



Bachelor of Sacred Theology

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2026-2027



Santa Clara
Jesuit School of Theology

Welcome to the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University!

JST-SCU is a premier Jesuit theology center and the graduate school of theology of Santa Clara University that forms women and men from across the world to lead and minister in the 21st-century global synodal Church. We bridge rigorous academic contextual theology with lived realities of faith and equip lay and religious students with synodal tools of spirituality, discernment, dialogue, and collaboration to make a difference in the world. In keeping with our [strategic priorities](#), students and faculty from across the globe converge at JST-SCU to engage in its academically rigorous, socially engaged, contextually diverse, and spiritually vibrant community.

JSTSCU is also an ecclesiastical faculty accredited and approved by the Vatican Dicastery for Culture and Education to prepare Jesuits, lay men and women, religious women and men, and diocesan priests for vocation, ministry, service, and career in the Church, society, and academy. With a current student body from 40 countries, our global community benefits from the wisdom of one another's experiences in preparation for ministry leadership and service to the Church and the world.

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, Santa Clara University's vision and mission are firmly rooted in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition to educate citizens and leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion and build a more humane, just, and sustainable world. Santa Clara (www.scu.edu) blends high-tech innovation with a social consciousness grounded in the Jesuit educational tradition and engaged with various communities to foster an entrepreneurial mindset in view of helping shape the next generation of leaders and global thinkers.

Besides institutional and academic strengths in systematic theology, biblical studies, sacraments and liturgy, moral theology, social ethics, inter-religious dialogue, and Christian spirituality, JST-SCU has recently enhanced expertise in the following areas of study:

- Ignatian spirituality, including classes, research, and practicums; four spiritual directors trained in Ignatian spirituality are available for Jesuit students.
- Biblical studies, with an emphasis on textual knowledge and contextual interpretation.
- Social ethics, with expertise in reconciliation, ecology, family systems, and post-colonial perspectives.
- Theology of synodality, with focus on the understanding, knowledge, and practice of synodality in the global Church.

JST-SCU's small size allows our world-renowned faculty to personally engage our students in the highest quality of academic excellence. The Jesuit Community at JST offers an intercultural experience of friendship in the Lord that provides a conducive environment for those in formation. We are deeply committed to preparing Jesuits and ministers for service in a global, synodal Church. A strong academic and ministerial formation is key to what the Society of Jesus can offer our Church and world in the second quarter of the 21st century.



For U.S. and international students, JST-SCU offers the Master of Divinity (MDiv); Master of Theological Studies (MTS); Master of Theology (ThM); and Ecclesiastical degrees at the Bachelor (STB), Licentiate (STL), and Doctoral (STD) levels in Sacred Theology.

- Our first cycle includes Jesuits and other students from all over the world, and the MDiv and STB are designed to prepare Jesuits for priestly ministry in a variety of contexts and lay students for dedicated church service. The Bay Area provides rich opportunities for ministerial and pastoral formation in various cultures and languages and socio economic conditions. This intercultural context counts as a distinct strength of our program
- The MTS offers students a foundation in theology and ministry, and the ThM allows students to explore a particular aspect of theology through classwork and a project or thesis.
- The STL allows Jesuits, diocesan priests and religious women and men to do serious academic research in a particular area of theology. Students work with a faculty member with expertise in their thesis topic, providing strong support across the spectrum of theological disciplines.
- Our STD program works with candidates moving directly from the licentiate as well as those who return to further studies to prepare for their assignments in universities and formation centers around the world. Here our Jesuit and lay faculty are at their best, offering strong mentoring and support—with an eye to finishing the degree on time!

For Jesuits and others who would like to come to JST-SCU for a period of academic engagement and spiritual renewal, we offer a Renewal Program for one or two semesters, led by an experienced spiritual guide. Renewal participants enhance the life of the whole community, contributing insight, wisdom, and depth in the courses they take, sharing the breadth and depth of their ministerial experience in formal and informal settings.

JST-SCU is marked by a strong diversity of its community of scholars, staff, and students. While classes require sufficient English proficiency, our professors speak French, Italian, German, Portuguese, Swahili, Vietnamese, and Spanish, among other languages, creating an environment conducive to global theological scholarship. To better serve the needs of our diverse student body, we offer tutoring and writing assistance and coaching for international students (including Jesuits) to help them develop the skills needed for academic writing and research.

We invite you to make your distinctive contribution to our academic and faith community, as together we enliven faith, promote reconciliation, labor for justice, and participate in God's mercy.

Welcome to JST-SCU!

Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, S.J.
Dean, Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

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STB Program Worksheet, STB Specific Forms, and Registration Related Forms are all available on the [Office of the Registrar page](#) under “Forms.”

I. Program Guidelines

Overview

The Bachelor of Sacred Theology (STB) is a Roman Catholic ecclesiastical degree program granted by the Jesuit School of Theology (JST) by virtue of its status as a pontifical faculty. The STB is the first cycle in the program of ecclesiastical degrees (*Veritatis Gaudium*, part VII, articles 47-50), intended to initiate basic theological formation. The STB ensures a comprehensive knowledge of theology and a strong foundation in Catholic doctrine, preparing students for various forms of ministry and advanced academic study. At JST, the STB is primarily offered to international students seeking priestly formation, as well as those preparing for the Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL) and the Doctorate in Sacred Theology (STD).

As a school, we are committed to two major ideals: First, the reverent and critical service of faith that does justice. “Critical” here denotes informed, thoughtful respect of the tradition. Secondly, as a means to carrying out that first ideal, we are also committed to the contextualized study of theology and ministry. This curriculum incorporates a contextual learning approach to theological study.

The curriculum employs three categories of coursework: Foundational, Distribution, and Elective. Foundational courses are taken in the first year and provide a foundation for subsequent coursework in each area. In the second and third years, students satisfy the Distribution requirements by selecting courses in the following areas of study: Biblical Studies; Systematic Theology; Christian Ethics / Moral Theology; History, Art, and Culture; Ministry and Pastoral Studies. The nature and content of these area courses, together with the electives, are guided primarily by the Program for Priestly Formation of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), as well as the governing documents of the Society of Jesus.

Goals and Objectives

Institutional Learning Goals

1. Students will gain a broad foundation in Christian theology, with a focus on the Roman Catholic tradition.
2. Students will demonstrate a critically-informed approach to faith that promotes social justice for the common good, especially for the benefit of those in greatest need.
3. Students will recognize the interplay between faith and culture in addressing issues that emerge in diverse cultural contexts.

STB Student Learning Outcomes

The STB program offers a comprehensive knowledge of theology and a strong foundation in Catholic doctrine, especially preparing students for priestly formation.

STB graduates will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of theological competencies in the following areas: Biblical Studies; Systematic Theology; Christian Ethics / Moral Theology; History, Art, and Culture; Ministry and Pastoral Studies.
2. Apply knowledge of theology to their preaching, teaching, liturgical presiding, celebrating sacramental rites, and pastoral situations.
3. Appraise theological and pastoral issues in the cultural, social, and global contexts in which they emerge.
4. Develop practices of prayer and discernment appropriate to their circumstances, with a particular grounding in Ignatian principles and spirituality.
5. Demonstrate strong professional / ministerial ethics, including collaborative leadership, self-care, and clear ministerial boundaries.
6. Articulate a deepening sense of their ministerial identity that emerges in their prayer and theological reflection on pastoral experience.
7. Be prepared for advanced studies in the ecclesiastical cycle by studying Latin and completing an STB synthesis paper.

Prerequisites and Advanced Standing

Prerequisites for the STB Program

- Completion of a bachelor's degree or equivalent.
- 24 semester units or 36 quarter units of philosophy.
- Applicants should possess the personal maturity and faith commitment commensurate with preparation for full-time ministry.

Advanced Standing and Transfer of Courses

Students who have taken graduate courses in theology not more than six years prior to registration may petition to transfer coursework for advanced standing in the STB program. Such petitions may be included with the Application for Admission or may be submitted during the first semester of study at JST. No more than 24 semester units of transfer credit can be applied to the STB program at JST.

No units will be transferred that have already been counted toward another degree. No units will be considered for transfer that are not from regionally accredited institutions of higher learning or were not attained at a graduate level. A student who enrolls in graduate courses in theology at an institution outside of JST-SCU during their course of study may petition the

Associate Dean for transfer credit toward the STB program. See the [Registrar page](#) for the form to Transfer Coursework for Transfer of Credit and Advanced Standing.

Degree Requirements

Normally, candidates for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church are required to have four years of formation. A student may expect to complete the STB program in three years, inclusive of summer coursework, but must complete the program within four calendar years from the date of first registration in the program, unless an exception is granted by the Associate Dean. For the fourth year of formation, students may continue taking courses as non-degree students, or apply for an advanced degree. Students seeking an additional advanced degree beyond the STB should apply for either the ThM (usually completed in one year) or the STL (usually completed in two years) during the third year of the STB program.

The STB program requires the completion of 81 semester units of coursework (25 three-unit courses plus six units of field education). A normal full-time course load is 12 units per semester, with occasional intersession or summer coursework.

The capstone of the STB program is the Comprehensive Examination, which is held in the spring semester of the third year and tests for both theological and pastoral competence, and the STB synthesis paper. Note that, along with the study of Latin, the Comprehensive Examination and the STB synthesis paper are not counted toward the 81 required units.

Students in all degree programs must maintain a 3.0 (B) Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) to graduate. A grade of B- or better is necessary in all courses used to satisfy a requirement for all JST degree programs.

Students in the STB program may elect to take courses as Pass / No Pass for no more than 18 units, not including the Field Education Practicum (FE-2151) or Integration Seminar (MDiv-4401), while in residence at JST. A pass in any course is equivalent to B- or better work. The petition to take a course Pass / No Pass is subject to the approval of the advisor and must be submitted to the Registrar. All changes to grading basis are final following the fourth Friday of the academic term. See [Academic Policies and Procedures](#) for additional information on grades.

JST provides a spectrum of course offerings that enable students to develop a solid theological foundation for priestly ministry. Academic advisors assist students in the selection of courses that are necessary for ministry in today's Church.

Both ordination-track and lay students are required to fulfill all degree requirements. Lay students may take some alternative courses in Pastoral Studies as indicated in the Program Outline and Unit Distribution for Coursework.

The STB curriculum is constructed around three theological syntheses. The first is comprised of foundations in Scripture, the history of Christianity, systematic theology, and Christian ethics / moral theology. The second emphasizes the application of theories and methods of theology for ministry. The third involves the integration of this material so that students are able to articulate theologically informed and pastorally appropriate responses to varied ministerial situations.

Language Study

Latin is required for the STB program. Students fulfill this requirement by either taking a course at JST, transferring previous coursework, or passing a Latin exam. See the [Registrar page](#) for the Latin Language Certification form. Other biblical languages, such as Greek or Hebrew, are recommended for those seeking more in-depth preparation for biblical studies.

Students in the STB program are encouraged to become familiar with a modern language as appropriate to their own ministerial setting.

Concurrent STB / MDiv

Students who complete an STB degree can also receive an MDiv degree concurrently by submitting a request to the Associate Dean. Requests to receive the STB / MDiv degrees concurrently may be made at the time of application or no later than the second semester of enrollment.

While the amount of units earned for the STB and MDiv programs is the same, the STB program includes more specific coursework requirements as per the USCCB Program for Priestly Formation, as well as study of Latin and a synthesis paper. Therefore, students seeking the concurrent degrees should follow the Program Outline and Unit Distribution for Coursework for the STB program and refer to the MDiv Field Education Handbook in order to ensure that they fulfill all degree requirements. By completing the STB program, as outlined in this handbook, students will have successfully completed all degree requirements of the MDiv program, inclusive of coursework, field education, and comprehensive examination.

Graduation

JST has two graduation dates each academic year:

- May – for students who finish during the fall semester or by the spring May deadline
- September / October – for students who finish in late May through the summer

Note regarding Commencement Ceremony: The only students permitted to “walk” in the commencement ceremony in May are those who have finished or will finish all requirements for their degree before or during the spring term.

Program Outline and Unit Distribution for Coursework

81 semester units (25 three-unit courses plus six units of field education) must be completed. While ordination-track students must fulfill all of the expectations of the USCCB Program for Priestly Formation, there are some alternative coursework options for lay students in Pastoral Studies as outlined below.

Year 1: Foundational Courses (24 units)

- Biblical Studies (6 units)
 - Pentateuch / Histories (3 units)
 - Gospels (3 units)
- History, Art, and and Culture (6 units)
 - Church History I (Early Church and Patristics) (3 units)
 - Church History II (World Christianity) (3 units)
- Systematic Theology (3 units)
 - Introduction to Contextual Theology (3 units)
- Christian Ethics / Moral Theology (6 units)
 - Fundamental Moral Theology (3 units)
 - Catholic Social Thought (3 units)
- Ministerial Formation (3 units)
 - Theology of Ministry and Practice (3 units)

Ordination-Track – Years 2 and 3: Distribution Courses (57 units) and Additional Requirements

- Biblical Studies (9 units)
 - Wisdom Literature (3 units)
 - Prophets (3 units)
 - Paul (3 units)
- History, Art, and Culture (3 units)
 - Culture, Context and Lived Religion (or equivalent) (3 units)
- Systematic Theology (15 units)
 - Christology (3 units)
 - Ecclesiology (3 units)
 - Sacramental Theology (3 units)
 - Trinity (3 units)
 - Theological Anthropology (3 units)
- Christian Ethics (3 units)
 - Elective (Healthcare / Bioethics or Sexual / Family Ethics) (3 units)
- Spirituality (3 units)
 - Elective (3 units)
- Field Education (6 units)
- Pastoral Studies (15 units)
 - Theology of the Priesthood (3 units)
 - Liturgy and Celebrational Rites (3 units)

- Preaching (3 units)
- Canon Law (3 units)
- Confessional Rites and Practices (1.5 units)
- Elective (1.5 units)
- Year 3 Ministerial Formation (3 units)
 - Integration Seminar (3 units)
 - Comprehensive Examination
- Latin
- STB Synthesis Paper

Lay Students – Years 2 and 3: Distribution Courses (57 units) and Additional Requirements

- Biblical Studies (9 units)
 - Wisdom Literature (3 units)
 - Prophets (3 units)
 - Pauline Literature (3 units)
- History, Art, and Culture (3 units)
 - Culture, Context and Lived Religion (or equivalent) (3 units)
- Systematic Theology (15 units)
 - Christology (3 units)
 - Ecclesiology (3 units)
 - Sacramental Theology (3 units)
 - Trinity (3 units)
 - Theological Anthropology (3 units)
- Christian Ethics (3 units)
 - Elective (Healthcare / Bioethics or Sexual / Family Ethics)
- Elective in History, Art, and Culture or Systematic Theology (3 units)
- Spirituality (3 units)
 - Elective (3 units)
- Field Education (6 units)
- Pastoral Studies (12 units)
 - Preaching (3 units)
 - Liturgy (3 units)
 - Canon Law (3 units)
 - Elective(s) (3 units)
- Year 3 Ministerial Formation (3 units)
 - Integration Seminar (3 units)
 - Comprehensive Examination
- Latin
- STB Synthesis Paper

Field Education Overview

Students should refer to the [MDiv Field Education Handbook](#) for additional information.

Year 1: In conjunction with the MDiv program, STB students will take FE-2621 Theology of Ministry and Practice (three units). This course explores a contemporary theology of ministry to equip students to serve as reflective ministerial practitioners, incorporating a synodal pedagogy. Students also typically complete two field education units (FE-2151 Practicum) per semester across three terms, beginning in the spring semester of their first year. Within the Practicum, students will engage in supervised Field Education ministry at their respective sites, write theological reflection papers integrating themes from their JST-SCU courses, and attend regular reflection sessions and cohort classes.

Year 2: Students will continue with Field Education, registering for two units of FE-2151 Practicum in the fall and spring semesters.

Year 3: A student may undertake Field Education in the fall semester of their third year, pending approval. In conjunction with the MDiv program, STB students will take the Integration Seminar in the spring of the cohort's third year. Its focus is to help students integrate their theological, pastoral and spiritual learning in preparation for comprehensive examination.

Categories of Coursework

Biblical Studies: The two foundational courses are survey courses intended to build socio-historical, literary, and theological-spiritual competence in reading and interpreting biblical texts. The distribution courses are text-based studies with either a field component or a contextual project that focuses particular and sustained attention upon the appropriation and / or relation of biblical texts to ministerial settings.

Systematic Theology: The systematic theology requirement addresses basic theological themes and includes an Introduction to Contextual Theology and coursework focused on particular doctrinal areas (i.e., Christology, Ecclesiology, Sacramental Theology, Trinity, and Theological Anthropology). This requirement is intended to expose students to the methodology and resources available for the study of theology. Historical theology is integrated into all systematic theology courses. Required courses include study of areas required by the USCCB Program for Priestly Formation that are not covered in an individual course (i.e., Pneumatology, Creation / Eschatology, Mariology, and Missiology, etc.).

Christian Ethics / Moral Theology: The two foundational courses introduce students to the principles of Fundamental Moral Theology and Catholic Social Thought. Students then take an elective course in either healthcare / bioethics or sexual / family ethics.

History, Art, and Culture: All students must take a course in Early Church History (including Patristics) and in World Christianity. Students are also required to take either RS-2092 Culture, Context, and Lived Religion or another approved course in art, history, or sociology of religion designed to expose them to the concept of culture and its implications for theological study and pastoral ministry.

Spirituality: Students take a Spirituality elective, preferably in the Ignatian tradition, in support of the development of prayer and discernment practices.

Canon Law and Sacramental / Liturgical Studies: Students take courses in Canon Law, Liturgical Studies, and Theology of the Priesthood. These courses are part of the Pastoral Studies Distribution courses.

Pastoral Practicum: As part of the Pastoral Studies Distribution courses, all students are required to take Preaching (or Homiletics). Ordination-track students also take courses in Celebrational and Confessional Rites. Other courses in Ministerial Skills are regularly offered for both ordination-track and lay students (e.g., Spiritual Direction, Intercultural Ministry, Hispanic Ministry, Administration, etc.).

II. STB Comprehensive Examination and Synthesis Paper

Year 3 Comprehensive Examination

One of the capstone experiences for the STB program, the Comprehensive Examination, is held at the end of the spring semester of the third year and tests for both theological and pastoral competence. The exam questions prepared by the examination board will integrate all aspects of the theological program, and include cases where students are expected to bring their academic and pastoral knowledge to bear in responding to hypothetical ministerial situations.

Students' performance on the comprehensive examination, consisting of written and oral components evaluated by their Examination Boards, must demonstrate a competency in historical and contemporary knowledge in biblical studies; systematic theology in its various subdisciplines; Christian ethics and moral theology; ministerial and pastoral applications; history, art, and culture. A passing grade, awarded after the oral exam, indicates that the student was able to answer questions in both the written and oral exams satisfactorily.

Students must register for the Integration Seminar (three units) during the spring semester of their third year when they take the comprehensive examination.

Synthesis Paper Guidelines

Overview: In their third year, students write a synthesis paper as a requirement for graduation under the supervision of a JST full-time faculty member. The synthesis paper (approximately 10,000 words) focuses on a doctrinal, ethical or pastoral issue. Students may revise a course paper or work with a course instructor to complete the STB paper in conjunction with a course. In all cases, students should communicate with their faculty supervisor regarding a paper topic and / or proposal.

Preparing and Filing of Synthesis Paper: The STB synthesis paper should be formatted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate Turabian.

Once the paper has been approved by the faculty supervisor, the student should submit the paper in electronic PDF format together with the signed [STB Synthesis Paper Approval Form](#) to the JST Registrar. The synthesis paper must be submitted to the JST Registrar by the first Monday in May for spring graduation.

Style Guidelines for Synthesis Paper

Spacing: Double spacing is required for the main body of the work except in those places where conventional usage calls for single spacing (e.g., footnotes, indented quotations, tables, etc.).

Font: The type size should be 12 point. Type used for charts, drawings, graphs, tables, footnotes, etc., may differ according to format and space requirements, but should be at least 10 point.

Margins: All margins should be set to 1 inch. Margin requirements apply to all pages, whether text, illustration, charts, graphs, or other content. Be sure to check the margins not only on pages with text, but also pages with charts, graphs, or images.

Page numbers: Page numbers must be at least 1/2 inch from the edge of the page.

Title Page: See a [sample of the required title page](#).

Filing Deadlines

- Spring graduates: The filing deadline is the first Monday in May.
- September / October graduates: The filing deadline is the final day of the fall add / drop period.
- Fall registrants completing before the spring semester: The filing deadline is the final day of the spring add / drop period. These students will receive their degree in May.

III. Formation Guidelines

Ministerial Formation

Formation in the STB program is comprised of various components. In addition to the academic and pastoral requirements outlined above, students may also participate in spiritual and community formation opportunities at JST and / or the student's religious community, which includes spiritual direction, regular faith-sharing in small groups, days of prayer, participation in liturgy, and an annual retreat. Students are also invited to attend personal development or skills-based ministry workshops on various topics. See the [Formation page](#) on the website and the [MDiv Field Education Handbook](#) for more general information about formation at JST.

Formation Goals

The STB program is guided by three interrelated formation goals:

1. Ministerial Identity: Focus on students' respective ministerial identities as priests, Jesuits, other religious, and lay ecclesial ministers.
2. Ministerial Practice: Focus on pastoral practice, supervision, and mentoring.
3. Ministerial Integration: Focus on the integration of theology with ministerial and pastoral experiences.

Ministerial Assessment

In addition to assessment of students' supervised field education experiences, students will be assessed on ministerial competency. This assessment will be done for students in religious communities by the appropriate formation authority in the community (i.e., Superior, Rector, or Formation Director). During the spring semester of the second year of the STB program, lay students will be assessed through the "Interim Review" process. This will include an interview with the Director of Ministerial Formation (DMF) and assessment based upon other relevant input brought to the attention of the DMF by faculty and administration.

Students are assessed on their ministerial formation particularly, but not exclusively, in the following areas:

- Capacity for collaborative leadership;
- Integration of service and learning, and of faith and justice;
- Knowledge of and commitment to professional ministerial ethics.

Ministry Opportunities

Field Education placements may include non-profit agencies, parishes, prison ministry, healthcare ministry, and high school or university campus ministries. Through these

experiences, students may develop skills in ministerial leadership, educational and parish leadership, spiritual formation, and outreach to underserved communities. For further information regarding Field Education requirements, please see the [MDiv Field Education Handbook](#).

Spiritual Preparation

The Ministerial Formation element of the STB program supports students as they grow in faith.

The attainment of this goal means that students are:

- Men and women of faith, familiar with the Word of God in Scripture and with the Catholic tradition in interpreting and understanding that Word; contemplative in their personal assimilation of this faith in a life of prayer.
- Prepared to exercise leadership in Christian worship through planning liturgies, preaching, administering sacraments, and other community liturgical celebrations, according to the gifts each has received.
- Prepared to counsel, guide, encourage and instruct in the Christian way of life, with special attention to issues of justice and human dignity; to lead in the formation of a just society and to exercise ministries of reconciliation, according to their gifts.

STB students are expected to be in spiritual direction and to make a retreat each year; and students are also encouraged to participate in a small faith sharing group that meets regularly. Jesuits and other students who are members of a religious community fulfill these requirements of the program through their own religious community. These aspects of the program are available to lay students through the school's Office of the Assistant Dean of Students. Participation in the liturgical life of the school is another way that students' spiritual life is nourished.

Priestly Formation

The USCCB Program for Priestly Formation requires that all candidates for ordained ministry complete four full years of theological study. This normally entails one year of study beyond completion of the STB program. For Jesuits of the United States, the Jesuit Conference stipulates that this fourth year will generally include the completion of eight semester-long courses in theological study at the graduate level, or the completion of a ThM or STL degree.

Since canonical faculties for preaching and celebration of the Sacraments are granted by the ordained's religious and ecclesiastical superiors, ultimate responsibility for the certification of the individual's readiness in these areas lies with the relevant superiors. As an aid in this aspect of ministerial preparation, regular courses designed to prepare students for the priesthood and for the pastoral administration of the Sacraments are offered at JST. The normal means by which competency is certified in the pastoral administration of the sacraments will be through successful completion of courses which focus on preaching, the celebration of the rites of the Church, and confessional counseling.

Ordination-track students fulfill their ordination requirements by taking pastoral courses that cover the following:

- Canon Law
- Preaching
- Celebration of the Sacraments (Liturgy and Celebrational Rites)
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessional Rites and Practices)

Some of these courses have prerequisites (e.g., Celebrational Rites and Confessional Rites and Practices). Students together with their advisors should plan their schedules in such a way that they have met the prerequisites prior to taking the corresponding pastoral course.

In addition to the courses listed above, second- and third-year ordination-track students are required to take Theology and Spirituality of Priesthood. Students are encouraged to take the course as soon as it is offered.

Special Examinations for Ordination-Track Students

The normal means by which competency is certified in the pastoral administration of the sacraments will be through successful completion of courses which focus on preaching, celebrational style, and confessional counseling. For exceptional circumstances, in which the student for some good reason has not taken the relevant course(s) outlined above, and is asked by the student's competent religious superior to certify a student's pastoral readiness in the given area(s), competent faculty are delegated by the JST Dean to administer the special ordination examinations which certify the individual's competence in preaching and the administration of the Sacraments.

IV. Subject Area Competencies

Biblical Studies Competencies

1. To have a working knowledge of the literary, historical, and theological grounding of the Old Testament canon, including: Pentateuch / Histories, Prophets, and Wisdom / Deutero-canonical Writings.
2. To have a working knowledge of the socio-historical setting, sources, literary features, theologies, and Christologies of the Gospels and Pauline literature.
3. To be able to negotiate the various representations of God (e.g., Creator, Redeemer, Liberator, Savior, the Christ, etc.) across the testaments with good theological understanding.
4. To be able to enunciate the unique revelation of each of the testaments as sources of faith and to be able to identify the various levels of the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament.
5. To be able to appropriately enlist scripture in the explication of the nature and practice of prayer in the Catholic tradition.
6. To be conversant on the following topics: Biblical notions of justice, dealing with violence in the Bible, sin, narratives on the miraculous, and fundamentalism.
7. To explain the following notions in conjunction with the Pauline teaching on these topics: Baptism, Salvation, Eucharist, Church, Life of Faith, Reconciliation, and Grace.
8. To be able to address the developments of the following topics across the canon: Creation, Covenant, Salvation, Christology, Apocalypticism, and Eschatology.

Systematic Theology Competencies

1. To apply critical methodologies to the interpretation of magisterial texts.
2. To give a critical account of major developments in the history of the Church from its beginning until the present.
3. To bring appropriate support from the history of the Church to the interpretation of the major theological themes both in various pastoral settings and in relation to the student's ministerial role.

4. To correlate biblical, historical, and theological developments on the doctrinal themes of God, Christ, Creation and Eschatology, the Human Person, Sin and Grace, Church, and Sacraments.
5. To apply the principles of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue to communicating Christian doctrine in a particular cultural and social context.
6. To integrate responsibly and critically the topics and practices of Christian spirituality into the analysis of biblical, theological, historical, and pastoral theology contexts.

Ministry and Pastoral Studies Competencies

1. To be able to lead a church community in prayer through the rites of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. To communicate effectively in preaching, teaching, presiding, celebrating, listening, and counseling.
3. To be able to organize and work with liturgical ministers, both ordained and lay, in preparing worship services.
4. To be able to use the pastoral circle for theological reflection and pastoral planning.
5. To hone a competency in group facilitation and Christian discernment, especially in an environment characterized by racial and ethnic diversity.
6. To be able to explain pastoral practices in a manner that relies upon important ideas within the Catholic theological tradition.
7. To bring Gospel values to bear in attending to issues concerning power and privilege.
8. To integrate spirituality as both a personal characteristic and a pastoral resource.
9. To integrate service and learning in solidarity with the poor and marginalized.
10. To apply norms of ministerial ethics to cases.

Christian Ethics / Moral Theology Competencies

1. To integrate the following sources of ethical deliberation in personal and social moral discernment: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.
2. To be able to explain natural law, theological anthropology, moral norms, freedom, agency, the fundamental option, and double effect.

3. To understand the relationship among the individual's formation of character, conscience, moral discernment, and magisterial authority.
4. To be able to explain the connection between ethics, grace and sin, conversion, and reconciliation at both the individual and social levels; to understand frameworks for assessing social sin, such as cooperation with evil, complicity, and corporate vice.
5. To have a working knowledge of the following themes in Catholic social teaching: human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, common good, preferential option for the poor, stewardship of creation, participation, the dignity of labor, the role of government, rights and responsibilities, and religious freedom.
6. To explain and assess the various contributions of ecumenical, interreligious, feminist / womanist / mujerista, liberationist, Black, Latino/a, Asian, decolonial, and other enculturated ethics.
7. To have a theoretical and practical knowledge of the following ethical methods: deontology, relationality / responsibility ethics, consequentialism, proportionalism, teleology, and virtue ethics.
8. To be able to marshal the sources and methods from Catholic theological ethics in addressing some of the following topics: integral ecology; sexuality; marriage and the family; healthcare; economics; war and peace; oppression (e.g., sex / gender, race, ethnicity, class); migration; incarceration.

History, Art, and Culture Competencies

1. To be able to articulate a basic understanding of culture as well as how it shapes meaning-making, consolidates identities, and steers human behavior.
2. To interpret how culture both shapes, and is shaped by, Christian scripture and tradition.
3. To be able to explain the meaning of secularization and how it affects religious commitment and worldviews.
4. To give an account of the ways and extent to which religion influences social solidarity, conflict, change, and political engagement.
5. To gain an appreciation for the extent to which religious ideas, institutions, and publics attend to pressing societal issues within various historical contexts.

6. To understand the difference and mutual relationship between “official” and “nonofficial” (or popular) religion and its ramifications for theology, ministry, and the sacred arts.
7. To be able to track the ways in which religious traditions inform one another just as they are themselves influenced by broader socio-cultural trends.
8. To be able to interpret and discuss images, objects, built environments, buildings, spaces, performances, and sounds that have emerged from religious traditions using appropriate methodological approaches.

STB Program Worksheet, STB Specific Forms, and Registration Related Forms are all available on the [Office of the Registrar page](#) under “Forms.”