.M. thesis or two research papers and a number of elective courses selected from Western's various course offerings.

All Th.M. students will select a particular biblical/theological discipline in which they will develop a specialization. Students will select Th.M. seminars and electives in consultation with the Th.M. program director as they develop their specialization in this area. All thesis track students will select the specialization that best corresponds to the area in which they would like to conduct their thesis research.

The areas of concentration are:

- Systematic theology
- Historical theology
- Pastoral theology
- New Testament
- Old Testament

Many other components go into making Western's Th.M. program one of the finest in the nation:

- Participation at national and regional meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) is encouraged. Our Th.M. students regularly read papers at regional ETS meetings, and some have done so at national ETS meetings.
- Graduate fellowships are available at Western, linking Th.M. students and professors in close relationships and providing opportunities for students to teach, grade papers and exams, and carry out research.
- The writing of the Th.M. thesis joins a student with two faculty readers who advise and mentor throughout this research phase of the program.

The director of the Th.M. program is available to help students clarify academic goals, select courses, and complete the registration procedure. A copy of the Th.M. Handbook is available by writing to the director of the Th.M. program at the Seminary.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A prospective Master of Theology student must hold either a three-year Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree or, in some instances, an academic Master of Arts (M.A.) degree. The specific requirements for each are the following:

The Master of Divinity Degree (M.Div.)

A prospective Master of Theology student may hold a three-year Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree or a comparable graduate theological degree from a graduate-level institution accredited regionally and/or by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada.

A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) is required. In addition, the successful applicant must be able to demonstrate an ability to work in any language considered necessary for the chosen field of study. Proficiency in English composition is also required. This latter requirement shall be determined by submitting, along with the application, a research paper written during previous studies which reflects grammatical and compositional competency.

The M.Div. degree should include at least the equivalent of the following academic courses:

• Biblical studies	10 credits
• Hermeneutics	2 credits
• Church History	4 credits
• Greek	6 credits
• Hebrew	6 credits
• Systematic Theology	12 credits

* Those students wishing to specialize in New Testament will be required to have an additional 3 credits of Greek including exegesis; those specializing in Old Testament need an additional 3 credits of Hebrew including exegesis.

[For Western Seminary M.Div. students: In addition to the normal core requirements, those wishing to specialize in New Testament are required to take NTS 510; those specializing in Old Testament must take OTS 510.]

The Master of Arts degree (M.A.)

A prospective Master of Theology student may hold an academic Master of Arts (M.A.) degree or a comparable graduate theological degree. Such a degree must provide equivalent theological background with evidence of aptitude for advanced theological study from a graduate-level institution accredited regionally and/or by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada.

The academic M.A. degree should be at least 60 semester credit hours and should include the equivalent of the following academic courses:

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| • Biblical studies | 10 credits |
| • Hermeneutics | 2 credits |
| • Church History | 4 credits |
| • Greek | 6 credits |
| • Hebrew | 6 credits |
| • Systematic Theology | 12 credits |

* Those students wishing to specialize in New Testament will be required to have an additional 3 credits of Greek including exegesis; those specializing in Old Testament need an additional 3 credits of Hebrew including exegesis.

[For Western Seminary M.A. (Biblical and Theological Studies) students: In addition to the normal core requirements, students are required to take CHS 505 or CHS 506 and a CHS elective. Those wishing to specialize in New Testament are required to take NTS 510; those specializing in Old Testament must take OTS 510.]

A student seeking entrance into the Th.M. program with an academic M.A. degree must also demonstrate competency in the areas of communication, interpersonal relationships, intercultural awareness, and practical ministry. In accordance with this, the Th.M. director will work with the prospective student to give him/her opportunity to demonstrate competency in these areas. Although this is not an exhaustive listing and is not intended to be a checklist, some of the areas that will be investigated include:

- Significant ministry experience
- Pastoral/ministerial/communication preparation
- Intercultural awareness
- Demonstrated ability to develop significant interpersonal relationships
- Teaching/counseling/leading experience indicating competency in communication

Should the Th.M. director consider the prospective student to be deficient in these areas and yet sense potential for growth, provisional acceptance into the program will be granted and further preparation assigned. Thus, the student will be admitted with a pre-Th.M. status. In some cases, a course or courses may be taken to remove the deficiency. In other cases, a practicum could be devised which would provide supervision and accountability so as to gain the necessary competency. In either case, these prerequisites must be completed before full acceptance into the program is granted.

A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) is required. In addition, the successful applicant must be able to demonstrate an ability to work in any language considered necessary for the chosen field of study. Proficiency in English composition is also required. This latter requirement shall be determined by submitting, along with the application, a research paper written during previous studies which reflects grammatical and compositional competency.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Master of Theology degree is conferred upon the attainment of certain personal and academic requirements. In addition to the general seminary requirements outlined on pages 31-32 and the specific Th.M. competencies listed below, degree candidates must (1) give evidence of a genuine Christian character, orthodox belief, and conduct consistent with a God-given call to a position of leadership, and (2) complete all courses in the prescribed Th.M. curriculum with a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

The Th.M. degree can be completed in one year of full-time study. Students may take up to an additional year to write a thesis and pass comprehensive exams. All full-time students, however, are expected to finish the degree within three years of initial registration. For part-time students, a good deal of flexibility is built into the program that allows for a longer period of time for degree completion. All Th.M. students are expected to maintain active progress toward their degree with at least an annual registration. A 3.0 grade point average must be maintained throughout the program.

In the Th.M. degree, students will choose between two distinct tracks. In the *thesis track* students will develop the research, writing, and critical thinking skills necessary for the production of a full Th.M. thesis with faculty supervision. This track will be most beneficial for students whose career objectives or personal interests require them to reflect deeply on some particular topic. In the *non-thesis track*, students focus on developing a broader base of knowledge across a range of biblical and theological disciplines, culminating in the production of two smaller research projects.

The Master of Theology, consequently, is a highly personalized degree program. Students may design their program to fit particular academic and/or vocational goals. All programs, however, will be designed around these two basic tracks:

Thesis Track (25 Credit Hours)

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| • Th.M. Seminars | 6 credits |
| • Other Electives | 12 credits |
| • Research Methods | 1 credit |
| • Thesis | 6 credits |
| | Total 25 credits |

Non-Thesis Track (25 Credit Hours)

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| • Th.M. Seminars | 10 credits |
| • Other Electives | 12 credits |
| • Research Methods | 1 credits |
| • Research Projects | 2 credits |
| | Total 25 credits |

The successful completion of an acceptable thesis or two guided research projects, as well as a comprehensive examination are integral parts of the program. The examination includes both an oral defense of a student's Th.M. thesis and an oral investigation of a student's competency in his/her concentration courses.

Post-M.Div. studies completed at another professionally or regionally accredited seminary or graduate school may be considered for transfer credit, if the proposed transfer credit fits the nature of the program and other requirements are met. A maximum of eight semester hours may be transferred. Students wishing to transfer credit should contact the Registrar's Office.

Students may complete up to eight hours through the Jerusalem University College (formerly the Institute of Holy Land Studies) in Jerusalem, Israel. These hours may be selected from among approved master's level courses at the Institute. The selection of such courses should be under the guidance of the director of the Th.M. program.

TH.M. CORE OUTCOMES

In addition to the Seminary's general educational goals, the Master of Theology program attempts to achieve specific outcomes. For each student, these outcomes are:

1. Be a scholar who appreciates and understands the various disciplines that contribute to evangelical scholarship and can articulate a model of integration of those disciplines and employ that model in his/her research and writing.
2. Be able to engage competently in high level research and articulate clearly and precisely his/her discoveries in both written forms (including a thesis) and oral presentations.
3. Be a person who has mastered the key concepts, themes, and skills of his/her Th.M. courses and can adequately defend his/her thesis before others.
4. Be able to interpret Scripture (a proficiency in the grammatical-historical method) with particular skills in textual criticism, lexicography, grammar, syntax, and genre awareness.
5. Know what biblical theology is and know how to engage in it, understanding how biblical theology affects both the exegesis of Scripture and systematic theology.
6. Know what systematic theology is and what are its proper sources, and know a methodology and how to employ that methodology in actually doing systematic theology.
7. Know the usefulness and role of historical theology in evangelical scholarship, being familiar with the most significant resources and knowing how to proceed in historical research.
8. Be able to recognize and appreciate the role of reason, logic, tradition, and world view in biblical and theological studies, and be able to interact with past and present philosophical and cultural issues which impinge on those studies.

“The Master of Theology is an excellent choice for students wishing to refine their understanding of the biblical and theological disciplines and the significance this has for the life and ministry of the church. Throughout the program, students are challenged to develop their skills in researching, writing, and critical thinking as they reflect deeply on the most important biblical and theological issues facing the church today.”

Dr. Marc Cortez, Th.M. Program Director
Academic Dean