

M.A. Handbook
Department of Theological Studies
Concordia University

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Master of/Magisteriate in Arts

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)

1. THEO 603 Method in Theology (3 credits)
2. THEO 604 Seminar (3 credits)
3. THEO 685 Reading Course (6 credits)
4. THEO 695 Thesis Proposal (3 credits)
5. Elective courses in Theology (9 credits)
6. THEO 697 Thesis (21 credits)

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

1. THEO 603 Method in Theology (3 credits)
2. THEO 604 Seminar (3 credits)
3. Elective courses in Theology (18 credits)
4. THEO 691 Research Paper (12 credits)
5. THEO 692 Applied Project in Theology (9 credits)

Applying

Application should be completed online:

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

Applications must be completed:

By July 1st for admission in September;

By November 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 Intertestamental 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

METHOD IN THEOLOGY

This course discusses truth in terms of cognitional theory and as related to the ecclesial community. Students will be invited to identify questions in theology and to analyze these questions so as to describe the kinds of data which will be needed. Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology* will be systematically studied as a textbook, in order to set up a higher level of reflection on these same topics. The course will be the occasion for the students to choose a director for their thesis, practicum, or research papers, and to begin working with a specific research direction.

THEO 604

HERMENEUTICS AND ECCLESIOLOGY: THE CHURCH AS INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY

This course will familiarize the students with different models of the church as interpretative community and how to exploit these models within different theoretical frameworks and in relation to different theological questions.

READING COURSE

The Reading Course is worth 6 credits and will normally begin after completion of THEO 603 (i.e. the second semester, though full-time students may register for in the first semester if full-time status needs to be assured). At this point, it may be supposed that students in the A option will have chosen a thesis area at least, and begun discussions with a Faculty member who might eventually direct the thesis.

The professor will provide 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.

The professor 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:

- a) Answers to the listed questions.
- b) Personal impressions and reactions. These can have the form of diary entries recording the experience on a daily basis, or the form of a collection of brief reflections, a page or two in length, as they occur.
- c) Organized reference notes, relating to specific parts of the thesis outline, in which materials relevant to the thesis are noted.
- d) 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 see the professor, in order to show and discuss the log. Evaluation will be based on these 4 meetings. Evaluation should take into account differences in the starting point of the student; those entering a new area should not be penalized if their mastery of

the materials and level of reflection on them reflect a lower level at the beginning and rise to higher levels at the end.

THEO 691

RESEARCH PAPER

The Research Paper is a component of the B option. 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 Director of Graduate Programme, and the professor will be appointed as Research Director 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 12 credits. Ideally it should be between 40 and 55 pages 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 Reading Course, or 3 credits of 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 Quaestionis" 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. (10 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 Director, and not submitted to a Committee.

THEO 692

APPLIED PROJECT

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. This will be done in a small group of 3 to 5 students with a professor, so that all may share the same understanding of the proposed study, and same vocabulary. One might plan on 8 to 12 contact hours as the project begins.

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 group of students, with some formal provision for discussion among the students, but not

necessarily formal contact hours with the professor. The equivalent of 3 credits (45 hours) would be assigned to this.

Finally, normally in a following semester, the students would work privately in reflecting 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, but on an individual basis. 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 course on Method in Theology (THEO 603) and in tandem with the Seminar (THEO 604) where a variety of useful basic ideas will be thoroughly discussed.

THEO 695

THESIS PROPOSAL

Normally full-time students will register for this in their third semester. The thesis Director will first be appointed by the Chair on the recommendation of the Director of the Graduate Programme after the latter has consulted both student and professor.

Theoretically, the thesis proposal should be completed before the actual research begins. The proposal will be elaborated under the direction of, and also evaluated by, the thesis Director.

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:

- An initial Bibliography – usefully structured, and partially annotated.

- A clear statement of the question to be addressed, beginning where appropriate, with a brief history of its origins and evolution.
- 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 697

THESIS

The Thesis is a component of the A option. 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 a Reading Course, and 3 credits in a Thesis Proposal, all under direct supervision, and all directed specifically at this project.

The Thesis should present what the Thesis Proposal outline, 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.