GRADUATE STUDIES: Academic Study of Religion in Society

- Master of Arts
- Master of Theological Studies
Master of Arts (MA)

A Master of Arts in Religion serves the following constituencies: those preparing for further graduate work in Religious Studies or other humanities disciplines at the PhD level; those preparing for teaching positions at community colleges or for adjunct instructor positions at colleges or universities; those preparing for professional careers (e.g., journalism, foreign service, non-profit organizations) in non-academic settings; or those simply seeking to enjoy the intellectual rewards of a liberal arts education at the graduate level. The curriculum includes study in an area of concentration, required courses to ensure breadth of religious and theological background, an MA colloquium, language study, and the development and writing of a thesis.

Degree Requirements

Students must meet the requirements as specified in this Catalog and the The Master’s Student Handbook for their year of matriculation in order to graduate.

Requirements for the degree are at least 72 quarter credits (or 40 quarter credits in addition to an MDIV degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution), with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better; an area of concentration, colloquium, proficiency in one foreign language, and a research thesis.

Students who average 40 quarter credits a year will complete the course work for a MA degree in two years. Students may, however, choose to complete their work over a longer period of time.

All requirements for the degree must be completed within seven calendar years from the date of the first course taken in the program.

MA Seminar

This is a required eight-credit course that takes place over two quarters. It meets for four hours per week in a seminar setting. Its purpose is to introduce students to the study of religion, its history, approaches and contemporary issues. It also introduces students to their particular sub-disciplines, enabling them to locate themselves within their particular fields. It works with students to develop research skills, identify thesis topics and develop a programmatic identity as MA students. This seminar is required of all MA students.
Area of Concentration

The area of concentration requires at least 24 quarter credits. Students can declare fields in classical areas or in other areas where Iliff has faculty resources to support concentrations. The field will not appear on the diploma. Possible concentrations include biblical studies, history of Christianity, theology and philosophy of religion, ethics and social change, and pastoral care. Other areas, including interdisciplinary ones, must be negotiated with a student’s concentration advisor and approved by the Director of the MA Program.

Students in the MA degree program shall declare their field of concentration in the Registrar’s Office before they have completed 25 credits in the program. After having completed 40 credits in the program, students must develop a plan for the remainder of their program and obtain signatures from both the Director of the Master of Arts program and their faculty mentor on their proposed course of study (Advanced Standing).

Students who enter with a 40 credit requirement (because of prior degrees) must declare their fields before they have completed 15 credits and must fulfill their language requirement before completing 30 credits.

To assure some breadth in the study of religion and theology, students must take at least 12 quarter credits outside the area of concentration, approved by their faculty advisors, except those who need only 40 credits for the degree.

Proficiency by examination in one foreign language is required. These languages are normally limited to French, German, Spanish, Hebrew, Greek or Latin. Exceptions may be made for a research language directly related to the student’s area of study.

A minimum of three quarters of study in Hebrew or Greek taken at Iliff may substitute for the proficiency examination. Latin is not ordinarily offered at Iliff. Course credit is not given for basic modern language study, but may be given for Hebrew or Greek taken at Iliff. Exceptions to this policy may be petitioned and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The language requirement should be completed by the time the student has completed 60 quarter credits.

A research Thesis will be done under faculty supervision for no less than four credits and 6000 words and no more than six, taken over one to two quarters. Students are required to take the MA/MTS Thesis Proposal Class. Please visit the The MA Degree Requirements in the Master’s Student Handbook for detailed information on this and all other degree requirements.
Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

This is an academic degree for students who wish to explore theological studies for general educational purposes or personal knowledge. It is not intended for persons wishing to develop professional skills in ministry.

Degree Requirements

To graduate, students must meet the requirements as specified in the Catalog and The Master’s Student Handbook for their year of matriculation.

At least 72 quarter credits with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better are required for the MTS degree.

This degree may be completed in 40 quarter credits if the student has previously completed an MDIV degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution prior to enrollment at Iliff. Specific requirements may be negotiated based on prior educational experience. A minimum grade point average of 2.0 is necessary. Students who average 40 quarter credits a year (13-14 credits each quarter of the academic year) will complete the course work for the MTS degree in two years. Students may, however, elect to complete their course work over a longer period of time.

All requirements for the degree must be completed within seven calendar years from the date of the first course taken in the program.

Students are expected to take the MTS Colloquium (4 credits), the First Year Interdisciplinary Seminar (4 credits), the Joint MA/MTS Thesis Proposal Class, and to create a Learning Plan which includes 56 credits of coursework.

PPF requirements and/or placements in internship settings are not part of this program’s structure. There is no language requirement in this degree. In addition, this degree does not offer fields of concentration or other forms of specialization.

Normally, Personal and Professional Formation credits (Vocation and Orientation, Identity, Power and Difference and Part Time Internship) are not accepted into the MTS degree program. Permission to participate and count Personal and Professional Formation credits in one’s degree program must be negotiated with the Director of Professional Formation in consultation with the MTS Director. Credit for Part-Time Internship will not be counted in the total number of hours necessary for the MTS degree.

All students must complete a Thesis project of 6000 words, worth four credits.