Courses of Study

Master in Divinity

Total hours required: 79

The Master in Divinity degree is the classic professional degree for ministry. The M.Div. degree combines a commitment to the study of the basic theological and pastoral disciplines, embodied in the 79 hours of degree requirements, with a commitment to flexibility in how students shape their programs. With particular focus on the preparation of persons for ordained ministry, the M.Div. program also provides professional education for those preparing for non-ordained ministry. For persons seeking ordination, consultation with faculty and with dioceses about diocesan vision and requirements — and prayerful reflection on needs and goals — help students shape a program that will prepare them well for ordained ministry. For those seeking the degree for professional education, the faculty provides a rich resource for advising and support. Students enter the M.Div. programs as Juniors (first year), continue through the Middler year (second year) and complete their work in the Senior or third year of study.

Entering students are required to participate in the August term, which combines intensive study of a biblical language (Hebrew or Greek), an introduction to seminary education and seminary writing (The Art of Learning), and orientation to life in the Seminary community. The required 3 credit hours of a biblical language are completed through a combination of classwork in the August Term and the following semester. First-year students are also required to take at least one of the required introductory sequences in scripture, i.e., OTS 511, 512, and 513 or NTS 501, 502, and 503.

Students who enter the program with prior academic work in one or more of the required areas of study are encouraged to apply to the Office of Academic Administration and Student Life for assessment and possible permission to fulfill the requirement by other means than the standard introductory course.

Requirements for the Master in Divinity Degree:

- Greek or Hebrew: 3 credit hours fulfilled by taking LAN 501 & 502 or LAN 511 & 512 in the August Term and the first quarter of the fall semester.
- Old Testament: 4.5 credit hours, fulfilled by taking OTS 511, 512, and 513
- New Testament: 4.5 credit hours, fulfilled by taking NTS 501, 502, and NTS 503
- Church History: 4.5 credit hours, fulfilled by taking CHT 501, 502, and 503
- Systematic Theology: 6 credit hours, fulfilled by taking STH 501 and STH 510.
- Christian Ethics: 3 credit hours fulfilled by taking ETH 501
- Homiletics: 4.5 credit hours, fulfilled by taking HOM 501 (3 credits), and one more homiletics course (1.5 credit hours).
- Studies in Christian Worship: 8.0 credit hours, fulfilled by taking CTS 410, LTG 401, MUS 501 and either MUS 512 or 513, and LTG 501 and 502.
- Christian Education: 3 credit hours, fulfilled by taking courses in CED
- Global Christianity-Mission and World Religions: 3 credit hours fulfilled by taking courses in GCM.
- Theology and Practice of Ministry: 4.5 credit hours, fulfilled by taking TPM 501 and 601.
- Field Education: 9 credit hours, fulfilled in one of the following ways:
  1. Three semesters of Field Education in one parish site.
  2. Two semesters of Field Education plus a four-week intensive, all in one parish site.
  3. Two semesters of Field Education in one parish site, plus either a four-week intensive or a one-semester placement in an institutional site.
  4. Two semesters of Field Education in one parish site, plus either two semesters in a different
parish site, or an eight-week intensive in a different parish site.

5. With the permission of the Vice President for Academic Affairs or the Associate Dean of Students in consultation with the Director of Field Education, students who take both biblical languages (6 credit hours of each language) may apply for an exemption from 3 credit hours of field education, if a request is made by April 1 of the Spring Semester preceding the year of the exemption. In addition, if the student is a middler, the exemption is contingent upon satisfactory completion of 6 credit hours of Field Education and Colloquy.

Students must complete courses offered in the January Term totaling at least 4.5 credit hours. Credit hours earned in a second August Term will count toward this requirement. An approved not-for-credit immersion experience may exempt students from a portion of the January term requirement. The credit hours must then be made up during the year or in another August or January term.

Further electives, making up a total of 79 credit hours, are required for the degree.

One course, of at least 2.0 credit hours, must be taken at another school in the Washington Theological Consortium.

Two years of full-time residence, in the final two years at VTS, is required for the M.Div. degree. Full-time residence means taking at least 12.0 credit hours each semester, and attending chapel and lunch daily.

A grade point average of at least 2.0 is required.

The degree can be completed in a maximum of seven years.

Please see the VTS catalogue for additional information and requirements.