



Master of Theological Studies/ Non Thesis Comprehensive Exams

Purpose of The Master of Theological Studies/ Non Thesis:

The Master of Theological Studies/ Non Thesis (MTS Non Thesis) is offered to “provide a basic understanding of theological disciplines for further graduate study or for general educational purposes.” (ATS Standard D 1.1 2015: 17). The goals for this degree include “the attainment of survey knowledge of various theological disciplines, or focused knowledge in a specific discipline, or interdisciplinary knowledge.” (ATS Standard D 1.1.2 2015:17)

Completion of the Degree via Comprehensive Exams:

In order to earn the MTS Non Thesis degree, students will write and pass comprehensive exams in three areas: Biblical Studies, Theology and Church History. The exams will be taken on three separate days for periods of three hours each.

How the Exam is Administered:

Each of the faculty in the three areas (Bible, Theology, Church History) will distribute a bibliography with no fewer than fifteen (15) books in addition to other scholarly resources (e.g., academic papers) per area to students and a substantial set of questions to serve as guideline for preparation. Additionally, students may propose books and questions in each area. In all cases, student proposed books and questions must be approved by the faculty. It is incumbent on the student to obtain approval of the books and questions. Three copies of that document will be distributed among the SOT Dean, the area faculty, and the student. If a student writes questions they will be added to the questions written by the faculty. From this extensive list of questions, the area faculty will select five questions per discipline which will be disclosed to students on the day of the exam, and from which the students will in turn choose three questions to answer competently in order to receive a grade.

For the Bible Exam: this exam alternates between Old Testament and New Testament each year. A student may choose, however, to take the Bible exam in either Hebrew Bible or New Testament through the following method:

- if the student desires to take the exam in Old Testament, they may take this exam after completing Old Testament during their first year as a graduate student at the seminary.

- if the student chooses to take the exam in New Testament, he or she may take it after completing this course series in their second year at the School of Theology.

The exams will be graded on a scale from High Pass, Pass, Low Pass to Fail.

If a student fails an area content exam, the faculty administering that exam will give the student three NEW questions drawn similarly from the extended list of questions distributed previously to the student.

Students will write their answers on a computer and are allowed an unmarked version of the NRSV with Apocrypha. They will not be permitted to bring anything with them into the examination.

When and Where the Exams Are Administered:

There will be two opportunities for students to retake examinations: two weeks after the initial testing, and again two weeks after that testing period. A student who fails three times will be eligible to retake the exam (s) during the summer term with the possibility of graduation in August.

Residential students will take the Comprehensive Exams on-site at the School of Theology. Online students are responsible to recruit a local proctor; someone to whom the examination questions will be mailed. The proctor will administer the examination, enforcing all the regulations printed on this document. The student must provide the proctor's name and mailing address to the Office of the Dean.

Approved by the SOT Faculty, August 25, 2015

Approval of the logistics component by the SOT Faculty, September 2, 2015