

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

Introduction

The Master of Theology (ThM) 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.

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.

The ThM requires one academic year of study. However, many students need additional time, usually to complete the thesis.

ThM 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, 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. Holy Cross has eliminated the requirement of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). If you wish to send your GRE score, the School of Theology code number is R-34496). International applicants must show competence in English by scoring at least 550, or 80, for the computer-based testing on the TOEFL exam (the School of

Theology code number is 9794) or demonstrate their competency in English in other ways.

Program Administration

The ThM program is under the supervision of the faculty, which works through the ThM Committee appointed annually by the Dean. The Director of the ThM 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 ThM Committee deliberates on all policy and curricular changes, and recommends proposals to the faculty for final decision.

Program. Learning Outcomes

1. Show competence beyond MDiv 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.

“Residency” Requirement

Whether one is enrolled for the in-person or the on-line program, the ThM assumes one academic year of full-time study (enrolled in three courses and the thesis “course”), including the writing of the thesis. A full-time student should develop a thesis proposal early in the first semester of study in order to complete the program at the end of the first year.

The program is open to qualified part-time students.

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. If a student has completed all course requirements but not yet completed the thesis, the student must enroll in ThM continuation, paying any applicable fees. If a student has not completed the degree three years after matriculation, the student is required to petition the ThM program director to continue in the program.

Course Requirements

ThM students must complete a minimum of six three-credit courses (18 credit hours). Half (9 credits) must be 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 ThM program, with the approval of the instructor teaching the course. Should a student desire to participate in a 5000 level course at Holy Cross, the student must approach the instructor to create and supervise a Directed Study with at least a 6000 level course number in order for it to fulfill the course requirements of the ThM. 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. Students must receive the approval of the ThM program director before enrolling in a course outside of the BTI.

Thesis Requirements

The ThM 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 MDiv level. The topic of the ThM thesis should be treated with significant scholarly depth within the usual scope of 50-60 pages. In consultation with the ThM 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 ThM 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. Both the first and second readers must agree to serve. The thesis advisor supervises the student's research and writing. Both the first and second readers will ultimately approve the thesis. 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 ThM program by October 15 for

a student matriculating in the fall semester or March 1 for spring matriculation.

The student registers for the ThM Thesis for 3 credits each semester. Credit will be granted upon successful completion of the thesis. If the student does not complete the thesis in the usual one year of study, the student must enroll in the ThM Continuation, paying any fees until the thesis is completed.

The ThM thesis serves as a capstone 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 completed thesis is due three weeks prior to graduation and must be submitted to the Library. For graduation in the fall semester, this is usually by the end of November; for the spring semester, this is usually by the end of April

All students must maintain a semester grade point average of 2.0 (C) per semester in order to be considered in good academic standing. A cumulative grade point average of 2.0 is required for graduation.

Financial Aid

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

Approved by the Faculty of the School of Theology, February 17, 2026