CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION

MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGY)

PROGRAM MANUAL

Approved by Faculty Assembly

September 22, 2011
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NB All necessary forms for the MA program can be found on union.edu, on the MA website
PREFACE

The first Master of Arts Program at Catholic Theological Union was a cooperative program with DePaul University. In 1971, after an extensive self-study and evaluation by the North Central Association and the Association of Theological Schools, it was recommended that the school appoint an MA Director and design its own independent program. Roman R. Vanasse, O.Praem., submitted an initial design for an MA program at CTU, and after approval by the faculty the program went into effect in September of 1972. The following have served as directors of the program: Roman Vanasse, O.Praem., 1972-1979; John Pawlikowski, O.S.M., 1979-1990; Stephen Bevans, S.V.D., 1990-1993; Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., 1993-1996; Kevin Madigan, 1996-2000; Gilbert Ostdiek, O.F.M., 2000-2002; Stephen Bevans, S.V.D., 2002-2005; Mary Frohlich, R.S.C.J., 2005-2010; and Antonio Sison, C.PP.S., 2010-present. This manual was compiled during the 1992-1993 school year and was edited in 1998, 2001, and 2002. It was edited and revised in 2005 in view of CTU’s change to the semester system in the 2004-2005 academic year, and edited again in 2007, 2010 and 2011 in view of further adjustments to the program.
PART I: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Catholic Theological Union offers two types of MA in Theology: the Research MA and the General Academic MA. Within these two types there are two possibilities for completing the MA: the MA with major and minor areas, and the Multidisciplinary MA, approved by the CTU Faculty Assembly on December 19, 2004.

The former form of the program is designed to include a major, i.e., focused, in-depth concentration in a particular discipline, as well as a minor to insure a broader knowledge of theology. Majors may be taken in:

- Biblical Studies (a general concentration, or concentration in Old or New Testament)
- Church History
- Intercultural Ministry
- Ethics
- Interreligious Dialogue
- Liturgy
- Spirituality
- Systematic Theology
- World Mission

Minors may be taken in these areas or in Pastoral Ministry. The minor must be different from the major (E.g. Old Testament major with minor in New Testament; Systematic Theology major with minor in New Testament, etc.).

The Multidisciplinary MA involves doing MA level work in courses representing each of the theological disciplines. It may be taken as a Research or as a General Academic degree. This approach is designed especially for students who do not have a previous theological degree and who are preparing for a ministry in which they need a wide acquaintance with the range of theological scholarship, rather than an in-depth knowledge of one discipline. High school teaching is one example of such a ministry.

A. MA with Major and Minor Concentrations

1. The Research MA with Major and Minor

1.1 Goals and Objectives

The goal and objectives of the Research MA (Theology) are stated in the following graduate profile.

1. The graduate of the Master of Arts program:
1.1 Attains and nurtures a clear identity of the professional ecclesial minister
1.2 Engages in personal and communal spiritual formation toward personal transformation and growth
1.3 Evidences progress toward a coherent and personally integrated theological vision
1.4 Demonstrates proficiency in engaging in academic study and research
1.5 Knows the content of particular areas of the Catholic tradition appropriate to the master’s level
1.6 Demonstrates familiarity with contemporary issues in Christian living today
1.7 Recognizes and critiques the strengths and weaknesses in diverse schools of theology
1.8 Engages in critical and respectful dialogue with other Christian traditions and religious ways
1.9 Profits from and utilizes a variety of theological and cultural perspectives

2. The graduate of Research MA (Theology), satisfies the performance outcomes of the Master of Arts degree plus the following:

2.1 Competently employs one or more research languages in addition to English
2.2 Demonstrates knowledge of a variety of theological methods used in intentional ways
2.3 Acquires and applies skills required for the pursuit of doctoral studies

1.2 Prerequisites

Admission to the Research MA (Theology) requires the following:

- fulfillment of the general admission requirements, including a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution or the educational equivalent;
- an undergraduate major in theology or religious studies consisting of fifteen semester hours or twenty-four quarter hours and incorporating the major introductory areas of theological study (i.e., Bible, Doctrine, History, Liturgy or Sacraments, Ethics);
- a background in philosophy sufficient for the understanding of theology, ordinarily consisting of six semester hours or nine quarter hours;
- completion of MA2200, MA Research Skills, or demonstration of adequate research and writing skills to do MA-level research.

The prerequisite in theology/religious studies can be fulfilled by (1) an undergraduate major in theology or religious studies from an accredited college or university, (2) foundational courses at CTU, or (3) a demonstration of equivalent preparation, provided that the MA Director, in consultation with appropriate faculty members, judges this preparation to be equivalent. To fulfill this prerequisite, the GPA of undergraduate work must generally be at least 3.0; that of graduate work must be at least 3.5. If an applicant’s GPA is below these standards, he or she may be admitted on probation. Courses to supply the background in philosophy can also be taken at CTU.
1.3 Candidacy and Time to Completion

Once 25 percent of coursework is completed, the student applies for candidacy. Signatures on the Candidacy Form indicate agreement that the student appears to demonstrate acceptable ministry capabilities in relation to his or her program. Candidacy is granted when the proper form has been signed by the student, the advisor, the formation director, the MA Director, and the Academic Dean. Candidacy is a graduation requirement for the MA degree.

The time required for completing the Research MA Program will usually be a minimum of two years. In the case of part-time students and for special reasons, this time can be extended, but the program must ordinarily be completed within seven years after coursework begins.

1.4 Academic Requirements

Requirements include thirty-three semester hours (eleven courses) of coursework at the 4000 level or above, comprehensive examinations, and a master's thesis. There is also a modern research language requirement [see 1.4.7 below]; other language requirements vary from department to department.

1.4.1 Courses

The course work is divided as follows:

a. eight courses in the student's major area – twenty-four semester hours. Normally, at least half of these courses are seminars at the 5000 or 6000 level.

b. three courses in one other theological discipline (the minor) -- nine semester hours.

Up to four courses may be taken without permission of the MA Director in schools of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools, at the University of Chicago, or at some other graduate school of theology, provided that (1) these courses are taken during the course of study at CTU, or (2) they have been taken within seven years previous to admission to CTU. Credits earned for degrees previously awarded are not transferable to CTU.

Ordinarily, these courses are applied to the program requirements in the following ratio: two courses in the major area of concentration; two courses in the minor area of concentration. Other arrangements can be made with the approval of the MA Director.

No credits from courses graded below “B” can be transferred. Requests for transfer are to be presented to the MA Director.

Individual departments may further specify course and language requirements (see 1.4.6 and 1.4.7).
It is the responsibility of the student to inform the professor, at the beginning of each MA course, that he or she is an MA student. The student may also wish to give the professor more information about the specific objectives and details of his/her MA program. The student is also responsible for clarifying with the professor what special requirements are expected of MA students for this course, and for fulfilling those requirements.

1.4.2 First-Year Requirements

All new MA students are required to attend two workshops during their first year of studies:

1. MA Road Map: Orientation and Procedures (Fall Semester - September)
2. MA Comps Prep: Oral Argument and Comprehensive Exams (Fall Semester - November)

At the end of their first semester or three completed courses, students will receive an “End-of-First-Semester Packet” which will contain the following, along with a letter explaining how to complete these requirements:

- Program Plan Form
- Candidacy Form
- Language Fulfillment Form

At this time the student is responsible to make an appointment with his or her advisor to discuss preparation of the Program Plan and the accompanying Focus Statement. The Focus Statement is a one to two page statement of the student’s personal learning goals for his/her MA program. It is not primarily a statement of “career” or “ministry” goals, but rather of the intellectual skills and content the student hopes to master for the sake of future ministry.

The student submits one copy of each form to the MA Director by email as (pdf attachment). MA Director will sign the forms and send the same electronically to the Registrar’s Office and cc the student.

1.4.3 Training in Method

Since the Research MA program focuses on developing the skills needed for theological research, it is important that all Research MA students learn the basic tools of theological research as well as the various methods in their area of concentration. Each student has the personal responsibility to acquaint himself/herself with respect to method during the course work part of the program as such knowledge is essential in preparing the comprehensive examination questions and writing the thesis. Each department has
developed specific methodology courses or other procedures to help facilitate its students’ achievement of proper methodological sensitivity. In some cases, foundational or complementary core courses that focus on method (i.e., those with the letter “A”) may fulfill this requirement of the program.

1.4.4 Relationship of Student to Advisor and Department

Each MA student will be assigned an advisor from the department within which his/her major area resides. The student is responsible to meet with the advisor regularly (at least once per semester) to prepare the Program Plan and Focus Statement, to discuss course choices before registration, and/or to discuss fulfillment of other requirements and personal goals for the MA program. The assigned advisor will normally also be the one who assists the student in preparing for comprehensives and chairs the Comprehensives Board.

MA students will also have a special relationship with the department (or sub-departments) to which their major area is related. They will meet periodically with the faculty members involved for professional sharing, methodological training and general reflection on the goals of the MA program. Students are not obligated to attend such sessions but are strongly encouraged to do so.

1.4.5 Comprehensive Examinations

Once students have completed coursework, they are eligible to take comprehensive examinations. The purposes of the comprehensive examinations are:

a. to demonstrate the candidate's grasp of theological methods and content of the disciplines included within his/her program;

b. to afford the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate the scope and integration of his/her theological studies, so that the MA represents more than just an accumulation of courses and a thesis.

A list of expected “Competencies for MA Comprehensive Exams” is provided in Appendix 2.

The Research MA comprehensives are based on ten questions that are developed by the student in consultation with his or her Examination Board. **For the Research MA with major and minor, seven questions are in the major area and three are in the minor area.** The questions, with bibliography, are submitted by the student to the Comprehensive Examination Board (see below) for its approval well before the actual date of the examination. Sample sets of questions for comprehensives are provided in Appendix 1.
The board of examiners consists of three members. For the MA with major and minor, two are from the student's major concentration and one from his or her minor. The chair of the board will ordinarily be the student's MA advisor, and the other members are to be proposed by the student and advisor. Keeping in mind appropriate lead-time – ordinarily at least four (4) months prior to the exam dates – student submits a duly accomplished Comprehensive Examinations Board Appointment Form to the MA Director electronically (as pdf attachment). The MA Director subsequently submits the form for the signature of the Academic Dean and then forwards the approved form to the Registrar’s Office (and cc the student, advisor, and board members).

The examinations consist of two parts.

a. First Part: Five hours before the scheduled time of the exam, the board will give the student a list of three questions chosen from among the seven questions prepared for the major area. From these three the student will choose one on which he/she will prepare a thirty-minute lecture. This will be followed by a thirty-minute question and discussion period with the board of examiners. The examination will be evaluated (1) according to the student's ability to articulate a grasp of the method(s) proper to the topic, and (2) according to the student's grasp of the “state of the question” of the topic on which he/she is examined.

b. Second Part: A one-hour oral examination in which the student will attempt to demonstrate his/her knowledge of the content and methods relevant to the other nine questions which he/she has proposed. In some cases a three-hour written examination may be substituted for the oral.

Regarding the use of materials in the examination:

a. For the oral presentation on the first day of the exam, a minimal number of note cards, books used for brief quotations, maps or charts are permitted. A student may also provide a brief outline of the oral presentation through a handout, on a blackboard, or with PowerPoint. A student may not read a lecture for this presentation.

b. For the second day of the exam, only basic primary source materials are permitted for occasional reference or quotation by the student. No note cards or outlines may be taken into the examination room on the second day.

A student may take a failed portion of the comprehensive examination a second time. Upon receipt of a petition from the student, the examination board may allow a third attempt. The examination board ordinarily remains the same for all attempts.
1.4.6 The MA Thesis

The thesis has a value of three credits. The thesis director and topic are selected by the student, with the approval of the MA Director. Any permanent member of the faculty may be approached to be the director, but no faculty person is under obligation to accept the responsibility. Once a faculty member agrees to direct a thesis he/she selects two readers in consultation with the student. The student then prepares an outline for discussion by the director and the readers. The final approval of the outline, however, is the exclusive responsibility of the thesis director. A copy of the approved outline is submitted to the MA Director electronically by email attachment (pdf).

In order to register for T5999, the student must complete the official MA Thesis Proposal Form. The Proposal will be approved only if all other program requirements, including language requirements, have been completed.

With the prior approval of the MA Director, a faculty member from another institution may serve as a thesis director or reader.

The readers are to submit a written critique on the draft of the completed thesis to the thesis director. The final draft of the thesis should normally be submitted at least six weeks prior to graduation.

The final grade for the thesis is the responsibility of the thesis director, but the director is strongly urged to consult with the readers regarding the grade.

Students researching or writing their theses must register for T5999, MA Thesis Credit. Every semester thereafter until the thesis is approved, they must register for CR5000, Continuing Registration. There is no charge for CR5000.

The student must submit one copy of the approved thesis to the school (given to the administrative assistant of the Dean) prior to graduation. This copy of the thesis is placed in the school archives. The student is also required to submit a form regarding the microfilming of the thesis.

The length of the thesis should be between 80 and 150 pages. The prescribed writing manual for CTU is the Chicago Manual of Style. The final copy of the thesis is approved for style by the administrative assistant of the Academic Dean.

The title of the thesis should accurately reflect its content. Title page specifics include:

a. The title page has a one-and-one-half-inch margin on the left, and a one-inch margin on the other three sides.

b. The title is centered and capitalized on line(s) 12/14.

c. The author statement is identified on lines 21/23.
d. The submission statement, including school and degree, appears on lines 30-38.
e. The date appears on line 44.
f. The signature line, name faculty member and statement of directorship appear on lines 50-52.

The usual arrangement for the content of the thesis is:

a. Preliminary pages (use small Roman numerals, centered at the bottom of each page)
   1. blank page
   2. title page (cf. copy of title page in appendix)
   3. copyright page
   4. acknowledgement page
   5. table of contents
   6. list of illustrations (if applicable)

b. Text
   1. use Arabic numerals, centered at the bottom of the page
   2. all pages should have a one-and-one-half-inch margin on the left, and a one-inch margin on the other three sides

c. Reference pages (use Arabic numerals, centered at the bottom of the page, in sequence with the preceding section)
   1. appendices
   2. end notes (if applicable)
   3. bibliography
   4. index
   5. vita (one page indicating the author's name, date of birth, colleges attended and degrees earned and any relevant professional positions held)

d. Paper: Acid-free paper only (students may consult bound theses in the CTU library for further guidance).

Guidelines for Revision Submissions:

• Readers communicate recommendations for revisions to the thesis director and not directly to the students.
• After the revisions are received by the thesis director, he/she makes the determination what is to be changed on the draft.
• Revisions are worked out between the thesis director and the student.
• The corrected draft is submitted to the thesis director, it does not go back to the readers unless there is a specific request.
• Ordinarily, the final version of the thesis is submitted to the Director who in turn signs the thesis and submits it to the Dean’s office.
• The thesis director fills out the thesis grade form and submits it to the MA Director.
• The MA Director submits the thesis grade form to the Registrar and sends a copy to the student and the advisor.

1.4.7 Policies for Language Requirements and their Assessment within the MA Program

1.4.7.1 General rationale for language requirements:

CTU has language requirements for the MA (Theology) program because the faculty believes that language study:

☐ Broadens intellectual horizons. Even a minimal ability in another language brings awareness of a broader range of perspectives on issues.
☐ Enhances research capabilities. Languages enable consultation of resources that would otherwise remain inaccessible.
☐ Gives a head start on PhD work. This is true even if the language study remains introductory.

Ideally, for all required languages the faculty would like to see the following skills:

☐ The ability to compare the original text of primary sources to translated versions.
☐ The ability to understand discussions of nuances in primary texts that involve the vocabulary or grammar of the original language.
☐ The ability to accurately translate short selections with the help of a dictionary and grammar book.

For the modern research language requirement, we would also like to see the following:

☐ The ability to read secondary literature in that language with the help of a dictionary.
☐ Intercultural Studies and Mission accepts oral skill as an alternative to this last expectation, if the student intends to conduct ethnographic research into oral traditions directly relevant to the student’s proposed thesis.

However, in reality, for many students these goals are only precariously achieved with one semester of language study. This will be taken into account in assessment of students’ skills. Students should address their own goals for language study in their Focus Statements.
1.4.7.2 Specific Language Requirements

Students in the Research MA program must demonstrate reading competence in two modern research languages which can serve as helpful tools in doing scholarly research in their major discipline. One of these two languages will be English. A modern research language is defined as one in which a significant body of published scholarly research relevant to the student’s major area exists. The student should discuss the choice of a language with his/her MA advisor.

ICSM (formerly CCM) has a policy of considering languages to be bona fide research languages if either of the two following conditions pertains: a) there is a significant body of scholarly literature in this language in the student’s proposed sub-field; and/or b) the student intends to conduct ethnographic research into oral traditions directly relevant to the student’s proposed sub-field. In the latter case oral proficiency will be tested instead of reading and translation ability.

Certain majors require additional language requirements:

- A Bible major (including a major in Old Testament or New Testament) requires a minimum of a recent, elementary, one-semester course in both biblical Hebrew and Greek. In cases where Hebrew and Greek have not been learned recently (i.e., within the last five years), the BLL Department reserves the right to require the student to take a proficiency examination in either or both of these biblical languages, or to take refresher courses. Bible majors must have completed their biblical language requirements by the end of their first year of study.

- Liturgy, Church History, Ethics and Systematic Theology majors require a reading knowledge of Latin.

1.4.7.3 Policy on assessment of language achievement:

LATIN: Departments requiring Latin will define the specific character of Latin proficiency expected for each concentration. They will locate appropriate materials (i.e. texts) that can be used both for practice and for an assessment test.

CTU will continue to offer Latin, and the course will take into account, and teach to, these departmental expectations. Assessment will take place within the course. Students who do not take Latin at CTU must normally take an assessment test. The student will be given a text to translate; he/she will have two hours, and may use a dictionary and a grammar book. The examiner will submit a form to the MA office indicating that the student has passed the test.

If the department determines that the student has passed a rigorous reading test in the language at another institution within the past three years, the testing may be waived. In this case a transcript must be submitted.
HEBREW, GREEK, ARABIC: For these languages, adequate assessment takes place within rigorous courses that are offered at CTU or in ACTS.

If a student does not take one of these courses, however, he or she must normally take a test that assesses ability to use the language as appropriate to the discipline. For these languages the departments (BLL, ICSM) will handle this test and determine its character. The examiner will submit a form to the MA office indicating that the student has passed the test.

If the department determines that the student has passed a rigorous reading test in the language at a seminary, college, or university outside of ACTS within the past three years, the testing may be waived. In this case a transcript must be submitted.

MODERN RESEARCH LANGUAGES:
Since the Hyde Park program that offered graduate modern language reading courses no longer exists, students normally prepare by taking courses elsewhere or by private tutoring.

No matter how the student chooses to prepare, she/he must normally take a reading and translation test that assesses ability to access theological texts in the language. The student will be given a text to translate; he/she will have two hours, and may use a dictionary and a grammar book. The examiner will submit a letter to the MA office indicating that the student has passed the test.

The testing requirement in modern languages will rarely be waived on the basis of previous coursework, unless these courses focus specifically on the type of reading skills needed for graduate research.

A student’s non-English native language may be used to fulfill the modern research language requirement, under the following conditions: 1) it is indeed a “research language”; 2) the student can read theological scholarship in the language; and 3) the student can give evidence that it will be actually be used in her or his thesis research. The student’s MA advisor must submit a letter confirming this.

ICSM students who plan to do ethnographic research will be assessed on oral ability rather than by the above methods.

A list of professors competent to test in a variety of languages is on the MA Union site. Students make individual arrangements to take the tests.

Students are normally expected to have completed their modern language requirements by the end of their first year of study. Approval of the Thesis Proposal Form by the MA Director will be contingent upon certification of language competence for all languages required for the degree.
1.4.8 Additional Departmental Requirements

Bible Research MA students must take:


b. Of the eight courses required in the area of concentration one course must be in intertestamental literature, one must be in biblical methods, and two others must be 5000 level seminars.

c. There is no mandatory sequence of courses in the area of concentration. Rather the advisor will advise the individual student about the options available in biblical studies.

Research MA students in Church History, Ethics or Systematic Theology must be trained in the methodologies appropriate to their area of specialization. Fulfillment of this requirement is determined in consultation with their MA advisor and is normally fulfilled in connection with regularly scheduled courses and in the researching and writing of the thesis. Students may also choose to do an independent tutorial course in method as part of their major or take one of the foundational or complementary core courses in method (A) in one’s major area (e.g. Art of Doing Theology, Doing Systematic Theology, Local Church History, Living the Moral Life).

Liturgy students for the Research MA are required to take a methods course in liturgy. The other courses of their major are chosen in consultation with their MA advisor.

Spirituality Research MA students are required to take Foundations for the Study of Spirituality and also at least two other courses with an historical focus.

1.5 Supervised Teaching Program (STP)

A Supervised Teaching Program (STP) is available to students in the Research MA program who have (ordinarily) less than five years teaching experience in theology.

For Research MA students, the STP is taken in addition to the twelve courses required for the degree. It may be taken any time after the student has passed comprehensive exams.

For details of the program, see 2.5 below.

1.6 Formation Requirements

Personal and spiritual formation is an integral part of preparation for ministry. MA students who are not members of a participating community and/or are not ordained priests are required to participate in one of the formation programs such as the Emmaus Lay Formation Program, the
Augustus Tolton Pastoral Ministry Program, or the Oscar Romero Scholars Program. They are to work with the director of the appropriate formation program after admission to CTU to determine how best to meet their needs for such growth. Students will not be admitted to candidacy for the degree without the signature of a formation director indicating that they have participated in the appropriate opportunities for spiritual and personal development.

2. The General Academic MA with Major and Minor

2.1. Goals and Objectives

The goal and objectives of the General Academic MA (Theology) are stated in the following graduate profile.

The graduate of the General Academic Master of Arts program:

1.1 Attains and nurtures a clear identity of the professional ecclesial minister
1.2 Engages in personal and communal spiritual formation toward personal transformation and growth
1.3 Evidences progress toward a coherent and personally integrated theological vision
1.4 Demonstrates proficiency in engaging in academic study and research
1.5 Knows the content of particular areas of the Catholic tradition appropriate to the master’s level
1.6 Demonstrates familiarity with contemporary issues in Christian living today
1.7 Recognizes and critiques the strengths and weaknesses in diverse schools of theology
1.8 Engages in critical and respectful dialogue with other Christian traditions and religious ways
1.9 Profits from and utilizes a variety of theological and cultural perspectives

The General Academic MA at CTU is not intended to serve as a preparation for PhD work (although pursuing this degree would not hinder a person from applying for a PhD program). While the Research MA emphasizes both familiarity with the Christian theological tradition and proficiency in theological method, the General Academic MA focuses primarily on the former. Candidates for the General Academic MA are expected to grasp the state of the question of various theological issues, and this is evaluated in both the written work for courses and the final comprehensive examinations.

2.2 Prerequisites

Admission to the General Academic MA (Theology) requires the following:
• fulfillment of the general admission requirements, including a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution or the educational equivalent;
• an undergraduate major in theology or religious studies consisting of fifteen semester hours or twenty-four quarter hours and incorporating the major introductory areas of theological study (i.e., Bible, Doctrine, History, Ethics);
• a background in philosophy sufficient for the understanding of theology, ordinarily consisting of six semester hours or nine quarter hours;
• completion of MA2200, MA Research Skills, or demonstration of adequate research and writing skills to do MA-level research.

The prerequisite in theology/religious studies can be fulfilled by (1) an undergraduate major in theology or religious studies from an accredited college or university, (2) foundational courses at CTU, or (3) a demonstration of equivalent preparation, provided that the MA Director, in consultation with appropriate faculty members, judges this preparation to be equivalent. To fulfill this prerequisite, the GPA of undergraduate work must generally be at least 3.0; that of graduate work must be at least 3.5. If an applicant's GPA is below these standards, he or she may be admitted on probation. Courses to supply the background in philosophy can also be taken at CTU. Note: Grades lower than a “B” (or equivalent) may not be counted as fulfillment of any prerequisite.

2.3 Candidacy and Time to Completion

Once 25 percent of coursework is completed, the student applies for candidacy. Signatures on the Candidacy Form indicate agreement that the student appears to demonstrate acceptable ministry capabilities in relation to his or her program. Candidacy is granted when the proper form has been signed by the student, the advisor, the formation director, the MA Director, and the Academic Dean. Candidacy is a graduation requirement for the MA degree.

The time required for completing the General MA Program will usually be a minimum of two years. In the case of part-time students and for special reasons, this time can be extended, but the program must ordinarily be completed within seven years after coursework begins.

2.4 Academic Requirements

Requirements include thirty-six semester credit hours (twelve courses) of course work at the 4000 level or above, and comprehensive examinations. Language requirements are at the discretion of the various departments.

2.4.1 Courses

The course work shall be divided as follows:
a. Eight courses in the student's area of major specialization -- i.e., twenty-four semester hours. Ordinarily at least three of these courses are at the 5000 or 6000 level.
b. Four courses in one area of minor specialization -- i.e., twelve semester hours;

Up to four courses may be taken without permission of the MA Director in schools of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools, at the University of Chicago, or at some other graduate school of theology, provided that (1) these courses are taken during the course of study at CTU, or (2) they have been taken within seven years previous to admission to CTU. Credits earned for degrees previously awarded are not transferrable to CTU.

Ordinarily these courses are applied to the program requirements in the following ratio: two courses in the major area of concentration; two courses in the minor area of concentration. Other arrangements can be made with the approval of the MA Director.

No credits from courses graded below “B” can be transferred. Requests for transfer are to be presented to the MA Director.

Individual departments may further specify course requirements (see 2.4.6).

It is the responsibility of the student to inform the professor, at the beginning of each MA course, that he or she is an MA student. The student may also wish to give the professor more information about the specific objectives and details of his/her MA program. The student is also responsible for clarifying with the professor what special requirements are expected of MA students for this course, and for fulfilling those requirements.

2.4.2 First-Year Requirements

All new MA students are required to attend two workshops during their first year of studies. These workshops will be offered at least once during each academic year. They are:

1. MA Road Map: Orientation and Procedures (Fall Semester - September)
2. MA Comps Prep: Oral Argument and Comprehensive Exams (Fall Semester - November)

At the end of their first semester or three completed courses, students will receive an “End-of-First-Semester Packet” which will contain the following, along with a letter explaining how to complete these requirements:

- Program Plan Form
- Candidacy Form
At this time the student is responsible to make an appointment with his or her advisor to discuss preparation of the Program Plan and the accompanying Focus Statement. The Focus Statement is a one to two page statement of the student’s personal learning goals for his/her MA program. It is not primarily a statement of “career” or “ministry” goals, but rather of the intellectual skills and content the student hopes to master for the sake of future ministry.

The student submits one copy of each form to the MA Director by email as (pdf attachment). MA Director will sign the forms and send the same electronically to the Registrar’s Office and cc the student.

### 2.4.3 Relationship of Students to Advisors and Departments

Each MA students will be assigned an advisor from the department within which his/her major area resides. The student is responsible to meet with the advisor regularly (at least once per semester) to prepare the Program Plan and Focus Statement, to discuss course choices before registration, and/or to discuss fulfillment of other requirements and personal goals for the MA program. The assigned advisor will normally also be the one who assists the student in preparing for comprehensives and chairs the Comprehensives Board.

MA students will also have a special relationship with the department (or sub-departments) to which their major area is related. They will meet periodically with the faculty members involved for professional sharing, methodological training and general reflection on the goals of the MA Program. Students are not obligated to attend such sessions but are strongly encouraged to do so.

### 2.4.4 Comprehensive Examinations

Once students have completed coursework, they are eligible to take comprehensive examinations. The purposes of the comprehensive examinations for the General MA are:

a. to demonstrate the candidate's grasp of the content of the disciplines included within his/her program;

b. to afford the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate the scope and integration of his/her theological studies, so that the MA represents more than just an accumulation of courses.

The examinations are based on eight questions that are developed by the student in consultation with his or her Examination Board. For the General MA with major and minor, five questions are in the major area and three are in the minor area. The questions, with bibliography, are submitted by the student to the comprehensive examination board (see below) for its approval well before the actual date of the examination.
The board of examiners consists of three members. For the MA with major and minor, two are from the student's major concentration and one from his or her minor. The chair of the board will ordinarily be the student's MA advisor, and the other members are to be proposed by the student and advisor. Keeping in mind appropriate lead-time—ordinarily at least four (4) months prior to the exam dates—student submits a duly accomplished Comprehensive Examinations Board Appointment Form to the MA Director electronically (as pdf attachment). The MA Director subsequently submits the form for the signature of the Academic Dean and then forwards the approved form to the Registrar’s Office (and cc the student, advisor, and board members).

a. First Part: Five hours before the scheduled time of the exam, the board will give the student a list of three questions chosen from among the five questions prepared for the major area. From these three the student will choose one on which he/she will prepare a thirty-minute lecture. This will be followed by a thirty-minute question and discussion period with the board of examiners. The examination will be evaluated according to the student's grasp of the “state of the question” of the topic on which he/she is examined.

b. Second Part: A one-hour oral examination in which the student will attempt to demonstrate his/her knowledge of present state of scholarly research related to the other seven questions which he/she has proposed. In some cases a three-hour written examination may be substituted for the oral.

Regarding the use of materials in the examination:

a. For the oral presentation on the first day of the exam, a minimal number of note cards, books used for brief quotations, maps or charts are permitted. A student may also provide a brief outline of the oral presentation in a handout, on a blackboard, or with PowerPoint. **A student may not read a lecture for this presentation.**

b. For the second day of the exam, only basic primary source materials are permitted for occasional reference or quotation by the student. **No note cards or outlines may be taken into the examination room on the second day.**

A student may take a failed portion of the comprehensive examination a second time. Upon receipt of a petition from the student, the examination board may allow a third attempt. The examination board ordinarily remains the same for all attempts.

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2.4.5 Language Requirements

Students in the General MA program with a major concentration in Biblical Studies, Old Testament or New Testament are required to have a basic knowledge of either Biblical Hebrew or Biblical Greek. This requirement is met in the same way as in the Research MA Program (see 1.4.7). Biblical language requirements must be satisfied by the end of the first year of study.

There are no modern foreign language requirements for other students in the General Academic MA program.

2.4.6 Additional Departmental Requirements

Bible, Old Testament, and New Testament majors in the General Academic MA must take:

a. Prerequisites: B4203 Introduction to the Old Testament and B4205 Introduction to the New Testament.

b. Of the eight courses required in the area of concentration one course must be in intertestamental literature, one must be in biblical methods, and two others must be 5000 level seminars.

c. There is no mandatory sequence of courses in the area of concentration. Rather the academic advisor will advise the individual student about the options available in biblical studies.

General Academic MA students with majors in Church History, Ethics, or Systematic Theology must be prepared to use the methodologies appropriate to their area of specialization. This requirement is determined in consultation with their MA advisor and is normally fulfilled in connection with regularly scheduled courses.

Spirituality majors in the General Academic MA are required to take Foundations for the Study of Spirituality and also at least two courses with an historical focus.

2.5 Supervised Teaching Program (STP)

A Supervised Teaching Practicum is available to students in the General Academic MA program who have had (ordinarily) less than five years teaching experience in theology.

The STP may be taken for a maximum of three (3) credits, and may substitute for a course in the major or minor area. It may be taken any time after the student has been admitted to academic candidacy for the degree.
The student registers for the STP at the registration period prior to the semester he or she wishes to begin it.

Credit is awarded based on a contract that is drawn up by the student, his or her site supervisor, and the academic advisor.

Ordinarily the STP is approved for those students teaching at a site no more than one hour's driving distance from CTU.

The student must meet at least four times with a supervisor/master teacher during his or her practicum.

A letter grade is given at the end of the STP by the student’s advisor in consultation with the site supervisor.

No salary should be given to the student teacher.

For those students who are teaching concurrently with their studies at CTU, supervised teaching could be considered as one of the courses for the General Academic MA program.

2.6 Formation Requirements

Personal and spiritual formation is an integral part of preparation for ministry. MA students who are not members of a participating community and/or are not ordained priests are required to participate in one of the formation programs such as the Emmaus Lay Formation Program, the Augustus Tolton Pastoral Ministry Program, or the Oscar Romero Scholars Program. They are to work with the director of the appropriate formation program after admission to CTU to determine how best to meet their needs for such growth. Students will not be admitted to candidacy for the degree without the signature of a formation director indicating that they have participated in the appropriate opportunities for spiritual and personal development.

B. The Multidisciplinary MA in Theology

As approved by the Faculty Assembly on December 17, 2004, CTU also offers an MA degree with no major or minor concentrations. Everything explained above pertains to this degree, which can be taken either as a Research or a General Academic degree. The following are details of the programs:

1. Multidisciplinary Research MA

The Multidisciplinary Research MA requires eleven courses in the following configuration:
1 Old Testament
1 New Testament
1 Systematic Theology
1 Cross-cultural/Mission Studies,
1 Liturgy
1 Ethics
1 Spirituality
1 History
3 additional courses in three different disciplines (so that there are no more than two courses in any single discipline)

Other requirements include:

Reading competence in one research language relevant to the thesis
Comprehensive exams (ten questions, spread throughout the subjects taken)
Formation components
Thesis (three credits)
(36 credits in all)

2. Multidisciplinary General Academic MA

The Multidisciplinary General MA requires twelve courses in the following configuration:

1 Old Testament
1 New Testament
1 Systematic Theology
1 Cross-cultural/Mission Studies,
1 Liturgy
1 Ethics
1 Spirituality
1 History
4 additional courses in four different disciplines (so that there are no more than two courses in any single discipline)

Other requirements include:

Comprehensive exams (ten questions, spread throughout the subjects taken)
Formation components
36 credits in all

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The Multidisciplinary MA: Guidelines for Advising and Comps

1. Since they do not have a disciplinary major, it is particularly important that students in the Multidisciplinary MA develop a clear “Focus Statement” near the beginning of their MA program. This is to be used to guide their selection of courses and paper topics.
2. If the student’s interests change during the program, they should re-write the Focus Statement.
3. The student’s MA advisor will normally be the chair of the Comprehensives Board. Selection of other members of the Comprehensives Board and the development of questions will be based on the focus and concerns expressed in the final Focus Statement, as well as the courses actually taken.
4. Among the eight questions for the General MA or the ten questions for the Research MA, each of the eight disciplines (cf. the Multidisciplinary MA Program Plan form) should be referenced. It is not necessary that there be a distinct question dedicated to each discipline, however.
5. The board may select any of the eight or ten questions for the first day of comps, while keeping in mind the student’s strengths.

C. Joint MDiv/MA Course Requirements

For students doing a joint MDiv/MA degree in the Research or General Academic MA program, a maximum of five (5) courses can apply to both degrees.

It is the responsibility of the student to inform each professor, at the beginning of each course, about the dual application of the course and about the objectives and details of his/her MA Program. Since the course counts toward both degrees, the student may be required to fulfill two distinct sets of requirements for it. The final grade for the course, however, should reflect expectations of the MA program.

D. Dual Concentration

Ordinarily, the MA Theology program does not encourage students to pursue a dual concentration, that is, two major areas of concentration as against the norm of one major area and one minor area. That said, exceptions may apply in cases where a student demonstrates: a) a clear rationale for pursuing a dual concentration related to her or his professional goals; and b) the exceptional academic competence and preparedness for the academic rigor such a program demands. The MA Director, in consultation with the student’s primary academic advisor and a faculty member from the department with oversight responsibilities for the second proposed area of concentration, makes the assessment and issues the approval. Approvals for a dual concentration will ordinarily not be granted to incoming students, but only to students who have completed at least one semester of their program.

Policies for the Dual Concentration are as follows:
1. Students who choose to pursue a dual concentration must complete the “major area” requirements in each of the chosen areas of concentration. Normally, this means that MA-Research students must complete seven (7) courses in each area. MA-General students must complete eight (8) courses in each area. The number of courses that carry a double-discipline designation and thus counted for both areas may not exceed four (4).

2. There will be no minor area of concentration.

3. Ordinarily, the student will be assigned two MA advisors, one in each area of concentration.

4. If one of the areas is Interreligious Dialogue, the student must work out with her or his advisor in that area how to fulfill the elective requirement of three (3) courses in a tradition other than her or his own. This may require additional coursework.

5. The student must complete the specific language requirements for each major area (i.e. Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or Arabic). MA-Research students must qualify in one modern research language.

6. As in the normal Comprehensive Examinations, the Board will consist of three members, at least two of whom must represent the departments responsible for oversight of each of the student’s two major areas. The MA-General student prepares five (5) questions in each field; the MA-Research student prepares six (6) questions in each field. On the first day the student will be given two questions from each area from which to select one question for presentation. On the second day an extra half hour will be added to the exam to assure that both fields are thoroughly examined.

7. Since the student is receiving only one degree, only one thesis is required for the Research MA. It may be in either field but the student is encouraged to incorporate some material and reflection from the area of concentration that is not directly treated in the thesis.

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PART II: PROCEDURES

The Student Handbook
All students should familiarize themselves with the Student Handbook information related to the policies and procedures of Catholic Theological Union. In addition to useful information about daily life in the school, students will find information about policies like plagiarism, netiquette online, copyright issues, tuition payment, student grievances, grades, academic probation, independent study, graduation procedures, etc. The Student Handbook is available on Union, the course management site, and on the CTU website.

1 Admission to the MA Program

A person is admitted to the MA program (Research or General Academic MA) either (1) simultaneously with admission into the school, or (2) by changing status from another program into the MA program (e.g., from MDiv to Research MA or MAPS to General Academic MA).

Students are admitted into the school or are approved for change of status by the Admissions Committee. Transcripts and other work will be evaluated by the MA Director to determine what foundational work (if any) is needed before the student can be admitted into the MA program. Special attention will be given to the prospective student's statement of goals for study at CTU. The MA Director may request a preliminary interview with a prospective MA student.

The application for the MA program or for change in status is submitted to the Director of Admissions.

2 Procedures After Admittance

After admission the student meets with the MA Director to plan for completion of any outstanding prerequisites and to inform the Director of his/her anticipated major area of concentration, for which an MA advisor will be appointed. The student may indicate a preference for a particular faculty person as MA advisor. Such a request will be seriously considered, but other factors (workload, sabbaticals, etc.) will also affect the final decision.

The MA Director will request the chairperson of the department in which the student's major area is included to appoint an MA advisor. The MA Director will notify the student of the appointment. The MA advisor will supervise the student's program, sign registration forms for students who are solely MA students and, ordinarily, serve as chair of the student's Comprehensive Examination Board.

The MA Director will appoint a faculty MA advisor for those students pursuing the Multidisciplinary MA (Theology). This will be done in consultation with both the student and faculty member. The MA advisor will supervise the student's course, sign registration forms for students who are solely MA students and, ordinarily, serve on the student's Comprehensive Examination Board.
When the MA advisor has been appointed it is the responsibility of the student to arrange a meeting for the purpose of drafting an initial Focus Statement and Program Proposal. For those doing the MA with a major and minor, this proposal should list the major and minor area and indicate the proposed courses areas in the program. For those students doing the Multidisciplinary MA, the proposal should list the courses or kinds of courses that the student is considering taking.

Once a student has secured preliminary approval of the MA proposal from his/her advisor, an electronic copy of the Program Plan form is submitted. At this point, the student's courses will be reviewed by the MA Director. Upon the Director’s approval, the student is formally admitted to the MA program and has seven years from that date to complete the program.

3 Registration

Registration procedures are found in the Student Handbook.

The student obtains the instructor's approval if explicitly required for that course.

For students enrolled only in the MA program, the advisor signs the registration form. Students enrolled in a dual MDiv/MA program get their MDiv advisor to sign the registration form after first consulting their MA advisor about the MA courses.

4 Credit by Examination

A number of courses and area requirements at CTU may be fulfilled for credit by examination in lieu of taking the course.

Students wishing to receive credit by examination are to register for the course at its regular time and approach the instructor in the department who teaches the respective course. The student will contract for an examination suited in style and content to the particular case.

The examination is to be taken within the first two weeks of the semester in which the course is taught. If the examination is successfully completed, the instructor will notify the Registrar of the grade in writing. The normal number of hours of credit will be given for the respective course and full tuition will be charged for the hours received.

5 Grading and Standards of Progress

General Policies and Procedures are found in the Student Handbook.

Grades are given at the end of each semester and published by the Registrar. The student's MA advisor (or regular MDiv advisor) keeps a progressive checklist of regular advancement toward completion of hour and area requirements.
Students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in the MA program. In maintaining this average, no more than two C’s may appear on a student's transcript of courses taken for the MA program. A student receiving a third C or a first D will ordinarily be dropped from the program.
PART III: PROGRAM CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS

Checklist for the Academic MA - Research Program [revised 09/13]

___ 1. The Student applies to Admissions Office: application form, transcripts, references, essay.
   ___ 1.1 Admission is granted by Admissions Committee, and an Admissions Letter is sent to the Student.
___ 2. The Student meets with the M.A. Director to determine Program and Major.
___ 3. The M.A. Director applies to the Department Head for assignment of an Advisor. In the case of the multidisciplinary M.A., the M.A. Director appoints an advisor in consultation with the Student and faculty member.
   ___ 3.1. An Advisor is assigned and the Student is notified.
___ 4. The Student registers him/herself on the M.A. website on CTU Union.
___ 5. The Student makes an appointment with his/her advisor.
   ___ 5.1 They begin discussing the Student’s goals for the program, and on that basis fill out the Registration Form for the current semester.
   ___ 5.2 They also discuss how the Student will fulfill his/her language requirements as soon as possible, and how the languages can be used during the program.
___ 6. The Student attends the two required first-year M.A. Workshops:
   ___ 6.1. M.A. Road Map: Orientation and Procedures
___ 7. At the end of the first semester or its equivalent (3 or 4 courses), the Student receives the “End of First Semester Packet.”
   ___ 7.1. Focus Statement and Program Plan: The Student prepares the Focus Statement and discusses it with the Advisor. On that basis the Program Plan is prepared.
      ___ 7.1.1 One electronic pdf copy is submitted by email to the M.A. Director.
      ___ 7.1.2 If the Student needs to change Program Courses, he/she consults the Advisor and repeats this step.
   ___ 7.2. Skills Feedback Forms for Professors:
      ___ 7.2.1 These are given to each professor from whom the Student has taken a course.
      ___ 7.2.2 The feedback received is discussed with the Advisor.
      ___ 7.2.3 If the Student’s admission letter stated that an Academic Review would be conducted at the end of his/her first semester, the M.A. Director will ask to review these forms as well.
7.3. **Candidacy Form:**  
- 7.3.1 The Student requests the signatures of the Advisor and the Formation Director.
- 7.3.2 The Student submits the signed form to the M.A. Director, who signs it and submits it to the Academic Dean.
- 7.3.3 The Dean’s signature constitutes the formal granting of candidacy.

7.4. **Language Fulfillment Form:** This is a plan for the fulfillment of all language requirements as soon as possible. Cf. the M.A. website on CTU Union for various ways that language requirements can be fulfilled.
- 7.4.1 It is signed by the Advisor and the Student and submitted to the M.A. Director.
- 7.4.2 When each language requirement is completed, those competent to judge inform the MA Director, who will inform the Registrar.

8. When course work is near completion, the Student meets with the Advisor to discuss the formation of the Comprehensive Exam Board (3 Professors) and approximate date of exam.
- 8.1. The Student asks the selected professors if they are willing to serve on his/her Board. When they have agreed, the Student informs the M.A. Director of their names and the semester when the Comps will be held.
- 8.2 The M.A. Director petitions the Dean for formal appointment of these professors to the Student’s Board.
- 8.3 The Student arranges the exact time of Comprehensive Exam with the Board members. The Student arranges the place of exam for both days with the Receptionist.

9. The Student submits a draft of questions for the Comprehensive Exam to the Chair of the Board.
- 9.1 After receiving feedback from the Chair, the Student submits a revised draft of the questions to all three Board members.
- 9.2 The Student repeats this process until all three Board members have approved the questions.

10. The Student prepares for the Comprehensive Exam on the basis of the approved questions and the “Competencies and Skills for Comprehensive Examinations.”

11. After each day of the Comprehensive Exam, the Chair of the Board submits the form with signatures of examiners, grade awarded, and any comments about the exam to the M.A. Director.

12. The Student requests a Credit Check and applies for graduation, meeting the deadlines set by the Registrar’s Office.

13. The Student asks one faculty member to direct his/her Thesis. The thesis director chooses two faculty members [or otherwise competent persons approved by the M.A. Director] to be readers, in consultation with Student. The Student asks each reader and informs Thesis Director and M.A. Director.
13.1. When thesis topic, Thesis Director and Readers are determined, the Student downloads a Thesis Proposal Form from the M.A. web site, fills it out, and submits it to the M.A. Director. The Student may then register for T5999 Thesis Credit.

13.2 The Student and Thesis Director consult regularly on the progress of the Thesis.

13.3 The Student adheres to all guidelines in the CTU Handbook for Writing and the M.A. Manual (both available on CTU Union).

14. When the Thesis is completed and approved by the Readers, the Thesis Director assigns the grade in consultation with the Readers.

14.1 The thesis Director submits the Thesis grade to the M.A. Director and the M.A. Director submits the grade and the Student's whole file to Registrar, in preparation for Graduation.

14.2 The Student submits one copy of the approved Thesis to the Dean's Office, along with a short Vita and a completed microfilm form (cf. M.A. Manual)

15. M.A. IS AWARDED!!

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Checklist for the Academic MA - General Program [revised 09/13]

___ 1. The Student applies to Admissions Office: application form, transcripts, references, essay.
   ___ 1.1 Admission is granted by Admissions Committee, and an Admissions Letter is sent to the Student.

___ 2. The Student meets with the M.A. Director to determine Program and Major.

___ 3. The M.A. Director applies to the Department Head for assignment of an Advisor. In the case of the multidisciplinary M.A., the M.A. Director appoints an advisor in consultation with the student and faculty member.
   ___ 3.1. An Advisor is assigned and the student is notified.

___ 4. The student registers him/herself on the M.A. website on CTU Union.

___ 5. The student makes an appointment with his/her advisor.
   ___ 5.1 They begin discussing the student’s goals for the program, and on that basis fill out the Registration Form for the current semester.

___ 6. The Student attends the two required first-year M.A. Workshops:
   ___ 6.1. M.A. Road Map: Orientation and Procedures

___ 7. At the end of the first semester or its equivalent (3 or 4 courses), the student receives the “End of First Semester Packet.”
   ___ 7.1. **Focus Statement and Program Plan**: The student prepares the Focus Statement and discusses it with the Advisor. On that basis the Program Plan is prepared.
      ___ 7.1.1 One electronic pdf copy is submitted to the M.A. Director.
      ___ 7.1.2 If the Student needs to change Program Courses, he/she consults the Advisor and repeats this step.
   ___ 7.2. **Skills Feedback Forms for Professors**:
      ___ 7.2.1 These are given to each professor from whom the student has taken a course.
      ___ 7.2.2 The feedback received is discussed with the Advisor.
      ___ 7.2.3 If the student’s admission letter stated that an Academic Review would be conducted at the end of his/her first semester, the M.A. Director will ask to review these forms as well.
   ___ 7.3. **Candidacy Form**:
      ___ 7.3.1 The student requests the signatures of the Advisor and the Formation Director.
      ___ 7.3.2 The student submits the signed form to the M.A. Director, who signs it and submits it to the Academic Dean.
      ___ 7.3.3 The Dean’s signature constitutes the formal granting of candidacy.
8. When course work is near completion, the Student meets with the Advisor to discuss the formation of the Comprehensive Exam Board (3 Professors) and approximate date of exam.

8.1. The student asks the selected professors if they are willing to serve on his/her Board. When they have agreed, the student informs the M.A. Director of their names and the semester when the Comps will be held.

8.2 The M.A. Director petitions the Dean for formal appointment of these professors to the student’s Board.

8.3 The Student arranges the exact time of Comprehensive Exam with the Board members. The Student arranges the place of exam for both days with the Receptionist.

9. The student submits a draft of questions for the Comprehensive Exam to the Chair of the Board.

9.1 After receiving feedback from the Chair, the Student submits a revised draft of the questions to all three Board members.

9.2 The student repeats this process until all three Board members have approved the questions.

10. The student prepares for the Comprehensive Exam on the basis of the approved questions and the “Competencies and Skills for Comprehensive Examinations.”

11. After each day of the Comprehensive Exam, the Chair of the Board submits the form with signatures of examiners, grade awarded, and any comments about the exam to the M.A. Director.

12. The Student requests a Credit Check and applies for graduation, meeting the deadlines set by the Registrar’s Office.

13. M.A. IS AWARDED!!
PART IV: SAMPLE FORMS
Language Proficiency Certification Form

(for use when the student chooses to take an exam with a professor, rather than a language course)

________________________________________ has successfully demonstrated the ability to read, comprehend and make use of theological material written in the following language(s):

________________________________________

I therefore recommend that the above-named student be listed as having demonstrated adequate proficiency in this language for the MA degree.

Signature of the Examiner: __________________________
Date: __________________________

MA Director: __________________________
Date: __________________________

cc: Student, Registrar, MA files
Catholic Theological Union
Office of the MA Director

Thesis Proposal Form

Name of Candidate: ________________________________

Title of Thesis: ____________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

Thesis Director: ___________________________________

Readers: 1. ___________________________________

2. _________________________________

___________________________________________

Signature of the Thesis Director

___________________________________________

Signature of the MA Director

Date: ________________________________

N.B.: Please submit this form to the MA Director as soon as it is completed. All language requirements must be completed before it will be approved. After approval, the Student will receive a copy of the signed form, which must be presented in order to register for T5999, MA Thesis Credit. This is a one-time registration. Thereafter the Student must register each semester for CR5000, Continuous Registration, until the thesis is completed. There is no charge for CR5000 registrations.
Appendix 1: Comprehensive Examination Questions/Bibliographies (samples)

The following questions were formulated by a student in the Research MA Program.

**Doctrine** (major)

1. Karl Rahner is the most important Roman Catholic theologian of the twentieth century. Describe his theological method, including the philosophical foundations of that method. What are its strengths? Shortcomings? Is it related to any other theological methods?


2. Using Rahner’s method as a general guide, explain how we might come to a transcendental understanding of marriage as a sacrament. Be sure to address issues such as the relationship between marriage and the church, its role in creation, its relationship to Christ, procreation, and divorce.


3. The philosophical revolutions that affected Rahner’s method, together with the scientific revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, have profoundly affected all of modern theology. In addition to explicating these revolutions, both philosophical and scientific, show how they laid the groundwork for the anthropological atheism of Ludwig Feuerbach. Additionally, explain how Paul Tillich’s theology of God deals with such issues.


4. While the upheavals in science and philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries have profoundly shaped the nature of modern theology, the church is still strongly rooted in its tradition. One area where this connection can be seen is in modern Vatican references to music. Show how the Augustinian theology of music as shaped by Greek philosophy and musical theory is reflected in the conciliar document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the postconciliar document *Musicam Sacram*.


5. Christology is another area where the church tradition is very rich, with the Church Fathers and the Scholastics each contributing volumes of writing on the subject. One of the most debated questions concerns whether or not Christ had a complete human soul. Compare and contrast the writings of Apollinaris of Laodicea, a thinker of the patristic period ultimately deemed heretical, and St. Thomas Aquinas, the most influential scholastic theologian, on this issue.


6. One set of documents with which contemporary Catholic Theology must never lose its connections is the Scriptures. Using a socio-historical approach, outline the two theologies of creation presented in the first three chapters of Genesis. Further, compare and contrast the two and show how their themes are applicable today.


Church History (minor)

1. A most important skill for historians is being able to analyze texts critically on their own terms. Such an analysis of primary sources allows them to reach their own conclusions without having to rely on secondary sources. Using only information directly supported by the texts, identify (if possible) the author, date, and occasion of the following subapostolic documents: *First Clement, Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, and *the Didache*. In addition, identify what the texts say (if anything) about church, God, Christ, and the sacraments.


2. Using such close reading to glean information from the text, the Scriptures can similarly be approached from an historical perspective. Keeping in mind the socio-historical conditions under which the Gospel of Matthew was authored, show how the Matthean infancy narratives can be understood as an original moment in the history of Christian-Jewish relations.


**Bible (minor)**

1. Over the centuries, Psalm 130 has played an important role in the liturgical life of the church; in fact, it can be found in eight different places in the current Catholic lectionary. Exegete this psalm, discussing it as a unit not only in terms of its historical, liturgical, and canonical contexts but also in terms of its literary structure and genre. In addition, discuss its vocabulary, poetic structures, and metaphors. Explain how this analysis of the text reveals its theological meaning.


2. First Corinthians 11:2-16 has long presented problems to scholars. While here Paul seems to be endorsing a patriarchal structure for the Christian community, other Pauline passages (e.g., Gal 3:28 and 1 Cor 11:11) speak of the equality of women and men in the Christian community. Exegete 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 against its socio-historical background showing how it can be brought into accord with the Pauline passages that support the equality of women and men.


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The questions below were formulated by a student in the General Academic MA Program.

Bible (major)
1. Mark 10:46-52 closed the section on the “way of discipleship” of Mark’s gospel. Discuss how this pericope might help us to understand the meaning of true discipleship.


2. With the exodus experience a background, discuss the significance of John 6:16-21.


3. Discuss the importance of Acts 10:9-33 in the development of Christianity. How does it relate to mission?


5. Employing literary analysis, explain why Psalm 23 is classified as a psalm of trust. As such, how can this psalm be applied for pastoral purposes?


**Doctrine** (minor)

6. It is said that one’s image of Christ serves as window to understand the Christology of a particular culture. Discuss Filipino Christology based on its images of Christ.


7. Contemporary missiology speaks of mission as a “single but complex reality” (*Redemptoris Missio*, no. 41), including elements of (1) proclamation and witness; (2) liturgy, prayer, and contemplation; (3) inculturation; (4) interreligious dialogue; (5) justice, peace, and the integrity of creation; and (6) reconciliation. In 1991 two of these elements—dialogue and proclamation—were singled out as worthy of particular reflection, especially since there had been a tendency among some thinkers to oppose the two. Discuss the relation between dialogue and proclamation as distinct but interrelated components of the Church’s Tradition.


8. Among the models of God presented by Sallie McFague, discuss the model of God as mother.


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Appendix 2: Competencies for MA Comprehensive Exams

The comprehensive exams are intended to be a “capstone” event in the MA program. The following list of competencies is intended to assist the student in monitoring his/her own development throughout the MA program, in view of what will be expected at the time of the exams. It also provides the comprehensives examining board with a common set of expectations to use in grading the exams.

When beginning the process of immediate preparation for the comprehensive exams, the student should discuss with his/her advisor specifically how each of these four criteria apply within his/her major and minor disciplines.

1. Demonstrates a grasp of the essential issues involved in each of the exam questions. Depending on the discipline, this may mean:
   – Is aware of key moments in the historical trajectory of this question.
   – Can articulate the range of perspectives and theoretical approaches that are currently being promoted.
   – Understands implications of the question in relation to specific contemporary settings.

2. Articulates a grasp of the range of methods current in the disciplines on which he/she is being examined.
   – Can name and explain the major methods employed in these disciplines, as well as the theoretical assumptions that undergird them.
   – Understands why different methods would be used in different contexts or with different agendas.

3. Demonstrates an ability to take and defend a position on each exam question.
   – Can self-reflexively situate his or her own position in relation to other possible positions.
   – Can name, describe, and justify the method selected to respond to the question.

4. Demonstrates an ability to think theologically in the oral setting.
   – Can lead listeners through a process of bringing appropriate data of experience, culture, and tradition, as well as appropriate theoretical perspectives, to bear on the issues involved in a question.
   – Engages flexibly in thoughtful conversation in response to the board’s critical questions.

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