Introduction

The Master of Arts in Theology is a two-year program that offers opportunity for the development of core knowledge and skills in the theological disciplines (systematic or historical theology, church history, sacred texts, liturgy, pastoral theology, religious ethics) from a Christian or a non-Christian perspective. At the core of the degree stands the development of research skills as evidenced in written coursework and particularly in the preparation of a thesis. Excellent library facilities are available both at Western and at its Affiliated Colleges, which maintain substantial collections in the Christian tradition in particular, as well as in Western Religion generally, and in closely cognate areas such as history and philosophy. Students in the MA in Theology program can expect to have high levels of personal contact with instructors, fellow students, and thesis supervisors.

Admissions

Applicants to the program must possess one of the following:

- a four-year degree in Theology from an accredited institution with a minimum average of 75% (or the equivalent in Religious Studies, where normally the applicant's studies should have included a major in Western Religion);
- a Bachelor's degree in an allied subject (e.g., Classics, History, English, Philosophy), followed minimally by the equivalent of twelve half courses (6.0 course load) in the Master of Theological Studies with a minimum average of 78%; or
- a Master of Divinity or Master of Theological Studies degree with a minimum average of 75% in the last two years of study.

Applications from individuals intending a focus on Islamic Studies or another non-Christian area will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Highly-motivated students wishing to use M.T.S. or M.Div. level study for admissions purposes are advised that it is possible to take a combined M.T.S.-MA or M.Div.-M.A. program, whereby both degrees may be taken over an accelerated period of approximately three (M.T.S.-M.A.) or four (MDiv.-M.A.) years of full-time study, or the equivalent in part-time study. In either case, a minimum of twelve half courses must be completed in the M.T.S. or M.Div. program prior to admission, with a minimum average of 78%. Students admitted to the joint degree program are given a credit of three half courses in the M.T.S. or M.Div. program

In exceptional cases, the program may also choose to admit students who already have an earned Graduate degree in an allied subject, though only in cases where research interests allow for a natural progression from the earlier program to the new. In such cases, however, a student will normally be required to Audit specified M.Div./M.T.S. courses during the first year of study.

In cases of admission to the program on the basis of a previous Graduate degree earned in an allied subject, admission is probationary, with continued registration being normally contingent on attaining a minimum average of 78% in the first Term of study. Probationary admission may also be available to students in other cases, e.g., where a student's academic record in Theology or Religious Studies (Western Religion) is outstanding, but the degree is not from an accredited institution.

Demonstration of proficiency in English is required of applicants whose first language in not English, by means of either the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or other test score for English proficiency. A waiver on this requirement may be granted if the applicant studied in an English- speaking country for at least two years (as determined by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Minimal acceptable TOEFL or similar test scores are those set by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in the Graduate Calendar, Section 2.0.1.

The program will normally admit students wishing to begin their studies in September, and only exceptionally in January.

Degree Regulations

The Master of Arts in Theology can be taken by full-time study over a period of not less than six Terms, or by part-time study over a period of not less than nine Terms. The maximum period of study available is normally nine Terms for full-time students and twelve Terms for part-time students.

1. MA students are required to complete five half courses at Graduate level in Theology, the degree's language requirement, Theology 9513A/B/L: Research Methodology, and a 25,000 word thesis. Normally, a maximum of two half courses may be taken as Independent Focus Courses.

2. Full-time students normally complete in the first year of study: three Graduate level half courses, the required course Theology 9513A/B/L: Research Methodology, and the language requirement; and in the second year of study: two Graduate level half courses plus the thesis. Some variation in degree pattern is, however, possible in cases where personal circumstances warrant.

3. Part-time students normally complete one half-course per Term, or the equivalent, as required to complete the degree within the minimum nine Terms of study available, along with a language course, the required course Theology 9513A/B/L: Research Methodology, and the thesis. The particular pattern by which course requirements are fulfilled is flexible, but students must complete Theology 9513A/B/L within the first two years of study, and will

normally complete all other course requirements by approximately the end of the second year of part-time study.

4. Students in a joint M.Div.-M.A. or M.T.S.-M.A. are registered in the program in which they are full-time. Full-time M.A. students in a joint program should be aware that they will be charged additional tuition for any M.Div. or M.T.S. courses that they take but may apply for Financial Aid from the Faculty of Theology for up to 50% of the cost of these courses.

5. The degree's minimum language requirement can be satisfied by attaining a Pass in any university-level half course offered either at Western or at an equivalent, accredited academic centre, in an ancient or modern language relevant to their theological research, as approved by the program Chair in consultation with the Advisor. Such courses normally include: Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Greek, Classical Arabic, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian or Latin; or German, French, or Spanish — though other ancient or modern languages may be substituted in the case of students with specialist research goals for which an alternative language would be more appropriate. In addition to this minimum requirement, students should note the following:

    a. If possible, in modern languages a student should complete the equivalent of a full undergraduate level course numbered 1900-4999. Alternatively, a course offered specifically in reading a language for research purposes (e.g., Western's Reading German) is especially appropriate, as a single such course can ordinarily bring a student up to the equivalent of *second* year reading level.

    b. In exceptional cases, and with the approval of the program Chair, a language examination, intended to demonstrate a reading knowledge of the chosen language and consisting of a translation exercise, can be substituted for the requirement to pass a half course in a chosen language. Such an exercise will normally consist of a short passage translated under examination conditions, leading to a Pass/Fail grade.

    c. Students are in all cases advised to complete the language requirement in their first year of full-time study, or by the end of their second year of part-time study, as the language requirement must be completed before submission of the thesis.

6. In addition to fulfilling the language requirement and completing Theology 9513A/B/L: Research Methodology, students must complete a further five half courses, comprising at least two half courses from Group A (the breadth requirement) and at least two half courses from Group B (the focus requirement). Students may choose the remaining half course from either Group A or Group B courses.

    a. **Group A**

        i. Theology 9510A/B-9519A/B
        ii. One Graduate course in another university discipline at Western, at the recommendation of the student's Advisor or Supervisor, and subject to the approval of the program Chair and of the Instructor and Department concerned. Students who take a full (1.0) Graduate course in another discipline will be credited with no more that one half course (0.5) towards the breadth requirement.

b. **Group B**

      i. Theology 9500-9509A/B: Special Topics in Theology

      ii. Theology 9520A/B-9590A/B: Seminar in Theology

      iii. One Graduate course in a closely cognate discipline at Western (e.g., for a student proposing to concentrate in New Testament, a relevant course in Classical Studies), at the recommendation of the student's Advisor or Supervisor, and subject to the approval of the program Chair and of the Instructor and Department concerned. Students who take a full (1.0) Graduate course in another discipline will be credited with no more that one half course (0.5) towards the concentration requirement.

c. At the recommendation of the Advisor or Supervisor, and with the approval of the program Chair, a student may substitute for half courses listed in either Group A and/or Group B, up to two half courses, or the equivalent, taken at Graduate level in either Theology or Religious Studies in another institution under a formal affiliation program or governing agreement (i.e., courses taken at the Toronto School of Theology, courses taken under the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student program, or other courses taken on University-sponsored national or international exchanges). Students are advised that such courses should be approved for these purposes in advance, as retrospective approval cannot be guaranteed. All such approval is subject to the Graduate Regulations of the University *Calendar*, Section 7: "Graduate Visitor and Exchange Programs."

d. With the permission of the program Chair and of the Instructor or Instructors concerned, a student may substitute for no more than *one* of the Graduate half courses in the concentration requirement any one of the half courses offered at 5200-level or above in a UWO/Affiliates based MDiv/MTS program in a single discipline (e.g., New Testament, in cases where a student needs to develop better disciplinary competence). Students should note that any such 5200-level half course must be taught by a Graduate program member, and that workload expectations can be expected to be roughly equivalent to those in a Graduate level half course (e.g., additional reading and/or essay work may be required).

7. An Advisor will be appointed by the program Chair for each student on admission to the program, based on early indications of research interest for the thesis. The expectation is that the student will be able to seek advice from the Advisor, explore concrete possibilities for research, and, in due course and if necessary, approach another member of the program in order to ask whether he or she would have an interest in supervising the work envisioned. The Supervisor, as identified by the student and with the agreement of the individual and the program Chair, is appointed by the Graduate Steering Committee upon the successful defence of the Thesis Proposal.

8. From May to August of the first year of full-time study (including for students admitted to the program in January), or of the second year of part-time study at the latest, a student is expected to produce a formal research proposal for the thesis, following the approved template (available from the program Chair). The Thesis Proposal will comprise

approximately 15 pages containing: 1) a draft statement of the topic and of the methodological approach to be taken to it; 2) a draft outline; 3) a preliminary bibliography of approximately 5 pages. This proposal should be reviewed, revised, and approved by the proposed Supervisor before it is submitted to the Graduate Steering Committee for consideration.

9. The Graduate Steering Committee will examine the Thesis Proposal and either approve it or recommend revisions. At the same time, the student will be assigned a thesis Supervisory Committee consisting of the Supervisor and at least one other member of the program.

10. Thesis requirements

    a. Students must, in addition to the requisite courses prescribed under the regulations, complete a thesis of no more than 25,000 words (100 pp.), and successfully defend it in an oral examination before a University Examination Board, in accordance with SGPS regulations governing a Master's thesis.

    b. Progress on the thesis, given coursework requirements and the varied personal circumstances of students, will be subject to the discretion of the student, in consultation with the Supervisor, during the student's second year of full-time study, or the third year of part-time study. As a general guideline, however, full-time students should aim to complete all courses so as to allow for two Terms to be devoted exclusively to completion, examination and correction of the thesis, and part-time students should similarly allow for about three Terms to be devoted exclusively to completion, examination and correction of the thesis.

    c. Full procedures and expectations governing submission, format and examination of the thesis can be found in the *Thesis Regulation Guide* and associated documentation found on the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website, and in the Graduate Regulations of the University *Calendar*. Students should be aware that strict timelines for the submission and examination of the thesis are set by SGPS and are encouraged to be in communication with the program Chair early in the term in which they hope to finish.

    d. The preferred format for citations and bibliography for the thesis is the Chicago (Turabian) Notes/ Bibliography style.

11. Student progress is reviewed informally at each meeting of the Graduate Steering Committee and formally, on an annual basis in March and April, through the SGPS Pathfinder Progress Reporting System.

12. Students in a combined M.Div.-M.A. or M.T.S.-M.A. program may apply to graduate from the M.Div. or M.T.S. once they have completed three half courses in the M.A.

Financial Support

Upon entry into the program, full-time students without OGS or SSHRC funding will receive a bursary of $2,000, which can be renewed for the six terms of the program. Part-time students will receive a bursary of $500, which can be renewed for the nine terms of the program. A maximum of $12,000 in total bursary funding is available to an individual student during the program, regardless of full- or part-time status. If a student moves from part-time to full-time status during the program, funding will not be awarded beyond the ninth term. If a student receives OGS or SSHRC funding during the program, the bursary will be discontinued.

In addition, students may apply to be Graduate Assistants (GA) at a rate of $17/hour for a maximum of 10 hours per week each term. Assignments of Graduate Student Assistants will be made at the beginning of each year.

Following the policies stated by SGPS, GAs serve as a "condition of receiving financial assistance." The workload expectations placed upon them may include "marking of examination papers, demonstration of work, or research as a member of the staff of a university" At no point will Graduate Student Assistants fill any of the roles reserved for Graduate Teaching Assistants, such as giving lectures or leading seminars.

Learning Community

Room 320B in the Administration Wing of Huron University College is provided for use as a Graduate Student Study Room. Students may use this room to store personal items, to study, and to meet informally.

Normally, on an annual basis, there will be a special event focussed on student and faculty research. Presentations may include summaries of recently approved theses, outstanding work completed in courses, and papers read at academic conferences.

Students are expected to participate in and to attend all academic lectures and events in the Faculty of Theology.

Administration of the Program

The MA Theology program is administered by the Graduate Steering Committee, a subcommittee of the Faculty of Theology Committee. On behalf of the FTC, the GSC oversees issues pertaining to faculty workload, student supervision and funding, and the maintenance of a community of research and learning. The GSC is chaired by the program Chair, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the program. Decisions made by the GSC take the form of recommendations and reports that are then passed at meetings of the FTC.

Membership in the GSC is composed of all full-time members of the Faculty of Theology who have been approved by SGPS to teach and supervise research within the MA program as well as one member of the program from each participating institution, selected by that institution. The Dean of Theology is a member *ex officio*.