

M.A. Handbook

Department of Theological Studies
Concordia University
Updated Winter 2020

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Master of/Magisteriate in Arts (Theological Studies)

The Program contains two options (A and B), and full-time students will be expected to choose one or the other before their second semester begins. Part-time students may decide at any point up to completion of 18 credits.

Option A: M.A. with Thesis (45 credits)

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| 1. THEO 603 Method in Theology | (3 credits) |
| 2. THEO 604 Theological Hermeneutics | (3 credits) |
| 3. THEO 605 Methods in Biblical Studies | (3 credits) |
| 4. THEO 690 Annotated Bibliography and Thesis Proposal | (6 credits) |
| 5. Elective courses from THEO 620-675 | (9 credits) |
| 6. THEO 697 Thesis | (21 credits) |

Option B: M.A. With Applied Project (45 credits)

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| 1. THEO 603 Method in Theology | (3 credits) |
| 2. THEO 604 Theological Hermeneutics | (3 credits) |
| 3. THEO 605 Methods in Biblical Studies | (3 credits) |
| 4. Elective courses from Theo 620-675 | (18 credits) |
| 5. THEO 691 Research Paper | (9 credits) |
| 6. THEO 692 Applied Project in Theology | (9 credits) |

Applying

Application must be completed online:

<http://graduatestudies.concordia.ca/>

By June 1st for admission in September

By October 1st for admission in January

Elective Courses

All the courses listed below are one-term, 3 credit courses

Topics in Scripture

THEO 621 Old Testament I
THEO 623 Old Testament II
THEO 627 Questions in O.T. Research
THEO 629 Inter-Testamental Studies
THEO 631 New Testament I
THEO 635 New Testament II
THEO 637 Questions in N.T. Research
THEO 639 Biblical Studies

Topics in Church History

THEO 641 History I
THEO 643 History II
THEO 645 History III
THEO 647 Research in History of Christian Thought
THEO 649 Questions in Christian Worship

Topics in Theology

THEO 651 Theology I
THEO 653 Theology II
THEO 655 Theology III
THEO 657 Questions in Theological Research
THEO 661 Ecclesiology I
THEO 663 Ecclesiology II
THEO 664 Ecclesiology III
THEO 667 Research in Ecclesiology
THEO 669 Theology & World Religions

Topics in Christian Ethics

THEO 671 Ethics I
THEO 673 Ethics II
THEO 675 Issues in Ethical Research

Compulsory Courses

THEO 603, 604, and 605 are required courses. THEO 603 and THEO 605 will be offered in alternate years. THEO 604 will be offered every two years or as needed.

THEO 603 METHOD IN THEOLOGY (3 credits)

This course introduces students to theological method: the questions, insights, and philosophical presuppositions that determine theological frameworks with some attention to modern systematic theology and Christian ethics. Students acquire a differentiated appreciation for the types of theology, the scope of distinct theological fields, and their research horizons.

THEO 604 THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the notion of church as interpretative community by encouraging them to develop an understanding of the basic principles of theological hermeneutics (the science or theory of interpretation) through a survey of the history of the discipline from early times up to present day.

THEO 605 METHODS IN BIBLICAL STUDIES (3 credits)

This course focuses on tools and methods employed in biblical studies and ancient literature related to the Bible (up to 600 CE). Synchronic and diachronic approaches are discussed but the course focuses primarily on diachronic methods (form and genre criticism, comparative method, etc.) Students are trained to develop skills in analyzing texts using biblical methods.

THEO 690 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND THESIS PROPOSAL (6 credits)

The Annotated Bibliography and Thesis Proposal constitute preliminary phases necessary for the writing of the MA Thesis. The Annotated Bibliography and Thesis Proposal are supervised by the supervisor of the Thesis and are assessed on a pass/fail basis.

Note: Students who have received credit for THEO 685 or 695 may not take this course for credit.

Annotated Bibliography: This is a Reading Course that will normally begin after completion of one or more of the required courses. At this point, students in Option A will have chosen a Thesis subject, and begun discussions with a Faculty member who will act as their Thesis Supervisor.

The professor and the student will decide on a recommended reading list which should enumerate texts in the following categories:

1. General introduction to the area
2. The primary sources relevant to the area, in translation, unless original languages are both possible and needed.
3. The classics among secondary literature in this area, in the original language where useful, or in translation where possible.
4. Relevant material to the Thesis subject.

The professor with the student will also provide a list of useful questions which can direct students toward significant insights.

The student should be encouraged to write constantly as she reads, and to report on this by maintaining a log consisting of at least the following:

- Answers to the listed questions.
- Insights and reactions. A collection of brief reflections, a page or two in length, as they occur.
- Organized reference notes, relating to specific parts of the Thesis outline, in which materials relevant to the Thesis are noted.
- The bibliography for the Thesis should be expanded through this exercise, and a record of discoveries kept.

Evaluation and contact hours: at least twice each semester the student should make an appointment to meet with their Thesis Supervisor, in order to show and discuss the Annotated Bibliography. Evaluation will be based on the 4 meetings with the professor and the notes taken for the Annotated Bibliography.

Thesis Proposal: The Thesis Supervisor will first be appointed by the Chair on the recommendation of the Graduate Program Director after the latter has consulted both student and professor.

The proposal will be elaborated under the direction of the Thesis Supervisor.

The Thesis Proposal must be submitted to the Graduate Committee of the Department, and accepted, either before the student registers in THEO 697 (Thesis), or within the semester after registration.

The Thesis Proposal shall have at least the following 4 sections:

- A review of literature – using the readings done for the Annotated Bibliography. The student should now structure these readings in their review of literature.
- A clear statement of the question to be addressed, beginning where appropriate, with a brief history of its origins and evolution and/or a working hypothesis can be proposed.
- A discussion of the method of investigation, including a break down into stages of inquiry. This should demonstrate a practical grasp of the work to be done. It will not bind the student afterwards, if experience recommends a different way of working.
- A projected Table of Contents for the actual Thesis. The order of exposition in the Thesis will not normally follow the order of inquiry during research.

THEO 691 RESEARCH PAPER (9 credits)

The guided research project involves the preparation of a substantial research paper. It may be prepared in conjunction with any seminar course but will be separate from the basic course requirements.

The Research Paper is a component of Option B. It will normally develop out of a course, or seminar, or Applied Project, under the direction of the professor who taught it. When a precise question has been agreed upon between professor and student, the question should be registered in the student's file and with the Graduate Program Director, and the professor will be appointed as Research Supervisor by the Chair of the Department.

The Research Paper should demonstrate competence in research in a limited area. It should best the student's ability to know when research has in fact been sufficient to answer the question asked, and to judge about the validity of conclusions based on the collected evidence. It should also test the student's ability to present findings in an orderly structure, with well-defined terminology, and clear procedures of proof.

The Research Paper represents full-time work of a least one semester, and it comprises 9 credits. Ideally it should be about 45 pages, double-spaced in length. Its nature is partially defined by the fact that, unlike the Thesis in Option A, it is not preceded by 6 credits of Annotated Bibliography and Thesis Proposal. Hence the Paper need not contain an account of the history of the question, but rather it will normally survey current research touching the question, identify a point of particular interest, and address that point. It will show mastery of research method, but not necessarily mastery of any field of knowledge.

A typical Research Paper might have something like the following form:

- The Question. (5 pages) This would merely formulate the question very clearly, showing its significance. (It would not present the “*Status Quæstionis*” in the classical form, i.e. presenting the history of the question, showing its evolution to the point at which the Thesis question arises.)
- Account of Research. (35 pages) Present the discovery progressively as it occurred: how bibliography and strategy of reading was chosen; summaries of relevant information as it was collected and sequence of insights; shifts in point of view and clarifications of the question as they occurred; justification of final definition of the question and of the belief that the research has legitimately come to term.
- Conclusion. (5 pages) A systematic presentation of the results of research, both the conclusions and their proof, in the form it might have in an article in an appropriate theological journal.

The Research Paper will be evaluated by the Research Supervisor, and not submitted to a Committee.

THEO 692 APPLIED PROJECT IN THEOLOGY (9 credits)

The aim of this course is to give the student the opportunity to engage in critical theological reflection by frequenting a milieu where theological interpretation occurs on a regular basis (e.g. a local parish, a confessional school, a religious formation program like the Christian Training Program, religious programming in the media, etc.) in order to assess the theological models presupposed in the activity studied. The *practicum* will include a 3 credit reading component related to the field of study.

The *practicum* may have a variety of forms. Its objective is to give the student the opportunity to engage in critical theological reflection by studying a real milieu where theological reflection occurs and is expressed in action, in order to identify the theological models implicit in the activities, and reflect on them. A syllabus of each practicum will be kept on file in the Departmental Office. As a very general norm it will take about two semesters in time, but be equivalent to 9 credits (135 hours) in terms of work.

The general norm is that there will be about 3 credits given to preparatory study: a) lectures, reading, and discussion about method, and about whatever theoretical basis is required by the topic, and b) formulating specific questions and discussed with a professor.

This would be followed by, or be partially accompanied by, the work of collecting data in the place(s) selected, and organizing data in initial categories. This would be carried out by the student. The equivalent of 3 credits (45 hours) would be assigned to this.

Finally, normally in a following semester, the student reflect on the data, analysing it, identifying and formulating any emerging answers to the questions formulated at the beginning, and in writing a report. This will involve further contact hours with the faculty member. Usually the report will be presented first as a rough draft for an initial evaluation and critique by the faculty member, and then in a final form for a final evaluation. The report will consist of no more than 30 pages including bibliography, documentation, appendices, etc.

The final grade will be based, as far as possible, on the student's work through all three phases.

Ideally, this practicum will begin in a student's second semester, i.e. after completion of the two or more of the required courses where a variety of useful basic ideas will be thoroughly discussed.

THEO 697 THESIS (21 credits)

The Thesis shall consist in the presentation of the research results. Each Thesis shall be examined by a committee consisting of the student's

Supervisor and by at least two other scholars from the Department. The remaining regulations concerning the Thesis examination are in accordance with the School of Graduate Studies (See [Thesis Regulations](#)). The Thesis is a component of Option A. It should be a mature presentation demonstrating mastery of a method, and of some part of a field of knowledge. Apart from undergraduate and graduate preparation of a general sort, it represents the work full-time of more than two semesters. In itself it comprises 21 credits; and it follows upon 6 credits in Annotated Bibliography and Thesis Proposal, all under direct supervision, and all directed specifically at this project.

The Thesis should present what the Thesis Proposal outlined, or else should justify the differences. The Thesis shares the following characteristics with the Research Paper: it should demonstrate competence in research in a limited area; it should test the student's ability to know when research has in fact been sufficient to answer the question asked, and to judge about the validity of conclusions based on the collected evidence; it should also test the student's ability to present findings in an orderly structure, with well defined terminology, and clear procedures of proof. However, beyond this, the Thesis should demonstrate mastery of part of a field of knowledge by situating the question and answer within that field and over the history of its development in theological thought.

Still the Thesis is not of a doctoral level. Doctoral dissertations are original and substantial in the sense that they present the results of new research at the cutting edge of scholarly work, and truly advance the body of knowledge about its topic. A Master's Thesis represents only an introduction to research. It may return to research already published to reconceive and reorganize it and then to present a new understanding of what has been discovered before. Without necessarily extending the discipline with new knowledge, it will demonstrate a new mastery of some question and some material. It will suffice to be original in that sense.

The Thesis will conform to the format described in the Graduate Calendar; it will be between 100 and 120 pages long. It can be presented in English or French. The Thesis will be evaluated by a committee of three, following the norms published in the Graduate Calendar.