



# Master of Theological Studies

## PROGRAM HANDBOOK

### 2025-2026



**Santa Clara**  
Jesuit School of Theology

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

JST-SCU is a graduate school of Santa Clara University and a formation center of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the U.S. Our school serves as a global hub for theological studies and ministerial formation. 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.

JST-SCU 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 34 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](http://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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 of Santa Clara University

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# Program Guidelines

## Overview

The Master of Theological Studies is an academic degree program that offers students a broad understanding of the Catholic theological vision through foundational courses in four core areas of study: Biblical Studies; Theology & Spirituality; Theological Ethics; and Culture, History & the Arts. Students will choose to concentrate in one of these core areas. The degree prepares graduates to be teachers and/or administrators in primary and secondary schools, directors of religious education or of faith formation programs, parish-based leaders, or administrators of various nonprofit organizations and voluntary service programs. Students also learn a theology of ministry for service in a changing Church and world. The MTS is an ideal program for persons engaged in ministry or seeking theological enrichment and a rewarding exploration of their faith. It is “hyflex,” meaning that students may choose to combine on-campus and online courses in any combination that works for them.

## 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.

### MTS Student Learning Outcomes

The MTS degree offers students a broad understanding of the Catholic theological tradition and specialized knowledge in a chosen concentration.

MTS Graduates will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge in Biblical Studies; Theology & Spirituality; Theological Ethics; and Culture, History & the Arts.
2. Integrate and apply their knowledge of the above areas within a chosen concentration.
3. Demonstrate a critical understanding of social, cultural, and global contexts and their significance to theology.
4. Apply informed knowledge of the Catholic tradition in the assessment of theological questions or pastoral issues.
5. Articulate the connections among their course work, their individual formation as shaped by their own practices, and their interactions with peers or professional colleagues.

## **Advanced Standing & Courses Taken Outside of the GTU During the Degree**

A student who has taken graduate courses in theology not longer than six years prior to registration may petition for advanced placement in the Master of Theological Studies program. This petition may be included with the Application for Admission or it may be submitted during the first semester of study at JST. No more than 12 semester units of advanced standing can be applied to the JST Master of Theological Studies program. Petition forms are available from the Registrar, the Office of Admissions or online on the Registrar's page: <https://www.scu.edu/jst/academics/office-of-the-registrar/>

No units will be transferred which 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.

Students in the MTS program may elect to take courses as Pass/No Pass for no more than 15 credits while in residence at JST.

A student who enrolls in graduate courses in theology at an institution outside of the GTU during their course of study may petition the Associate Dean for transfer credit in the MTS degree program. Petition forms are available online at <https://www.scu.edu/jst/academics/office-of-the-registrar/>.

## **Degree Requirements**

The Master of Theological Studies degree requires the completion of 48 semester hours (16 three-unit courses). A full-time student may expect to complete the Master of Theological Studies degree in two academic years, but must complete the program within five calendar years from the date of first registration in the program. Twelve semester units is the normal full-time course load. Students may elect to submit a 3-credit thesis (roughly 40 pages) or equivalent praxis project in their area of concentration. Students choosing the thesis or praxis project options will register for 3 credits of MTS-8300 in their final semester.

Students in all degree programs must maintain a 3.0 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 Jesuit School of Theology degree programs.

Students are required to take a course that teaches them the following four religion and culture competencies: conceptual, analytical, theological and pastoral. To fulfill this requirement, students must take RS-2092 Culture, Context and Lived Religion or an equivalent course approved by the Associate Dean.

Students are required to submit a portfolio in their final semester. This portfolio has two components:

- 1) Either the student's thesis, praxis project, or a paper of 15-25 pages written as part of an advanced course (4000-level or higher) in the area of concentration.
- 2) A reflection paper (3 pages, double-spaced) on your experience in the MTS program and whether or not your learning achieved the MTS Student Learning Outcomes.

## **Continuing Registration**

MTS students who have completed coursework and are working on final projects must sign up for a 1-credit continuing registration course (MTS-3001) each semester to maintain their student status until their submitted project is approved and they are graduated.

## **Credit Distribution for MTS HyFlex Coursework**

MTS students may come to Berkeley as full-time residential students and take all of their classes in person. However, with our hyflex format, students now have the option of participating in an on-campus fall orientation and on-campus summer and intersession courses, while taking online, hybrid, and remote classes that are offered year round. Students may also choose to come to Berkeley for one or more regular semesters while completing the rest of their studies online.

Forty-eight semester hours of credit must be completed. Students are strongly encouraged to do at least half of their degree program at the Jesuit School of Theology.

### ***I. Introduction to Contextual Theology (ST-2038 or equivalent) (3 credits)***

### ***II. Foundations (24 credits)***

- Biblical Studies (6 credits)
- Theology & Spirituality (6 credits)
- Theological Ethics (6 credits)
- Culture, History & the Arts (6 credits). RS-2092 Culture, Context and Lived Religion or an approved equivalent is required as three of these six units.

### ***III. Concentrations (12 credits)***

- Biblical Studies
- Theology
- Theological Ethics
- Culture, History & the Arts
- Christian Spirituality

### ***IV. Electives (9 credits)***

Students may take 9 credits of electives at JST, around the GTU, or at UC Berkeley.

### ***V. Thesis, Praxis Project, or Advanced Course***

MTS students may choose to write a thesis (roughly 40 pages) or complete an equivalent praxis project in their area of concentration. This thesis or project is to be done under the direction of a full-time JST faculty member approved by the Associate Dean. The student must submit a proposal for the thesis or project, including the name of the director to the Associate Dean for approval. Students who do not elect to complete a thesis or project must take an advanced course (4000 or higher) in their area of concentration. Each of these three options counts as 3 out of the required 12 credits within the concentration.

# MTS Synthesis Paper/Project Guidelines

MTS students may choose to write a thesis (roughly 40 pages) or complete a praxis project in their area of concentration. This thesis/project is to be done under the direction of a full-time JST faculty member approved by the Associate Dean. Students choosing the thesis or praxis options will register for 3 credits of MTS-8300 in their final semester.

**Proposal:** A proposal for the project or paper is subject to the approval of the Associate Dean, who will also approve the principal advisor and a second reader. A form for this proposal is included in this handbook.

**Grade for Thesis/Project:** A sample grade report form is included in this handbook. A copy of the grade sheet should be given to each reader along with the final version of the thesis or project.

**Preparing and Filing of Thesis/Project:** The MTS thesis/project should be formatted in accordance with Library specifications, using the most recent edition of *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate Turabian.

One PDF copy of the final, corrected and signed version of the thesis/project should be digitally filed with the JST Registrar's Office. The MTS thesis/project will be kept on file at JST.

**Thesis/Project Deadline:** The MTS thesis/project must be graded, corrected, signed and submitted to the JST Registrar by the **first Monday in May** for May graduation.

All forms mentioned above can be found at the end of this handbook, and are also available online at <https://www.scu.edu/jst/academics/office-of-the-registrar/>





## Style Guidelines for Thesis

Turabian is the writing style for Graduate Theological Union theses and dissertations (i.e., the most recent edition of *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate Turabian). Approval of style is the responsibility of the candidate's committee.

### 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

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.

Left: 1 1/2 inches (When a hard copy of the thesis/project is bound, the left-hand margin will fall into a gutter; for this reason the left margin is larger than the others.)

Top, right, and bottom: 1 inch

Page numbers may be no closer than 1/2 inch from edge.

### TITLE PAGE:

A sample of the required title page can be found at the end of this handbook.



## Guidelines for the MTS Praxis Project

An MTS project differs from an MTS thesis in that it is immediately ready for pastoral, educational, counseling, or other practical situations. It is an application of theological expertise to a particular need or for a particular group.

Examples of MTS projects include syllabi for courses, materials for retreats, educational films, blogs, etc. Criteria for grading MTS projects include:

1. Does the project seem to be informed by good theological understanding in the student's area of concentration, including appropriate bibliographical material?
2. Does the project reflect good general theological knowledge, including relevant bibliographical material?
3. Is the material presented appropriate in topics, language and level of difficulty for its intended audience?
4. Does the Analytical Introduction (see below) clearly state the purpose, methodology and goals of the project?
5. Does the project seem likely to achieve the goals stated, assuming appropriate audience and presentation?

MTS projects should be prefaced by an Analytical Introduction of about 5-8 typed, double-spaced pages explaining the project. Material to be covered in the Analytical Introduction includes:

1. **Title**
2. **Rationale and purpose:** Briefly state why you are doing this project. (E.g., "While teaching 10<sup>th</sup> grade, I came to realize that my students had little or no knowledge of the gospel of John. At the same time, our school has a strong institutional commitment to social justice. In this project, I seek to bring those two dynamics into dialogue.") Next, describe the purpose of the project and its intended audience (e.g., "This class is intended to provide high school students with a solid introduction to the gospel of John, especially as it speaks to questions of social justice.")
3. **Goals:** (e.g., "Retreatants will be introduced to *Lectio Divina* as a prayer practice.") What, specifically, will the recipients of your work gain from it? Most projects will have 3-4 distinct goals.
4. **Structure and Methodology:** How is the project organized, and why in this way? How will your project meet its goals? What scholarly resources and concepts are you drawing on, and why? Make sure to connect the aspects of your project clearly to your bibliography. (NOT: "I am using historical-critical methodology to read the text." RATHER: "The historical-critical scholarship of X shapes this project. As X states, 'Scripture without a sense of historical context is deracinated.' Therefore, I will...") This should be the main part of your paper.
5. **Materials:** A schedule, budget, advertising flier, or other appropriate materials may be included here.

## 6. Conclusion

NOTE: In general, remember that the MTS project is to be equivalent to a 40-page paper. Therefore, if your project includes a structural task (like designing a parish education program or a semester-long course), while you need not provide all the specific texts you will need to create, you should include enough specific materials for your graders to have a sense that you are integrating your theological knowledge well in the project. For a project that is a school class, this would mean including some lectures in full text (i.e., if speaking from an outline, include the outline), while the syllabus will also be significant in evaluating the project overall. For a guidebook for hospital chaplains, this would mean including all or most of the final text, but some chapters may be left in outline form. For a blog, submit the website address, but in your introduction highlight several entries, perhaps with feedback from or interaction with readers. If the project involves research with human subjects, SCU protocols on human subjects must be observed.

### **Filing deadlines, registration and graduation for MTS Students:**

#### **Filing Deadlines for Graduation:**

- Spring graduates: The filing deadline is the first Monday in May.
- September/October graduates: The filing deadline is the date of the late registration deadline for Fall Semester registration.
- Fall registrants completing before the spring semester: The filing deadline coincides with the registration deadline for Spring Semester registration. These students will receive their degree in May.

#### **Registration Requirements:**

Students must file their thesis by the late registration deadline for the upcoming semester in order to avoid having to pay tuition for an additional semester.

**Graduations:** 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.

# Technology Requirements for Online Coursework

## Technical Requirements

The JST uses Moodle for our online classes. Moodle is a web-based learning management tool that allows professors to post readings, assignments, videos, and engage the class in dialogue. In order to use Moodle, you will need a login (provided by the school upon registration) and the following tools to ensure your success:

1. A working email address that you monitor frequently. We recommend that you use your student email address ([\\_\\_\\_\\_@scu.edu](mailto:____@scu.edu)) for this purpose.
2. A working, reliable internet connection and a reliable electric power supply.
3. A computer, laptop, or tablet with an updated operating system (Windows, Mac, Linux) and an updated internet browser (Chrome, Firefox).
4. A webcam.
5. A microphone.

## Recommended Browsers

[Google Chrome](#) and [Mozilla Firefox](#) are recommended for use with Moodle with a computer. Safari is not recommended. On smartphones and tablets, use a web browser to access Moodle (do not use the Moodle app).

## Recommended Settings

- Make sure that the browser is set to accept cookies (from both 1st party and 3rd party).
- Javascript must be enabled.

## Recommended Software

The latest versions of these Adobe products are required for most classes:

[Adobe Reader](#)

[Adobe Flash Player](#)

The latest versions of these other media players are also suggested:

[Windows Media Player](#) (for PC's)

[Apple QuickTime](#) (for Macs)



**PROGRAM WORKSHEET**

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

This worksheet is intended to assist you in determining your progress in the M.T.S. program.

**M.T.S. Hyflex**

**Introduction to Contextual Theology (ST-2038) (3 Units)**

<b>Foundations (24 units)</b>	
<p><b>Biblical Studies (BS, OT, NT)</b></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p><b>Theology &amp; Spirituality (ST, LS, SP, PT)</b></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>
<p><b>Theological Ethics (CE)</b></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p><b>Culture, History, &amp; the Arts (RS, HS, HR, RA)</b></p> <p>1. RS 2092: Culture, Context &amp; Lived Religion or equivalent</p> <p>2.</p>

<b>A. Concentration (12 units)</b>	<b>Electives (9 units)</b>
<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4. Thesis/Praxis Project/Advanced Course (4000-level or higher)</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>



## THESIS/PRAxis PROJECT PROPOSAL

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Paper/Project:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Area of Concentration: \_\_\_\_\_

### READERS' SIGNATURES:

Director/Academic Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Scope & Nature** (½ page): Briefly describe the scope and nature of your paper or project. Within what social, historical, and/or cultural context is your work situated? Who or what are the subject(s) of your study?
2. **Research Question**
3. **Thesis Statement**
4. **Structure and Methodology** (1-2 pages): How is the project organized and why? How will your project meet its goals? What scholarly resources and concepts are you drawing from, and why? Methodology should comprise a large portion of your paper.
5. **Significance** (1 paragraph): Briefly state why you are doing this project and why it is important to your intended audience. What *specifically* will the recipients of your work gain from it?
6. **Short Bibliography** (1 page)

Approval of JST Associate Dean

Date

**SUBMIT THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE JST ASSOCIATE DEAN'S OFFICE.**

A copy will be returned to you.



## GRADE REPORT FORM

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

***Instructions to the Student:***

1. Fill in your name and thesis title.
2. Give a copy to your thesis/project director.

Title of Thesis/Project: \_\_\_\_\_

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***Instructions to Director:***

1. Please check one of the following grade options.
2. Return the signed form to the JST Registrar, 1735 Le Roy, Berkeley, 94709.

- Pass** with No Revisions  
 Pass with **Minor** Revisions  
 **Returned** for **Major** Revisions\*  
 Does **Not** Pass

Print Director Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*If the reader feels major revisions are necessary, s/he should contact the student and thesis director, and retain this grade sheet until satisfied that the thesis requires only minor revisions.

Comments (if any): **PLEASE INDICATE IF THESE ARE CONFIDENTIAL TO THE ASSOCIATE DEAN.** *[Use the reverse side of this page or separate sheet if necessary.]*

**FORM FOR TITLE PAGE OF THESIS**

.....(Title in CAPS).....

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A Thesis by

.....(Your Name).....

presented to

The Faculty of the

Jesuit School of Theology

of Santa Clara University

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Theological Studies

Berkeley, California

---(month & year of filing)---

Committee Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Type first and last name below line), Director      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Type first and last name below line), Reader      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
*IF THERE IS A THIRD READER* (Type first and last name below line), Reader      Date