
Pacific School of Religion

ACADEMIC PROGRAM MANUAL

Part I (of II)

for the

MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Office of the Dean and Registrar

Effective August 2015

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME	1
WHY A PROGRAM MANUAL?	1
M.T.S-SPECIFIC COURSE PLANNING INFORMATION	3
Using Your M.T.S. Worksheet	
M.T.S. Course Distribution	
M.T.S-SPECIFIC ACADEMIC STIPULATIONS	3
Required Number of PSR Credits.....	3
Transfer Credits.....	3
Expected Program Time.....	3
Lapsed Time Rule.....	3
Foundational Courses.....	3
Area of Interest Courses.....	3
Field Education Courses.....	4
Special Reading Courses.....	4
Summer Session Credits.....	4
Online Credits.....	4
Cross Registration.....	4
Required GPA.....	4
Incompletes/Extensions in Courses.....	4
Letter Grade vs. Pass/Fail.....	4
MILESTONES OF THE M.T.S. DEGREE	4
Entrance Report.....	4
Final Report.....	5
Synthesis Essay.....	5
M.T.S. CHANGE OF PROGRAM INFORMATION	5
A FINAL WORD	5

APPENDIX

M.T.S. Worksheet
M.T.S. Entrance Report form (submit online)
M.T.S. Final Report form (submit online)
M.T.S. Synthesis Essay Guidelines
M.T.S. Synthesis Essay Assessment Rubric

[CONTINUE ON TO PART II ONLINE](#)

WELCOME TO THE MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES PROGRAM

Welcome to the Master of Theological Studies program. You have entered a graduate degree program designed to provide a generalized yet rigorous course of theological studies without research or thesis requirements. Some of you are pursuing lay or ordained ministries in churches and other faith communities. Others have an interest in the intersection of religion, theology, Christian ethics or spirituality and your current vocation. Still others seek to deepen or broaden your understanding of any number of fields within theological studies in the context of a seminary. Whatever has led you here, we are glad to have you with us and welcome the perspectives and inquiries you bring.

Students who complete the M.T.S. will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding and knowledge of four basic theological disciplines, i.e., bible, history, theology, and ethics through a critical and contextual appropriation of the Christian tradition.
- Bring these four disciplines into creative and critical interplay
- Demonstrate their ability to use at least two of these theological disciplines in framing a response to a contemporary issue or problem
- Demonstrate competency related to an area of interest.

The M.T.S. program is designed to be a two-year, full-time (up to five years part-time) program offering students a broad yet comprehensive education in theological studies, across a range of disciplines. Building on a core of foundational courses, the program allows you to focus on and gain competency in more particular areas of interest compatible with the resources of the school. M.T.S. students are encouraged to take full advantage of the Graduate Theological Union's schools, centers, and institutes during their course of study.

WHY A PROGRAM MANUAL?

It is standard academic policy that students are governed by the requirements of the catalog under which they were admitted. This manual is an official and necessary supplement to the catalog. The standards, requirements, policies, and procedures of the program presented here provide a common understanding of these elements of the program among PSR faculty and students enrolled in the M.T.S. program.

Registration in a PSR degree or graduate certificate program assumes the registrant has read and agreed to

the terms as outlined in the program manual appropriate to their year of entry. A [Statement of Understanding](#) must be signed and submitted by the second week of the first semester in the program in order to continue. The M.T.S. Program Manual consists of two parts:

- 1) **Part I:** This portion of the program manual outlines academic standards, requirements, policies, and procedures that are particular to the M.T.S. program.
- 2) **Part II:** This portion of the program manual outlines academic standards, requirements, policies, and procedures that are common to all PSR programs. It covers in more detail the following topics:

[Academic and Administrative Calendars](#)

[PSR Extended Calendar](#)

[Academic Resources](#)

[Course Catalog](#)

[ONLINE GTU Course Catalog](#)

[Degree and Certificate Programs](#)

[click on your program]

[Registrar](#)

[Registration](#)

[Registration Instructions](#)

[Transcripts](#)

[Registrar Services](#)

[Identification and Library Cards](#)

[Policies for Students](#)

[Academic Disputes Policy »](#)

[Accessibility Accommodation & ADA »](#)

[Advising »](#)

[Building and Facilities Care Guidelines »](#)

[Campus Security & Clery Act »](#)

[Change of Program »](#)

[Commitment to Equality »](#)

[Common Academic Policies Chart »](#)

[Community Covenant »](#)

[Complaint Procedure »](#)

[Credit Hour Policy »](#)

[Dining »](#)

[Drug Free Schools & Communities Policy »](#)

[Email Account Policy, Contact & Profile Information Updates »](#)

[English as a Second Language \(ESL\) Extension Policy »](#) (ESL students only)

[Extensions & Lapsed Time »](#)

[Full-time or Part-time Status »](#)

[Grades »](#)

[Graduation »](#)

[Grievance Policy »](#)

[Health Insurance for Students »](#)

[Housing »](#)

[Information Technology \(CITS\) »](#)

[Leave of Absence & Deferment »](#)

[Plagiarism Policy »](#)

[Policy Statement on the Use of Inclusive Language »](#)

[Privacy Policy \(FERPA\) »](#)

[Provisional Student Policy »](#)

[Satisfactory Academic Progress & Academic Probation Policy »](#)

[Sexual Harassment Policy »](#)

[Student Conduct and Special Needs Policy »](#)

[Transferring Credits and Advanced Standing »](#)

[Tuition, Fees and Refund »](#)

[Use of Technology in Classrooms »](#)

[Withdrawal and Termination »](#)

The manual was prepared by the Office of the PSR Dean and Registrar. It is our attempt to provide clear explanations of the structure of the program and to

provide resources for you as you move through the program. We hope that you will use it frequently. Any questions of clarification should be directed to the Dean or Registrar.

Administrative procedures can be modified at any point in order to improve and clarify the program, so students and faculty are urged to be attentive to supplementary pages distributed during their course of study which may reflect changes in the program. **This manual reflects the details of the program as of August 2015.**

M.T.S.-SPECIFIC COURSE PLANNING INFORMATION

Using Your M.T.S. Worksheet

The *M.T.S. Worksheet*, found at the end of this manual and available in front of the Office of the Dean and Registrar, is your planning document. All the course distribution expectations are listed for you to follow. Using this worksheet will ensure that you meet the program's requirements. When consulting with the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs or your advisor about specific course planning or program review, bring this document with you.

M.T.S. Course Distribution

M.T.S. students are required to complete a minimum of 48 credits. Twelve (12) credits must be taken as foundational courses in designated areas (see below). Each foundational course may not be less than 3.0 credits and must be taken for letter grade. It is recommended that courses in this category be introductory level. Course distribution is as follows.

Foundational courses (12):

- 3 credits in Biblical Studies (BS, OT or NT)
- 3 credits in Historical Studies (HS)
- 3 credits in Theology (ST), Philosophy [of Religion] (PH), Philosophical Theology (PT)
- 3 credits in Ethics & Social Theory/Christian Ethics (CE) or Religion & Society (RS)

Area of Interest courses (24)

Electives (12)

M.T.S. 5020 Synthesis Essay

Total M.T.S. courses (48)

Twenty-four (24) credits must be taken in an Area of Interest defined in consultation with the faculty advisor. The remaining 12 credits are elective credits.

M.T.S.-SPECIFIC ACADEMIC STIPULATIONS

Required Number of PSR Credits

In all certificate and degree programs, at least one-third of all credits earned toward the program, including transfer credits from within and outside the GTU, must be earned from PSR courses. In the M.T.S., this totals a MINIMUM of 16 PSR credits.

A PSR course is one in which the "School Course Ownership" field of the online course schedule is PSR. Usually at least one instructor of the course is PSR faculty.

Transfer Credits

Up to two-thirds of your program or 32 credits may be transferred if your petition is approved and credits follow guidelines in [PSR's Transfer and Advanced Standing Policy](#)

Expected Program Time

For the M.T.S. to be awarded, the equivalent of 48 credits, which usually translates to two full-time academic years, must be completed. Although full-time is still counted as 9 credits or more for purposes related to housing, financial aid, etc., for the purposes of finishing in the prescribed time of two years, students will need to average 12 credits per semester (if no Intersession or summer courses are taken) or 24 credits per year. Students who register at a less than 12 credit load in the Fall and Spring may be able to reach this recommended yearly average by taking courses during Intersession and Summer.

Lapsed Time Rule

While the M.T.S. is a two-year program, you may take up to five years of part-time study to complete the M.T.S. degree including semesters on leave. The beginning of the lapsed time period starts with the first course work applied to the degree, including transferred courses. Any extension beyond the stated lapsed time may be granted by the Dean, in consultation with the appropriate faculty. Additional extensions are extremely unusual, and all extensions are subject to the willingness of the advisor to continue to work with the student.

Foundational courses

All foundational courses must be taken for letter grade. Each of the four foundational course requirements must be fulfilled by one 3.0 credit course and cannot be fulfilled by taking two 1.5 credit courses. The courses used toward fulfilling foundation requirements should be based in the Christian tradition, but in some circumstances a student may request to fulfill a foundational requirement with a course centered around a non-Christian tradition depending on the student's area of focus and upon written approval of the PSR core faculty person in that required area. This written approval must be secured and submitted to the Assistant Dean for Academic Program before the start of the semester.

Area of Interest Courses

Working with his or her advisor, each M.T.S. student will define a special area of interest in which to do twenty-four (24) credits of required coursework. This area of interest may consist of a particular field (e.g. biblical studies) or a broader topic of interest (e.g. feminist studies, religion and health combined). In either case, the student is advised to approach the area of interest in an interdisciplinary manner. At least half of the area of interest electives must be taken for letter grade.

While you are welcome to develop your own interdisciplinary area of interest, you also may fulfill your area of interest requirements by taking courses related to either a PSR or a Graduate Theological Union (GTU)

certificate program.

For instance, PSR offers a [Certificate of Sexuality and Religion](#) (C.S.R.), a [Certificate of Spirituality and Social Change](#) (C.S.S.C.), and a [Certificate of Swedenborgian Theology](#) (C.S.T.) Similarly, the GTU also offers a [Certificate in Women's Studies](#) (C.W.S), a [Certificate in Black Church/Africana Religious Studies](#) (B.C./A.R.S.), and a [Certificate in Asian and Oceanic Cultures and Faith Traditions](#) (A.O.C.F.T.).

Finally, the GTU's affiliated centers, certificates in [Islamic Studies](#), [Jewish Studies](#), and [Orthodox Christian Studies](#)—all of which can be taken concurrently with your M.T.S. at PSR as a significant part of your area of interest.

Field Education Courses

While Field Education (FE) courses are not required for the M.T.S., M.T.S. students may complete up to 6 Field Education credits total (FE-1007) which may be applied to either their Area of Interest Electives or your General Electives. Field Education courses are graded on a pass/fail basis. Placements for M.T.S. Field Education courses may be in congregational, agency, or community settings. Please make an appointment with the Director of Field Education at the latest during the semester before you wish to take a Field Education course to ensure your placement is approved and paperwork in order before registering. For cases in which you would like a placement but aren't sure where, the Field Education Office may also be able to help you discern and locate a match based on your interests. For more information on Field Education please consult the [PSR Field Education](#) page.

Special Reading Courses

No more than six of the credits required for your degree may be SRC 9999 independent study credits. There are no limits to the number of upgraded courses (SRC 8888's) you may complete.

Summer Session Credits

There is no limit on how many summer session credits may be applied to the M.T.S.

Online credits

Up to 50% (or 23.5 credits) of your program may be taken online (usually 8000-level course or any course that doesn't require physical presence on campus) you can use toward your program. International students in any program may take only one online course per semester if registered full-time.

Cross Registration

M.T.S. students may cross-register for up to one U.C. Berkeley, Dominican University, Holy Names, or Mills course per Fall and Spring semester if admitted into the

course by the instructor and approved by the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs. Courses must be applicable to the M.T.S. degree and at the graduate level or in some cases, upper-level undergraduate level.

Required GPA

Satisfactory completion of the M.T.S. requires the completion of the necessary courses with the overall GPA of 3.0 (B) or higher.

Incompletes/Extensions in Courses

No more than 3 incompletes may be taken during your entire program.

Letter Grade vs. Pass/Fail

Required foundational M.T.S. courses and at least half of all Area of Interest courses must be taken for a letter grade. General electives may be taken for pass/fail if the course allows it. However, if a student anticipates additional graduate work, it is not advisable to take academic courses pass/fail.

MILESTONES OF THE M.T.S. DEGREE

In addition to the 48 credits specified for the degree, M.T.S. students must also complete a set of milestones, non-course requirements for graduation that are due at specific points of a program:

- **Entrance Report** in the first semester,
- **Final Report** in the last semester, and
- **Synthesis Essay** in the last semester

These milestones are used by the Office of Academic Affairs for assessment of the school's academic programs, and for assessing individual student progress. After a student has left the program and data has been gathered, milestones are retained for a limited time in the Office of Academic Affairs then destroyed.

Your advisor plays an important role in these required "milestones" of the M.T.S. as they must "sign off" on each before they are submitted to the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs. You are accountable to your advisor for satisfactory completion of these requirements.

Entrance Report

During the first semester of the M.T.S. degree program, you must submit an [Entrance Report](#) online detailing and clarifying your learning goals for the program and self-assessment in particular competency areas of relevant to the program goals. The Report is reviewed by your advisor, who may indicate necessary revisions or request a follow up meeting with you based on your submission. The Entrance Report is submitted online to your advisor and the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs no later than the end of October for Summer/Fall admits and March for Intersession/Spring

admits.

Final Report

During the last semester, you will submit a [Final Report](#) online, assessing whether and to what degree the learning goals articulated in the Entrance Report have been accomplished. The Final Report, received by your advisor and the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs, must be submitted by the end of your final semester.

Synthesis Essay

The M.T.S. Synthesis Essay (10-15 pages) is completed in the final semester of your program, in consultation with your advisor. In this essay, you will identify a problem, issue, or topic related to your Area of Interest. The essay should address this issue by drawing on two of the foundational disciplines studied in the program.

[Guidelines for this essay](#) are available in the appendix of this manual, in front of the Office of Academic Affairs, and on the M.T.S. web page.

You must register in your last semester for the M.T.S. Synthesis Essay course (M.T.S.-5020-01). You may choose to take the course for either 0.0 credits or 1.5 credits, depending if you need the elective credits. The course is intended to require your time and attention on your essay in the first half of your final semester. In order to graduate in May, you must submit your essay to your advisor by April 15. The essay is graded by your faculty advisor on a Pass/Fail only basis. If the essay is graded as "Fail" you will need to revise it and resubmit it to your advisor for re-grading shortly thereafter. The final version of your M.T.S. Synthesis Essay must then be submitted to the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs by the last day of the semester.

In some cases usually related to a change of program or transfer that leads to advanced standing in the program, requirements for one or more milestones may be waived or modified with the approval of the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs.

M.T.S PROGRAM CHANGE INFORMATION

Changing Degree Programs

If you discover that you are not in the degree program that is most appropriate to your vocational needs, you do have the opportunity to apply to change programs. However, you must apply to change before the completion of the 24th credit. If you wish to change to the M.Div, you will need to work with the Field Education office in your first year to set up a placement for the second year.

To apply for admission to a degree program, meet the priority deadline for the semester you wish to begin the program:

for the MDiv: February 1 for Summer/Fall and
November 1 for Intersession/Spring;
for the MA: February 15 for Fall and
September 30 for Spring.

To be admitted to the degree program, you must have completed at least nine credits before you apply and be registered for at least nine more credits. All credit earned in the M.T.S. program may be applied to any PSR masters degree within the policies and standards of the new degree program if and when a student is regularly admitted to that program (within the time-lapse limits of that program). For details about procedures for a change of program and the admission requirements for degree programs, contact the Admissions Office and ask for *Procedures for Change of Program* form. Please note that students applying to the GTU Common MA program at PSR must complete the GTU Application.

A FINAL WORD

It is the sincere intention and desire of the faculty and staff of PSR that you complete your degree program successfully. We want to offer you assistance to make it not merely a means to an end, but an experience you will remember positively and complete efficiently. You will learn that we cannot anticipate all your questions, but we encourage you to ask any that arise. We would like to know if there are ways in which this handbook could be more helpful to you. Any comments, suggestions or questions would be very much appreciated.

We wish you a productive stay at PSR.



Masters of Theological Studies Entrance Report

During the first semester of the M.T.S. degree program, you must submit an Entrance Report form detailing and clarifying your learning goals for the program and self-assessment in relevant competency areas at the beginning of your program.

The report is reviewed by your advisor, who may indicate necessary revisions, and who may request a meeting with you after receiving it, or with whom you may want to consult in writing the report. The entrance report is submitted to your advisor and the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs no later than end of October (for Summer and Fall starters) or end of March (for Intersession and Spring starters). A copy of your Entrance Report will be received by the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and archived in the Office of Academic Affairs for a limited number of years separately from your official student file. Please ensure you use the official school email addresses for both yourself and your advisor.

Responses from all students in aggregate form may be shared with faculty for the purposes of student advisement. If data is presented in aggregate form to other non-PSR third parties such as accreditors, all personal identifiers (such as your name and email) will be removed.

This milestone is due the end of October for Summer/Fall admits, end of March for Intersession/Spring admits. Please submit any further questions about this milestone to the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs at registrar@psr.edu.

OFFICE USE ONLY: Cohort Year

Name *

Your email address *

Date

Calendar

Advisor's Name

Advisor's email *

The last 3 digits of your student ID number (the number on the front of your library card):

SUBMIT ONLINE
do not print this form

1. Please rate your own knowledge and understanding of the following basic theological disciplines at the beginning of your MTS program:

	very weak or none	somewhat weak	average	somewhat strong	very strong	don't know
Bible	<input type="radio"/>					
Religious History	<input type="radio"/>					
Theology	<input type="radio"/>					
Ethics and Social Theory	<input type="radio"/>					

2. Please rate your own skill level in the following areas at the beginning of your MTS program:

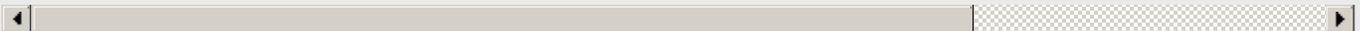
	very weak or none	somewhat weak	average	somewhat strong	very strong	don't know
Ability to integrate & synthesize information	<input type="radio"/>					
Critical Thinking	<input type="radio"/>					
Theological Thinking	<input type="radio"/>					
Contextual appreciation & awareness of Christian tradition	<input type="radio"/>					
Ability to write clearly	<input type="radio"/>					

3. Please state clearly at least 3 of your learning goals for the MTS program.

Learning goal #1

Learning goal #2

Learning goal #3



4. What contemporary issue(s) or problem(s) do you hope to study through the MTS program?

5. What is your current vocation if you have one?

6. What is your planned vocation after completing the MTS if different from your current vocation?

7. How do you envision the MTS enriching or changing your vocation?

8. What concerns/reservations/apprehensions, if any do you have about your study at PSR? Note: If you would like to request accommodations for any kind of disability, you may consult [PSR's Accessibility Accommodation Policy](#).

SUBMIT ONLINE
do not print this form

9. Did you requested a change of program to the MTS within PSR (usually from either the MDiv or the MA program)? *

- Yes
- No

If you changed to the MTS from another PSR program, please answer the following questions.

10. What are your reasons for changing to the MTS:

- Financial (Please explain):
- Vocational (Please explain):
- Academic (Please explain):
- Other:

11. Given that the MTS is a 2 year program with a 5 year lapsed time rule, which includes all semesters/years on leave, describe how you plan to complete the MTS requirements in the remaining time you have:

Thank You!

Thank you for completing the PSR MTS Entrance Report. A copy has been sent to you and your advisor at the emails you provided on this form. A copy has also been received and will be retained in the Office of Academic Affairs. Please keep the email with your completed Entrance Report for your academic records as you may need later.



Masters of Theological Studies Final Report

During the last semester of the M.T.S. degree program, you must submit a Final Report form detailing and evaluating your learning goals for the program.

The report is reviewed by your advisor, who may indicate necessary revisions, who may request a meeting with you after receiving it, or with whom you may want to consult in writing the report. The final report is submitted to your advisor and the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs no later than the end of your last semester. A copy of your Final Report will be received by the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and archived in the Office of Academic Affairs for a limited number of years separately from your official student file. Please ensure you use the official school email addresses for both yourself and your advisor.

Responses from all students may be shared with faculty for the purposes of student advisement. If data is presented in aggregate form to other non-PSR third parties such as accreditors, all personal identifiers (such as your name and email) will be removed.

This milestone is due the LAST DAY of your LAST SEMESTER. Please submit any further questions about this milestone to the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs at registrar@psr.edu.

OFFICE USE ONLY: Cohort Year

Name *

Your email address *

Date

Calendar

Advisor's Name

Advisor's email *

The last 3 digits of your student ID number (the number on the front of your library card):

1. Please rate your own knowledge and understanding of the following basic theological disciplines after completing the MTS program compared with when you first started at PSR:

	much weaker	somewhat weaker	about the same	somewhat stronger	much stronger
Bible	<input type="radio"/>				
Religious History	<input type="radio"/>				
Theology	<input type="radio"/>				
Ethics and Social Theory	<input type="radio"/>				

2. Please rate your own skill level in the following areas after completing the MTS program compared to when you first started at PSR:

	much weaker	somewhat weaker	about the same	somewhat stronger	much stronger
Ability to integrate & synthesize information	<input type="radio"/>				
Critical Thinking	<input type="radio"/>				
Theological Thinking	<input type="radio"/>				
Contextual appreciation & awareness of Christian tradition	<input type="radio"/>				
Ability to write clearly	<input type="radio"/>				

3. Please refer to question 3 of your MTS Entrance Report and reflect on and evaluate how well you achieved the learning goals you had in the beginning of the program. Please note whether your learning goals had changed and why. If you do not have a copy of your Entrance Report, please email the Assistant Dean for Academic Programs for a copy at registrar@psr.edu.

4. What contemporary issue(s) or problem(s) did you study through the MTS program?

5. What were the (at least) two main theological disciplines (Bible, History, Theology, Ethics) you integrated and engaged in your MTS Synthesis essay to explore the contemporary issue named in #4?

6. What is your planned occupation after graduating?

7. How will what you learned through the MTS enrich or be applied your vocation?

8. What feedback would you give to the program to improve it?

9. Did you requested a change of program to the MTS within PSR (usually from either the MDiv or the MA program)? *

- Yes
- No

Thank You!

Thank you for completing the PSR MTS Final Report. A copy has been sent to you and your advisor at the emails you provided on this form. A copy has also been received and will be retained in the Office of Academic Affairs.

SUBMIT ONLINE
do not print this form

Guidelines for the M.T.S. Synthesis Essay

The capstone integrative document of the Master of Theological Studies Program at PSR is the M.T.S. Synthesis Essay. The essay is used as a learning tool, to assist you in integrating the various aspects of your theological education prior to graduation, and as an assessment tool, as evidence of the extent to which you have achieved the goals of the degree program, and the extent to which PSR has met the goals it has set out for teaching and learning in the M.T.S. program.

Your Synthesis Essay should in some significant part reflect the goals of the program. In your essay you should be prepared to:

- 1) Engage in theological reflection, analysis, and critical thinking about a contemporary issue related to your Area of Interest.
- 2) Draw upon at least 2 areas of theological study (bible, history, theology, or ethics). You will be integrating and bringing these areas into creative and critical inter-play with one another
- 3) Demonstrate knowledge and competency in your area of interest
- 4) Show evidence of your understanding of the importance of social location by explaining how differing contexts impact one's understanding of the text, issue, or topic under discussion.

While it is not as long as an M.A. thesis, and does not involve the sort of original scholarly research characteristic of an M.A. thesis, the M.T.S. Synthesis Essay is nonetheless a piece of academic writing. While personal reflection may be relevant in situating the source of your interest in the topic, or the contextual factors that shape the way you ask it, the essay is designed to be an academic exercise using the standards of argument and publicly accessible reasoning that characterize a typical research paper. While it should meet the design requirements discussed below, the essay may build on a research paper you have written or are writing for a course in your degree program.

The Synthesis Essay is 10-15 pages long, and prepared in consultation with your advisor. In the essay you will identify a problem, issue, or topic related to your Area of Interest. The issue/problem should be described clearly and set in its context (social, religious, etc.). The essay should then address this issue by drawing on two of the foundational disciplines (Biblical Studies, Historical Studies, Theology, and Ethics) studied in the program. Usually the Area of Interest is quite broad (i.e. Religion and Psychology; Feminism and Religion, Religious Pluralism; Social Justice; Religion and the Arts). The issue, problem, or topic identified in the synthesis essay must necessarily be much narrower than the Area of Interest, so that you may successfully address it within the recommended 10-15 pages.

So for example, a student interested in ecological justice might focus the essay on the relationship of eco-feminism to the Christian faith in a way that makes appropriate use of religious and theological resources. Such a student might wish to draw on her exposure to Biblical Studies, exploring biblical themes that support or contribute negatively to an ethic of environmental justice. In this case, the student is demonstrating that she has acquired exegetical, historical-critical, and hermeneutical skills appropriate for someone who has obtained a degree in theological studies. Further, she might draw on her exposure to the discipline of theology, identifying eco-feminist strands in a work or works of Christian feminist theology. In so doing, she is demonstrating both critical theological and contextual reflection skills and also actual theological knowledge of thinkers and texts encountered as part of her theological education.

The above example is only illustrative, as there is considerable freedom in the design and content of the essay; the M.T.S. Synthesis Essay is intended to give you an opportunity to integrate creatively your theological education by bringing this education to bear on a question that has motivated your theological education or engaged you throughout your exploration of your particular area of interest. At the same time you will be demonstrating newly acquired standard critical skills and knowledge from at least two theological disciplines. You may find it helpful to consult with your advisor and perhaps other faculty members as you prepare your essay.

You must register in your last semester for the M.T.S. Synthesis Essay course, M.T.S.-5020-01. You may choose

to take the course for either 0.0 or 1.5 credits. The course is intended to requirement your time and attention for the M.T.S. Synthesis Essay in the first half of your final semester. In order to graduate in May, you must submit your essay to your advisor by April 15th. The essay is graded by your advisor on a Pass/Fail basis. If after you submit your essay to your advisor, the essay needs revisions, you must revise it and resubmit it to your advisor until they approve it by signing the essay. A copy of your final essay signed by your advisor is due to the Assistant Dean by the last day of the semester. Once the Assistant Dean receives this signed copy, your grade for M.T.S. 5020 will be recorded as "Pass". If the signed copy is not received by the last day of the semester, the grade will be recorded as "Fail" and PSR will not be able to confer your degree.

Pacific School of Religion Master of Theological Studies

M.T.S. Synthesis Essay Assessment Rubric

Student Name: _____

Grad Yr: _____

Area of Interest: _____

Evaluation standards of M.T.S. Synthesis Essay	Further description particular to essay	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Issue/problem is identified and described clearly related to area of interest	Issue/Problem: _____				
Issue/problem is addressed by drawing on at least two theological disciplines:	Discipline 1: _____				
	Discipline 2: _____				
Integration of these disciplines into creative and critical inter-play with one other		1	2	3	4
Demonstrates critical theological reflection skills; ability to think and analyze theologically		5	6	7	8
Demonstrates contextual reflection skills		9	10	11	12
Particularized competency in an area of interest/discipline		13	14	15	16

Integration of at least two theological disciplines

¹ Able to integrate and synthesize information and make connections across two or more theological disciplines to address a special topic, issue, or question logically, clearly, and in ways that show not only understanding but also respect for each discipline's own integrity

² Able to integrate and synthesize information and make connections across two or more theological disciplines to address a special topic, issue, or question in ways, but shows a few misconceptions and/or omissions in doing so

³ Able to integrate and synthesize information and make connections across two theological disciplines to address a special topic, issue, or question, but shows signs of significant misconceptions and/or omissions

⁴ Unable to integrate and synthesize information and make connections across two theological disciplines to address a special topic, issue, or question

Theological thinking, analysis, reflection

⁵ Able to refer to, evaluate, and use relevant resources from each of the above disciplines critically, consistently, and responsibly

⁶ Able to refer to, evaluate, and use resources from at least the above the disciplines critically and responsibly but not consistently

⁷ Able to refer to and use resources from some of the theological disciplines, but without good evaluation and/or careful consideration of relevance

⁸ Unable to refer to, evaluate, and/or use resources from each of the theological disciplines

Contextual Reflection & Appropriation

⁹ Able to explain and illustrate critically and carefully how contexts under consideration are different and what importance those differences make in understanding and/or dealing with a text, a situation, and/or an issue

¹⁰ Able to explain and illustrate critically and carefully how contexts under consideration are different, but struggles to articulate and demonstrate what importance those differences make in understanding and/or dealing with a text, a situation, and/or an issue

¹¹ Able to explain and illustrate how contexts are different if they are obvious, but unable to articulate and demonstrate what importance those differences make in understanding and/or dealing with a text, a situation, and/or an issue

¹² Unaware that there are various contexts

Competence in a Discipline or Area of Interest

¹³ Able to critically and clearly explain, address, and illustrate a topic or an issue within her or his particular area of interest not only with relevant disciplinary resources but also in their own words

¹⁴ Able to explain, address, and illustrate a topic or an issue within her or his particular area of interest with relevant disciplinary resources but not consistently in their own words

¹⁵ Struggles to explain, address, and illustrate a topic or an issue within her or his particular area of interest (including the reference to and use of relevant disciplinary resources)

¹⁶ Unable to explain, address, and illustrate a topic or an issue within her or his particular area of interest

[CONTINUE ON TO PART II ONLINE](#)

Part II covers the following topics you are required to read as part of your program manual