



2025-2026
ACADEMIC CATALOG

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Legal Disclaimer

The information in the Academic Catalog is current as of December 15, 2025 for the academic year 2025-2026. Any modifications after this date override the content of this document.

American Lutheran Theological Seminary reserves the right at all times, at its sole discretion, to review, modify, amend, or alter any provision of this Catalog.

PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION, AND INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Purpose

Our purpose is to provide quality Christian education for working adults who are seeking a spiritually formative theological education that reflects the beliefs and mission of The AALC. Our programs support men seeking ordination in Word and Sacrament ministry, along with both men and women of the laity, who desire focused academic opportunities in Biblical Studies and desire to be equipped to faithfully serve in their vocations. (Matt. 28:18–20, Col. 1:9, 2 Tim. 2:15)

Vision

Our vision is to provide the highest level of spiritually formative theological education, grounded in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions by using an interactive classroom format. Directed toward men who are called to the office of the holy ministry, and lay men and women seeking a theological education, we thereby aim to provide our students with all the tools needed to better serve the Lord in their respective vocations. (1 Pet. 4:10–11, Heb. 12:1–2)

Mission

Our mission is to bring Christ and His Gospel to the world and to equip future leaders in the church to do so as well. We dedicate ourselves as witnesses to the eternal Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in its fullness and purity, preserving and extending the unity of the faith as revealed in God's Holy Word. (Mark 16:15, Acts 13:47)

- Our educated and experienced staff provide high-quality Lutheran theological education to a global Christian community. Our long history of remote education provides a unique interactive classroom experience for both students and professors.
- Our spiritually formative instruction through our Pastoral Ministry (Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree or Certificate in Lutheran Theology) Program prepares, educates, examines, and certifies men, who have been called to the holy vocation of the Office of Word and Sacrament ministry, and leads to ordination in the AALC.
- We also provide multiple academic opportunities with various areas of focus for both laity and non-Lutheran pastors with our Service to the Church (Master of Arts in Religion (MAR) degree) and Formal Christian Education (Master of Arts in Theology (MAT) degree) programs.
- Through our Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program, we equip pastors for advanced study and renewed excellence in preaching, teaching, leadership, and pastoral practice.
- In all programs, ALTS emphasizes the role of the pastor as Seelsorger—the shepherd and caretaker of souls—grounding ministry in faithful proclamation of the Word and Christ-centered pastoral care.

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

These Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) are established in accordance with the Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Goals of American Lutheran Theological Seminary. They are designed to reflect The ALTS's commitment to providing quality, spiritually formative Christian education rooted in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, equipping individuals for faithful service in their diverse vocations.

As a result of completing any degree program at American Lutheran Theological Seminary, graduates will be able to:

1. Demonstrate Theological Understanding and Confessional Fidelity for Spiritually Formative Growth.
 - Articulate a comprehensive understanding of Christian theology, deeply rooted in Holy Scripture, faithfully reflecting the Lutheran Confessions, and foundational to a spiritually formative education.
 - Interpret and apply God's Word with sound hermeneutical principles to foster faithful service in diverse vocations.
 - Engage in critical and constructive theological reflection on matters of faith, church, and society, informed by focused academic opportunities (e.g., Biblical Studies) and grounded in the foundations of the Christian Faith.
2. Cultivate Spiritual Maturity and a Christ-Centered Vocational Commitment.
 - Evidence ongoing personal spiritual formation grounded in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, characterized by a life of discipleship, prayer, and Christian virtues, reflecting the seminary's commitment to spiritually formative education.
 - Articulate and pursue a clear vocational calling to serve Christ, His Church (with particular attention to The AALC), and the world, including a commitment to bring Christ and His Gospel to others.
3. Engage in Competent Ministry Praxis and Ethical Leadership to Equip and Serve.
 - Apply theological knowledge, ethical principles, and practical ministry skills effectively and with cultural discernment, equipped to serve in various roles (whether lay or ordained, including as Commissioned Church Workers, helpers in congregations, or in preparation for Word and Sacrament ministry).
 - Serve faithfully as Seelsorger, providing Christ-centered pastoral care, guiding souls with wisdom and compassion, and embodying the seminary's commitment to the cure of souls.
4. Practice Communication, Scholarship, and Lifelong Learning
 - Communicate Christian truth effectively through both written and oral means, lead with wisdom, and serve with compassion, utilizing the tools provided by a quality Christian education.
 - Utilize appropriate research methods, information literacy, and analytical skills to address contemporary challenges and opportunities, demonstrating a commitment to continued personal, spiritual, and professional development as witnesses to the eternal Gospel.

ADMISSIONS

Requirements

Prospective students are assessed according to their personal faith in Jesus Christ, their academic background, and, with regard to the Pastoral Ministry Program, their call to the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament within The AALC.

ALTS prepares its students for pastoral ministry and other service to the church, which requires that certain personal and spiritual qualifications be met:

1. Demonstrated faith in Jesus Christ, daily repentance, and a clear sense of call to service in the church.
2. A signed application form to provide personal information and to indicate that the applicant submits himself or herself to be educated according to the standards of the doctrinal positions of the Seminary and The AALC.
3. Three recommendations that testify to the applicant's Christian and moral character. These should be from the pastor of the applicant's home congregation, an employer, and a personal acquaintance or college academic advisor. Exceptions to these can be made and will be determined based on the student's circumstances.
4. Ecclesiastical Approval – All seminary students must obtain in writing the necessary ecclesiastical approval from their church body before beginning their studies (i.e. Bishop, Regional Pastor, Presiding Pastor, President of Synod, District President, etc.).

ALTS is a school of graduate study and therefore applicants must have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Prospective students are responsible for having official transcripts of all post-high-school work sent directly to the Registrar of ALTS (email transcripts to registrar@taalc.org).

A small number of applicants without a bachelor's degree may qualify for our Pastoral Ministry Program. This program is available to students 30 years old or older who can demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing at a level that is necessary for our courses. This is determined on a case-by-case basis by the leadership of ALTS, and there may be additional requirements to prepare the student for the writing of research papers before acceptance into the program. The number of students in this category will not exceed 10% of the total number of students in the Master of Divinity track of ALTS' Pastoral Ministry Program.

Application Procedure

All students and auditors are required to apply as a student with ALTS. The application process begins with completing the 'Request for Information' form found on our website: [Admissions – American Lutheran Theological Seminary](#).

1. Submit the completed Request for Information form.
2. The ALTS Administrator will contact you by phone and have a conversation with you.

3. Upon a satisfactory conversation, the Administrator will direct the Registrar to send an application link to you. This is done through our Learning Management Software, Populi:
 - a. You will receive a link to your Admissions Portal. In this Portal you will find the application for your desired Program and degree (there is one application form for our Master's level Programs and a separate one for our Doctoral Program).
 - b. Fill out the Application Form and submit it. The Application Form automatically saves your progress. You can use the same Admissions Portal link to access your Application Form and continue it.
 - i. Cover Letter: upload your Cover Letter to the appropriate file box on your Application Form.
 - ii. Ecclesiastical Approval: All applicants to any of our Programs must get written approval from their ecclesiastical authority. This written approval can be uploaded to the appropriate file box on your Application Form.
 1. For TAALC members, your ecclesiastical approval should come from your Regional Pastor.
 2. For Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod members, as per the directive ALTS has received from the Office of the President, must submit written approval from both his or her District President and the Office of the President of the LCMS.
 3. For those who are members of neither the TAALC or LCMS, approval from the appropriate Church authority will satisfy this requirement.
 - iii. Three Reference Letters are required—one should be from your Pastor. The Reference Forms are built into the Application Form.
 1. When you come to this portion of your Application Form, enter the email address of your reference (you may send a short message with it if you want—this is optional).
 2. Your reference will receive an email with a link to fill out the Online Reference Form on your behalf. When your reference submits the form, it will show up in your Application Form.
 - iv. For applicants whose first language is not English, you must complete a TOEFL Test and submit your scores to the Registrar (min score: 85). The test can be taken online here: [TOEFL English Language Test | Globally Accepted - ETS](#).
 - v. When your Application Form is complete, sign it in the signature box on your Application Form.
 - vi. A \$25 Application Fee must be paid before you can

submit your Application. You may do this through Populi.

- c. In your Admissions Portal you will also find a Background Check Authorization Form. Fill this out and submit it.
- 4. Arrange for official transcripts, bearing the seal of the institution and the signature of the Registrar, from each school attended to be sent directly to ALTS. Transcripts can be emailed to the Registrar at registrar@taalc.org.
- 5. Once all of these documents have been submitted and received by the Registrar, your Application Packet will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee of ALTS.

Acceptance into our Programs

Determination of a student's acceptance is made by the Admissions Committee based upon academic ability, spiritual maturity, and general fitness for the program to which they are applying. Notification of acceptance to or rejection from the Program will be sent to the student by the Registrar.

If you are accepted to one of our Programs, you will receive an official Acceptance Letter from ALTS and your account in Populi will be activated.

- 1. This will send you an email from American Lutheran Theological Seminary with a link to set your password for your Populi account (user name and Student ID are automatically assigned).
- 2. Once you are set up in Populi, you can view your Transcript, which will have your program and degree attached to it. You can also register for appropriate courses through the Registration section of your Populi Account.
- 3. Courses are tied to Programs and degrees. Populi will by default show you courses you are eligible to enroll for according to your Program, degree, and concentration, as well as having met the necessary prerequisites.
- 4. If you wish to Audit a course, on your Registration page, you can change what Populi shows you from 'Enroll' to 'Audit.' The available courses for Audit will be shown. Doctoral Program courses cannot be audited.
- 5. Questions or issues that arise in regard to the registration process can be directed to the Registrar at registrar@taalc.org.

Note: Acceptance into the Pastoral Ministry Program (M.Div or Certificate) does not automatically qualify one for pastoral ministry in The AALC. The determination of an individual's position on the clergy roster of The AALC is recommended by the Clergy Commission and decided by the Association Council, rather than ALTS.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Students will receive a notification from Populi when registration opens for the upcoming Academic term. Students may then register for available courses that are appropriate to their Program and degree. Courses are tied to specific Programs and degrees and many of them have other prerequisites, and so not all courses offered are available to every student. Registration is done through the Registration page of the

student's Populi account.

Note: In Populi, 'Enroll' refers to taking a course for credit; 'Audit' means 'no credit.' Registration can refer to both Enroll and Audit.

Note: Some courses may be enrolled in without having met the necessary prerequisites at the discretion of the Department Chair. Students desiring this may fill out the necessary form to request this from the Department Chair. Upon approval, the Department Chair will notify the Registrar. In these cases, self-enrollment is not permitted, and the student will be enrolled in the course by the Registrar.

If a student desires an Independent Study, he or she may fill out the appropriate request form and submit it to the instructor of the course. If approved, a course for that Independent Study will be set up by the Registrar. Self-enrollment in Independent Studies is not permitted and students will be enrolled in their approved Independent Study by the Registrar.

Upon enrollment in a course, the student will be charged for the course according to the current Tuition Schedule, along with a once-per-term technology fee of \$27. Students can view any balances on their account on the Financial page of their Populi account. The Financial Administrator of ALTS will invoice student accounts through Populi. Tuition payments should be made through Populi.

All students must ensure that there are no administrative holds on their accounts prior to registering for new courses.

Payment for courses must be made in full at the time of registration or follow the payment schedule outlined below.

- 40%- Payment with registration
- 30%- Payment by the end of week two
- 30%- Payment by the end of week five

Adding a Class

With the permission of the instructor, a student may add a course(s) through the Friday of the first week of the term for the Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer terms. Open enrollment will close by the start of the first week of the current term. Any enrollment after this will need to be done by the Registrar.

Attendance

While enrolled at the American Lutheran Theological Seminary, students are expected to understand that full participation and attendance is expected in classes, class related activities, and field experience assignments. At their discretion, instructors may treat an absence as excused, but are not obligated to do so. In the event of an excused absence, students are expected to complete and submit all assignments within a timely manner. Excessive absences may result in the lowering of a student's grade, disciplinary action, or dismissal.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating of any kind, including but not limited to plagiarism, is considered unethical conduct and is inconsistent with Christian life. Be it faculty or student, cheating may be grounds for original dismissal. Disciplinary action, as a result of academic dishonesty will be handled by the Seminary President, in consultation with the professor of the course in which the plagiarism occurred.

Academic Grievances

Concerns related to course instruction should initially be discussed with the course instructor. If an issue is unable to be resolved, the President of the American Lutheran Theological Seminary should be consulted. In the event that the grievance is related to the President's role as an instructor, the Presiding Pastor of the American Association of Lutheran Churches should be consulted. Responding to concerns and grievances about academic policies and procedures is the responsibility of the Seminary President or Presiding Pastor, in consultation with the Commission for Higher Education, faculty, and Registrar.

Classroom Recording Policy

Zoom classes are recorded by the professor and are available to students to view for a limited period of time following the class. These recordings are the property of the seminary and may not be used beyond their intended use for active seminary students enrolled in the course being recorded. Unless special permission is granted, these videos shall not be shown to others. Due to the nature of certain courses there may not be recordings of the classes.

Grade Changes

Grade changes should only be implemented in situations when an instructor becomes aware or believes that previously submitted student work should have received a different evaluation. Instructors may consent to reviewing work after the end of the term in which it was completed, but they are not obligated to do so. In all cases, grade changes must be finalized by the end of the term after the term in which the course was conducted.

Incompletes

When the instructor determines that events beyond a student's control have prevented them from fulfilling the course requirements within the given quarter, an initial grade of "Incomplete" (I) may be given. Incompletes must be requested and approved no later than the last regularly scheduled day of the quarter. When an incomplete has been given, all assignments and grades must be submitted by the last day of the term after the term in which the course was conducted. If an incomplete is given during a spring term all assignments and grades must be submitted by August 1. If the work has not been fulfilled by the established due date, the grade of "I" will permanently become an "F."

A student or instructor may request an Incomplete by contacting the Registrar.

Approval of the Incomplete must be documented, as indicated by signatures of the student and the instructor.

A student who has an Incomplete in a course that is a prerequisite for another course may not register for the subsequent course until the term after the term in which a satisfactory grade has been awarded. For example, if a student takes Lutheran Confessions I in the Winter Term but uses the Spring Term to fulfill an Incomplete for that course, they would only be eligible to take Lutheran Confessions II beginning in the subsequent Fall Term.

Retaking a Course

If failed, courses required for the completion of a program must be repeated. The original grade of "F" will remain on a student's transcript. The grade earned while retaking the course will appear on the transcript separately, along with an 'R' indicating a retake. Students may not retake courses for which a grade of C- or higher was received. They can, however, audit a course that has already been taken.

Transfer Credits

The Seminary President is responsible for determining the eligibility of credits for transfer credit. Students may request a transcript review at the time of admission.

- Credits more than 8 years old will not be eligible for transfer. After the approval and application to the student's program of study, the credits will be valid for the duration of the student's program.
- Credits for courses with a grade below "C" are not transferable.
- Undergraduate courses are not transferable.
- It is recommended that students desiring to take courses at another institution with the intention of transferring the credits to ALTS consult with the Seminary President in advance.

Withdrawing from a Class

A student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty during the first three weeks of a quarter. Withdrawing during this time will appear as a "W" on the student's transcript.

A student who drops a course or officially withdraws from a course of the Seminary prior to the end of the seventh week of a quarter shall receive a refund based on the following terms:

- If an official withdrawal request is received by the end of the first day of the quarter, students are eligible for a full refund.

- If an official withdrawal request is received after the first day of the term, the following refund schedule will be followed:
 - Official withdrawal prior to the end of the first week of the term will result in a refund of 90%.
 - Official withdrawal prior to the end of the second week of the term will result in a refund of 75%.
 - Official withdrawal prior to the end of the third week of the term will

- result in a refund of 50%.
- Official withdrawal prior to the end of the fifth week of the term will result in a refund of 25%.
- There is no refund after the end of the fifth week of the quarter.

Students may not withdraw after the seventh week of the quarter. Withdrawals between the third and seventh weeks will result in a withdrawal fail, which will appear as "WF" on the student's transcript.

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate a withdrawal request. The official date of withdrawal will be based on the date in which the withdrawal request was received by the Registrar's office.

Students who have received scholarship monies to pay for the class that is being withdrawn from will receive a refund based on the following:

- If an official withdrawal request is received by the end of the first week of the term, scholarship monies will be credited to the student's account and can only be utilized for subsequent classes.
- If an official withdrawal request is received after the first week of the term, scholarship monies will be forfeited.

Leave of Absence/Withdrawal from Degree Program

A student may request a leave of absence for a period of up to one year. All requests should be initiated with the Registrar's office. If a leave of absence is granted, the student can resume studies at any time during the leave period without reapplication. Graduation requirements remain under the catalog in effect at the time of the student's enrollment at ALTS. If a student has not resumed classes by the end of the leave of absence, they will be withdrawn from the seminary.

Students desiring to withdraw from the American Lutheran Theological Seminary must notify the Registrar's office in writing. Financial obligations must be resolved before a withdrawal becomes official.

A student who has withdrawn may be readmitted; however, the student will be required to meet the graduation requirements outlined in the academic catalog at the time of readmission.

Dismissal

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary reserves the right to dismiss students, but only exercises this practice with careful consideration.

TUITION

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary operates on the generosity of our donors within The AALC and friends of The AALC for the purpose of keeping the cost paid by our students low. Our goal is to provide quality education and training for service in Christ's Church without financial stress.

All our courses are online, which means you participate from the comfort of your home. Classes are normally held from 8pm (EST) to 10:30pm (EST). The student is responsible for their own technological equipment.

The actual cost to ALTS to provide a single course to a single student is \$1,750. However, ALTS subsidizes each student per 3-unit course in the amount of \$1,250. Therefore, the cost to each student per course is:

General Tuition

- \$167.00 USD per credit-hour + a \$27 technology fee assessed once per term per student

Auditing Courses at ALTS

The term "audit" refers to a course that is taken for no credit, meaning that it is not calculated into a student's cumulative grade point average. A student may enroll in a course as an auditor prior to the end of the first week of the quarter, as space allows.

Whether or not a student is allowed to audit any course is at the discretion of the instructor of that course. If spots are filling up in any class, priority is given to students taking the course for credit, rather than to those who are auditing.

In general, it is expected that only introductory courses will be audited by the general public, though pastors, church workers, and others with a background in theological education may take upper-level courses at the discretion of the professor of that course. Some exceptions may be allowed; decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Auditing is for the benefit of the individual enrolled in the course and will not result in any credit given toward a degree at ALTS. If a student chooses to audit a course and later enrolls in a degree program, the audit does not excuse them from taking the full course again with all credit requirements as given by the instructor.

The student who audits a course is expected to attend as many class sessions as for credit students, though there is no expectation that one will participate in tests or writing assignments.

Audit – General Public

- \$100.00 USD per class + a \$27 technology fee assessed once per term per student.

Audit – American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC)

Pastors, church workers, and congregants within The AALC are able to enroll and audit courses at ALTS at a discounted rate of \$50.00 USD per class + a \$27 technology fee assessed once per term per student.

Grants and Scholarships

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary offers grants and scholarships when specific funds are available. As our courses are designed to be economical, the need for grants and scholarships are normally not a consideration.

Grants and scholarships are available for international students specifically where standards of living are not on par with the United States. International students can inquire about such grants and scholarships after registration.

As stated above, ALTS subsidizes each student in the amount of \$1,250 per 3-unit course. For M.Div. students only, funds from the California Community Scholarship are available for those who can demonstrate significant financial need. Students requesting assistance must contact the Registrar and will be sent an application form. All decisions regarding scholarships are made by the scholarship committee.

Sufficient Academic Progress Policy for ALTS

Good Academic Standing GPA

Students in the M.Div, M.A.R., and M.A.T. programs must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 for good academic standing, which is consistent with the requirement outlined in the ALTS guide. Students in the D.Min. program must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for good academic standing.

Minimum Credits per Year

Students must complete at least four courses annually to maintain good standing and stay on track for graduation.

Maximum Time to Complete Program

Students in the Pastoral Ministry Program (M.Div., CLT) must complete their coursework within a maximum of seven years. For those who do not complete the program within this timeframe, reapplication and adherence to the updated program requirements at reentry are required. The maximum time allowed to complete the Formal Christian Education or Service to the Church (M.A.T., M.A.R.) Program is seven years from the start of coursework. If a student needs a leave of absence, they may take up to one year without reapplying. After that period, students must reapply and meet any updated program requirements. Students in the Doctoral Program (D.Min) must complete the program within seven years.

Incomplete Policy

In cases where a student is unable to complete course requirements on time due to circumstances beyond their control, an Incomplete (I) grade may be granted. Requests must be made by the last

scheduled day of the quarter, with coursework completed by the end of the following term (by August 1 for spring term incompletes). Unresolved Incompletes will convert to an F.

Grade to GPA Policy

GPA is calculated on a 4.0 scale as follows:

- A = 4.0, A- = 3.66, B+ = 3.33, B = 3.0, B- = 2.66, C+ = 2.33, C = 2.0, D+ = 1.33, D = 1.0, F = 0.0
- Grades of P (pass) are equivalent to a GPA value of 2.5.

Academic Probation

A student falls into academic probation if the cumulative GPA drops below 2.0 or a term GPA below 1.75. Probation may also be triggered if a student accumulates two Incomplete grades in a quarter. Students on probation are restricted to a course load of no more than two full courses per quarter.

Students on probation must complete the next three courses with a grade of C or higher (or Pass) within three consecutive terms to regain good standing. Failure to meet these conditions results in dismissal.

Quantitative Progress Requirement

To qualify for financial aid and meet satisfactory academic progress, students must complete at least 66.7% of attempted credits each term. All courses with grades of A, B, C, or P count toward completed credits. Courses graded F, I, W, or WF are not considered completed for this calculation.

Exceptions and Appeals

Students may appeal academic decisions, such as probation or dismissal, by submitting a written explanation of extenuating circumstances to the Seminary President or designated faculty. Appeals should include a detailed academic plan approved by the student's academic advisor.

Pastoral Ministry Program (Master of Divinity and Certificate in Lutheran Theology)

I. Program Overview

The Pastoral Ministry Program at American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) is designed to train men for pastoral ministry, primarily within The American Association of Lutheran Churches (TAALC), although exceptions may be considered by seminary leadership. This Program recognizes the evolving landscape of theological education and leverages advanced technology to deliver a robust and accessible seminary experience. Through live video conferencing ATLS creates a dynamic virtual classroom, enabling real-time (synchronous) interaction between students and professors. This online approach mitigates the high costs associated with on-campus (residential) study and relocation, making quality theological education more attainable.

The Pastoral Ministry Program is built upon a partnership model involving the student, the seminary, and the congregation. A key component of this Program is the Vicarage (pastor-in-training period), where students apply their learning in a real-world congregational setting. This integration of academic study with practical ministry experience is critical for the holistic development of future pastors, equipping them with the theological knowledge, pastoral skills and spiritual maturity necessary to effectively serve Christ and His Church.

There are two tracks, or pathways, through the Pastoral Ministry Program. The first track is that of the Master of Divinity (M.Div) Degree. The second is that of the Certificate in Lutheran Theology. Details below.

II. Program Objectives

The Pastoral Ministry Program is designed to:

1. *Equip Men for Pastoral Ministry:* To provide comprehensive theological education and practical training for men called to serve as pastors within The AALC and other approved contexts.
2. *Deliver Accessible Theological Education:* To offer a high-quality seminary education through an interactive online platform, making it accessible to students regardless of their geographical location.
3. *Integrate Theological Study with Practical Experience:* To foster a dynamic learning environment where academic knowledge is directly applied and refined through a supervised vicarage in a congregational setting.
4. *Provide a Thorough Grounding in Core Theological Disciplines:* To ensure students gain proficiency in Exegetical, Doctrinal, Historical, and Pastoral Theology, as well as Biblical languages.
5. *Cultivate the Identity and Competencies of a Seelsorger:* To develop the student's pastoral heart and skills as a *Seelsorger* (caretaker of souls), equipping them for the spiritual,

emotional, and theological care of souls through effective pastoral care, preaching, teaching, and leadership, all grounded in Lutheran theology.

6. *Foster a Partnership in Ministerial Formation:* To create a collaborative relationship between the seminary, the student, and the congregation, ensuring mutual growth and support throughout the educational journey.

III. Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Pastoral Ministry Program, graduates will be able to:

1. *Exegetical Proficiency:*
 - Demonstrate competence in the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments using appropriate hermeneutical principles and original biblical languages (Hebrew (Elective) and Greek (Required)).
 - Articulate the overarching narrative and theological themes of Scripture.
2. *Doctrinal Soundness:*
 - Explain and defend the key doctrines of the Christian Faith from a Lutheran confessional perspective.
 - Engage in theological reflection and apply doctrinal truths to contemporary issues and pastoral practice, particularly distinguishing Law and Gospel.
3. *Historical Understanding:*
 - Describe the major developments, figures, and theological movements in the history of the Christian Church, with special attention to the Lutheran Reformation and the history of The AALC.
 - Analyze the influence of historical events and theological traditions on contemporary church life and practice.
4. *Pastoral Competence as a Seelsorger:*
 - Articulate a sound theology of pastoral ministry centered on *Seelsorge* (the care of souls), and demonstrate essential skills in pastoral care, counseling, conflict resolution, and catechesis for the spiritual well-being of those served.
 - Prepare and deliver biblically faithful, theologically sound, and pastorally relevant sermons that minister God's Word for the *Seelsorge* of the congregation.
 - Understand and apply principles of Christian worship and pastoral leadership to nurture the spiritual life and health of the congregation, reflecting the calling of a *Seelsorger*.
5. *Ministerial Integration:*
 - Integrate theological knowledge with practical ministry skills effectively during their vicarage and subsequent pastoral service.
 - Exhibit a commitment to lifelong learning and spiritual growth in their pastoral vocation.

IV. Program Structure

The Pastoral Ministry Program requires the completion of 90 credit hours, comprising 30 distinct courses, most of which are valued at 3 credits. The curriculum is structured around four major areas of theological education: Exegetical Theology, Doctrinal Theology, Historical Theology, and

Pastoral Theology, along with foundational studies in biblical languages. There are 78 Credits from the Core Courses, with the remaining 12 Credits chosen from the list of Elective Courses.

A significant component of the Program is the **Vicarage**. After completing a determined number of courses, students may apply to serve as a Vicar (pastor-in-training) in a TAALC congregation or other approved ministry setting. The Vicarage provides an invaluable opportunity for students to gain practical pastoral experience under the mentorship of an experienced pastor, while continuing their seminary studies. This partnership involves obligations for the Vicar to both the seminary (continued coursework) and the congregation (pastoral service). The congregation, in turn, partners with the Vicar and ALTS by providing support and opportunities for growth.

Students are expected to complete the Pastoral Ministry Program within seven years of beginning their coursework, which necessitates completing a minimum of four seminary courses each year.

V. Curriculum and Course List

The Pastoral Ministry Program (M.Div., CLT) curriculum consists of 30 courses, each requiring a time commitment of approximately two and a half hours per week for ten weeks. Of the required 30 Courses, 26 are Core Courses, and the remaining 4 are chosen from the Electives.

Biblical Studies (7 Core Courses)

- E201 Hermeneutics
- EO101 Old Testament Introduction
- EO201 Pentateuch
- EO202 Prophets
- EN101 New Testament Introduction
- EN205 Synoptic Gospels
- EN207 Pauline Epistles
- EO218 Writings (Ketuvim) (ELECTIVE)
- EN218 Catholic Epistles (ELECTIVE)

Lutheran Theology (6 Core Courses)

- S101 Theological Prolegomena
- S201 Doctrine I
- S301 Doctrine II
- S205 Lutheran Confessions I
- S305 Lutheran Confessions II
- S207 Catechesis
- S401 Christian Ethics (ELECTIVE)
- S110 Apologetics (ELECTIVE)
- S115 Law and Gospel (ELECTIVE)

- S120 Theological Philosophy (ELECTIVE)

Church History (5 Core Courses)

- H102 Early Church History
- H202 Medieval Church History
- H302 Reformation History
- H405 History and Polity of The AALC
- H409 History of Christian Worship
- H312 Modern and Postmodern Church History (ELECTIVE)

Practical Theology (6 Core Courses)

- P101 Pastoral Theology and Life
- P201 Pastoral Care
- P301 Pastoral Care in Conflict and Crisis
- P205 Preaching I
- P305 Preaching II
- P203 Missions
- P117 Christian Spirituality & Formation (ELECTIVE)

Languages (2 Core Courses)

- LG101 Greek I
- LG102 Greek II
- LH101 Hebrew I (ELECTIVE)
- LH102 Hebrew II (ELECTIVE)
- LG201 Greek Readings (ELECTIVE)
- LH201 Hebrew Readings (ELECTIVE)

VI. Admission Requirements

There are two pathways or tracks to admission into the Pastoral Ministry Program. The first is that of the Master of Divinity (M.Div) Degree, and the second is that of the Certificate in Lutheran Theology (CLT).

A. Pathway One: Master of Divinity Degree

To be admitted into the Pastoral Ministry Program for the Master of Divinity Degree (M.Div.) at ALTS, applicants must ordinarily meet the following criteria:

1. *Educational Background:* Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. Official transcripts from all colleges attended must be submitted.

2. *Recommendations:* Provide three letters of recommendation. Ordinarily, for TAALC applicants, two of these letters should be from a TAALC pastor and a member of their TAALC congregation.
3. *Application Materials:* Submit a complete application, including details of additional training and work history.
4. *Commitment to ALTS Standards:* Agree to abide by the rules of conduct of ALTS.
5. *English Proficiency:* Students whose primary language is not English must successfully complete and submit their Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to ALTS. (min score: 85)
6. *Program Indication:* Applicants should indicate their interest in the Pastoral Ministry Program: M.Div. degree on both the Request for Information Form (www.alts.edu/admissions) and on the Application Form.
7. *Ecclesiastical Approval:* All Pastoral Ministry Program students must obtain in writing the necessary ecclesiastical approval from their church body before their application to the Program will be considered (i.e. Bishop, Regional Pastor, Presiding Pastor, President of Synod, District President, etc.).

B. Pathway Two: Certificate in Lutheran Theology (CLT)

I. Certificate Overview

The Certificate in Lutheran Theology (CLT) at American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) is a non-degree pathway into the Pastoral Ministry Program. The Certificate is designed for individuals who seek comprehensive theological education and ministry training but do not hold an undergraduate degree. This program provides the same rigorous coursework as the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree, offering a structured and robust pathway for those called to serve the church through pastoral ministry, in-depth theological study, and Christian leadership.

While the Certificate in Lutheran Theology does not confer a graduate academic degree, it signifies the successful completion of an M.Div.-equivalent curriculum. It is intended to prepare students for potential Ordination and effective pastoral ministry, particularly within The American Association of Lutheran Churches (TAALC) and other church bodies that recognize such comprehensive theological training. The program leverages ALTS' proven online, interactive classroom format, making quality Lutheran theological education accessible.

The Certificate in Lutheran Theology is designed to provide comprehensive theological education and practical training equivalent to the Master of Divinity degree for individuals without an undergraduate degree who are called to serve in pastoral ministry.

II. Admission to the Certificate in Lutheran Theology Pathway

The admission requirements for the Certificate in Lutheran Theology are identical to those of the Master of Divinity with the following distinctions:

1. *Educational Background:* Applicants are **not** required to submit undergraduate transcripts or hold a bachelor's degree. Individuals who possess an undergraduate degree are not admissible to the Certificate in Lutheran Theology and should consider the Master of Divinity, or other Programs and degrees offered at ALTS.
2. *Graduate-Level Writing Sample:* A sample of graduate-level writing is required to ensure the student is able to meet the academic rigor of the Program.
3. *Age Consideration:* Generally, only those over the age of 35 will be admitted. However, exceptional circumstances may be considered by the seminary Admissions Committee.

To begin the application process, please fill out and submit the Request for Information Form at www.alts.edu/admissions.

VII. Graduation Requirements

To graduate with the Master of Divinity degree or the Certificate in Lutheran Theology, students must:

1. *Coursework Completion:* Successfully complete all 30 required courses (90 credit hours) as outlined in the program curriculum.
2. *Vicarage Completion:* Successfully complete the vicarage requirements as determined by the seminary and the supervising congregation/entity.
3. *Academic Standing:* Maintain a satisfactory academic record as defined by ALTS. (A specific minimum GPA may be outlined in the Student Handbook).
4. *Time Limit:* Complete all degree requirements within seven years from the date of matriculation into the Program.
5. *TAALC Ordination (if applicable):* Students desiring Ordination in The American Association of Lutheran Churches (TAALC) must make an application to The AALC's Clergy Commission upon graduation from the Pastoral Ministry Program. Graduation from ALTS does not guarantee Ordination.

VIII. Program Delivery Method

1. *Online Learning:* The majority of courses are conducted via live video conference, creating an interactive virtual classroom where students and professors can see and hear each other in real-time.
2. *Intensive Courses:* Some courses, typically two, are offered as in-person intensive summer courses.
3. *Technology Requirements:* All students are expected to have access to high-speed internet and a functioning video camera to participate fully in online classes. Students are responsible for ensuring their technology meets the requirements for connecting to the online classrooms.

4. *Class Schedule:* Online classes are typically scheduled to accommodate students who may be working or involved in ministry, though specific times will be provided with course registration materials.

IX. Evaluation and Assessment

- Student learning and performance are assessed through a variety of methods, which may include but are not limited to:
- Written examinations
- Research papers and essays
- Class participation and presentations
- Practical assignments related to pastoral ministry

Professors will outline specific grading methods, criteria, and expectations for each course in the course syllabus. Successful completion of assignments and active engagement in coursework are essential for academic progress.

X. Faculty

Courses in the Pastoral Ministry Program are taught by qualified faculty members who possess appropriate academic credentials and significant pastoral experience. Faculty are dedicated to providing robust theological instruction and mentorship, guiding students in their academic pursuits and preparation for ministry. Specific faculty assignments for courses will be made available prior to course registration.

XI. Timeline for Completion

The Pastoral Ministry Program is designed to be completed within a flexible timeframe, but students must complete all requirements within seven years of beginning their coursework. To maintain steady progress, students are generally expected to complete a minimum of four seminary courses (12 credit hours) each academic year. This timeline allows for the integration of vicarage experience alongside academic studies.

XII. Academic Policies and Procedures

1. *Attendance:* Regular and active participation in online classes is expected. Policies regarding absences will be outlined by individual instructors and in the Student Handbook.
2. *Academic Integrity:* ALTS upholds a high standard of academic honesty. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary actions, including dismissal from the program.
3. *Technology Use:* Students are required to be familiar with and supply their own technology (computer, high-speed internet, video camera) to connect with ALTS classrooms.
4. *Student Conduct:* Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Christian character and the professional standards of pastoral ministry.

5. *Other Policies:* For comprehensive information on academic policies, procedures, grading, leave of absence, and other student-related matters, please refer to the official ALTS Student Handbook.

XIII. Support Resources

ALTS is committed to supporting students throughout their theological education:

1. *Faculty Advising and Mentorship:* Students will have access to faculty for academic guidance and mentorship, particularly in navigating coursework and the vicarage experience.
2. *Technical Support:* Assistance will be provided to students for connecting to and utilizing the online learning platforms.
3. *Library Resources:* Information should be sought from ALTS regarding access to library collections, including physical resources (if applicable) and digital theological libraries (such as the Digital Theological Library - DTL).
4. *Congregational Partnership:* The vicarage model inherently includes support and guidance from the supervising pastor and congregation, fostering a practical learning environment.
5. *Peer Interaction:* The live online classroom environment encourages interaction and mutual support among students, creating a community of learners.

SERVICE TO THE CHURCH PROGRAM (MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGION)

I. Program Overview

The Service to the Church Program at American Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS) results in the Master of Arts in Religion (MAR) degree. The MAR is a practical degree designed to prepare both men and women for dedicated service in Christ's church. This program is ideal for individuals seeking to become Commissioned Church Workers or to serve as valuable helpers in the diverse ministries of local congregations. Graduates are equipped for roles such as Deacon or Deaconess, Director of Youth Ministries, Bible Study Leader, or Missionary.

The Service to the Church Program focuses on building critical foundations in biblical exegesis, church history, and systematic theology, with a strong emphasis on practical application and service within the church. Students are equipped to serve effectively in local parish settings or within parachurch organizations, grounded in a solid theological understanding and prepared for specialized ministry contributions.

II. Program Objectives

The Service to the Church Program is designed to:

1. *Provide Foundational Theological Knowledge:* To equip students with a robust understanding of Scripture, key Christian doctrines from a Lutheran perspective, and the historical development of the Church.
2. *Develop Skills for Practical Ministry Service:* To prepare students for effective service in various lay ministry roles within congregations and other Christian organizations.
3. *Foster Specialization in Key Ministry Areas:* To allow students to develop focused expertise in Administration, Outreach, or Pedagogy, tailored to their calling and service goals.
4. *Cultivate a Heart for Service:* To instill a commitment to serving Christ and His Church with theological insight, practical competence, and spiritual maturity.
5. *Equip for Effective Communication and Leadership:* To enable students to teach, lead, and contribute meaningfully to the mission and ministry of the church in their chosen area of concentration.
6. *Prepare for Advanced Study or Enhanced Ministry:* To provide a solid academic foundation that can lead to further graduate study or enhance the student's capacity for impactful lay ministry.

III. Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Service to the Church Program, graduates will be able to:

1. *Biblical and Theological Understanding:*
 - Demonstrate a foundational understanding of the Old and New Testaments and principles of biblical interpretation.
 - Articulate core Christian doctrines from a Lutheran confessional standpoint.
 - Understand the major developments and figures in Church History, including the history and polity of The AALC.
2. *Ministry Skills and Application:*
 - Apply theological knowledge to practical ministry situations within a church or parachurch context.
 - Communicate Christian truth effectively in teaching, outreach, or administrative roles.
 - Serve competently in their chosen area of concentration (Administration, Outreach, or Pedagogy).
3. *Research and Critical Thinking:*
 - Conduct master's-level research and write a thesis that integrates theological understanding with their chosen concentration.
 - Engage in critical thinking about contemporary issues facing the church and society from a theological perspective.
4. *Personal and Spiritual Formation:*
 - Exhibit growth in personal faith and a commitment to Christian discipleship.
 - Understand the importance of lifelong learning and spiritual development for effective ministry service.

IV. Program Structure

The Service to the Church program requires the completion of 45 credit hours. The curriculum is structured as follows:

- Core Theological Studies (24 credits): Eight foundational courses (3 credits each) covering biblical studies, systematic theology, and church history.
- Concentration Studies (6 credits): Two specialized courses (3 credits each) in one of three chosen areas: Administration, Outreach, or Pedagogy.
- Elective Courses (9 credits): Three elective courses (3 credits each), allowing students to explore additional areas of interest. Prerequisites must be met for elective courses.
- Master's Thesis (6 credits): A final capstone research project in the student's chosen concentration.

Total Credit Hours: 45 credits

V. Curriculum and Course List

Students will complete the core theological studies, select a concentration, fulfill elective requirements, and complete a master's thesis. All courses are assumed to be 3 credits unless otherwise specified for the thesis (6 credits).

Core Theological Studies (24 credits - Common to all concentrations)

- S101 Theological Prolegomena
- EO101 Old Testament Introduction
- EN101 New Testament Introduction
- S205 Lutheran Confessions I (*Prerequisite: S101 Theological Prolegomena*)
- S305 Lutheran Confessions II (*Prerequisite: S205 Lutheran Confessions I*)
- H101 Church History Overview
- H405 History and Polity of The AALC (*Prerequisite: H101 Church History Overview*).

Concentration: Outreach (6 specific credits + Core + Electives + Thesis)

- L100 Language Tools for Biblical Study
- S110 Apologetics
- P210 Evangelism
- *Elective 1 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 2 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 3 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
- TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

Full Course List for Outreach Concentration (10 courses + 3 Electives + Thesis):

- L100 Language Tools for Biblical Study
- S101 Theological Prolegomena
- EO101 Old Testament Introduction
- EN101 New Testament Introduction
- S205 Lutheran Confessions I (*Prerequisite: S101 Theological Prolegomena*)
- S305 Lutheran Confessions II (*Prerequisite: S205 Lutheran Confessions I*)
- H101 Church History Overview
- H405 History and Polity of The AALC (*Prerequisite: H101 Church History Overview*)
- S110 Apologetics
- P210 Evangelism
- *Elective 1 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 2 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 3 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
- TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

Concentration: Pedagogy (6 specific credits + Core + Electives + Thesis)

- L100 Language Tools for Biblical Study
- S110 Apologetics
- S207 Catechesis
- *Elective 1 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 2 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 3 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
- TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

Full Course List for Pedagogy Concentration (10 courses + 3 Electives + Thesis):

- L100 Language Tools for Biblical Study
- S101 Theological Prolegomena
- EO101 Old Testament Overview
- EN101 New Testament Overview
- S205 Lutheran Confessions I (*Prerequisite: S101 Theological Prolegomena*)
- S305 Lutheran Confessions II (*Prerequisite: S205 Lutheran Confessions I*)
- H101 Church History Overview
- H405 History and Polity of The AALC (*Prerequisite: H101 Church History Overview*)
- S110 Apologetics
- S207 Catechesis
- *Elective 1 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 2 (Prerequisites must be met)*

- *Elective 3 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
- TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

Concentration: Administration (6 specific credits + Core + Electives + Thesis)

- L100 Language Tools for Biblical Study
- S101 Theological Prolegomena
- P110 Parish Administration and Service
- *Elective 1 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 2 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 3 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
- TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

Full Course List for Administration Concentration (10 courses + 3 Electives + Thesis):

- L100 Language Tools for Biblical Study
- S101 Theological Prolegomena
- EO101 Old Testament Overview
- EN101 New Testament Overview
- S205 Lutheran Confessions I (*Prerequisite: S101 Theological Prolegomena*)
- S305 Lutheran Confessions II (*Prerequisite: S205 Lutheran Confessions I*)
- H101 Church History Overview
- H405 History and Polity of The AALC (*Prerequisite: H101 Church History Overview*)
- P110 Parish Administration and Service
- *Elective 1 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 2 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- *Elective 3 (Prerequisites must be met)*
- TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
- TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

VI. Admission Requirements

(Specific admission requirements for the MAR program should be obtained directly from The ALTS Admissions Office or the seminary website. Generally, applicants to master's level programs may be expected to meet criteria such as the following, but confirmation is essential):

1. *Educational Background:* Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. Official transcripts from all colleges attended should be sent to the registrar at registrar@taalc.org.
2. *Application Form:* Submission of a completed ALTS application form for the Service to the Church Program.

3. *Statement of Purpose:* A written statement detailing the applicant's reasons for pursuing the MAR degree, their ministry goals, and how the program aligns with their calling.
4. *Letters of Recommendation:* Three letters of recommendation from academic or pastoral references.
5. *English Proficiency:* Students whose primary language is not English must successfully complete and submit their Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to ALTS. (min score: 85)
6. *Ecclesiastical Approval:* All MAR students must obtain in writing the necessary ecclesiastical approval from their church body before their application will be considered by the ALTS Admissions Committee (i.e. Bishop, Regional Pastor, Presiding Pastor, President of Synod, District President, etc.).

Prospective students are encouraged to contact ALTS by filling out and submitting the Request for Information Form on the ALTS website (www.alts.edu/admissions).

VII. Graduation Requirements

To graduate with the Master of Arts in Religion degree, students must:

1. *Coursework Completion:* Successfully complete all required coursework, including core courses, concentration courses, and electives, totaling 39 coursework credit hours.
2. *Master's Thesis:* Successfully complete and defend a master's thesis (6 credit hours) in their chosen area of concentration, meeting all academic and formatting standards set by ALTS.
3. *Minimum GPA:* Maintain a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) as specified by ALTS (e.g., typically 3.0 on a 4.0 scale) throughout the program.
4. *Degree Completion Timeline:* Complete all degree requirements within the maximum timeframe permitted by ALTS (e.g., typically 5-7 years from the date of admission).
5. *Ethical Conduct:* Adhere to the academic integrity and student conduct policies of ALTS.

VIII. Program Delivery Method

1. *Online Learning:* The majority of courses are conducted via live video conference, creating an interactive virtual classroom where students and professors can see and hear each other in real-time.
2. *Intensive Courses:* Some courses, typically two, are offered as in-person intensive summer courses.
3. *Technology Requirements:* All students are expected to have access to high-speed internet and a functioning video camera to participate fully in online classes. Students are responsible for ensuring their technology meets the requirements for connecting to the online classrooms.
4. *Class Schedule:* Online classes are typically scheduled to accommodate students who may be working or involved in ministry, though specific times will be provided with course registration materials.

IX. Evaluation and Assessment

Student learning and performance in the Service to the Church program will be evaluated through a variety of methods, tailored to the nature of the courses and learning objectives. These may include:

- Written examinations and quizzes
- Research papers, essays, and case studies
- Class participation and discussion contributions
- Presentations
- Practical ministry projects or assignments
- The Master's Thesis (proposal, research, writing, and defense)

Specific grading policies and assessment criteria will be outlined by instructors in each course syllabus.

X. Faculty

Courses in the Service to the Church Program are taught by faculty members who possess appropriate academic qualifications, theological expertise, and practical ministry experience. Faculty are committed to providing quality instruction, mentorship, and academic support to help students achieve their educational and ministry goals. Information on specific faculty members teaching within the Service to the Church Program can be obtained from ALTS.

XI. Timeline for Completion

For a 45-credit hour master's program, students typically complete the degree in:

- Full-time study: Approximately 2 to 2.5 years.
- Part-time study: Approximately 3 to 5 years.

ALTS will provide specific guidelines regarding the maximum allowable time for degree completion, which is often around 5-7 years.

XII. Academic Policies and Procedures

Students in the Service to the Church Program are subject to the academic policies and procedures of American Lutheran Theological Seminary. Key areas include:

1. *Attendance/Participation:* Policies regarding attendance for any on-campus or synchronous online sessions, and participation requirements for all courses.
2. *Academic Integrity:* Strict adherence to policies on academic honesty, including prohibitions against plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct. Violations can lead to disciplinary action.
3. *Grading System:* Understanding the seminary's grading scale, GPA calculation, and policies regarding incompletes or grade changes.

4. *Leave of Absence*: Procedures for requesting a temporary leave of absence from the program if necessary.
5. *Other Policies*: Students should familiarize themselves with the comprehensive ALTS Student Handbook, which details all other relevant academic policies, student rights, and responsibilities.

XIII. Support Resources

ALTS is committed to providing resources to support Service to the Church students in their academic journey:

1. *Academic Advising*: Students will be assigned an academic advisor to assist with course selection, program planning, and navigation of degree requirements.
2. *Thesis Support*: Faculty guidance and support will be available for students throughout the thesis research and writing process.
3. *Library Resources*: Information should be sought from ALTS regarding access to library collections, including physical resources (if applicable) and digital theological libraries (such as the Digital Theological Library - DTL).
4. *Technical Support*: If the program utilizes online learning platforms, technical assistance may be available to help students with access and usage.
5. *Spiritual Formation*: While not a formal resource, the learning environment and interaction with faculty and peers can contribute to the student's spiritual growth and development.

Students are encouraged to proactively utilize the support services and resources offered by ALTS.

FORMAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM (MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY)

I. Program Overview

The Formal Christian Education Program at American Lutheran Theological Seminary results in the Master of Arts in Theology (MAT) degree. The MAT is an academic graduate degree designed to provide individuals with comprehensive theological instruction in a chosen area of study. A distinctive feature of this program is its accessibility to a broad range of students, as it is not limited to those who adhere to the Lutheran Confessions. The Formal Christian Education Program emphasizes rigorous academic engagement with theological disciplines, equipping students for advanced study, teaching, or enriched ministry roles requiring deep theological understanding.

Students in the Formal Christian Education Program will delve into one of four specialized areas of study: General Theological Studies, Exegetical Studies, Doctrinal Studies, or Historical Studies.

The program culminates in the completion of a master's thesis, allowing students to contribute scholarly research to their chosen field.

II. Program Objectives

The Formal Christian Education Program is designed to:

1. *Provide Advanced Theological Knowledge:* To offer students in-depth academic instruction in a chosen theological discipline (General Studies, Exegesis, Doctrine, or History).
2. *Develop Research and Analytical Skills:* To equip students with the necessary skills for advanced theological research, critical analysis, and scholarly writing, culminating in a master's thesis.
3. *Foster Comprehensive Understanding:* To ensure students gain a thorough understanding of biblical texts, theological doctrines, historical developments, or broad theological principles, depending on their specialization.
4. *Prepare for Further Academic Pursuits:* To provide a strong academic foundation for students intending to pursue doctoral studies (e.g., Ph.D. in theology or related fields).
5. *Promote Scholarly Engagement:* To encourage thoughtful engagement with theological issues and contribute to theological discourse through focused study and research.

III. Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Service to the Church Program, graduates will be equipped to provide the following:

1. *Specialized Knowledge:* Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding in their chosen area of theological study (General Studies, Exegetical Studies, Doctrinal Studies, or Historical Studies).
2. *Research and Scholarship:*
 - Conduct independent, master's-level theological research using appropriate methodologies.
 - Produce a substantial piece of scholarly writing in the form of a master's thesis that contributes to their field of study.
3. *Critical Analysis:* Critically analyze and evaluate complex theological texts, concepts, and historical data.
4. *Effective Communication:* Articulate advanced theological ideas and research findings clearly and coherently in written and potentially oral forms.
5. *Integration of Knowledge:* Integrate knowledge from various theological disciplines to address specific research questions or theological problems.
6. *Preparation for Advanced Roles:* Demonstrate readiness for further academic study at the doctoral level or for professional roles requiring advanced theological expertise.

IV. Program Structure

The Formal Christian Education Program requires the completion of 45 credit hours. This is comprised of:

- Classroom Coursework (39 credits): Thirteen courses (3 credits each) tailored to the chosen area of study. This includes core requirements and specialized courses within the concentration, and may include elective options.
- Master's Thesis (6 credits): A significant research project written under faculty supervision within the student's chosen area of study.

Students choose one of four areas of study:

- General Studies
- Exegetical Studies
- Doctrinal Studies
- Historical Studies

V. Curriculum and Course List

The program consists of 39 classroom credit hours (13 courses at 3 credits each) plus a 6-credit master's thesis.

Area of Study: General Studies

1. L100 Language Tools For Biblical Study
2. E201 Hermeneutics (*Prerequisite: L100 Language Tools*)
3. EO101 Old Testament Introduction
4. EN101 New Testament Introduction
5. S101 Theological Prolegomena
6. S115 Law and Gospel
7. H101 Church History Overview
8. H409 History of Christian Worship (*Prerequisite: H101 Church History Overview*)
9. S201 Doctrine I (*Prerequisite: S101 Theological Prolegomena*)
10. S301 Doctrine II (*Prerequisite: S201 Doctrine I*)
11. Elective (*Prerequisites must be met*)
12. Elective (*Prerequisites must be met*)
13. Elective (*Prerequisites must be met*)
14. TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
15. TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

Area of Study: Exegetical Studies

1. L100 Language Tools For Biblical Study
2. E201 Hermeneutics (*Prerequisite: L100 Language Tools*)
3. S101 Theological Prolegomena

4. EO101 Old Testament Introduction
5. EO201 Pentateuch (*Prerequisite: E102 Hermeneutics; EO101 Old Testament Introduction*)
6. EO202 Prophets (*Prerequisite: E102 Hermeneutics; EO101 Old Testament Introduction*)
7. EN101 New Testament Introduction
8. EN205 Synoptic Gospels (*Prerequisite: E102 Hermeneutics; EN101 New Testament Introduction*)
9. EN207 Pauline Epistles (*Prerequisite: E102 Hermeneutics; EN101 New Testament Introduction*)
10. S201 Doctrine I (*Prerequisite: S100 Theological Prolegomena*)
11. S301 Doctrine II (*Prerequisite: S115 Doctrine I*)
12. Elective (*Prerequisites must be met*)
13. Elective (*Prerequisites must be met*)
14. TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
15. TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

Area of Study: Doctrinal Studies

1. L100 Language Tools For Biblical Study
2. E201 Hermeneutics (*Prerequisite: L100 Language Tools*)
3. S101 Theological Prolegomena
4. H101 Church History Overview
5. H409 History of Christian Worship (*Prerequisite: H101 Church History Overview*)
6. S201 Doctrine I (*Prerequisite: S100 Theological Prolegomena*)
7. S301 Doctrine II (*Prerequisite: S201 Doctrine I*)
8. S205 Lutheran Confessions I (*Prerequisite: S101 Theological Prolegomena*)
9. S305 Lutheran Confessions II (*Prerequisite: S205 Lutheran Confessions I*)
10. S115 Law and Gospel
11. S110 Apologetics
12. Elective (*Prerequisites must be met*)
13. Elective (*Prerequisites must be met*)
14. TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
15. TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

Area of Study: Historical Studies

1. L100 Language Tools For Biblical Study
2. E201 Hermeneutics (*Prerequisite: L100 Language Tools*)
3. S101 Theological Prolegomena
4. H102 Early Church History
5. H202 Medieval Church History (*Prerequisite: H102 Early Church History*)
6. H302 Reformation History (*Prerequisite: H202 Medieval Church History*)
7. H409 History of Christian Worship (*Prerequisite: H302 Reformation History*)
8. H312 Modern and Postmodern Church History (*Prerequisite: H302 Reformation History*)
9. S201 Doctrine I (*Prerequisite: S100 Theological Prolegomena*)

10. S301 Doctrine II (*Prerequisite: S201 Doctrine I*)
11. S205 Lutheran Confessions I (*Prerequisite: S101 Theological Prolegomena*)
12. S305 Lutheran Confessions II (*Prerequisite: S205 Lutheran Confessions I*)
13. Elective (*Prerequisites must be met*)
14. TH501 Thesis Research and Writing (3 credits)
15. TH502 Thesis Defense before Committee (3 Credits)

VI. Admission Requirements

(Specific admission requirements for the MAT program should be obtained directly from The ALTS Admissions Office or the seminary website. Generally, applicants to academic master's programs may be expected to meet criteria such as the following, but confirmation is essential):

1. *Educational Background:* Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. Official transcripts from all colleges attended should be sent to the registrar at registrar@taalc.org.
2. *Application Form:* Submission of a completed ALTS application form for the Service to the Church Program.
3. *Statement of Purpose:* A written statement detailing the applicant's reasons for pursuing the MAR degree, their ministry goals, and how the program aligns with their calling.
4. *Letters of Recommendation:* Three letters of recommendation from academic or pastoral references.
5. *English Proficiency:* Students whose primary language is not English must successfully complete and submit their Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to ALTS. (min score: 85)
6. *Ecclesiastical Approval:* All MAT students must obtain in writing the necessary ecclesiastical approval from their church body before their application will be considered by the ALTS Admissions Committee (i.e. Bishop, Regional Pastor, Presiding Pastor, President of Synod, District President, etc.).

Prospective students are encouraged to contact ALTS by filling out and submitting the Request for Information Form on the ALTS website (www.alts.edu/admissions).

VII. Graduation Requirements

To graduate with the Master of Arts in Theology degree, students must:

1. *Coursework Completion:* Successfully complete all required coursework (39 credit hours) as outlined for their chosen area of study, including any electives.
2. *Master's Thesis:* Successfully complete and defend a master's thesis (6 credit hours) that meets all academic and formatting standards set by ALTS and demonstrates original research and scholarly competence in their area of study.
3. *Minimum GPA:* Maintain a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) as specified by ALTS (e.g., typically 3.0 on a 4.0 scale) throughout the program.
4. *Degree Completion Timeline:* Complete all degree requirements within the maximum timeframe permitted by ALTS (e.g., typically 5-7 years from the date of admission).

5. *Ethical Conduct:* Adhere to the academic integrity and student conduct policies of ALTS.

VIII. Program Delivery Method

1. *Online Learning:* The majority of courses are conducted via live video conference, creating an interactive virtual classroom where students and professors can see and hear each other in real-time.
2. *Intensive Courses:* Some courses, typically two, are offered as in-person intensive summer courses.
3. *Technology Requirements:* All students are expected to have access to high-speed internet and a functioning video camera to participate fully in online classes. Students are responsible for ensuring their technology meets the requirements for connecting to the online classrooms.
4. *Class Schedule:* Online classes are typically scheduled to accommodate students who may be working or involved in ministry, though specific times will be provided with course registration materials.

IX. Evaluation and Assessment

Student learning and performance in the Formal Christian Education Program will be rigorously evaluated through methods appropriate for an academic graduate degree. These may include:

- Research papers and critical essays
- Exams (e.g., comprehensive exams for certain courses or areas)
- Seminar participation and presentations
- Book reviews and critiques
- The Master's Thesis (evaluated on research quality, argumentation, originality, writing clarity, and defense)

Specific grading policies and assessment criteria will be outlined by instructors in each course syllabus.

X. Faculty

Courses in the Formal Christian Education Program are taught by faculty members holding appropriate doctoral degrees and demonstrating expertise in their respective theological disciplines. Faculty are committed to academic excellence, fostering critical thinking, and guiding students in their research endeavors. Information on specific faculty members teaching within the Formal Christian Education Program can be obtained from ALTS.

XI. Timeline for Completion

(The expected timeline for completion of the MAT degree should be confirmed with ALTS.)

For a 45-credit hour master's program with a thesis component:

- Full-time study: Typically 2 to 2.5 years.
- Part-time study: May extend to 3 to 5 years, or as permitted by seminary policy. ALTS will provide specific guidelines regarding the maximum allowable time for degree completion.

XII. Academic Policies and Procedures

Students in the Formal Christian Education Program are subject to the academic policies and procedures of American Lutheran Theological Seminary. Key areas include:

1. *Attendance/Participation:* Policies regarding engagement in online or any synchronous course components.
2. *Academic Integrity:* Strict adherence to policies on academic honesty, including prohibitions against plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct. This is especially critical for a research-oriented degree.
3. *Grading System:* Understanding the seminary's grading scale, GPA requirements, and policies regarding thesis evaluation.
4. *Thesis Guidelines:* Specific policies and procedures related to thesis proposal, research, supervision, writing, and submission.
5. *Leave of Absence:* Procedures for requesting a temporary leave from the program.
6. *Other Policies:* Students must familiarize themselves with the comprehensive ALTS Student Handbook for all other relevant academic policies, student rights, and responsibilities.

XIII. Support Resources

ALTS is committed to providing resources to support MAT students in their academic pursuits:

1. *Academic Advising:* Students will be assigned an academic advisor, typically a faculty member in their area of study, to assist with course selection, program planning, and thesis development.
2. *Thesis Supervision:* Dedicated faculty supervision and mentorship will be provided for the master's thesis.
3. *Library Resources:* Access to theological library resources, including digital databases (such as the Digital Theological Library - DTL) and inter-library loan services, is crucial for research. Students should inquire about the specific resources provided by ALTS.
4. *Writing Support:* The seminary may offer or direct students to resources for academic writing assistance.
5. *Technical Support:* If the program is online, technical assistance for accessing learning platforms and resources.

Students are encouraged to actively engage with faculty and utilize the support services offered by ALTS to succeed in this rigorous academic program.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM

I. Program Overview

The Doctoral Program at American Lutheran Theological Seminary results in the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) degree. The well-trained pastor is not only a faithful scholar, credible academic, and competent exegete, but he is also a shepherd and caretaker of souls, (Hebrews 13:17). The unique purpose of the Doctor of Ministry degree is to provide pastors with exceptional training, ability, and experience in the biblical responsibility of the care and cure of souls. Through rigorous coursework, specialization, and a final project, students will enhance their ability to lead, teach, and serve within their ministry context.

The Doctoral Program equips pastors with the advanced theological, pastoral, and practical skills necessary to lead and care for their congregations effectively. Through in-depth coursework and hands-on projects, graduates will be prepared to address the complexities of ministry with theological insight and pastoral compassion.

II. Program Objectives:

The Doctoral Program is designed to:

1. Develop pastors as *Seelsorgers* (pastoral caregivers), enhancing their ability to provide spiritual, emotional, and theological care within their ministry context.
2. Provide post-graduate professional development that builds on a solid foundation of biblical, theological, and pastoral expertise, focusing on pastoral care through Word and Sacrament.
3. Strengthen the capacity for theological and pastoral integration, enabling pastors to apply advanced biblical and theological knowledge to diverse ministry settings.
4. Foster specialization in key areas of ministry, allowing pastors to deepen their expertise in Biblical Studies, Lutheran Dogmatics, Historical Theology, or Practical Ministry.
5. Promote the practice of pastoral care through Word and Sacrament, ensuring that all forms of ministry are centered on the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.
6. Equip pastors to implement pastoral care effectively, grounded in Lutheran theology and designed to nurture the spiritual health of individuals and congregations.

III. Program Learning Outcomes:

To achieve these outcomes, graduates will:

Spiritual and Theological Growth

1. Deepen personal theological understanding by integrating biblical and theological knowledge into the pastor's own spiritual growth and pastoral practice.
2. Cultivate personal spiritual formation as a Seelsorger, focusing on maintaining one's spiritual health to support effective ministry.
3. Foster habits of lifelong learning, encouraging continuous theological study and personal development to sustain effective pastoral care throughout the pastor's vocation.

Research and Specialization

4. Demonstrate advanced research skills by engaging in critical theological reflection and producing specialized research that applies Lutheran theology to practical ministry settings.
5. Develop expertise in a chosen specialization, applying knowledge from Biblical Studies, Lutheran Dogmatics, or Historical Theology to enhance pastoral care, teaching, or church leadership.

Ministry Application

6. Identify and address critical pastoral needs through theological reflection and the application of Seelsorge principles, providing effective pastoral care to congregants.
7. Apply specialized knowledge from the chosen area of focus (Biblical Studies, Lutheran Dogmatics, Historical Theology, or Practical Ministry) to address specific ministry needs in the student's context.
8. Implement pastoral care effectively through the administration of Word and Sacrament, grounded in Lutheran theology, to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation.
9. Evaluate and improve pastoral practices by integrating theological insights and pastoral care techniques, ensuring the ongoing spiritual health of the church and its members.

IV. Program Structure

The Doctoral Program is structured in three levels: Seelsorger (Pastoral Caregiver), Specialist, and Practitioner, culminating in a final research project that applies advanced pastoral care principles.

Level 1: Seelsorger (18 Credits)

Seelsorger (Pastoral Caregiver): includes the completion of four required courses: Pastoral Care in Loss and Death, The Pastoral Heart in Conversation and Lifestyle, Personal Spiritual Formation, and Pastoral Care through Word and Sacrament. After the completion of the core courses of this program, the student will demonstrate that he has inculcated the pastoral principle of Seelsorger by creating and documenting a project that implements its virtue in his own ministry.

Level 2: Specialist (12 Credits)

At the Specialist level, students select one Field of Study as a focused area of ministerial specialization. Options include Biblical Studies (Old Testament or New Testament), Lutheran Dogmatics, Historical Studies, Practical Ministry, or an interdisciplinary field of study. Students complete four courses within the selected discipline. One course may, with faculty approval, take the form of an Independent Study designed in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

Level 3: Practitioner (15 Credits)

The Practitioner level includes a Project Proposal, and the creation of a Project Committee comprised of at least 3 faculty members. The Final Project will demonstrate the student's ability to research and examine within their specific field of study, and to apply the pastoral care as Seelsorger to that aspect of pastoral ministry. The successful research, application, compilation, and creation of the Final Project and its Defense constitute the completion of the degree requirements.

Total Credit Hours: 45 credits

V. Course List

Level 1: Seelsorger

1. DM601: Conversational Servanthood
2. DM602: Grief Care – Pastoral Care in Loss and Death
3. DM603: The Wounded Healer – Personal Spiritual Formation
4. DM604: Word and Sacrament – Re-Presenting the Care of Christ
5. DM605: Seelsorger Project

Level 2: Specialist

Students will choose one of the following fields of study and complete 4 required courses within their specialization.

Biblical Studies (Old Testament Track)

1. DM701: Biblical Theology for Care of Souls
2. DM702: Genesis (Hebrew)
3. DM703: The Psalms for Prayer, Preaching, and Pastoral Care (Hebrew)
4. DM704: Jonah (Hebrew)
5. DM705: Isaiah and the Prophetic Word (Hebrew)
6. DM706: Independent Study in OT Biblical Studies

Biblical Studies (New Testament Track)

1. DM701: Biblical Theology for Care of Souls
2. DM712: Pauline Theology and Pastoral Ministry (Greek)
3. DM713: Pastoral Epistles (Greek)
4. DM714: Hebrews and the Theology of Christ's Priesthood (Greek)
5. DM715: Johannine Literature (Greek)
6. DM716: Independent Study in NT Biblical Studies

Lutheran Dogmatics

1. DM721: Theological Method in the Lutheran Tradition
2. DM722: Lutheran Scholastic Theology
3. DM723: The Doctrine of God – Medieval and Post-Reformation Scholastic Perspectives
4. DM724: Advanced Christology – The Person and Work of Christ in Lutheran Theology
5. DM725: Ascetical and Mystical Theology
6. DM726: Theological Ethics for Pastoral Ministry
7. DM727: Issues in Contemporary Theology
8. DM728: Independent Study in Lutheran Dogmatics

Historical Theology

1. DM731: Chrysostom and Patristic Homiletics
2. DM732: Cappadocian Fathers and Cyril of Jerusalem
3. DM733: Augustine and Early Church Fathers
4. DM734: Benedict of Nursia and Monastic Spirituality
5. DM735: Bede, Bernard, and Medieval Homiletics
6. DM736: Theologians of the Medieval Church
7. DM737: Luther and the Reformation World
8. DM738: Independent Study in Historical Theology

Practical Theology

1. DM741: The History and Theology of the Care of Souls
2. DM742: Teaching as Seelsorger
3. DM743: Preaching as Seelsorger
4. DM744: The Divine Office: History, Theology, and Pastoral Practice
5. DM745: Advanced Studies in Liturgical Theology and Practice
6. DM746: Spiritual Formation and Direction
7. DM747: Independent Study in Practical Theology

Interdisciplinary

The Interdisciplinary Track is designed for students who seek to combine insights from multiple fields of study to address complex challenges in pastoral care. This track provides the flexibility to tailor a program of study by selecting courses across the specializations, allowing for an integrated approach to advanced pastoral care. Students will choose up to four courses from any of the other specialization tracks (Biblical Studies, Lutheran Dogmatics, Historical Theology, or Practical Ministry). One course may, with faculty approval, take the form of an Independent Study designed in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

1. DM754: Independent Interdisciplinary Study (3 credits)

Level 3: Practitioner

1. DM801: Project Proposal – Annotated Outline and Bibliography.
2. DM802: Final Project – Research, Application, and Compilation
3. DM803: Project Defense before Project Committee

VI. Admission Requirements

To be admitted into the Doctoral Program at American Lutheran Theological Seminary, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- 1) *Ecclesiastical Approval.* Applicants must provide documentation of ecclesiastical approval from their denominational body or church authority. This ensures that the student is in good standing with their church and has the endorsement to pursue advanced theological and pastoral studies. This document can be uploaded to the Application Form.
- 2) *Educational and Ministry Experience Requirements.* Applicants must meet one of the following two pathways for eligibility:
 - a) *Pathway 1: M.Div. Degree and Pastoral Experience*
 - i) Hold a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree from an accredited seminary or theological institution. Official transcripts bearing the seal and signature of the sending institution can be emailed to the registrar at registrar@taalc.org.
 - ii) Have at least 3 years of pastoral ministry experience in a significant ministerial role.
 - b) *Pathway 2: Significant Graduate Study and Pastoral Experience*
 - i) Have at least 5 years of effective full-time pastoral ministry experience.
 - ii) Have completed a significant amount of graduate-level coursework in theology from an accredited institution, demonstrating academic excellence in the form of high grades, comprehensive understanding, and strong theological insight.

- iii) Applicants who do not hold a graduate degree will be required to interview with the Admissions Committee to explain any extenuating circumstances that prevented the completion of a graduate degree and how their ministry experience compensates for it.
- 3) *English Proficiency*: Students whose primary language is not English must successfully complete and submit their Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to ALTS (min score: 85). TOEFL scores can be emailed to the registrar at registrar@taalc.org.
- 4) *Statement of Purpose*. Applicants must submit a Statement of Purpose (300-word minimum) detailing the following:
 - a) Vocational or Ministry Calling: A description of the applicant's calling to ministry and how it has shaped their journey.
 - b) Vocational or Ministry Goals: A clear outline of the applicant's long-term goals for ministry and how they plan to impact their church or community.

The Statement of Purpose can be uploaded to the Application Form.

Prospective students are encouraged to contact ALTS by filling out and submitting the Request for Information Form on the ALTS website (www.alts.edu/admissions).

VII. Graduation Requirements

1. Completion of all required coursework as outlined in the program curriculum.
2. Successful completion of the final project or thesis, which is evaluated by faculty and possibly external reviewers.
3. Minimum GPA: Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 throughout the program.
4. Students must meet the requirements of their chosen specialization and complete all assignments, projects, and courses.
5. Degree Completion Timeline: The Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree must be completed within 7 years from the date of admission.

VIII. Program Delivery Method

1. *Online Learning*: All courses are conducted online, providing real-time interaction between students and professors via platforms like Zoom.
2. *Class Schedule*: Courses typically run from 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. (EST) to accommodate the schedules of working professionals.
3. *Technology Requirements*: Students are required to have high-speed internet and a functioning video camera for participation.
4. Some courses may include intensive components during specific sessions, typically in the summer.

IX. Evaluation and Assessment

1. *Grading Policies*: Students are assessed based on a variety of methods such as exams, written assignments, participation, and presentations. Professors outline specific grading methods for each course.

2. *Project Review:* The final project is evaluated by faculty members and may require an oral defense or presentation, depending on program requirements.
3. *Incompletes and Grade Changes:* These are managed on a case-by-case basis according to seminary policies.

X. Faculty

1. Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins – Specializes in Historical Theology.
2. Rev. Dr. Cary Larson – Specializes in Practical Ministry.
3. Rev. Dr. Chris Caughey – Specializes in Biblical Studies.
4. Rev. Dr. Jordan Cooper – Specializes in Lutheran Dogmatics.

These faculty members guide students through the program, offering expertise in their respective fields and providing academic supervision for thesis projects.

XI. Timeline for Completion

1. The Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree must be completed within 7 years from the date of admission.
2. Course Offerings: Courses are offered quarterly, and students are expected to complete a certain number of credits each year to maintain steady progress toward graduation.
3. Students should anticipate working on their final thesis or project in the final year of study.

XII. Academic Policies and Procedures

1. *Attendance:* Attendance in online classes is mandatory, with absences only allowed for exceptional circumstances, as approved by the professor.
2. *Academic Integrity:* Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are strictly prohibited and can result in disciplinary actions, including dismissal from the program.
3. *Transfer Credits:* A maximum of 50% of the total degree credits may be transferred from another post-graduate or doctoral program, subject to approval. This includes credits from an earned degree at the same academic level.
4. *Leave of Absence:* Students may request a leave of absence for up to one year. Failing to return after this period will result in withdrawal from the program.
5. *Other:* See the Student Handbook for all other academic policies.

XIII. Support Resources

1. *Digital Theological Library:* ALTS offers students access to the Digital Theological Library (DTL), a comprehensive collection of e-books, journals, and academic resources for theological research. Access is available at: [Digital Theological Library](#).
2. *Advising and Thesis Support:* Students are assigned academic advisors to help with course selection, program progression, and thesis development.
3. *Technology and Online Resources:* Students are provided with support for online learning platforms and tools, including technical assistance and research support services.

TWO-YEAR COURSE SCHEDULE

Year 1 (Beginning Fall of Odd Years)

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
LH101 Hebrew 1	LH102 Hebrew 2	E201 Hermeneutics	LH211 Hebrew Readings
EN101 New Testament Introduction	EN205 Synoptic Gospels	EN207 Pauline Epistles	S207 Catechesis
L100 Language Tools for Biblical Studies (MAT & MAR)	P305 Preaching 2	P110 Parish Administration and Service (MAT & MAR)	P101 Pastoral Theology and Life
H101 Church History Overview (MAT & MAR)	H405 Hist and Pol of The AALC	H102 Early Church History	S120 Theological Philosophy
S115 Law and Gospel	H409 History of Christian Worship	P210 Witness & Evangelism (MAT & MAR)	
S101 Theological Prolegomena	S205 Lutheran Confessions 1	S305 Lutheran Confessions 2	

Year 2 (Beginning Fall of Even Years)

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
LG101 Greek 1	LG102 Greek 2	E201 Hermeneutics	LG211 Greek Readings
EO101 Old Testament Introduction	EO201 Pentateuch	EO202 Prophets	P104 Pastoral Care in Conflict and Crisis
L100 Language Tools for Biblical Studies (MAT & MAR)	EO218 Writings (Ketuvim)	EN218 Catholic Epistles	S401 Christian Ethics
S101 Theological Prolegomena	S201 Doctrine 1	S301 Doctrine 2	P205 Preaching 1
S115 Law and Gospel	S110 Apologetics	H405 Hist and Pol of The AALC	
H202 Medieval Church History	H302 Reformation History	H312 Mod and Postmod Church History	Biblical Studies
P203 Missions & Outreach	P117 Christian Spirituality and Formation	P201 Pastoral Care	Lutheran Theology
			History
			Practical Theology
			Languages

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

BIBLICAL LANGUAGES

L100 Language Tools for Biblical Study

This course is designed to help students develop skills in the use of biblical language tools for doing exegetical studies in the New Testament. You will learn enough Greek to understand your computer software program, a Greek interlinear, do Greek word studies, and use advanced academic reference tools. You will also develop the ability to “phrase” a biblical text. All M.A.R. and M.A.T. students must take and pass Language Tools for Biblical Study.

Prerequisite: Formal Christian Education (MAT degree) or Service to the Church (MAR degree)

Programs

Credit Hours: 3

LG101 & LG102 Greek I & II

Greek I & II are technical courses that prepare the student to read and write in the Koine Greek text of the New Testament. The goal of these courses is to create proficiency in the ancient language, so that one is prepared for in-depth textual study of the New Testament books. Greek is required for Biblical Studies by all M.DIV. students.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 6

LG211 Greek Readings

This course is designed for students who have completed foundational Greek studies and wish to improve or maintain their proficiency in reading the Koine Greek of the New Testament. Students will engage in regular readings of selected New Testament passages, focusing on developing reading fluency, expanding vocabulary, and reinforcing their understanding of Greek grammar and syntax in context. The primary goal is to enhance the student's ability to engage directly with the New Testament in its original language.

Prerequisites: Greek I & Greek II

Credit Hours: 1

Status: Elective

LH101 & LH102 Hebrew I & II

Hebrew I & II are technical courses, offered as an elective two-quarter sequence, that prepare students to read and write in the Biblical Hebrew of the Old Testament. The goal of these courses is to develop proficiency in the ancient language, equipping students for in-depth textual study of the Old Testament books. Proficiency in Biblical Hebrew, combined with strong hermeneutical skills, is foundational for advanced exegesis of the Old Testament in its original language.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 6

Status: Elective

LH211 Hebrew Readings

This course is designed for students who have completed foundational Hebrew studies and wish to improve or maintain their proficiency in reading the Hebrew of the Old Testament. Students will engage in regular readings of selected Old Testament passages, focusing on developing reading fluency, expanding vocabulary, and reinforcing their understanding of Hebrew grammar and syntax in context. The primary goal is to enhance the student's ability to engage directly with the Old Testament in its original language.

Prerequisites: Hebrew I & Hebrews II

Credit Hours: 1

Status: Elective

BIBLICAL STUDIES

E201 Hermeneutics

This course equips students with essential principles for biblical interpretation, focusing on mastering the historical-grammatical method. The course assumes the student has completed an introductory level of Greek or Language Tools. Students will learn to analyze historical, literary, and grammatical contexts, understand the role of the interpreter, explore the theological unity of Scripture centered in Christ, and move from exegesis to responsible contemporary application.

Prerequisite: Greek I & II (M.DIV.) or Language Tools (MAR & MAT)

Credit Hours: 3

EO101 Old Testament Introduction

This course examines the writings of the Old Testament, with attention to the author, style, intended audience, date, and theological themes of each writing. It also provides the student with the background of the key points of the redemptive narrative of Scripture such as creation, salvation, and Christ's person and work as presented in the Hebrew Bible. The student is expected to read significant portions of the Old Testament throughout the course.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

EO201 Pentateuch (Torah)

The Pentateuch is the foundational section of the Old Testament and has a profound impact both within the Christian church and the broader world today. In this course, the student is equipped to understand the historical world of the Pentateuch, along with the most important theological and literary themes in these five books. The student is expected to examine the Greek or Hebrew text in some depth. The student is equipped not only to understand this section in its original context, but with the tools to apply God's revelation within the Torah to the Lutheran congregation in a twenty-first century context.

Prerequisites: Hermeneutics, Old Testament Introduction, (or admittance upon consent of Department Chair)

Credit Hours: 3

EO202 Prophets (Nevi'im)

In this course, the student gains a thorough understanding of the theological, exegetical, and historical contents of the books written by the Hebrew prophets. An emphasis is placed on Isaiah,

and its place within redemptive history—particularly his Messianic prophecies that are fulfilled in Christ. The student is expected to examine the Greek or Hebrew text in some depth. Isaiah is also placed within the broader context of Israelite prophetism which encapsulates both the major and minor prophets in the Old Testament.

Prerequisites: Hermeneutics, Old Testament Introduction, (or admittance upon consent of Department Chair)

Credit Hours: 3

EO218 Writings (Ketuvim)

The "Writings" (Ketuvim), the diverse third section of the Old Testament, offer profound insights into Israel's worship, wisdom, and history. This course explores their varied literary genres and historical settings, with special attention to key texts like Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, examining their contributions to understanding God, humanity, and covenant life in redemptive history. The student is expected to examine the Greek or Hebrew text in some depth. Students will learn to faithfully exegete these texts and apply their truths to the contemporary Lutheran congregation's worship, teaching, and pastoral care.

Prerequisites: Greek or Hebrew or Language Tools, Hermeneutics, Old Testament Introduction, (or admittance upon consent of Department Chair)

Credit Hours: 3

Status: Elective

EN101 New Testament Introduction

This course examines all writings of the New Testament while considering the topics of author, style, intended audience, date, and theological themes. An emphasis is placed on Christological themes, and the fulfillment of the Old Testament narrative through establishment of the New Covenant. In this course, the student is expected to read significant portions of the New Testament.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

EN205 Synoptic Gospels

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) undertakes an in-depth exegetical study of these three Gospels, with sustained attention to the Greek text. Students will engage in comparative analysis of parallel accounts and conduct detailed exegesis of key pericopes to discern the distinct theological message and literary artistry of each evangelist. Emphasis will be placed on understanding Jesus as the Messiah and the fulfillment of Old Covenant promises as presented by the Synoptic writers, and on applying these gospel narratives to contemporary Christian life and ministry.

Prerequisites: Hermeneutics, New Testament Introduction, (or admittance upon consent of Department Chair)

Hermeneutics Credit Hours: 3

EN207 Pauline Epistles

This course explores Paul's theology as revealed across his epistles. The Pauline corpus is examined with attention to its major theological themes (such as justification by faith, life in the

Spirit, and the nature of the Church), literary contexts, and its overarching connection to the rest of the New Testament. Students will engage in exegetical study of selected passages from various Pauline Epistles, examining the Greek text in some depth to unpack significant theological concepts within these theologically rich writings.

Prerequisites: Hermeneutics, New Testament Introduction, (or admittance upon consent of Department Chair)

Credit Hours: 3

EN218 Catholic Epistles

This course provides an intensive exegetical study of the Catholic (or General) Epistles: James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, and Jude. The primary focus will be on the detailed exegesis of these texts in their original Greek. Students will analyze the literary structures, syntactical features, and theological arguments of each epistle, addressing key interpretive issues directly from the Greek. Through this rigorous engagement with the original language, the course aims to uncover the distinct contributions of these writings to New Testament theology—including themes like faith and works, suffering, false teaching, and Christian love—and to equip students for accurate interpretation and application in contemporary ministry.

Prerequisites: Hermeneutics, New Testament Introduction, (or admittance upon consent of Department Chair)

Credit Hours: 3

Status: Elective

DM701: Biblical Theology as Care of Souls

This course provides an in-depth exploration of the foundational principles and methodologies of biblical theology. Students will examine the development of biblical theology as a discipline, focusing on understanding Scripture as a unified, Christ-centered narrative of God's redemptive acts. Emphasis will be placed on tracing key theological themes (such as covenant, kingdom, temple, and mission) across the Old and New Testaments, demonstrating their organic development and culmination in Christ. The course will equip pastors to apply the insights of biblical theology to souls in need of pastoral care through preaching, teaching, and visitation.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM702: Genesis (Hebrew)

This course offers a detailed exegetical study of the book of Genesis, engaging directly with the original Hebrew text. Students will employ advanced hermeneutical principles and linguistic tools to analyze key passages, focusing on the literary structure, grammatical features, and narrative artistry of Genesis. The course will delve into its profound theological themes, including creation, the fall, covenant, sin, redemption, and the patriarchal narratives, considering their foundational significance for biblical theology. Particular attention will be given to deriving pastoral applications for contemporary ministry contexts, addressing questions of origins, human nature, and God's covenant faithfulness.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM703: The Psalms for Prayer, Preaching, and Pastoral Care (Hebrew)

This course offers an advanced exegetical and theological study of selected Psalms through direct engagement with the Hebrew text. Students will analyze the linguistic features, poetic structures, and literary forms of the Psalter, including lament, praise, thanksgiving, wisdom, and royal psalms. Attention is

given to the theological depth of the Psalms as expressions of faith before God, addressing themes such as suffering and trust, repentance and forgiveness, hope and deliverance, divine kingship, and the life of prayer. The course emphasizes the Psalms as the Church's prayer book and as a primary resource for preaching and pastoral care. Particular attention is given to the application of the Psalter faithfully within contemporary pastoral and liturgical contexts.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM704: Jonah (Hebrew)

This course involves a focused exegetical study of the book of Jonah, with close attention to the Hebrew text. Students will engage in detailed linguistic and literary analysis to understand the prophet's historical context, the book's narrative structure, and its powerful theological message. Key themes such as God's sovereignty, universal compassion, human disobedience, repentance, mission to the nations, and divine mercy will be explored in depth. The course emphasizes deriving practical applications for pastoral ministry, particularly concerning the church's mission, the pastor's own struggles with God's call, and proclaiming God's mercy in diverse pastoral settings.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM705: Isaiah and the Prophetic Word (Hebrew)

This course offers an advanced exegetical and theological study of selected passages from the book of Isaiah through direct engagement with the Hebrew text. Students will employ advanced linguistic, grammatical, and literary analysis to examine Isaiah's prophetic poetry and prose, with attention to genre, imagery, and rhetorical strategy. The course situates Isaiah within its historical and canonical contexts, exploring the prophet's proclamation of judgment and consolation, holiness and hope, and the sovereignty of God over history. Students will also examine the book's enduring significance for biblical theology and Christian proclamation. The course encourages responsible use of Isaiah's prophetic word faithfully in preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry within contemporary contexts..

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM706: Independent Study in OT Biblical Studies

This self-directed course allows Doctor of Ministry students to pursue advanced research in a specific area of Old Testament theology, exegesis, or a particular Old Testament book not covered in other specialized courses. Under the guidance of a faculty advisor, the student will develop a research proposal, conduct in-depth scholarly investigation, and produce a substantial academic paper or ministry-related project. This independent study is designed to be tailored to the student's individual interests and specific ministry needs, fostering expertise and enhancing their ability to apply Old Testament scholarship to their pastoral context.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM712: Pauline Theology and Pastoral Ministry (Greek)

This course offers an advanced exegetical and theological study of the theology of the Apostle Paul through direct engagement with the Greek text. Students will examine key theological themes such as justification and participation in Christ, law and gospel, grace and faith, union with Christ, sanctification, the church, and eschatology, while situating Paul's thought within its Jewish, Greco-Roman, and early Christian contexts. The course also engages significant contemporary debates in Pauline scholarship, including

questions raised by the New Perspective and related approaches, assessing their claims in light of the biblical text and the wider theological tradition. Emphasis is placed on integrating careful exegetical work with theological reflection and pastoral application, equipping students to interpret and proclaim Pauline theology faithfully within the life and ministry of the Church.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM713: Pastoral Epistles (Greek)

This exegetical course offers an in-depth study of the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus), with a primary focus on the Greek text. Students will examine the historical context, literary features, and theological content of these letters, paying close attention to their instructions regarding sound doctrine, church leadership and organization, pastoral care, and Christian conduct. Through detailed exegesis, the course will explore themes crucial for pastoral ministry, including qualifications for church officers, guarding the apostolic tradition, mentoring, and maintaining godly order within the congregation. The aim is to equip pastors with a deeper understanding of these epistles for effective leadership and theological instruction in their ministry settings.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM714: Hebrews and the Theology of Christ's Priesthood (Greek)

This course offers an advanced exegetical and theological study of the Epistle to the Hebrews through direct engagement with the Greek text. Students will analyze the linguistic, rhetorical, and literary features of Hebrews, with particular attention to its sustained argument concerning the person and work of Christ as high priest. The course also explores the pastoral exhortations addressed to a community under pressure. Emphasis is placed on responsible theological interpretation and pastoral reflection, equipping students to engage Hebrews faithfully in teaching, preaching, and theological discourse within contemporary ecclesial contexts.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM715: Johannine Literature (Greek)

This course offers an intensive exegetical study of the Johannine Literature—encompassing the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John (1, 2, & 3 John), and the Book of Revelation—with sustained engagement with the original Greek text. Students will explore the distinct historical settings, characteristic literary styles (including narrative, epistle, and apocalyptic), and the overarching theological unity and diversity within these profound writings. Through careful exegesis of selected passages from each work, the course will focus on prominent Johannine themes such as its unique Christology (e.g., the Logos, "I AM" statements, divine sonship), realized and future eschatology, the person and work of the Paraclete, the command to love, the nature of eternal life, and the cosmic conflict and ultimate divine triumph detailed in Revelation. The aim is to equip students to interpret these complex texts faithfully and to apply their rich theological insights effectively in pastoral ministry, preaching, and Christian discipleship.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM716: Independent Study in NT Biblical Studies

This course offers Doctor of Ministry students the opportunity for a personalized research project in a specific area of New Testament theology, exegesis, or a particular New Testament book or corpus not extensively covered in other specialized courses. Working closely with a faculty advisor, the student will

formulate a focused research topic, engage in advanced scholarly research, and produce a significant academic paper or a project directly applicable to their ministry. This independent study is designed to enhance the student's exegetical and theological skills, allowing them to deepen their expertise in an area of New Testament studies relevant to their interests and pastoral leadership.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

S101 Theological Prolegomena

This course provides an introduction to Christian Theology, exploring the foundational questions that define its nature, scope, and method. Students will explore key topics including: the fundamental nature of theology and dogmatics; the core characteristics of Lutheran Protestantism (with its material and formal principles); the methods used in theology, emphasizing Scripture and the Church's historic Confessions; and will include a survey of the history of dogmatic thought.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

S110 Apologetics

This course is an introduction to the discipline of apologetics, wherein the student learns to defend the Christian faith in view of both intellectual and moral challenges that arise in the modern world. The apologetic model used though this course is the classical one as explained in the medieval scholastics and the later Lutheran orthodox. This class covers the philosophical challenges of materialism, the historicity of the Gospel accounts, and the prevalence of relativism in the postmodern age. At the end of this class, the student should be equipped to both defend the faith and to use these tools in a practical ministry context.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

Status: Elective

S115 Law and Gospel

The distinction between the law and the gospel is at the heart of Lutheran doctrine and pastoral practice. In this class, the student will explore this theological framework for the proper distinction between these two words of God with an orientation toward the application of this teaching in practical ministry contexts. This class studies C.F.W. Walther's theses in *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* as its foundational text, and also overviews theological challenges that have been brought against the classical distinction, such as those of Karl Barth and Gerhard Forde.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

Status: Elective

S120: Theological Philosophy

This course explores the relationship between philosophy and Christian theology. Students will examine the influence of major philosophers and philosophical movements on the

development of Christian thought and practice from the early church to the present. Special attention is given to the ways in which philosophical categories and methods have shaped theological concepts, as well as the critical evaluation of philosophy in light of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. The course provides students with tools for discerning how philosophy can both serve and distort theology, and how faithful theology engages philosophical ideas for the sake of the Gospel.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

Status: Elective

S201 Doctrine I

This course is an in-depth study of the foundational elements of Christian doctrine. This course covers the topics of: the nature and authority of Scripture; the essence and attributes of God; divine providence; man and woman as both created and fallen; the nature and impact of sin; and Christ's person and work. Scriptural and philosophical foundations of these teachings are presented alongside a study of alternate perspectives on each topic. By the end of the course, the student is expected to have a clear understanding of each doctrine, along with the ability to communicate it to others.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena

Credit Hours: 3

S205 Lutheran Confessions I

This course is a study of the documents included within the 1580 Book of Concord as accepted as authoritative by Confessional Lutheran churches. This first course on the Confessions covers the following documents: the Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. There are two essential elements of this course: a presentation of the history of the controversies and political situations leading to these documents, and the doctrinal content of the Confessions. The teachings are applied to practical life and ministry in the twenty-first century.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena

Credit Hours: 3

S207 Catechesis

This course offers a comprehensive study of Martin Luther's Small Catechism and Large Catechism, which serve as foundational texts for instruction in the Christian faith within the Lutheran tradition. Key elements of this course include: an exploration of the historical context and pastoral concerns that led to the writing of the Catechisms; a detailed examination of their doctrinal content, including the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar; and a focus on developing effective methodologies for catechetical teaching and faith formation. The theological insights and pedagogical principles derived from the Catechisms are applied to practical Christian living and ministry in the twenty-first century.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena

Credit Hours: 3

S301 Doctrine II

This course continues the in-depth study of the foundational elements of Christian doctrine. This

course covers the topics of: justification by faith; the church and ministry; the sacraments; predestination; and eschatology. Scriptural and philosophical foundations of these teachings are presented alongside a study of alternate perspectives on each topic. By the end of the course, the student is expected to have a clear understanding of each doctrine, along with the ability to communicate it to others.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena and Doctrine I

Credit Hours: 3

S305 Lutheran Confessions II

This course is a study of the documents included within the 1580 Book of Concord as accepted as authoritative by Confessional Lutheran churches. This second course on the Confessions covers the following documents: the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, and the Epitome of the Formula of Concord. There are two essential elements of this course: a presentation of the history of the controversies and political situations leading to these documents, and the doctrinal content of the Confessions. The teachings are applied to practical life and ministry in the twenty-first century.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena and Confessions I, (or admittance upon consent of Department Chair)

Credit Hours: 3

S401 Christian Ethics

This course provides a framework for moral reasoning and decision-making grounded in the Christian faith. Beginning with the foundational doctrines of regeneration and sanctification, we will explore how the believer's new life in Christ shapes their ethical outlook and daily conduct. The course will introduce students to Virtue Ethics, examining the cultivation of Christ-like character as central to the moral life. Students will also engage with various competing ethical models, developing the critical tools necessary to analyze and address the complex moral challenges of contemporary society from a confessional Lutheran perspective, equipping them to lead their congregations in faithful and virtuous living.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena, Doctrine I, Doctrine 2

Credit Hours: 3

DM721: Theological Method in the Lutheran Tradition

This course provides an advanced examination of theological prolegomena within the Lutheran tradition, focusing on the sources, norms, and methods by which theology is responsibly undertaken. Students will critically engage questions of authority, including the relationship between Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, tradition, reason, and historical context, while examining how theology is ordered, argued, and applied. The course explores classical and post-Reformation Lutheran approaches to theological method, with attention to distinctions such as law and gospel, the proper use of reason in theology, and the relationship between dogmatics, exegesis, and pastoral practice. Designed for ThM-level study, the course prepares students for advanced theological research and thesis work by fostering methodological clarity, confessional coherence, and disciplined theological reasoning.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM722: Lutheran Scholastic Theology

This course offers an in-depth study of the historical development, theological methods, and enduring

significance of Lutheran Scholasticism during the post-Reformation era. Students will engage with the major figures and key texts of this period, examining the context in which Lutheran orthodoxy was articulated and defended. The course will focus on the distinctive characteristics of Lutheran scholastic methodology, its engagement with philosophical tools, its systematic elaboration of doctrine (loci method), and its profound contributions to the confessional identity and theological precision of the Lutheran church. Emphasis will be placed on understanding how these contributions continue to inform contemporary Lutheran theology and pastoral practice.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM723: The Doctrine of God – Medieval and Post-Reformation Scholastic Perspectives

This advanced seminar provides a rigorous exploration of the Christian Doctrine of God, with a particular focus on the rich theological insights developed within Medieval and Post-Reformation Scholastic traditions. Students will examine key aspects of God's nature and attributes, the doctrine of the Trinity, and divine works such as creation, providence, and predestination, as articulated by influential theologians of these eras. The course will involve critical engagement with primary and secondary sources, analyzing the philosophical and exegetical underpinnings of these scholastic formulations and assessing their contemporary relevance for pastoral ministry, theological reflection, and addressing modern challenges to Christian theology.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM724: Advanced Christology – The Person and Work of Christ in Lutheran Theology

This course undertakes a rigorous and advanced study of Christology, focusing on its systematic development and articulation within Lutheran theology. Emphasis is placed on the two natures in Christ and His threefold work (prophet, priest, and king), particularly in relation to salvation (atonement and justification), the sacraments, and their direct implications for pastoral ministry. Students will engage deeply with key Lutheran confessional statements, seminal theologians, and contemporary discussions in Christology, aiming to equip pastors with a profound understanding for preaching, teaching, and providing Christ-centered care.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM725: Ascetical and Mystical Theology

This course offers a theological examination of the ascetical and mystical traditions of the Christian Church. Students study how theologians and spiritual writers across the tradition understood the Christian life, the nature of contemplation, and the pursuit of union with God. Emphasis is placed on doctrinal analysis and historical context, enabling ministers to assess ascetical and mystical theology critically and responsibly within the framework of Lutheran doctrine.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM726: Theological Ethics for Pastoral Ministry

This course offers an advanced study of theological ethics as it relates to pastoral ministry, grounded in Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the wider catholic tradition. Students will examine foundational ethical concepts such as natural law, divine command, vocation, conscience, law and gospel, and moral formation, while engaging classical and contemporary approaches to Christian moral reasoning. Particular attention is given to ethical challenges encountered in pastoral and ecclesial contexts, including questions

of life and death, sexuality and marriage, authority and obedience, justice and mercy, and the exercise of pastoral judgment amid moral complexity. The course emphasizes careful theological analysis rather than casuistry alone, equipping students to reason ethically with confessional clarity and pastoral wisdom in the service of the Church and its care of souls.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM727: Issues in Contemporary Theology

This course examines significant theological developments, movements, and debates in modern and contemporary theology from the post-Enlightenment period to the present. Students select a particular issue or theological trajectory for focused study, engaging its historical origins, theological claims, and implications for the life of the Church. The course emphasizes critical analysis and theological discernment, equipping ministers to engage contemporary theology thoughtfully and responsibly in preaching, teaching, and ministry.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM728: Independent Study in Lutheran Dogmatics

This course provides an opportunity for Doctor of Ministry students to conduct a self-directed research project in a specialized area of Lutheran dogmatic theology under the supervision of a faculty advisor. Students will select a topic of particular interest or relevance to their ministry context, develop a research proposal, engage in extensive scholarly investigation using primary and secondary sources, and produce a substantial academic paper or ministry-focused project. This independent study is designed to foster advanced theological research skills and allow for in-depth exploration of a specific dogmatic theme, historical figure, or contemporary issue within Lutheran theology, culminating in a work that demonstrates significant scholarly engagement and pastoral application.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

CHURCH HISTORY

H101 Church History Overview

This course explores the history of the Christian church from its inception to today, by reviewing prominent movements, persons, doctrines, and institutions using both secondary and primary source materials. The course discusses the impact of society, culture, politics, and philosophy upon the church. Special emphasis is placed upon adherence to the Holy Scriptures in the faith and life of the church, in spite of facing various crises and conflicts, hierarchs and heresies.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

H102 Early Church History

This course presents the major theological events, movements, and personalities influencing the life of the Church during the first six centuries. Special attention is given to persons, institutions, cultures, and doctrine. The goal is for the student to understand the development of the early Christian Church, including orthodox and heretical doctrines, canonization of Holy Scripture, ecumenical councils, liturgical worship, and ecclesiastical polity.

Prerequisite: None.

Credit Hours: 3

H202 Medieval Church History

This course offers an exploration of Christian history from the pontificate of Gregory the Great (circa AD 590) to the eve of the Protestant Reformation (circa AD 1500). Students will be examining the rise and consolidation of papal authority, the various forms and impact of monasticism, the complex interplay between ecclesiastical and secular powers, the intellectual achievements of Scholasticism, the phenomenon of the Crusades, and the growing estrangement leading to the Great Schism. The course will also investigate popular piety, movements of dissent and early reform, and the prominent Medieval theologians. Through engagement with primary and secondary sources, students will analyze key figures, events, and theological currents and their lasting significance.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

H302 Reformation History

The purpose of this course is to acquaint the student with the philosophical and religious history of late Medieval and Reformation Europe. As foundation, students will become conversant with soteriological and epistemological views of the time as well as societal and political concerns and events. The contributions of Martin Luther receive prominent attention. Other outstanding Reformers are also studied, viz. Zwingli, Grebel, and Calvin.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

H312 Modern and Postmodern Church History

This course covers church history from the publication of Rene Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy* in 1641 to today. The focus is on theological, philosophical, and historical developments in this time period, and the church's response to such developments. Throughout this course, the student will gain an understanding of how the many changes in science, culture, and technology in the modern era relate to theological debates and movements. Key topics include: the rise of Lutheran Pietism; the challenges of modernity and the Enlightenment; the growth of missions; ecumenical dialogues; and Protestant Liberalism, along with its detractors.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

Status: Elective

H405 History and Polity of TAALC

This course provides a history of American Lutheranism, specifically focusing on the predecessor church bodies as the background for the formation of The AALC. It focuses on interactions between church bodies and theological issues during this period. Then, the polity of The AALC is examined within Lutheranism and the Church Catholic. Contemporary Lutheran issues and their influence on The AALC are also addressed.

Prerequisite: None

Prerequisites M.A.T. & M.A.R.: Church History Overview

Credit Hours: 3

H409 History of Christian Worship

This course provides a historical and theological survey of Christian worship, beginning with the Jewish antecedents to the divine liturgy, including synagogal worship, temple worship, and Jewish prayer forms. Patristic developments of the eucharist rite are traced in the eastern and western traditions. The concept of eucharistic sacrifice is examined, giving special attention to the Medieval development of the Roman sacrifice of the Mass. The course explores Luther's reformation of the Mass, and the distinctive characteristics of Lutheran sacramentology. The course concludes with an examination of various Lutheran resources and practices today.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM731: Chrysostom and Patristic Homiletics

This course examines patristic-era preaching, focusing on John Chrysostom ("the Golden-Mouthed") and other key figures by analyzing their homiletic methods, exegetical approaches, and pastoral applications from their sermons. Students will assess the lasting legacy of these homiletics for effective biblical exposition and the role of preaching in contemporary ministry.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM732: Cappadocian Fathers and Cyril of Jerusalem

This course details the significant theological and pastoral contributions of the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzus) and Cyril of Jerusalem, particularly regarding Trinitarian doctrine, catechesis, and liturgy. Through analysis of their primary works, students will understand their impact on historical theology and discern their relevance for contemporary pastoral practice.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM733: Augustine and Early Church Fathers

This advanced course examines the profound theological and pastoral contributions of Augustine of Hippo alongside other key Church Fathers (2nd-5th centuries), with an emphasis on their primary texts. Students will analyze their impact on core Christian doctrines and enduring pastoral care models, discerning their relevance for contemporary ministry.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM734: Benedict of Nursia and Monastic Spirituality

This course explores the Benedictine monastic tradition as a formative stream of Christian spirituality and theology. Centered on the Rule of Benedict and the wider monastic tradition shaped by it, the course examines themes such as prayer, obedience, humility, stability, and communal life. Students study how monastic spirituality informed theological reflection and pastoral care in the Church. The course invites ministers to engage the monastic tradition as a sustained theological and spiritual resource within the life of the Church.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM735: Bede, Bernard, and Medieval Homiletics

This course offers an advanced historical and theological study of medieval preaching through close examination of the sermons of the Venerable Bede, Bernard of Clairvaux, and other representative medieval preachers. Students will explore medieval approaches to biblical interpretation, including typology, allegory, and moral exhortation, situating these methods within the broader theological and ecclesial contexts of the Middle Ages. The course examines how Scripture was read, proclaimed, and applied within monastic and pastoral settings, with attention to the theological aims and spiritual formation fostered through preaching. By engaging primary sermon texts and their interpretive frameworks, students will gain insight into the continuity and development of Christian proclamation and its enduring significance for the Church's preaching tradition.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM736: Theologians of the Medieval Church

This course provides advanced study of the theologians and theological movements of the medieval Church. Students examine the diversity of medieval theologians, including Ansem, Lombard, and Aquinas, with attention to how theologians of the period interpreted Scripture, articulated doctrine, and addressed the life of faith. The course emphasizes careful historical and theological reading, helping students recognize both the unity and diversity of medieval theology and its enduring influence on Reformation thought.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM737: Luther and the Reformation World

This course offers intensive engagement with the theology of Martin Luther within the broader theological, ecclesial, and cultural world of the Reformation. Students undertake close reading of Luther's major writings, examining central themes such as justification, law and gospel, Scripture, sacramental theology, ecclesiology, and pastoral care. Luther is studied as a theologian shaped by the late medieval tradition and as a reformer responding to concrete pastoral and doctrinal challenges. The course equips ministers to interpret and appropriate Luther's theology thoughtfully for contemporary preaching, teaching, and ministry.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

DM738: Independent Study in Historical Theology

This self-directed D.Min. course enables students to research a specific area of historical theology (particularly focusing on early church history) relevant to their ministry, under close faculty guidance. Students will develop a proposal, conduct in-depth scholarly investigation using primary and secondary sources, and produce a substantial paper or project applying historical insights to contemporary ministry.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

P101 Pastoral Theology and Life

This course examines what it means to stand, “[I]n the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus

Christ.” The course details the practical implications of Christ-like leadership in a post-Christian world. The pastor’s personal character and habits are discussed. Methodologies of pastoral administration, goal setting, congregational participation, and scheduling are taught. Attention is given to building trust, collegial leadership, pastoral decision making, and lay leadership development. The importance of pastoral record-keeping is also discussed.

Prerequisite: Pastoral Ministry Program (M.Div degree and CLT)

Credit Hours: 3

P110 Parish Administration and Service

This course prepares lay leaders to serve faithfully within the parish by supporting the work of the pastor and strengthening congregational life. Students will explore the biblical and theological foundations of lay service, with emphasis on personal character, spiritual habits, and Christ-like leadership in a post-Christian world. Practical attention is given to parish administration, record-keeping, and working effectively with pastors, church councils, and committees. Students will also learn how to encourage volunteer participation and work alongside the pastor and church leaders. While ultimate responsibility for conflict prevention and pastoral care rests with the pastor, lay leaders are trained to offer support that promotes strengthens the congregation’s mission.

Prerequisite: Formal Christian Education (MAT degree) or Service to the Church (MAR degree) Programs

Credit Hours: 3

Status: Elective

P117 Christian Spirituality & Formation

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of Christian spirituality, designed to enrich the student's personal faith and equip them for the sacred task of spiritual guidance within the parish. The course will trace the rich and diverse history of Christian spiritual traditions, examining the classic disciplines that have sustained believers for centuries. Through this historical lens, students will learn spiritual formation, how to help others cultivate their relationship with God. Particular emphasis will be placed on developing the capacities of the pastor to serve as a spiritual director, providing a framework for accompanying others on their faith journey and fostering a vibrant spiritual life within the congregation.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

Status: Elective

P201 Pastoral Care

This course explores the practical applications of the theology of the Cross, the life of the *Seelsorger* (soul caregiver), the heart of Christ, and the difficulties of putting them into practice as an ordained servant of God. It serves as an introduction to the pastor’s duties and responsibilities as caretaker of souls. This course overviews different methodologies of pastoral counseling and teaches the student how to discern the difference between pastoral counseling and clinical counseling. The student is taught basic skills in listening, conversation, note taking, and discernment within a pastoral context, and the proper application of Law and Gospel to address the spiritual needs of the congregant. The pastor’s work in visitation is discussed in depth.

Prerequisite: Pastoral Ministry Program (M.Div & CLT); Pastoral Theology and Life

Credit Hours: 3

P203 Missions & Outreach

As Jesus delivers his Great Commission to the disciples (Matt. 28:18-20), it is the calling of the church to reach out to one's community and the larger world with the Gospel of Christ. This course develops a theology of mission as described in the book of Acts, with a view to its practical application in a congregational context. The student is equipped in methods of mission and evangelism for both a foreign and domestic context.

Prerequisite: Pastoral Theology and Life (M.Div only)

Credit Hours: 3

P205 Preaching I

This course serves as an introduction to expository preaching from a Lutheran perspective. In this course, the student learns about best practices in sermon preparation and presentation. Special attention is paid to the law and gospel dynamic as it relates to preaching, the importance of catechesis in the pulpit, and how to apply the Word of God in a practical manner to each church's unique situation. Through listening to sermons of Lutheran pastors in class, and reading classic sermons, the principles of preaching are explained as they relate to the preaching of lectionary texts. Students will also examine how preaching relates to the rest of the divine service.

Prerequisite: Pastoral Ministry Program (M.Div & CLT); Recommended: Law and Gospel

Credit Hours: 3

P210 Evangelism & Witness

As witnesses of Jesus Christ, laypeople are called to share the hope of the Gospel in word and deed (Acts 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:15). This course provides a biblical and theological foundation for evangelism, drawing on the example of the early church in the book of Acts. Emphasis is placed on practical skills for personal witness, conversational faith-sharing, and participation in congregational outreach. Students will learn how to articulate their faith clearly, respond to questions with gentleness and respect, and support the mission of the local church in reaching the community.

Prerequisite: Formal Christian Education (MAT degree) or Service to the Church (MAR degree)

Programs

Credit Hours: 3

P301 Pastoral Care in Conflict & Crisis

Building upon the foundations of P201, *Pastoral Care*, this course equips the student to offer pastoral care in the midst of conflict and crisis. Common areas of congregational conflict are addressed, including interpersonal tensions between individuals, conflict within families, and difficulties that may arise between the pastor and the congregation. In addition, the course gives focused attention to crisis ministry in times of grief, loss, and trauma, preparing the student to walk with people through seasons of suffering, death, and other life-shaping events. Throughout the course, a variety of guest teachers share insights into pastoral practice across different situations of conflict and crisis in both congregational and community settings.

Prerequisite: Pastoral Ministry Program (M.Div & CLT); Pastoral Theology and Life, Pastoral Care and Counselling

Credit Hours: 3

P305 Preaching II

Following upon the basics of preaching, this course deepens the student's understanding of the

sermon and of engaging delivery. There are three components to this course. First, the student learns alternate methods of preaching beyond the expository method. Second, the student explores occasional sermons required for different pastoral situations (funerals, weddings, baptisms, etc.). Third, the student learns creative methods to bring pastoral care through the sermon to his congregation. By the end of this course, the student should have the ability to prepare and deliver sermons for a variety of occasions.

Prerequisite: Pastoral Ministry Program (M.Div & CLT); Preaching I, Vicarage
Credit Hours: 3

P400: Vicarage (Pastoral Internship)

The Vicarage is a one-year, full-time internship (or its equivalent part-time) in which the Pastoral Ministry student engages in supervised ministry within a congregational setting. Under the guidance of an ordained pastor, the Vicar participates in the full range of pastoral responsibilities, with the exception of officiating marriages, consecrating the Sacrament of the Altar, and pronouncing Absolution. This internship provides extensive practical experience in worship leadership, preaching, visitation and pastoral care, teaching, administration, and participation in congregational life. The Vicarage is designed to integrate theological study with pastoral practice, cultivate ministerial identity, and prepare the student for the responsibilities of the Office of Holy Ministry. Successful completion requires regular evaluations by both the supervising pastor and the student.

Prerequisite: Pastoral Ministry Program. Completion of at least 18 courses in the Pastoral Ministry Program, including S101 Theological Prolegomena, S205 Lutheran Confessions I, S207 Catechesis, P101 Pastoral Theology and Life, P201 Pastoral Care, P205 Preaching I
Credit Hours: Pass/Fail

DM601: Conversational Servanthood – The Pastoral Heart in Conversation and Lifestyle

This foundational Doctor of Ministry course explores the integral relationship between servanthood, authentic conversation, and effective pastoral ministry. Students will delve into biblical and theological models of servant leadership and examine how a pastor's lifestyle and conversational practices profoundly shape their ability to provide genuine pastoral care. Emphasis is placed on cultivating the "pastoral heart" through developing skills in active listening, empathetic dialogue, and Christ-like service, enabling pastors to build trust and minister effectively within their congregations and communities.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program
Credit Hours: 3

DM602: Grief Care – Pastoral Care in Loss and Death

This course provides an advanced study of the theological principles and practical skills essential for providing effective pastoral care to individuals and communities experiencing loss, grief, and bereavement. Students will explore various models of grief, the impact of different types of loss, and the role of faith and ritual in the grieving process. Special focus will be given to ministering in situations of death, conducting funerals, and offering ongoing support to the bereaved, equipping pastors to be compassionate and competent caregivers during life's most challenging moments.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program
Credit Hours: 3

DM603: The Wounded Healer – Personal Spiritual Formation

This course invites Doctor of Ministry students to an honest exploration of their own spiritual journey and well-being as it relates to the demands of pastoral ministry. Drawing on the concept of the "wounded healer," students will examine how personal experiences of brokenness and healing can inform their

pastoral care. The course focuses on developing sustainable practices for personal spiritual growth, self-care, and resilience, enabling pastors to assess and address their own spiritual health in order to more effectively and authentically minister to others from a place of spiritual depth.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM604: Word and Sacrament – Re-Presenting the Care of Christ

This course offers a comprehensive theological and practical examination of how the ministry of Word and Sacrament serves as the central means by which pastors re-present the pastoral care of Christ to His people. Students will delve into the Lutheran understanding of the Word proclaimed and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and the Lord's Supper as primary instruments of God's grace, forgiveness, and healing. The course emphasizes not only the theological significance of these means of grace but also their thoughtful and pastorally sensitive application in diverse ministry contexts to nurture the spiritual lives of congregants.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM605: Seelsorger Project – Demonstration of Pastoral Care in Ministry

This significant practical course requires the Doctor of Ministry student to design, implement, and document a substantial project demonstrating the effective application of Seelsorge (the pastoral care and cure of souls) within their own ministry context. Building on the principles learned in Level 1 coursework, students will identify a specific pastoral care need or opportunity, develop a biblically and theologically informed approach, carry out the ministry intervention, and provide thorough documentation and reflection on the process and outcomes. This project serves as a key demonstration of the student's ability to integrate theory and practice in providing authentic pastoral care.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 6

DM741: The History and Theology of the Care of Souls

This course offers an advanced historical and theological examination of the Christian tradition of the care and cure of souls (*cura animarum*), tracing its development from Scripture through the patristic, medieval, Reformation, and modern periods. Students will explore how pastoral care has been understood and practiced as a theological task shaped by the proclamation of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the exercise of spiritual wisdom. Particular attention is given to the emergence of the *Seelsorger* as a theological vocation, examining pastoral models drawn from figures such as the Church Fathers, monastic writers, Reformers, and Lutheran orthodox theologians. The course emphasizes theological reflection on pastoral care rather than technique alone, equipping students to situate contemporary pastoral practice within the Church's historic understanding of the care of souls.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM742: Teaching as Seelsorger

This course explores the vital role of teaching within pastoral ministry, specifically examining how the identity and calling of a Seelsorger (pastoral caregiver) informs and shapes Christian education. Students will develop a robust theology of teaching that integrates pastoral care with pedagogical principles. The course focuses on practical methods for teaching diverse age groups in various congregational settings (e.g., Bible studies, new member classes, confirmation), emphasizing how to communicate Christian truth in a way that nurtures faith, addresses spiritual needs, and promotes holistic discipleship.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM743: Preaching as Seelsorger

This advanced homiletics course emphasizes the deep integration of pastoral care (Seelsorge) into the art and practice of preaching. Students will explore how the sermon can be a primary vehicle for addressing the diverse spiritual, emotional, and existential needs of the congregation. The course focuses on developing skills in exegeting both the biblical text and the congregation, crafting sermons that are not only biblically faithful and theologically sound but also pastorally sensitive, relevant, and healing, effectively ministering God's Word to the hearts of listeners.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM744: The Divine Office: History, Theology, and Pastoral Practice

This course offers advanced study of the Divine Office as the Church's daily prayer, tracing its development from biblical and patristic origins through medieval, Reformation, and the liturgical renewal and reforms of the twentieth century. Students examine the theological foundations of the Office, its structure and purpose, and the principles guiding its contemporary shape and use. The course critically engages the continuity and change evident in modern revisions of the Office and considers their theological and pastoral implications. Emphasis is placed on understanding, evaluating, and leading the Church's prayer in ways that are faithful to the tradition and responsive to contemporary ecclesial contexts.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM745: Advanced Studies in Liturgical Theology and Practice

This course provides an opportunity for advanced, focused study in liturgical theology and practice. In consultation with the instructor, students select a specific area of Christian worship for sustained exploration, such as Jewish antecedents to Christian Worship, Eucharistic Prayers, ritual action, liturgical history, or pastoral leadership in worship. The course emphasizes theological depth, critical engagement with sources, and careful reflection on practice. The theological and historical inquiry is integrated within the life and worship of the Church.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM746: Spiritual Formation and Disciplines in Ministry

This course offers an advanced study of Christian spiritual formation, exploring both classical and contemporary understandings and practices of spiritual disciplines. Students will examine the biblical and theological foundations for various disciplines (such as prayer, meditation, fasting, Scripture study, solitude, and community), critically evaluating their historical development and modern expressions. The primary focus is on how these disciplines can be intentionally and meaningfully implemented to foster deep personal spiritual growth for the pastor and to cultivate a vibrant spiritual life within the congregation.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM747: Independent Study in Practical Ministry

This self-directed course allows Doctor of Ministry students to pursue advanced study and develop specialized expertise in a specific area of practical ministry relevant to their current or anticipated service.

Working closely with a faculty advisor, the student will design a personalized learning plan, which may include in-depth research, development of new ministry initiatives, or advanced skill acquisition in areas such as teaching, preaching, leadership, discipleship, or pastoral counseling. The culmination will be a substantial project or paper demonstrating mastery and innovative application in the chosen area.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM754: Independent Interdisciplinary Study

This advanced course provides Doctor of Ministry students with the opportunity to engage in a personalized research project that thoughtfully integrates knowledge, methods, and insights from multiple theological disciplines (e.g., biblical studies, systematic theology, historical theology, practical ministry). In collaboration with a faculty advisor, students will identify a specific ministry challenge, question, or opportunity and design a unique interdisciplinary approach to address it. The goal is to produce a scholarly paper or ministry project that demonstrates sophisticated theological integration and offers innovative solutions or perspectives for contemporary ministry.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM801: Project Proposal – Annotated Outline and Bibliography

This crucial course guides Doctor of Ministry students through the process of developing a comprehensive and academically sound proposal for their Final Ministry Project. Students will learn to define a specific ministry problem or area of research, formulate a clear thesis or project aim, construct a detailed outline, and compile an extensive annotated bibliography of relevant scholarly and practical resources. The completed proposal must be approved by the student's appointed Project Committee before proceeding to the final project.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program

Credit Hours: 3

DM802: Final Project – Research, Application, and Compilation

This course represents the capstone experience of the Doctor of Ministry program, in which the student executes the research and ministry application outlined in their approved project proposal. Students will engage in rigorous research, apply theoretical knowledge to their specific ministry context, and compile their findings and reflections into a comprehensive final project (typically 80-100 pages). This project must demonstrate the student's ability to integrate advanced theological understanding with practical ministry skills, specifically applying the principles of Seelsorger (pastoral care) to their chosen area of focus.

Prerequisite: Doctoral Program; Approved Project Proposal

Credit Hours: 9

DM803: Project Defense before Project Committee

In this culminating course, the Doctor of Ministry student will formally present and defend their completed Final Project before their appointed Project Committee, comprised of faculty members. The defense provides an opportunity for the student to articulate the project's purpose, methodology, findings, and contribution to ministry. Successful defense of the project demonstrates the student's mastery of their chosen subject, their capacity for advanced theological reflection and research, and their readiness to make a significant contribution to pastoral practice.

Prerequisite: Finished Project

Credit Hours: 3

OTHER

TH501: Thesis Research and Writing

This course represents the capstone experience for the Master of Arts in Religion and the Master of Arts in Theology degrees. Under faculty supervision, students will research, write, and develop a thesis (typically 50–70 pages) that demonstrates their ability to integrate advanced theological understanding with interdisciplinary analysis. The thesis must employ an interdisciplinary method, moving from the identification of a theological or research problem, through historical and biblical study, systematic formulation, apologetic engagement, and application to life and ministry. Students are expected to demonstrate rigorous academic research skills, exegetical competence, and constructive theological reflection in conversation with the Lutheran Confessions and the wider Christian tradition.

Prerequisite: Formal Christian Education (MAT degree) or Service to the Church (MAR degree) Programs
Credit Hours: 3

TH502: Thesis Defense before Committee

In this culminating course, Master of Arts students will formally present and defend their completed thesis before an appointed Thesis Committee, composed of faculty members. The defense provides the student with the opportunity to articulate the thesis's purpose, methodology, argument, and contribution to theology and ministry. Successful defense demonstrates the student's competence in advanced theological research, their ability to engage critically with alternative perspectives, and their readiness to make a meaningful contribution to the church and academy.

Prerequisite: TH501. Formal Christian Education (MAT degree) or Service to the Church (MAR degree) Programs
Credit Hours: 3

TH748: Theological Writing and Argumentation

This course develops advanced skills in theological writing and scholarly argumentation appropriate to post-graduate theological study. Students will refine their ability to construct clear, coherent, and persuasive theological arguments grounded in careful engagement with primary sources and critical interaction with secondary literature. Emphasis is placed on thesis formulation, analytical structure, logical coherence, and appropriate academic style, with attention to the conventions of theological scholarship and documentation. The course prepares students for sustained research writing by cultivating precision of language, disciplined reasoning, and the ability to articulate complex theological claims with clarity and rigor.

Prerequisite: None
Credit Hours: 3

TH749: Advanced Theological Research

This course provides advanced training in theological research methods, preparing students for independent scholarly inquiry and thesis-level work. Students will examine research design, source evaluation, and methodological approaches across biblical, historical, systematic, and practical theology. Particular attention is given to the identification and critical use of primary sources, engagement with current scholarly debates, and the responsible integration of historical and theological contexts. The course equips students with the tools necessary to formulate viable research questions, construct annotated bibliographies, and conduct sustained theological investigation with academic integrity and methodological clarity.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

TH811: Thesis Proposal – Annotated Outline and Bibliography

This course guides Master of Theology students through the development of a formally structured and academically rigorous thesis proposal. Students will identify a focused research question within their chosen field of specialization, articulate a clear thesis statement, and construct a detailed outline demonstrating the scope, argument, and methodological approach of the proposed thesis. Emphasis is placed on identifying and critically evaluating primary and secondary sources, resulting in a substantial annotated bibliography that situates the proposed research within current scholarly discourse. Approval of the thesis proposal by the student's Thesis Committee is required before proceeding to thesis research and writing.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 2

TH812: Thesis Research and Writing

This course constitutes the primary research and writing phase of the Master of Theology thesis. Under faculty supervision, students conduct sustained theological research appropriate to advanced post-graduate study, engaging primary sources, historical contexts, and contemporary scholarship relevant to their research question. Students will develop a coherent and well-supported academic argument, demonstrating methodological competence, analytical depth, and clarity of expression. The completed thesis represents a substantial work of theological scholarship within the student's area of specialization.

Prerequisite: Approved Thesis Proposal

Credit Hours: 3

TH813: Thesis Defense before Thesis Committee

In this culminating course, the Master of Theology student formally presents and defends the completed thesis before an appointed Thesis Committee. The defense provides an opportunity for the student to articulate the thesis's research question, methodology, argument, and conclusions, and to respond to critical questions from faculty examiners. Successful completion of the defense confirms the academic integrity, coherence, and scholarly contribution of the thesis and constitutes the final requirement for the ThM degree.

Prerequisite: Completion of Thesis Research and Writing

Credit Hours: 1