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# **COURSE SELECTION PLANNING**

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**School of Theology**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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### **Purpose**

The primary purpose of the School of Theology is to offer graduate theological education to train students to be pastors, teachers, biblical counselors, and for other areas of service to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Central to these educational functions is the development of persons of Christian character, commitment, and integrity.

The School of Theology seeks both to serve and to lead the denomination. While closely related to the academic and Christian communities of the world, its chief concern is the Christian ministry of Southern Baptist churches.

The School of Theology provides the biblical and theological training for effective ministry. Because Christian ministers encounter a wide spectrum of issues, the education that is both comprehensive and highly specialized. For comprehensiveness, students complete a core curriculum that will enable them to think theologically and will equip them with appropriate knowledge and skills. To meet the demand for specialization, students have the opportunity to select an area of concentrated vocational preparation.

### **Overview of Academic Programs**

Academic programs in the School of Theology consist of three types. First, the basic professional programs designed to equip qualified students for the practice of ministry are the Diploma in Theology, the Master of Arts degree, the Master of Divinity degree, and the Advanced Master of Divinity degree. Second, the professional doctoral degree is the Doctor of Ministry. Third, the research doctoral programs designed to qualify advanced students for research and teaching, as well as for other specialized leadership positions, are the Master of Theology degree and the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

### **Program Goals**

The programs in the School of Theology are offered to equip qualified students for the practice of effective Christian ministry. The goal of this faculty is for every graduate:

- To be a called disciple and minister of Jesus Christ, serving His Kingdom
- To possess a deep and growing love for God and a desire to bring glory to His name
- To possess an abiding love for people and the work of Christian ministry in the context of the church
- To bear witness to the complete truthfulness of Holy Scripture
- To maintain the historic principles of the Christian faith and of the Baptist heritage
- To be ethically informed and to embody the moral imperatives of the Kingdom of God
- To integrate theological understandings with human need in the contemporary world
- To demonstrate Christian commitment, maturity, integrity and spirituality
- To possess knowledge of the Bible and of historic and contemporary Christian thought and practice
- To receive specialized training and skill development in specific areas of ministry

This document is intended to guide in planning a course of study in the M.Div. program, and can be consulted prior to registration.

### **Course Load**

The pace of study will depend upon a number of factors -- family responsibilities, church ministry, hours employed, academic ability.

Minimum load – For full-time students, 9 hours or the minimum. Recommended for persons employed more than 25 hours weekly, studying on academic probation, or with below average academic achievement. Falling below nine hours may cause difficulties with scholarships, loan programs, student visa requirements, etc. Be sure to check with the appropriate seminary offices when considering a course load below nine hours. (\*Note: Any on-campus student currently enrolled in 8 hours including “Personal Spiritual Disciplines” (40150) **may be** eligible for SBTS financial aid)

Average load -- 10-14 hours per semester. Recommended for students employed no more than 25 hours weekly and with no academic struggles.

Maximum load -- 18 hours per semester. Recommended only for persons with exceptional academic ability who have minimal pressures with employment and family responsibilities.

### **Types of Courses**

There are three types of courses in the M.Div. program: required, divisional electives, and free electives. Most required courses are taught only during the fall and spring semesters. Winter and summer short-term classes offer good opportunities for completing divisional and free electives.

### **M.Div. Concentrations**

All Master of Divinity students must follow the program requirements of one of the five concentrations: Christian Ministry, Pastoral Ministry, Biblical and Theological Studies, Biblical Counseling, and Worldview and Apologetics. The Advanced Master of Divinity program is available for qualified students.

**Program Progress Forms** are available for each School of Theology program and M.Div. emphasis. Students should follow the program or emphasis they select. If a student wishes to change the M.Div. track, Academic Records must be informed, and the student should obtain the Program Progress Form of the new track from the Secretary of the Senior Associate Dean.

## COURSE SELECTION GUIDELINES

### Requirements

1. Students **must** take the course “Personal Spiritual Disciplines” (40150) during their first year of study (preferably their first semester).
2. Students are encouraged to take Personal Evangelism (32100) in the first year of study.
3. Students are encouraged to fulfill their Applied Ministry or its equivalent in their second year.

### Recommendations

1. At least one language requirement should be completed during the first year of studies. *It is best to take the second semester language course immediately after having taken the first semester of that language.* Taking two elementary biblical languages at the same time is not recommended.
2. In the first year of M.Div. work the foundational biblical studies courses should be taken (Hermeneutics, NT, OT).
3. The preferable sequence is to complete the second semester of two-semester introductory courses after the first semester. For example, 20200 (OT I) should precede 20220 (OT II), although this is not required.
4. When possible, it is desirable to align biblical language courses with biblical introduction courses. For example, take "Introduction to the New Testament" (22200-22220) in tandem with "Elementary Greek" and "Greek Syntax and Exegesis" (22400-22440).
5. Normally, the required work in a department or division should be taken before elective courses. Registration materials will indicate when required work is a formal prerequisite to an elective course.
6. Preaching courses tend to be more beneficial after finishing the language courses.
7. Some elective courses are offered annually, but others cycle through the curriculum less frequently.
8. The one and two-week terms (December, January, June, and July) offer more elective courses than required courses.
9. If a student secures advanced placement in an area, the sequence of studies in that discipline will be altered so that more divisional electives are allowed.
10. Those who consider continuing on with advanced graduate studies (Th.M. and/or Ph.D.) are advised to plan ahead and take required course work and pertinent electives *in the area of future study*.

**Summary:** These guidelines are offered to assist in the selection process. Many factors, however, impact course selection, and few students are able to select their courses in exactly the order they might choose.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR MASTERS LEVEL STUDENTS

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## **Academic Advising**

Academic advising is offered for new students during orientation. Academic advising is also available during the year. Students may contact the Dean of Student Administrative Services at [academicadvising@sbts.edu](mailto:academicadvising@sbts.edu).

## **Shepherding Groups**

Shepherding groups are designed to provide students with small group mentorship from faculty as well as fellowship with other students. School of Theology faculty serve to provide spiritual support and pastoral oversight for all students in the degree programs of the School of Theology.

## **Advanced Placement Exams**

Students may take advanced placement tests in Old Testament, New Testament, Greek, Hebrew, Church History and Systematic Theology. Please note that being granted advanced placement in some area does not shorten the program, but permits qualifying students to take advanced electives exclusively within that field instead of the prescribed requirements.

## **Written Communication**

All seminary students must demonstrate an acceptable level of written communication proficiency by achieving a “B-” or better in college English courses prior to attending seminary, or by successfully completing Written Communication (31980). All courses in English Composition and/or Grammar are averaged to verify a “B-” minimum. For students below this standard, a Written Communication course is *required* in the first or second semester of enrollment. Course 31980 is remedial (undergraduate), worth two credit hours, although it is not applicable toward any degree requirements.

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## INFORMATION ABOUT APPLIED MINISTRY

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### **Applied Ministry Overview**

Applied Ministry is an opportunity for the student to learn while engaged in the practice of ministry. The student is required to combine a period of actual experience as a minister with the following additional requirements:

- A goal-oriented ministry process
- Reflections on personal ministry
- A one-hour weekly field supervisory session with an approved minister/supervisor
- Thoughtful theological reflection on the process of ministry with a supervised group of peers
- Careful attention to biblical, theological, and practical resources

Applied Ministry is required for all students in master's level programs. Students may select courses from the options given in the degree requirements section of their particular program. Applied Ministry courses, or equivalent courses, taken in excess of the stipulated Applied Ministry requirements must be counted as free elective credits.

### **Enrollment Requirements**

Students may take only one course (or its equivalent) in a single semester. To enroll in any Applied Ministry course, the following is necessary:

- Successful completion of course 40150, Personal Spiritual Disciplines
- Attendance at Applied Ministry Orientation
- An approved title and ministry placement which requires a minimum nine-hour-a-week ministry commitment in an approved church or agency. The nine hours also includes time with a faculty supervisor.
- An approved field supervisor or a supervisory committee. Approval forms for all placements and supervisors are found in the Applied Ministry Manual.

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## A PRACTICAL DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM OF PLAGIARISM

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Plagiarism is the use or theft of intellectual property without attribution, both a moral and educational transgression. Students are required to affirm their academic integrity in writing when submitting all course work: *On my honor, I have neither given nor taken improper assistance in completing this assignment.*

### **Why is plagiarism an issue for seminary students?**

Educators have a traditional concern that material be credited properly as a part of the learning process. To this view the Christian minister adds a commitment to the worth of persons, to the importance of the search for truth, and to the integrity of belief and behavior. The prohibition of theft, at least as old as the Ten Commandments, extends to the misrepresentation of an individual's most personal property: words and ideas.

Southern Seminary considers plagiarism to be conduct inappropriate to a minister. It also identifies plagiarism as an offense against the community and, as such, cause for disciplinary action.

### **In what situations should a seminary student be concerned about plagiarism?**

The opportunity for plagiarism exists in any presentation or exchange of ideas. It may occur in speech or writing. The context may extend from conversation and informal writing to public addresses and documented research. This range includes essays, reviews, class presentations, term papers, sermons, program notes, lectures, analyses, translations, take-home examinations, online assignments, research projects, theses, and dissertations.

### **What types of borrowing must be identified to avoid plagiarism?**

Any borrowing of ideas or their expression, which the creator might identify as personal intellectual property, must be acknowledged. This is true no matter what type of source is used, whether it be authoritative or published, or of a less formal nature. This includes borrowing from another student, previous or current, with or without that person's permission. Examples of borrowings include: direct quotations, indirect quotations, paraphrases, summaries, ideas or concepts, interpretations of facts or materials, views of disputed information, and results of field research.

### **How should these borrowings be identified in order to avoid plagiarism?**

Whatever the type of borrowing or the context of its use, the appropriated material should be attributed to its source. At the least, the name of the individual or source should be given with the material. In less formal situations, it may be sufficient to say or write, "As \_\_\_\_\_ said '.....'" In formal writing there are standard formats for documenting sources. The guide to this type of documentation at Southern Seminary is the *Southern Manual of Style* published by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and *A Manual for Writers, Sixth Edition* by Kate L. Turabian. The type of attribution necessary for particular assignment or presentation is at the discretion of the professor.

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## STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

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A student of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary may attempt to resolve a grievance with a member of the seminary faculty or academic staff through either the Informal Grievance Process or the Formal Grievance Process. A grievance is defined as behavior or a decision which the student perceives to be in error or unfair. A grievance may include the grade or evaluation of any class or course work, but not the final course grade which may be appealed only according to the established process for final grade review. Another example of a grievance would be a student's feeling that he or she was ridiculed or inappropriately embarrassed by a staff or faculty member.

### **Informal Grievance Process**

There are many opportunities for students enrolled in the seminary to express or deal with their grievances in an informal manner (see Matthew 18:15). The teacher or person responsible for the student's awareness of a grievance is normally quite open to discussing the matter, and willing to negotiate a mutually satisfactory solution in informal conversation. In addition, professors, instructors, faculty advisors, Garrett Fellows, student assistants, and student representatives of various organizations are open to consult with students concerning any problems which arise and to provide students with information concerning their rights and responsibilities.

The deans of the schools are also available to discuss any problem with a student and will, in most cases, attempt to reconcile differences between the parties involved in an informal manner. When the problem cannot be resolved through this informal means, a student may seek resolution through the Formal Grievance Process outlined below.

### **Formal Grievance Policy**

1. A student who has a grievance must present a written statement to the person whose action has occasioned the grievance within thirty days of the student's first awareness of the problem. The statement must contain a detailed description of the problem including dates, persons involved, a summary of the steps taken to resolve the problem and the results of this, and the specific resolution which the student feels is appropriate.
2. The faculty or academic staff member receiving the written statement must indicate to the student in writing within seven days of the receipt of the complaint what he or she is willing to do to resolve the matter. If the student is satisfied with the response, the matter is considered closed.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the faculty or staff member's response, he or she may appeal the decision to the dean of the school who supervises the faculty or staff person by indicating in writing within seven days of receiving the response that he or she wishes to appeal. This notice must include both the information listed in Step A and the response elicited in Step B above.
4. The dean will investigate the matter and will indicate to the student in writing within seven days of receiving the appeal what will be done to resolve the matter and the dean's decision is final. If the grievance is with a dean, the student may appeal by the same process to the Vice President for Academic Administration.