

## Credit Hour Policy

For PSR courses, one (1.0) semester credit hour requires the following minimum work:

- one hour of instructor mediated learning and
- three hours of outside of class study weekly

for an average fifteen (15) week semester.

Thus, one three credit hour (3.0) course would require a minimum of 12 hours of work per week (3 instructor mediated hours plus 9 outside study hours) for 15 weeks.

### *Time per Credit*

For each graduate credit awarded by a course at Pacific School of Religion, students should be spending approximately one hour (50 minutes) in contact with the instructor and three hours (150 minutes) on course work outside of class per week over the equivalent of a 15-week semester.

This applies to face-to-face, intensive, and online classes alike.

- 1.0 credit course = 13 hours of direct contact plus 38 hours outside of class
- 1.5 credit course = 19 hours of direct contact plus 56 hours outside of class
- 3.0 credit course = 38 hours of direct contact plus 113 hours outside of class

These figures are targets, not absolutes. Courses may exceed the expectations, or the ratio of direct contact to outside work may vary somewhat.

Learning outcomes for classes that have multiple formats are to be identical across format. Format should have no effect on quality or quantity of learning outcomes.

### *Hours Outside of Class*

“Hours outside of class” include advance and daily readings, writing, participation in online discussions, studying, reflection, projects, final papers, etc.

### *Intensive Classes*

Intensive classes take place in summer and January sessions. They typically meet for four or eight hours per day, five days a week. Because we cannot expect students in a five or ten day course to spend 10+ hours per day studying outside of class, substantial student work ahead of and/or following the actual course dates is to be expected.

In the case of 3.0 credit classes that meet for 60 hours (3 weeks), direct contact hours exceed the 38 hour expectation. You may subtract the additional 22 hours of in-class time from the 113 required hours of out of class time, resulting in a target of 91 hours of out of class work time expected.

### *Online Classes*

Online classes warrant further clarification, as definitions of “contact with the instructor” and “hours outside of class” are less obvious. As stated in [Department of Education’s DCL ID: GEN-11-06](#):

*The credit hour definition does not emphasize the concept of “seat time” (time in class) as the primary metric for determining the amount of student work for Federal purposes. Institutions may assign credit hours to courses for an amount of work represented by verifiable student achievement of institutionally established learning outcomes. Credits may be awarded on the basis of documentation of the amount of work a typical student is expected to complete within a specified amount of academically engaged time, or on the basis of documented student learning calibrated to that amount of academically engaged time for a typical student.*

We see a similar line of reasoning in the [Department of Education’s Program Integrity Q&A document](#) ():

*CH-Q4:*

*How would an institution apply the definition of a credit hour if the institution offers asynchronous online courses that are not also offered in a classroom setting?*

*CH-A4: There is no “seat time” requirement implicit in the definition of a credit hour. An institution that is offering asynchronous online courses would need to determine the amount of student work expected in each online course in order to achieve the course objectives, and to assign a credit hour based on at least an equivalent amount of work as represented in the definition of credit hour.*

*[Guidance issued 3/18/2011]*

Updated 12/15/16