

FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

ACADEMIC POLICIES



August 2008

FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Academic Policies

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INTRODUCTION

These *Academic Policies* supplement the Franciscan School of Theology [catalog](#), which is the primary source for information about academic policies. The policies were developed from the norms and regulations of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Western Association of Colleges (WASC), the two agencies that accredit FST. Students will be promptly informed of any changes to published policies.

Degree Programs

The Franciscan School of Theology offers a variety of degree programs to serve the ministerial and academic needs of our students. For specific information about the scope and requirements of these degree programs, consult the current FST catalog.

- **Master of Arts in Ministry for a Multicultural Church (MAMC).** The MAMC is a two-year professional degree that prepares students for professional ministry in the multicultural church of today. The overall aim of this degree is both to establish the appropriate theological foundation for ministry and to help students develop skills that will enable them to serve and learn from diverse cultural communities of faith within the Roman Catholic Church.
- **Master of Theological Studies (MTS).** The MTS is a two-year academic degree providing a breadth of theological understanding for general education purposes. One major function of this degree is to strengthen the religious basis for the student's life or work in a secular career or in church ministry.
- **Master of Divinity (MDiv).** The MDiv is a four-year program geared primarily as preparation for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church.
- **Master of Arts (MA).** The MA is a two year research-oriented academic degree offered jointly by FST and the GTU in preparation for teaching and doctoral studies.

Special Students

The status of special student is assigned to those students who want to study at FST, but who are not interested in pursuing a degree.

Doctoral Students

Ph.D. and Th.D. degrees are offered by the GTU. Students in these programs may affiliate with the FST community to take advantage of its resources.

Academic Advising

Upon admission to FST, you are assigned a faculty advisor to assist you in selecting courses that

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fulfill the requirements of your degree program, and to provide other academic consultation. Advisors are chosen with your degree program and educational goals in mind.

ADMISSIONS

Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Requirements

FST adheres to the requirements regarding admission to post-baccalaureate degree programs published in *Degree Program Standard M.1* by the Association of Theological Schools of the United States and Canada, *ATS Bulletin 46, Part 1, 2005*, specifically:

- **Admission of Students with Baccalaureate Degree.** A baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or building membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada, or the educational equivalent; evidence of the commitment and qualities desired for pastoral leadership; the academic ability to engage in graduate education.
- **Admission of Students without Baccalaureate Degree.** Up to 10 percent of the students in the degree programs may be admitted without a baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent, if the institution can demonstrate by some objective means that these persons possess the knowledge, academic skill, and ability generally associated with persons who hold the baccalaureate degree. Admission of such applicants should be restricted to persons with life experience that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level.

FST Application Requirements

Applicants to the Franciscan School of Theology must have at least a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, or the equivalent from a non-US school. Occasional exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Academic Dean when compensatory factors are present.

Special Requirements for M.Div. Applicants: Certain special requirements apply to applicants to the M.Div. program:

- Members of religious communities and diocesan candidates must provide a letter of approval from their ordinaries or religious superiors.
- A minimum of 30 semester credit hours in undergraduate philosophy.

All applicants to degree programs must submit a completed Application for Admission consisting of:

- Application form
- Statement of purpose
- Application fee

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- Official transcripts of all undergraduate work
- Three letters of academic or ministerial recommendation

Applications are available from the Admissions Office or can be downloaded from our website www.fst.edu.

International Students. In addition to the application elements listed above, international students must:

- Demonstrate the ability to speak, read, and write English either by TOEFL score, by successful course work in English at an accredited college or university, or by another measure deemed acceptable by the Academic Dean
- Supply official translations of transcripts written in a language other than English
- Submit a financial declaration in US dollars attesting to the availability of funds sufficient to cover personal and academic expenses for the duration of their stay

Application Deadlines

FST has rolling admissions for its MAMC, MTS, and M. Div. degrees. Note that deadlines for application to the GTU Common MA program are firm: February 15 for the fall semester and September 30 for the spring semester.

Proof of Admission

Only a written notice from the Academic Dean is valid proof of admission to the Franciscan School of Theology.

Registration

Semester System

FST, along with the other GTU schools and UC Berkeley operates on a semester system. There is also a January intersession with a limited number of courses offered.

Schedule of Classes

A schedule of classes is available on the [web](#) or in the printed *GTU Course Schedule*. Courses are referenced by discipline, faculty, course title, time, and location. The online listing is updated daily and provides the most accurate information. An addendum to the printed schedule containing additions, cancellations and corrections is published before the beginning of the semester.

Registration Periods

There are two registration periods for each semester: early registration in the middle of the preceding semester, and general registration the week before the opening of a semester. Returning students are encouraged to take advantage of early registration. New students will register at general registration their first semester of attendance. Specific dates of the registration period are published

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in the *GTU Course Schedule*. FST's Registration Coordinator explains procedures to entering students and assists in the registration process.

Intersession Courses

FST students enrolled full time in Fall semester may take 1.5 credits at no charge. Additional units for full-time students are charged at the regular part-time rate as are all intersession units for other students.

Registration Deadlines

Deadlines for registration appear on the *GTU Course Schedule*. No registration is accepted after the second week of a term except with the permission of the Academic Dean. A fee will be assessed for late registration.

Changes in Enrollment

Students making changes in enrollment (adding a class, dropping a class, changing units, or grading option) will be assessed a fee for each change after the end of the second week of classes. No change of enrollment will be permitted after the 10th week of the term, except under circumstances approved by the Academic Dean.

Registration Holds

Students who have unpaid library fines, unpaid tuition, or any indebtedness to FST will not be permitted to register for the following semester.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are due in full at registration time unless other arrangements are made with the Chief Financial Officer. Students must pay all published fees. No fees will be waived.

Tuition will be refunded at the following rates for students who formally withdraw from FST or from individual courses. Other fees will not be refunded.

Through first week of semester	100%
Through second week of semester	75%
Through third week of semester	50%
Beyond fourth week of semester	no refund

Leave of Absence

Students who intend to interrupt their studies must request an official leave of absence for each semester from the Academic Dean. Normally academic leaves are not granted for more than two consecutive semesters. Students who neither register for classes nor request an official leave for a given semester may be required to reapply for admission before resuming their studies.

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Degree Program Time Limits

- **MTS and MAMC.** Students in the MTS and MAMC programs must complete all requirements for the degree within four years of the first semester of registration after acceptance into a program.
- **MDiv.** Students in the MDiv program must complete all requirements for the degree within seven years of the first semester of registration after acceptance into the program.
- **MA.** MA students must conform to the time limit in the *MA Program Handbook* available from the GTU Dean's Office.

ACADEMIC STATUS AND CREDITS

Full-Time Enrollment

Nine units per semester is considered full-time enrollment. Twelve units per semester is the maximum credit load allowable without permission from the faculty advisor and the Academic Dean.

Transfer Credits

At the discretion of the Academic Dean, up to one year's course work (24 credits) from another comparable graduate institution may be transferred provided the student earned at least a B, and the course has not been used as credit toward any other degree. To request transfer credits, complete a *Request to Transfer Courses* form and present it to your faculty advisor and the Academic Dean. Upon approval from the Academic Dean, the Registration Coordinator will apply the transfer credits to the student's transcript.

Special Students

Special Students may take up to 24 units for credit. Special Students registering for fewer than 9 units in a semester must take all courses from FST professors. Special Students who register for 9 units or more in a semester may include one course from another GTU school. Faculty will monitor this requirement.

Auditing Courses

Students may audit courses instead of enrolling for credit provided there is no restriction on auditors noted in the GTU Course Schedule. Auditors have the same privileges as students who take courses for credit, but they are not held to final examinations, and do not receive a final grade or credit. No transcript will be available unless requested. The fee for auditing a class is full tuition.

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GTU Cross-Registration

Among the GTU schools there is open cross-registration for all students enrolled.

COURSES

Course Syllabi

At the initial class meeting, professors distribute a written course syllabus describing the goals and objectives of the course, the principal requirements including papers, reports, required reading, and examinations. This does not preclude the addition of other later assignments at the discretion of the professor.

Courses syllabi are on file in the office of the Academic Dean.

Class Scheduling

Once class schedules are finalized with the Consortial Registrar, classes meet at the published times and places. In exceptional circumstances, faculty members may request changes from the Academic Dean.

Core Courses

Core courses are those that FST requires for a specific degree program as published in the FST catalog for the MAMC, MTS, and MDiv degrees, and in the GTU catalog for the Common MA. Core courses must be taken for a letter grade, ordinarily from FST faculty. Field Education courses for pastoral ministry degrees must be taken from FST faculty. Online courses do not fulfill degree program requirements.

Special Reading Courses

Note: This section excludes bump-up courses, CPE, and MA thesis registrations.

Special reading courses are designed with a professor to meet needs and goals of a student not covered by regularly offered courses. They may not be used to fulfill core requirements without permission from both the faculty advisor and the Academic Dean.

- **Professors.** FST professors may teach up to two special reading courses per semester. Course Scheduling forms for special reading courses must contain a full bibliography and indicate the minimum number of meetings with the student. For non-core curricular courses, at least ten class meetings of forty-five minutes each (or the equivalent) must be scheduled.
- **Students.** Students may take only one special reading course per semester. In the course of a two-year program, only two special reading courses may be taken; in the course of the 4-year

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MDiv program, three may be taken.

MTS Thesis Requirements

By the end of their second semester of study, MTS students must select a thesis director and a second faculty reader, obtain approval from the Academic Dean, and negotiate commitments and schedules with the director and reader. The *Thesis Guidelines, Master of Theological Studies*, which is distributed to all MTS students, contains further details for this process, and the preparation of the thesis.

Common MA Requirements

Students enrolled in the Common MA must conform to the requirements outlined in the *MA Program Handbook* available from the GTU Academic Dean.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Satisfactory Academic Performance (SAP), Probation, and Dismissal

An overall “B” average is required to remain in good standing in FST’s academic programs. Student falling below an overall “B” average in any semester will be placed on academic probation by the Academic Dean in discussion with the student and faculty advisor. Satisfactory work in subsequent semesters will result in the student’s removal from academic probation. Failure to show sufficient improvement may result in dismissal, which will be determined by the Academic Dean in consultation with a faculty committee.

Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend classes regularly, and to inform professors with a phone call or email if they must miss a class.

Tardy Work

Faculty members are expected to inform students of their policy regarding accepting tardy work during the opening week of classes.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Students are expected to submit only work that is their own, and to acknowledge printed materials consulted in preparing all assignments. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Professors have the right to sanction students for cheating or plagiarism by counseling, requiring revision of course work, and/or by means of the course grade, whether for a specific assignment or for the entire course. All incidents of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Academic Dean. Cheat-

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ing or plagiarism may result in dismissal, which will be determined by the Academic Dean in consultation with a faculty committee.

Grading

Professors are responsible for assessing, and supporting the competencies and progress of students using various approaches such as discussions, written assignments, projects and adequate testing. At the end of each semester, faculty enter final grades into the GTU computer system using a web interface called “Web Advisor” by the date indicated by the GTU Registrar. In case of an error in filing a grade, faculty prepare a *Change in Grade* form, showing both the incorrect grade and the new one, get the approval of the Academic Dean, and submit it to the Registration Coordinator.

The following grading system is in effect at FST:

GRADE	GRADE POINT
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7

- **Pass/Fail.** With the permission of the Academic Dean a course may be taken pass/fail. A grade of “P” (pass) is considered “B” work or better. Work below “B” is considered fail.
- **Incomplete Work.** Students are expected to complete all required assignments on time. Students who are doing passable work but cannot complete it on time, may request a grade of “I” (Incomplete) by submitting a *Petition To Take An Incomplete* to the professor and Academic Dean by the last day of the semester. All work must be completed within three weeks. The professor then has three weeks to submit a *Change in Grade* form to the Registration Coordinator.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Only units earned with a letter grade (including “F”) are used to compute grade point average (GPA). Transfer units, units with “I”, Pass, or AUD are not included. GPA is calculated by adding the grade points, and dividing the sum by the number of units carrying a letter grade carried to two decimal places.

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GRADUATION

Intent to Graduate

Students who intend to graduate in a given semester must complete a *Notice of Intent to Graduate* form by September 30 for December graduation, or February 28 for May graduation. Students must be enrolled in the semester during which they finish their courses of studies. Exception to these limits may be made at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

Diplomas

For GTU scheduling purposes, FST's graduation ceremony usually takes place the weekend before the end of classes. At the ceremony, participating students are presented with a certificate stating that they will receive a diploma upon successful completion of all course work. Diplomas are mailed after grades are reported. Diplomas will not be issued to students who have not cleared all indebtedness to the School.

Transcripts

Transcripts must be requested in writing or by email. The first transcript requested is free; there is a nominal charge for subsequent requests. Transcripts will not be issued to students who have not cleared all indebtedness to the School. Note that grades of "F" appear on transcripts.

Note: On transcripts before Fall 1983, units are in quarter units. Quarter units and semester units are to be treated separately. If both units appear on a single transcript, convert quarter units to semester units for total units, and to compute grade points. Semester units equal 2/3 Quarter units.