MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY AND SOCIETY

This program is in moratorium effective Fall 2014. The Department of Theology and Religious Studies is, therefore, not considering applications or admission to the program during this period.

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Program Description

The Master of Arts in Theology and Society is an academically-oriented thirty-six credit curriculum which aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to interrelate with the Catholic tradition and the issues and concerns of contemporary society. This program is designed especially, but not exclusively, for students who are interested in informing their professional or personal activity in the church or world through the Christian, particularly Catholic, tradition and in turn, enriching that tradition through their reflection and living. This program will, therefore, appeal to those who serve in professional or volunteer capacities in local parishes or congregations, those who work in religiously-affiliated school systems as teachers or administrators, or persons involved in a variety of careers that could be enhanced by greater familiarity with theological and ethical studies.

The mission of SJU to "foster a lived awareness of the challenging and mutually enriching interaction between Christian faith and diverse contemporary culture" is the reason for and the guiding principle of the M.A. In keeping with SJU’s Jesuit character, the program aims to prepare "men and women with and for others" by integrating the study of theology with contemporary issues in and features of American and global society. As a curriculum in service to the church and the world, the program puts into practice Pope John Paul II’s understanding of the specific mission of Catholic universities:

By its very nature, a University develops culture through its research, helps to transmit the local culture to each succeeding generation through its teaching, and assists cultural activities through its educational services. It is open to all human experience and is ready to dialogue with and learn from any culture. A Catholic University shares in this, offering the rich experience of the Church’s own culture. In addition, a Catholic University, aware that human culture is open to Revelation and transcendence, is also a primary and privileged place for a fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae, Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities (1990), B.

The Master of Arts in Theology and Society offers an integrative approach to the study of both the content and method of the various theological disciplines as well as theology’s necessary engagement with society and culture. All courses in the program will be designed to foster an interdisciplinary grasp of the study of theology, whatever their primary discipline and focus. At the same time, the courses will explicitly relate their theological activities to the twenty-first century United States and global contexts. In other words, the integrative design of the program is both “intrinsic” and “extrinsic”. That is, each individual course (whether in biblical studies, systematics, historical theology, ethics, or interreligious relations) will consciously demonstrate its relationship to the content and methods of the other disciplines (intrinsic integration), and all courses will in varying degrees relate their subjects to issues in today’s society and culture (extrinsic integration). It is, in part, this integrative approach that differentiates this degree from other regional programs. It also allows students to enter into the program at any point in the proposed rotation of courses.

Admission Requirements

Students who apply to the M.A. in Theology and Society will be required to submit:

• A completed Saint Joseph’s University graduate application.
• Official sealed transcript(s) of undergraduate/graduate coursework with a G.P.A. of 3.0 (on a scale of 4) from an accredited institution of higher education.
• Personal statement – a letter of intention outlining the candidate’s professional goals and educational objectives in pursuing the Master of Arts in Theology and Society.
• Two letters of recommendation.
• A current resume or curriculum vitae.[Correct website to reflect this spelling.
• $35 application fee—waived if applicant attended a Graduate Studies Open House or is an SJU graduate.
• Requirements for international students and regarding English proficiency may be found at: http://www.sju.edu/admissions/graduate/applicationinstr.html.

Students will also be expected to be familiar with basic principles and methods of biblical, theological, and ethical studies. This may be demonstrated in the following ways:

• Undergraduate coursework
• Undergraduate-level study in non-credit programs such as diocesan ministerial certification programs. Course descriptions and syllabi should be submitted.
• Directed reading and assessment.

Students with an undergraduate GPA below 3.0 or no discernible theological preparation for coursework may be admitted on a provisional basis.

Note: The Master of Arts in Theology and Society program is a cohort-based program. This program does not offer new cohort starts each semester. Students admitted to the program will be added to a cohort wait list. When the start list reaches 10 admitted students, the program director will notify accepted students of the next cohort start.

Learning Goals and Objectives for the M. A. in Theology and Society

Goal 1: Students will be well-informed in the classic areas of Catholic Christianity: biblical studies, church history, doctrine, ethics, and interreligious dialogue.

Objective 1.1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of key concepts in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible.

Objective 1.2: Students will demonstrate knowledge of key aspects of the New Testament.

Objective 1.3: Students will demonstrate knowledge of at least one major period in church history.
Objective 1.4: Students will demonstrate knowledge of key issues in one of the following two doctrines: Doctrine of God or Christology.

Objective 1.5: Students will demonstrate knowledge of key issues in Theological Anthropology.

Objective 1.6: Students will demonstrate knowledge of key issues in one of the following two doctrines: Ecclesiology or Sacraments.

Objective 1.7: Students will demonstrate knowledge of key principles in Christian social ethics.

Objective 1.8: Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in appropriate dialogue between Christianity and at least one additional major religious tradition: Judaism, Islam, or Hinduism, Chinese religion.

Goal 2: Students will interrelate Catholic tradition and contemporary culture and/or society.

Objective 2.1: Students will identify theological questions arising from particular cultural arenas and/or social situations.

Objective 2.2: Students will articulate social and/or cultural implications of their studies in bible, history, doctrine, ethics and interreligious dialogue.

Objective 2.3: Students will reflect theologically on a situation arising from their current or prospective paid or volunteer work.

Goal 3: Students will advance in the Jesuit tradition of “being men and women for others.”

Objective 3.1: Students will demonstrate the use of theology to interpret and act in relation to the needs of others in the larger society.

Objective 3.2: Students will identify ways in which the needs of others in society challenge and/or transform some theological traditions.

Undergraduate Student Enrollment

Undergraduates who are juniors or seniors may participate in these graduate classes. They must have the permission of the department chair and will complete level-appropriate course requirements and assessments that differ from those assigned to graduate students. The percentage of undergraduate students in a graduate course will not exceed 30%. Undergraduates must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Preference will be given in descending order to:

- Undergraduate theology or religious studies majors
- Undergraduate theology or religious studies double majors.
- Undergraduate theology or religious studies minors.
- Undergraduate honors students.
- Students whose lab requirements or student teaching requirements make taking courses during the day difficult.

Students earn 36-credits by participating in 12 courses according to the following rubric:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biblical Studies: 2 courses (1 course in each Testament)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systematic Theology: 3 courses (1 in each of 3 areas: God, Theological Anthropology, and Ecclesiology and Sacraments)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical Theology: 1 course</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christian Ethics: 3 courses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interreligious Relations: 1 course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electives: 2 courses</td>
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Full-time students will be taking two courses per term. Courses will be offered during Fall, Spring, and Summer I terms and will generally meet from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on the SJU campus. We expect, however, that some students will attend part time, taking one course per term. Courses will be offered in such a sequence that students will be able to finish their programs in the minimum possible time, no matter at which point in the sequence they matriculate. Students can complete their distributional requirements in 6 terms (2 years) by taking 2 courses per term in their first 6 terms. Students can also complete their distributional requirements in 12 terms (4 years) by taking 1 course per term.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>SJU 1</th>
<th>SJU 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 1 (Fall)</td>
<td>Bible (NT)</td>
<td>Interreligious Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 2 (Spring)</td>
<td>Systematics (God)</td>
<td>History</td>
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