

# **FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES 2011-2012**



**August 2011**

# FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

## Academic Policies

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## 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.

**Note:** There are no new admissions to the MAMC program in academic year 2011-2012. The program has been suspended for one year in order to restructure it.

- **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.

### 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 eight 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](#).

### Certificate Students

To earn a Certificate in Theological Studies, students must:

- Enroll in FST under the status of a Special Student

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- Complete 24 semester units for a letter grade (12 of which must be from FST, no more than 3 units may be from an online course, and only 3 units from a Special Reading Course)
- Complete all course work within three academic years
- Maintain an overall 3.0 grade point average
- Complete at least one major paper for a course in an area of special interest

International students seeking to fulfill requirements for a year of study abroad may qualify for this program.

In the event that a student completes all the coursework for the MAMC, MDIV, or MTS degrees, but withdraws before completing the final synthesis project or thesis, the student may request a Certificate in Theological Studies. At the discretion of the Academic Dean, and in consultation with the faculty, FST may grant the Certificate in Theological 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. Special students may take courses from any GTU school.

### 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, students are assigned a faculty advisor to assist in selecting courses that fulfill the requirements of their degree programs, and to provide other academic consultation. Advisors are chosen with a student's degree program and educational goals in mind.

## ADMISSIONS

### FST Application Requirements

#### 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, 2010* by the Association of Theological Schools of the United States and Canada, specifically:

- **Admission of Students with Baccalaureate Degree.** Students must possess a baccalaureate degree from a member institution of the Association of Universities and Colleges or an institution accredited by a United States agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or the educational equivalent of the baccalaureate degree.
- **Admission of Students without Baccalaureate Degree.** Educational equivalent of the baccalaureate degree shall be determined on the basis

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of undergraduate work commensurate in kind, quality, and amount typical of North American baccalaureate degree programs.

Occasional exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Academic Dean when compensatory factors are present.

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

- Application form
- Statement of purpose
- Application fee
- Official transcripts of all undergraduate and any previous graduate work
- Three letters of academic or ministerial recommendation

Applications are available from the Admissions Office or can be downloaded [here](#).

### **Special Requirements for MDIV Applicants**

Certain special requirements apply to applicants to the MDIV. program:

- For members of religious communities, a letter of approval from their ordinary or religious superior
- A certificate of completion issued by the applicant's ordinary or religious superior stating that the applicant has taken a minimum of 30 semester credit hours in undergraduate philosophy or its equivalent as prescribed by the USCCB *Program for priestly Formation*. Franciscan Friars who do not have 30 semester hours in undergraduate philosophy or its equivalent may enroll in the MAMC program, then transfer to the MDIV when they meet the philosophy credit requirement.

### **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, MDIV, and Certificate programs. Note that deadlines for application to the GTU Common MA program are firm. Refer to the [GTU Catalog](#) for more information about the MA program.

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### **Proof of Admission**

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

### **Registration**

#### **Schedule of Classes**

A [schedule of classes](#) is available on the GTU website. Courses are referenced by discipline, faculty, course title, time, and location. The listing is updated constantly and provides the most accurate information.

#### **Registration Periods**

There are three periods each semester when students are able to register online and/or make changes to their registration:

- Early Registration: a two-week period that occurs during the semester previous to the one for which the student is registering
- General Registration: the two-week period prior to the start of the semester
- Late Registration: the first two weeks of the semester. A fee is assessed for registering late, but not for making changes to course registration

New students will register at general registration their first semester of attendance. [Specific dates of the registration period](#) are published on the GTU website. Procedures are explained to entering students during the new student orientation period. FST's Registrar is available to assist in the [registration process](#).

#### **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 10<sup>th</sup> week of the term, except under circumstances approved by the Academic Dean.

#### **Registration Holds**

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

#### **Intersession Courses**

FST students enrolled full time in Fall semester may take 1.5 credits during intersession 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.

#### **Summer Courses**

Some GTU schools offer summer courses. They are available to all GTU students. Fees are paid directly to the school offering the course.

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### Tuition and Fees

All student accounts are due on or before the first day of classes each semester. Accounts may be paid in cash, check, or money order. Because of the high processing fees, FST does not accept credit cards for payment of tuition and fees.

If full payment of current tuition and fees by the first day of classes is not possible, students must make a payment plan arrangement with the Business Manager at the beginning of each semester.

Unpaid balances cannot be carried over from semester to semester. Any unpaid balances will be subject to finance charges and collection procedures. Students with unpaid balances will not be permitted to register for the following semester. Diplomas or transcripts will not be issued unless all accounts are paid in full. 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%
Fourth week of semester and beyond	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.

## 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 special 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](#) and present it to your faculty advisor and the Academic Dean. Upon approval from the Academic Dean, the Registrar will apply the transfer credits to the student's transcript.

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### Special Students

Special Students who eventually enroll in a degree program may request that up to 24 credits be applied to the degree program.

### 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.

### GTU Cross-Registration

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

## 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 identified by topic (such as, Introduction to Old Testament) 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. FST/GTU online courses may be taken for electives only, and no more than six (6) credits may count toward a degree program.

### 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 cov-

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ered 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 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, prepare a thesis proposal, obtain approval from the Academic Dean, and negotiate commitments and schedules with the director and reader. The [MTS Thesis Guidelines](#) 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](#).

## 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. Students 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.

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### Cheating and Plagiarism

Students are expected to submit only work that is their own, and to acknowledge 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 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. Cheating or plagiarism may result in dismissal, which will be determined by the Academic Dean in consultation with a faculty committee.

If a student is suspected of plagiarism in a course taken from a school other than FST, the following protocol will be followed:

1. The faculty member teaching the course will notify the dean of his or her own school that an FST student is suspected of plagiarism.
2. The dean of the faculty member's school will notify the dean of FST that the student has been suspected of plagiarism.
3. The faculty member will follow the policy of his or her own school in regard to possible consequences within the context of the course (for example, failing grade on the assignment, failing grade for the course).
4. FST will be responsible for following its own policy in regard to possible consequences beyond the context of the course (for example, warning, academic probation, expulsion).

### 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 obtain a *Change in Grade* form from the Registrar, complete it showing both the incorrect grade and the new one, get the approval of the Academic Dean, and submit it back to the Registrar.

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 an elective course may be taken

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pass/fail. A grade of “P” (pass) is considered “B” work or better. Work below “B” is considered fail. Core courses may not be taken pass/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 submit 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 Registrar.

### 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” (Incomplete), 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.

## 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.

### 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 and settlement of all indebtedness to FST and the GTU. Diplomas are mailed after grades are reported.

### Transcripts

Transcripts must be requested in writing using the [Transcript Request](#) form. 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 FST and the GTU. 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.