

# Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Program

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree program is designed for those engaged in or preparing for vocational ministry, including the pastorate, intercultural service, Christian education, pastoral counseling, chaplaincy, evangelism, music and worship ministries, and related areas of service. Historically, the M.Div. degree has been the recommended program for those preparing for ordination.

The M.Div. program requires a core of biblical, theological, and applied ministry studies. In addition, students select an elective track consisting either of a ministry specialization or a self-designed sequence of electives approved by a faculty mentor. This flexibility of design recognizes that many students come with differing God-given gifts, passions, talents, experiences, and goals.

The M.Div. course of study, designed to assist the local church in the training and nurturing of godly leaders, is guided by five overarching educational values which the Seminary believes are essential to that objective. Those values are:

1. Outcome-based instruction
2. Spiritual and character formation
3. Mentor relationships
4. Church relatedness
5. Global and cultural awareness

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The explicit outcomes which the M.Div. seeks to produce encompass multiple dimensions of the graduate's life and work. This means that the M.Div. student's educational experiences are intended to produce growth in knowledge, character, and skills for ministry. Many of these outcomes are best achieved and measured in the field, rather than the classroom. Consequently, many of the educational experiences bring the classroom and the church together in partnership to prepare the student for a life of fruitful ministry.

In addition to the Seminary's general educational goals, the M.Div. program attempts to achieve specific outcomes:

1. Applies biblical truth to life and ministry based on a thorough understanding of the biblical canon and solid exegesis
2. Employs mature theological thinking to evaluate competing ideas, develop a personally integrated and gospel-centered expression of biblical teachings, communicate theological truths clearly, and apply theological truths to life and ministry
3. Demonstrates cultural awareness and discernment in theological thinking and ministerial practice
4. Exhibits a Christ-like character worthy of being emulated, and integrity that imparts credibility to his/her ministry

5. Demonstrates self-awareness and a commitment to an ongoing process of personal and spiritual formation that is clearly grounded in the gospel
6. Implements a gospel-centered philosophy of ministry that is biblical, missional and transformational
7. Communicates God's truth clearly, accurately, and convincingly
8. Nurtures and equips people so that God's purposes are effectively accomplished in and through them

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the general requirements for admission to the Seminary given on pages 20-21, applicants for the M.Div. program are expected to present an accredited baccalaureate degree (or its equivalent) with a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or higher (on a 4.0 scale), including a breadth of liberal arts. Applicants who do not meet these general academic requirements may petition the Admissions Committee for consideration. A recommendation from the applicant's pastor and three personal recommendations regarding the applicant's Christian character and leadership potential also are required.

## TRANSFER CREDIT

Upon approval by the Registrar, transfer of up to 45 hours credit is allowed toward the M.Div. program from graduate institutions accredited by the Association of Theological Schools or regional accrediting associations. Students must have earned a grade of B or better for a course to be considered for transfer and coursework must have completed no more than five years prior to matriculation to Western Seminary. Alternatively, students may receive advanced standing of up to 22 credit hours of the 45 credit hours of transfer credit allowed toward their program if they are able to demonstrate current competency in required coursework based on prior study (based on parallel undergraduate work or transfer credit that is ineligible for consideration based on age). Transferability of credits earned at Western and transferred to another institution is at the discretion of the receiving institution. Consult the Registrar's Office for information on eligibility of transfer credit and advanced standing.

*"'Ministry of the Word' is the paramount New Testament priority for church leadership. Western's M.Div. is about laying a solid foundation for a lifetime of effective ministry of the Word. It gives balanced focus to receiving the message from God and relating that message to any people group on the planet."*

Dr. Gary Tuck, Professor of Biblical Studies

## RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Of the 90 credit hours required for the Master of Divinity program, a minimum of 45 credit hours must be completed through coursework completed at Western Seminary, with a minimum of 30 credit hours taken in resident study at one of Western Seminary's physical campus locations. All work leading to the Master of Divinity must be completed within six years from the time of matriculation. Extension of this limit requires approval of the Administrative Committee. However, only one such extension may be considered due to special circumstances, such as ill health. Reinstatement to the program after withdrawal requires Admissions Committee action and may subject the student to additional requirements for the degree. All credits applied toward degree requirements must be earned within ten years of the awarding of the M.Div. degree

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Master of Divinity degree is conferred upon the attainment of certain personal and academic requirements. In addition to the general seminary requirements outlined on pages 34-36, 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; (2) complete all courses in the prescribed M.Div. curriculum with a minimum grade point average of 2.5.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students may complete their studies in as few as six semesters, including mentored field ministry, with a minimum of 90 credit hours required as a minimum for graduation. The program is designed around a common core of 78 hours and an elective track of 12 hours. The 78-hour core contains six hours of mentored ministry. The elective track involves either the completion of a ministry specialization (12 hours of prescribed and elective credits) or an open track (12 hours of elective credits and mentored ministry approved by a faculty mentor). Students in either track may choose a concentration (open track students may select as many as two concentrations). Each concentration consists of six elective hours in a particular discipline, with the course selection requiring faculty mentor approval.

### Track or Ministry Specialization

The intent of a ministry specialization is to further equip an individual with the skills, insights, and training experiences necessary for a distinctly defined ministry role. Like the divinity core, the ministry specializations are outcome-driven. Eight to twelve credits of course work reflect a thoughtful blend of required courses and restricted electives designed to impart the character, knowledge, and skill outcomes deemed essential for each particular role.

**EXPOSITIONAL MINISTRY SPECIALIZATION.** The Expository Ministry specialization seeks to develop advanced skills in those whose ministry will focus especially on the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. Hence advanced studies in the biblical languages and exegetical skills are provided, along with additional training in communicating the fruit of one's study. In addition to the M.Div. core outcomes, the Expository Ministry specialization attempts to achieve specific outcomes:

1. Know the full process of exegesis pertinent to biblical Greek and Hebrew
2. Be able to apply this full exegetical method to the texts of various Old and New Testament genres
3. Be able to develop and deliver expository messages and lessons

**PASTORAL MINISTRY SPECIALIZATION.** The Pastoral Ministry specialization is designed as the foundational preparation for those who are called to serve the local church in a pastoral capacity. The specialized courses seek to develop pastors competent to lead a church with integrity, understanding, and skill. Learning is guided by faculty and pastor/mentors in both classroom and church contexts.

In addition to the M.Div. core outcomes, the Pastoral Ministry specialization attempts to achieve specific outcomes:

1. Know the biblical, theological, and ministerial foundations for pastoral ministry including pastoral identity, the nature of pastoral ministry, preaching, soul care, and ministry programs
2. Be able to do basic, tool-assisted exegesis of texts from various Old and New Testament genre with a view to preparing expository messages and lessons
3. Be able to develop and deliver with advanced proficiency expository sermons and lessons from various biblical genres
4. Be able to perform relevant pastoral duties such as administering the ordinances, performing weddings and funerals, doing visitation, dealing with crisis situations, counseling, equipping, and practicing church discipline
5. Be able to deal with issues of leadership and management in the church, such as decision making, team building, board dynamics, conflict management, finances, buildings, legal matters, and the like

**OPEN TRACK.** Students may elect to choose up to 12 credits of course work apart from any specialization. Electives are chosen with faculty advisor guidance based on student goals, prior experiences, talents, and God-given gifts.

## CURRICULUM PLAN

*Please note: Biblical studies, theological studies, hermeneutics and church history courses may be offered in 4-credit or 2-credit (i.e., BLS 501X, BLS 501Y) formats, depending on the campus location.*

### Spiritual formation: 6 credits

SFS 501	Learning to Love God and Others .....	(2)
SFS 502	Practicing Prayer and Other Key Disciplines .....	(2)
SFS 504	Growing into Ethical Maturity .....	(2)

### Biblical studies: 16 credits

DBS 506	Learning to Interpret Scripture .....	(4)
BLS 501X	Interpreting Old Testament I: Genesis - 2 Samuel .....	(2)
BLS 501Y	Interpreting Old Testament II: 1 Kings - Song of Solomon .....	(2)
BLS 502X	Interpreting Old Testament III: Isaiah to Malachi .....	(2)
BLS 502Y	Interpreting New Testament I: Gospels .....	(2)
BLS 503X	Interpreting New Testament II: Epistles 1 .....	(2)
BLS 503Y	Interpreting New Testament III: Epistles 2 .....	(2)

### Biblical language studies: 14 credits

(see note below on biblical language options)

NTS 501	Functional Foundations of Greek .....	(3)
NTS 502	Functional Application of Greek .....	(3)
or NTS 508	Introducing Foundation for Greek Exegesis .....	(3)
NTS 509	Greek Reading and Syntax .....	(3)
(Students complete either NTS 501/502 or NTS 508/509)		
OTS 501	Functional Foundations of Hebrew .....	(3)

- OTS 502 Functional Application of Hebrew ..... (3)  
 or OTS 508 Introducing Foundation for Hebrew Exegesis ..... (3)  
 OTS 509 Hebrew Reading and Syntax ..... (3)  
 (Students complete either OTS 501/502 or OTS 508/509)

- NTS 515 Principles of Exegesis ..... (2)  
 or OTS 515 Principles of Exegesis ..... (2)

### Theological studies: 16 credits

- THS 501 Knowing the Triune God: Theology I ..... (4)  
 THS 502 Glorifying the God of our Salvation: Theology II ..... (4)  
 THS 503 Living as the Community of the Spirit: Theology III ..... (2)  
 THS 508 Integrating Ministry and Theology ..... (2)  
 CHS 505 Wisdom from Church History ..... (4)  
 or CHS 506 Insight and Inspiration from Church History ..... (2)  
 CHS 5xx Church history elective ..... (2)  
 (Students complete either CHS 505 or CHS 506 and a CHS elective)

### Ministerial studies: 20 credits

- DIS 501 Communicating Christ in Culture ..... (2)  
 DMS 501 Thinking Theologically about Ministry Leadership ..... (2)  
 DMS 502 Introducing Theology and Practice of Worship ..... (2)  
 DMS 506 Developing Godly Leadership for the 21st Century ..... (2)  
 or PCW 513 Women in Leadership ..... (2)  
 EMS 505 Growing Disciples Intentionally ..... (2)  
 PTS 503 Practicing Evangelism and Apologetics ..... (2)  
 PTS 504 Maximizing the Church's Redemptive Influence ..... (2)  
 PTS 507 Providing Pastoral Counseling ..... (2)  
 PTS 508 Developing Strong Families ..... (2)  
 PTS 510 Preparing and Preaching Expository Sermons ..... (2)

## SPECIALIZATION OR TRACK

### 18 credits — Select one

The 18 credits of course work in the elective tracks may be taken in one of three ways: (1) a ministry specialization (minimum of 8 credits in pastoral or expositional courses); or (2) an integrated sequence of electives chosen with faculty guidance. The choice among these three options is based on student goals, talents, God-given gifts, and prior experiences.

### OPEN TRACK

#### Mentored Ministry: 6 credits

- MFM 500 Discovering and Developing Your Ministry Potential ..... (2)  
 MFM 501-04 Mentored Field Ministry ..... (1+1+1+1)  
 Note: Check with your program advisor for MFM 501-504 details.

#### Open electives: 12 credits

### EXPOSITIONAL MINISTRY SPECIALIZATION

#### Mentored Ministry: 6 credits

- MFM 500 Discovering and Developing Your Ministry Potential ..... (2)  
 MFM 501-04 Mentored Field Ministry ..... (1+1+1+1)  
 Note: Check with your program advisor for MFM 501-504 details.

#### Expositional Ministry required courses: 4 credits

- NTS 5xx Exegesis Elective ..... (2)  
 or OTS 5xx Exegesis Elective ..... (2)  
 (Choose two credits from courses with a PTS or EMS prefix, or from those with a communications emphasis such as teaching, preaching, etc.)

# Master of Divinity

## 72 CREDITS

Spiritual Formation [6] Theological Studies [16]  
 Biblical Studies [16] Ministerial Studies [20]  
 Biblical Languages [14]

### OPEN TRACK

Concentration [6] + Open Electives [6]  
 OR...  
 Open Electives [12]  
 Mentored Ministry [6]

### EXPOSITIONAL MINISTRY SPECIALIZATION

Required Courses [4]  
 Restricted Electives [6]  
 Open Electives [2]  
 Mentored Ministry [6]

### PASTORAL MINISTRY SPECIALIZATION

Restricted Electives [8]  
 Open Electives [4]  
 Mentored Ministry [6]

**DEGREE TOTAL  
= 90 CREDITS**

### Restricted electives: 6 credits

(Choose six credits from courses with a NTS, OTS, BLS, or THS prefix, or from those with a communications emphasis such as teaching, preaching, etc.)

### Open electives: 2 credits

**PASTORAL MINISTRY SPECIALIZATION**

**Mentored Ministry: 6 credits**

MFM 500 Discovering and Developing Your Ministry Potential ..... (2)

MFM 501-04 Mentored Field Ministry ..... (1+1+1+1)

Note: Check with your program advisor for MFM 501-504 details.

**Required courses: 2 credits**

PTS 506 Providing Pastoral Care ..... (2)

**Restricted electives: 8 credits**

NTS 5XX Exegesis elective ..... (2)

or OTS 5xx Exegesis Elective ..... (2)

PTS Communication Course ..... (2)

(Choose four credits from courses with a PTS or CNS prefix)

**Open electives: 2 credits**