

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

Introduction

The Master of Theology (Th.M.) program is an advanced course of study which builds on the first graduate-level theological degree. The primary goal of the program is to provide an advanced theological education in the context of an Orthodox community. It is intended for candidates who: (a) may later pursue studies at the doctoral level; (b) desire to teach formally; (c) desire scholarly enhancement of their priestly or ministerial practice; or (d) are interested in personal theological and spiritual enrichment. While the program is of particular interest to Orthodox students who have received their first graduate theological degrees from Orthodox theological schools in the United States and abroad, it welcomes all qualified applicants.

Beginning in the 2022-2023 Academic Year, the ThM program at Holy Cross has two tracks: in-person and online. The online track, while following all the general requirements listed below, consists of asynchronous courses crafted specifically for the academic requirements of the ThM program. Further details regarding the online track are available from the Registrar or the Director of the ThM program.

Th.M. Program Requirements

Admission Requirements

Admission into the program requires a first graduate-level theological degree (Master of Divinity, Licentiate of Theology awarded to graduates of Orthodox schools of theology abroad, Master of Theological Studies, etc.). Applicants must have demonstrated previous academic work of high quality (3.3 grade average or better), an aptitude for critical thinking, and independent study under faculty supervision. Language requirements include proficiency in English as well as sufficient language preparation for the proposed course of study. All applicants must complete the Graduate Record Exam (GRE; the School of Theology code number is R-34496). Students should bear in mind that GRE scores are viable for only five years after the date the exam is taken. International applicants must show competence in English through the computer-based testing on the TOEFL exam (the School of Theology code number is 9794).

Program Administration

The Th.M. program is under the supervision of the faculty, which works through the Th.M. Committee appointed annually by the Dean. The Director of the Th.M. program, also appointed by the Dean, chairs the committee. The Director's duties involve providing information to applicants on all matters pertaining to the program, advising them regarding courses and registration, keeping appropriate records on behalf of the Committee, and generally overseeing the entire program. The Th.M. Committee deliberates on all policy and curricular changes, and recommends proposals to the faculty for final decision.

Program. Learning Outcomes

1. Show competence beyond M.Div. or MTS level in one area of theology; e.g., biblical, historical, patristic, systematic, or practical.
2. Conduct advanced research in theology and produce written work of publishable quality.

Course Requirements

Th.M. students must complete a minimum of half their required coursework in upper level courses (7000-level). Courses at the 6000 level may be taken according to a student's program needs and under the supervision of the director of the Th.M. program. A minimum of 12 credits or 4 courses must be completed at Holy Cross, while the remaining 6 credits or 2 courses may be taken through member schools of the Boston Theological Institute (BTI) or other accredited theological schools.

The Master of Theology degree requires one-year residency. It is awarded upon the successful completion of 24 credits (12 credits per each semester) and the approval of the thesis.

The program is also open to qualified part-time students. However, all candidates must complete the program, including the acceptance of the thesis, within a period three years from the date of matriculation into the program.

For international students, immigration status is granted only for a period of two years when enrolled in the Th.M. degree program. No extension will be granted beyond the two-year degree program. Optional Practicum Training (OPT) is not available for Th.M. degree recipients.

Thesis Requirements

The Th.M. thesis is an advanced research paper written in the student's chosen area of concentration. It is intended to demonstrate competence in a theological field beyond the M.Div. level. The topic of the Th.M. thesis should be treated with significant scholarly depth within the usual scope of 50-60 pages. In consultation with the Th.M. director, the student selects a thesis advisor from among the Holy Cross faculty teaching in that field. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Th.M. program director if there is a special need. The thesis advisor works with the student to develop a thesis proposal and recommends a second reader. The thesis advisor supervises the student's research and writing, and schedules the oral examination (i.e., thesis defense). If the thesis advisor is a Holy Cross faculty member, the second reader may be from outside of Holy Cross.

Students are required to submit a written thesis proposal (5-6 pages) that presents the topic, describes the problem or area of research and its significance, and lays out the methodology of the thesis. The proposal provides a table of contents and a preliminary bibliography. The thesis proposal should be approved by the thesis advisor and the second reader and is submitted to the director of the Th.M. program by October 15 for fall admission or March 1 for spring admission.

The student registers for the Th.M. Thesis for 3 credits each semester. Credit will be granted upon successful completion of the oral examination (i.e., the thesis defense).

The ThM thesis serves as a capstone seminar for the ThM online program by demonstrating a student's ability to conduct research and write at a significantly high academic level and produce a thesis that is of sufficient quality for publication within a peer-reviewed context. The thesis also requires a student's ability to demonstrate strong oral communication skills through an oral defense of the research.

The completed thesis is due three weeks prior to graduation.

Financial Aid

Candidates are eligible for financial assistance. Students seeking financial aid should apply through the Student Financial Aid Office.