

Graduate Department of Religion | Vanderbilt University

M.A. Degree Plan – Matriculation year: 2022

The M.A. program is designed to enable students to explore personal interests or vocational options, to acquire a background for teaching at the secondary level, or to attain a foundation for further studies at the doctoral level.

Specialty M.A. This program involves a concentration in one of the subspecialties of religious study. Students will select a major of at least 12 hours and a minor of at least 6 hours from the following areas: ethics and society; Hebrew Bible; historical studies; critical studies in Asian, Islamic and Jewish traditions; homiletics and liturgics; Jewish studies; New Testament; religion, psychology, and culture; and theological studies. The remaining hours may be chosen from the above areas or from other departments of the Graduate School.

Cross-Disciplinary M.A. This program, to which students are admitted under exceptional circumstances, provides an opportunity for students to relate one of the subspecialties of religious studies to an appropriate supportive discipline. Normally, 12 hours are taken in one of the areas listed under the specialty M.A., with the remaining hours taken in another department of the Graduate School. The thesis will attempt to integrate the methods and subject matters of the two disciplines in relation to a chosen problem.

1. Coursework

Total hours: 30 (10 courses)

Required course:

REL 8010: Religion Research for MA students (Fall 2021) No credit

Semester completed:

Incompletes are discouraged. Any Incompletes must be completed within twelve (12) months of the end of the semester in which it was taken, or the Incomplete will automatically become permanent. An "I" that is not replaced by a letter grade may be changed, at the discretion of the instructor, to an "F"; otherwise, the "I" will automatically become permanent and will remain on the transcript. When a student enters a semester with two or more Incompletes, he or she will be restricted to a lighter load of courses. The normal load of three or four courses will be reduced by:

- one course for two Incompletes
- two courses for three or four Incompletes.

Transfer credits: as many as 6 credit hours as long as the courses meet the following criteria.

- Must be graduate level credit from an accredited institution.
- Grade earned must be "B" or higher ("P" or "S" grades must be certified to be "B" or higher by the reporting institution).

- Previous credit must not have been used toward required hours for an undergraduate degree.

Research Courses: REL 7999 Master's Thesis Research [0]

After coursework is completed or in a semester with less than nine hours, MA students register for this course to maintain full-time student status.

2. Language

(One modern language of research relevant to the proposed program of study.) The M.A. language requirement may be satisfied by:

- Performing satisfactorily in the GDR administered language examination,
- Taking and passing with the grade of B+ or higher a Vanderbilt University course, including a final exam, designed specifically to teach graduate students to use the language in research, or
- Presenting transcript evidence of two years (12 semester hours) of college language credit with a grade average of B or better during the previous five years.
- If a student has an existing second-language ability not developed through coursework (for example, a student whose native language is not English, bilingual students, or heritage speakers) s/he may, with the approval from their advisor, petition the department to accept their native language as satisfying one modern language requirement. Final approval from the DGS is required.

Since candidates specializing in Hebrew Bible or New Testament are expected to work with the original texts in Hebrew and Greek, students in these fields may not meet the general language requirement with Hebrew or Greek.

3. Thesis

(Due no later than six years after matriculation.)

The M.A. thesis topic is determined in consultation with, and at the approval of, the candidate's Thesis Committee. This committee is comprised of two Graduate School faculty members, at least one of whom should be in the area of the student's major. This two-person committee also evaluates the final product. The thesis is typically 50-70 pages in length.

Date of completion:

Worksheets and Forms:

- [Transfer Credit Checklist](#)
- [Permission to Audit](#)
- [Permission to Receive Graduate Credit for an Undergraduate Level Course](#)
- [Request for Independent Study/Directed Readings Course](#)

- Minor Area Worksheet

- Request for Incomplete

- [Thesis Preparation](#)

- [Intent to Graduate Form](#)

Most forms are linked from the GDR student portal, others can be picked up from the GDR office.

Student portal: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/religion/php/>