

Master of Theology (Th.M.)

The Master of Theology degree is an advanced masters degree program at Brite Divinity School. The twenty-four hour program leading to this degree is designed to provide students with a more complete mastery of a particular area of theological study than is normally provided at the M.Div. level. Students who enter the program may seek a variety of objectives: to prepare for further graduate study at the doctoral level, to prepare for some forms of teaching (in institutions, public or private, where masters preparation is expected for entry level positions), to use scholarly study to enhance ministerial practice, or to engage in disciplined and critical reflection upon a specialized form of ministry. By the end of the program, students will be expected to demonstrate an advanced understanding of their chosen area of study through the completion of a thesis project.

Degree Requirements

This degree requires the completion of twenty-four semester hours, and a thesis. All courses require approval of the student's advisor.

I. Areas of Study

- A. Hebrew Bible, Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and Literature of Early Judaism. The history, theology, literature, religion, and language of ancient Israel and Early Judaism in ancient Near Eastern and Jewish settings. Contemporary methods of biblical interpretation.
- B. New Testament and Literature of Early Christianity. The history, theology, literature, religion, and language of early Christianity in Graeco-Roman and Jewish settings. Contemporary methods of biblical interpretation.
- C. Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care. The theory and practice of ministry in pastoral theology and pastoral care.
- D. History and Theology. Preparation in theological analysis and constructive formulation, including study in history, theology, historical theology, and ethics.

II. Language and Research Methodology

Reading knowledge of both Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Greek is required for matriculation into Areas A and B. During the first week of classes, entering students will take brief diagnostic tests in both biblical languages (thirty minutes allowed for translation in each testament, with the aid of a dictionary). In light of the diagnostic, the BIIN faculty will provide direction to each student for fulfilling the ancient language requirement. Results of the diagnostic examinations and language remediation will be communicated to the entire BIIN faculty and the Associate Dean's office. In addition, all students will take at least three hours in advanced translation and interpretation in the language of their specialization.

Work in the area of History and Theology requires knowledge of one modern language other than English (typically French, German, Italian, Korean, Spanish, or Modern Hebrew). The modern language requirement is met by passing a two hour exam normally prepared and graded by a Brite faculty member. Exams will be graded Pass/No Pass. The two-hour exam will require a translation of no more than two pages from a book or journal article. Students may make use of a dictionary. Students should be in conversation with the faculty member conducting the examination for particular instructions.

Brite occasionally offers BRLN 90000 to provide a foundation from which students can prepare for a modern language exam. This course, while beneficial, does not satisfy the modern language requirement. Students who have completed BRLN 90000 are encouraged to continue to develop their translation skills before taking an exam with a faculty member.

Students in the area of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care will need to demonstrate competence in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. This requirement can be met by passing an acceptable graduate level course, approved by the faculty, at an accredited college or university with a grade of "B" or better.

III. Curriculum

- A. The program requires 24 hours of course work.
- B. Course work will typically include twelve hours at the 90**3 level in the area of one's specialization, or related areas. The remaining nine hours of courses will be at the 70000-90000 level. Courses are to be planned in consultation with the student's advisor.
- C. In the final semester of program, students must complete a three-hour independent research study course (****94013) including the writing of a thesis, normally 40-50 pages in length. Students must pass an oral examination based upon the thesis project, which will be conducted by the student's advisor and a faculty member chosen, in consultation with the student, by the student's advisor.

Additional Degree Requirements

- 1. Twenty-four semester hours of credit must be completed with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25, based on a four-point grading system.
- 2. All entering students are required to participate in orientation sessions conducted prior to the beginning of classes in the fall and spring semesters.
- 3. All entering students are required to attend a Seminar on Healthy Boundaries. Students who do not complete this requirement will be subject to the cancellation of their registration.
- 4. Except for approved transfer credit, Th.M. students will normally fulfill all their course requirements through courses taught by Brite faculty.
- 5. The Th.M. requires at least two semesters of academic study.
- 6. Master of Theology students who are not enrolled in any class during a fall or spring semester will be charged a fee for continuation in program by enrolling in BRLB 90001 Dissertation or Thesis Research in Library. This fee will allow use of the Mary Couets Burnett Library. If a student is enrolled in BRLB 90001 or any other courses in the spring semester and is advance registered for BRLB 90001 or any other courses in the fall semester, library access will continue during the summer without enrolling in BRLB 90001. Library copy cards function in the summer only if the student is enrolled in a summer semester course (either BRLB 90001 or any other summer semester course). BRLB 90001 will not count toward the twenty-four credit hours required by the degree.
- 7. Students may be withdrawn from individual courses for lack of academic progress upon the recommendation of the faculty member and with the approval of the Dean. Students may be dismissed from the Divinity school at the discretion of the Dean or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at such times as it is clearly demonstrated that the student is not interested in, or making, acceptable academic progress.
- 8. All degree requirements must be completed within four years from the date of the earliest credit counted toward the degree (including transfer credit, if any). Extensions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs after consultation with the Advanced Programs Committee.