MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGION DEGREE PROGRAM

POLICY MANUAL

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AT
GETTYSBURG

61 SEMINARY RIDGE
GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17325

A Message from the Dean

The Master of Arts in Religion degree (MAR) is "designed to provide students the opportunity to pursue a concentration in an area of theological interest while also providing a broad foundation for further graduate study or for general educational or vocational purposes".

The Degree program outcomes include:

- Demonstrate competency in a selected area of theological study
- Engage selected areas of theological studies with attention to their breadth and depth.
- Develop skills in theological research, critical thinking and communication.

As you work through the MAR program, you may use this Manual to guide your work. Periodic updates of policies will be made available on our seminary website.

The Faculty welcomes you to this program with the hope that it will provide nurture, new perspectives and responsiveness to the realities of ministry in the twenty-first century.

Cordially,

The Rev. Robin J. Steinke, Ph.D.
Dean of the Seminary

THE MAR DEGREE

I. Rationale

This degree program is designed to provide students the opportunity to pursue a concentration in an area of theological interest while also providing a broad foundation for further graduate study or for general educational or vocational use.

II. Outcomes

This degree program prepares students to:

- Demonstrate competency in a selected area of theological study
- Engage selected areas of theological studies with attention to their breadth and depth
- Develop skills in theological research, critical thinking, and communication

III. Strategies

The degree requires a total of 51 credits:

- 37.5 credits of course work, including:
  - 3 credits in the Keynote Course
  - 15 credits in an area of concentration
  - 9 credits in a secondary area
  - 10.5 credits as free electives
- 1.5 credits Practicum in Theological Research
- 12 credits in a Capstone Experience, which could be either:
  - Thesis research and writing (which would include a final, oral defense of the thesis)
  - A project or internship (which would include a final assessment of work completed as pertains to the degree and concentration outcomes)
  - An internship (which would include a final assessment of work completed as pertains to the degree and concentration outcomes)

Students also are required to complete the Sexual Ethics Seminar.

The Keynote Course serves as an opportunity to form relationships important to collegial learning and an introduction to the program and to the critical role social media play in effective communication. The Capstone Experience serves as an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the degree outcomes.

Concentrations are offered in: Biblical Studies, History and Theology, Religion and Media, and Practical Theology. Students are expected to declare the area of concentration no later than following successful completion of 24 credits.

Students are expected to declare their area of concentration before successful completion of 24 credits. This decision, made in consultation with the academic advisor and a possible thesis

/project/internship advisor, should be communicated using "Selection of Concentration" form available from the Registrar (http://www.ltsg.edu/Departments/Registrar).

Students are expected to gain competence in the tools appropriate to their area of concentration.

IV. Assessment

Student performance is assessed through coursework and capstone experience, and the capstone experience especially includes assessment of the student's fulfillment of the outcomes of the degree.

The degree program itself is regularly assessed by the MAR/MAMS Committee.

Grading: See the current LTSG *Catalog* for extensions and grade requirements for the degree.

OVERVIEW OF THE MAR DEGREE PROGRAM

I. Duration

The total program should normally be completed within two academic years. If the total program is not completed within four academic years, the student must petition the faculty for continuance in the degree program, providing a timeline for the completion of remaining work. Any extension of that timeline must in turn be petitioned to the faculty.

II. Advising

Upon admission, a student is assigned an academic advisor responsible for guiding the student in his/her educational program at the Seminary. The academic advisor may or may not eventually serve as the student's thesis advisor. Once a student's capstone experience is approved, the faculty member overseeing that experience becomes the student's academic advisor as well.

III. A Possible Sample Course Sequence

Year	August Intensive	Fall Semester	Jan (J Term)	Spring Semester
1	Keynote Course (3)	12 credits		12 credits
2		11.5 credits 4.110 Research Practicum (1.5 credits)		Thesis, Project, or Internship (12 credits)

IV. Coursework

Students in the MAR degree program have no stipulated field education requirements, but field education may become a component of a concentration.

Students may take courses offered or create independent studies.

Students are expected to gain competence in the tools appropriate to their area of concentration. For example, biblical or historical studies may require language competencies; religion and media may require competence in web design; and certain studies may require statistical or other methodological competencies.

A. MAR Keynote Course

This course serves as both an orientation to the MAR degree concentration in Religion and Media, and also as an orientation to the MAR program in general. It introduces the landscapes of media culture with an emphasis on active engagement in creation within those landscapes, and it also engages important theological issues raised by and in those landscapes. It examines how spiritual formation and theological reflection occur within media cultures, and raises questions around the promotion of faith in public life through media. This course is required for all MAR candidates and highly recommended for all MAMS candidates.

B. Independent Study Courses

The MAR degree program provides opportunity for the student to negotiate up to twelve credits of independent studies in the course of his/her program (excluding the required Practicum in Theological Research). The student's academic advisor, the course instructor, and the Dean must approve such studies in advance.

Several rubrics are important:

- The student shall consult with his/her academic advisor prior to negotiating an independent study.
- Similarly, prior to registration the student shall consult with the faculty member whom he/she hopes will be the instructor of the study.
- The student will then complete and sign an independent study proposal that includes a statement of rationale, outcomes, strategies, and means of assessment, together with a sample bibliography. The proposal shall be submitted to the faculty member and Dean for written approval, and accompanies the registration form.
- All independent studies require the same registration procedures as other courses, and all rules and deadlines concerning registration, fees, withdrawals, and extensions ~~shall~~ pertain.

C. Online Course Policies – see Student Handbook

D. Transferring Credits into the MAR Degree Program – see Student Handbook

V. Capstone Experience

The capstone experience for the MAR degree allows for a summative evaluation. Candidates may elect a written thesis, an internship, or a project to serve as their capstone experience.

Students will confirm the topic of their thesis or outline plans for their project or internship in consultation with their thesis/project advisor. Normally this will occur by the end of their first year with submission to the M.A.R. / M.A.M.S committee, and they will work on it during their second year. A preliminary draft of the thesis or report on the work completed is presented to the student's thesis/project advisor by March 1 and the final draft by April 1. An oral examination on the thesis or on work completed in the project or internship is then arranged.

Students are expected to declare their area of concentration before successful completion of 24 credits. This decision, made in consultation with the academic advisor and a possible thesis /project/internship advisor, should be communicated using "Selection of Concentration" form available from the Registrar (http://www.ltsg.edu/Departments/Registrar).

A. MAR Thesis

1. **Nature, Purpose, and Scope**

The MAR thesis is a research paper that demonstrates the student's ability to engage in significant scholarship. It should embody the results of original research and substantiate a specific view.

A typical MAR thesis is fifty (50) to seventy-five (75) pages in length, but needs to be long enough to provide the depth appropriate to the study, and short enough to maintain the requisite focus.

2. **Timeline [beginning in the second year of study]**

Step 1	July 1	Selection of Topic Advisor
Step 2	Fall Semester	Practicum in Theological Research
Step 3	Oct 1	Thesis Proposal submitted to MAMS/MAR Committee
Step 4	Feb. 1	Submission of 2 chapters and preliminary bibliography to Thesis Advisor and to Writing Specialist for style and formatting
Step 5	Mar 1	Submission of Complete draft to Thesis Advisor
Step 6	Mar 20	Submission of final draft to 2nd reader
Step 7	Apr. 5	Review and Defense
Step 8	Apr. 20	Submission of Revisions to Thesis Advisor and, if requested by that advisor, also to the Writing Specialist
Step 9	One Week before Graduation	Submission of archival copies (faculty signatures take place at this point)

NB: Exceptions to this time line (at any stage) must be petitioned to the Dean of the Seminary.

3. **4.110 Practicum in Theological Research**

Students registering for the thesis credits in more than one semester should complete the Practicum in Theological Research by the time they have completed six credits of the thesis.

Students registering for twelve thesis credits in one semester should take the Practicum in Theological Research before that semester.

4. **Thesis Proposal**

Before registering for Thesis Research and Writing, the student's thesis proposal must be submitted to and approved by the MAMS/MAR Committee. This proposal, crafted by the student in consultation with a possible thesis advisor, should be of approximately 1200-1500 words, including the following sections:

a. a provisional title of the thesis.

b. a general statement of the thesis, which defines the area and scope of the study, indicates the basic proposition or question which the thesis will examine ; and states. clearly the desired goal or outcome of the thesis.

c. the rationale for the thesis, which involves setting forth the origin and background of the study, its implications, the reason for interest in it, and the need for it.

d. a survey of previous studies relating to the thesis. The student shall present a brief description of earlier studies which have bearing on the proposed investigation. This description should contain a statement of what earlier studies have revealed and

should carry reference to areas of the general problem which remain unexplored or inadequately explored.

e. sources , including a preliminary bibliography of approximately 20 sources.

f. the investigative methodology and procedures, which should include a clear explanation of the steps one expects to follow in carrying out the investigation.

g. a tentative outline of the document, which should show at least the larger sections, such as chapters and major subdivisions.

The thesis proposal cover page (sample at Appendix A), signed by the thesis advisor, should accompany the thesis proposal when the student submits it to the MAMS/MAR Committee for approval. Upon approval by the faculty members of the MAMS/MAR Committee, the chair will notify the student and thesis advisor, sign the proposal cover page, and forward it to the Dean and Registrar. The Committee also will recommend three possible second readers for the thesis; the dean will choose and inform the second reader.

5. **The Thesis Semester**

During thesis preparation, the student is to take the initiative in arranging conferences with the thesis advisor. Normally, these conferences should take place at least monthly.

If an advisor is on leave, on sabbatical, or leaves the faculty of the school, the need for replacement should be discussed by the candidate with the Dean who will appoint a substitute in consultation with the appropriate faculty member.

a. **Thesis Drafts**

The number and nature of preliminary drafts will depend upon the desires of the student and thesis advisor. In any case, the student must submit a draft of two chapters and a preliminary bibliography to the advisor by February 1 before graduation. These drafts should be submitted to the Writing Center specialist at the same time, so that style and formatting can be checked. The thesis advisor may require submission of material chapter by chapter. The thesis advisor approves the student's progression to the final draft.

b. **The Final Draft of the Thesis**

The student submits a complete draft to the advisor by March 1. After receiving and making requested changes, the student submits a final draft to the advisor and second reader by March 20.

6. **Thesis Style**

a. Leave a one and one-half inch margin at the left on each page and at least three-quarters of an inch on the other three sides. The same margins apply to charts, graphs, tables, and maps. Use a five-space indentation for paragraphing.

b. Double space the body of the manuscript. Single space long quotations, footnotes, and similar special material.

c. The project document should otherwise follow the stylistic recommendations of the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian.

d. The Title Page format is provided at Appendix B.

e. The Approval Page must follow the title page. The format for the approval page is provided at Appendix C.

7. **Thesis Defense**

The thesis advisor schedules a thesis defense with the student and the second reader, to take place before April 5. At this meeting the faculty readers engage in conversation with the student about the thesis and how it demonstrates facility in the degree outcomes. The dean serves on this panel *ex officio*, but may also serve as the second member of the panel.

At the close of the defense, the panel may:

a. Approve the thesis as submitted

b. Approve with minor typographical corrections, reviewed by the thesis advisor

c. Approve with specific, substantive changes, reviewed only by the thesis advisor

d. Require significant revision before a second review by the full panel.

The panel may also choose to approve the thesis "with distinction" as a means of acknowledging exceptional work.

If the panel requires significant revision before a second review, and there is not time before the end of the semester to complete such a process, the student must apply for an extension using the "Request for Extension" form. See the Student Handbook for details. The student may apply to graduate "pending completion of requirements," but approving that application rests in the sole discretion of the faculty.

8. **Final Submission of the Thesis (Archival Copies)**

a. Acid-free, archival quality paper is required. Print quality needs to be clear and dark.

b. Two copies of the thesis, including the approval page, should be prepared and submitted to the Registrar by the day preceding graduation. The library will bind both copies, one for the library archives and one for library circulation.

c. With each copy of the thesis, provide an abstract (same margins, but single-spaced). This is a summary document of not more than one thousand words. It should enable one to take in at a glance the specific issue to be studied, the method, the principal facts and the solution or findings.

d. All students are encouraged to make their work available to a wider audience by allowing access to an electronic full text pdf file of the thesis via a link to its record on the library's online catalog.

e. In order to graduate, the student must have submitted two archival copies of the thesis (see below) and paid all outstanding balances.

B. MAR Internship

1. Nature, Purpose, and Scope

The MAR internship is an intensive practicum meant to provide practical experience in a working environment that directly relates to the student's course of study and intended vocation.

A typical MAR internship should be roughly 300 hours, and take place over the course of one to two semesters. There are twelve total credits for the internship

2. 4.110 Practicum in Theological Research

Students registering for the internship in more than one semester should complete the Practicum in Thesis Preparation by the time they have completed six credits of the thesis.

Students registering for twelve thesis credits in one semester should take the Practicum in Theological Research before that semester

3. Internship Proposal

Once the student and a proposed internship advisor have agreed concerning the subject, the student prepares an internship proposal of approximately 1200-1500 words, in the form of a ROSA statement:.

- R: Give the **rationale** for the internship—why this location, this supervisor, these duties, etc.
- O: List the intended **outcomes** of the internship
- S: List the intended **strategies** that will be used to achieve the intended outcomes
- A: Indicate how the **assessment** of those outcomes will occur. This should include both supervisor evaluation and self-evaluation by the student.

The internship proposal cover page (sample at Appendix D), signed by the proposed internship advisor and the academic advisor, should accompany the internship proposal when the student submits it to the MAMS/MAR Committee for approval. This cover page also includes the name and title of the internship supervisor. Upon approval by the faculty members of the MAMS/MAR Committee, the chair will notify the student and faculty advisor, sign the proposal cover page, and forward it to the Dean and Registrar. The Committee will also recommend three possible second members of the post-internship revew; the dean will choose and inform the second reader.

4. The Internship

During the internship the student is to take the initiative in arranging conferences with the internship advisor. Normally, these conferences should take place at least monthly.

If an internship advisor is on leave, on sabbatical, or leaves the faculty of the school, the need for replacement should be discussed by the candidate with the Dean who will appoint a substitute in consultation with the appropriate faculty member.

The student is responsible for providing the internship advisor with final evaluation forms from her or himself, and from the internship supervisor (see Appendix E and F), together with any other assessment materials described in the proposal, by three weeks before proposed graduation.

5. **Post-Internship Review**

The internship advisor schedules a review with the student and the second member of the review panel, to take place no later than a week before proposed graduation. At this meeting the faculty readers engage in conversation with the student about the internship and how it demonstrates facility in the degree outcomes. The dean serves on this panel *ex officio*, but may also serve as the second member of the panel. The internship advisor takes into account the work of the review in assigning a grade and filling out a descriptive report for the internship.

C. MAR Project

1. **Nature, Purpose, and Scope**

The MAR project is a creation meant to provide practical experience in the student's chosen course of study. It could include such media as the arts (visual, plastic, performance, music, etc.), the use of web resources or social networks, development of courses or other resources, authoring of parish teaching resources, hymns, or services.

The project should require roughly 300 hours or work, and take place over the course of one to two semesters. There are twelve total credits for the project.

2. **4.110 Practicum in Theological Research**

Students registering for the internship in more than one semester should complete the Practicum in Thesis Preparation by the time they have completed six credits of the thesis.

Students registering for twelve thesis credits in one semester should take the Practicum in Theological Research before that semester

3. **Project Proposal**

Once the student and a proposed project advisor have agreed concerning the subject, the student prepares a project proposal of approximately 1200-1500 words, in the form of a ROSA statement.

- R: Give the **rationale** for the project—why this subject, this audience, this medium, etc.
- O: List the intended **outcomes** of the project.
- S: List the intended **strategies** that will be used to achieve the intended outcomes.
- A: Indicate how the **assessment** of those outcomes will occur. This should include evaluation by both the project director and the student him or herself.

If directing the project requires expertise beyond that found on the seminary faculty, the student has responsibility for finding a project director agreeable to the project advisor and the faculty members of the MAMS/MAMS committee.

The project proposal cover page (sample at Appendix G), signed by the proposed internship advisor and the academic advisor, should accompany the project proposal when the student submits it to the MAMS/MAR Committee for approval. This cover page also includes the name and title of the project director, if that person is different from the project advisor. Upon approval by the faculty members of the MAMS/MAR Committee, the chair will notify the student and faculty advisor, sign the proposal cover page, and forward it to the Dean and Registrar. The Committee also will recommend

three possible second members for the project review; the dean will choose and inform the second member.

LTSG is in the process of establishing a policy regarding the use of human subjects in research. Until this policy is established, proposals for projects that include experiential dimensions for people other than the candidate are asked to include consideration of three related questions:

a. how the confidentiality of participants will be preserved;
b. how support for a participant will be provided, if the experience in the project becomes uncomfortable or damaging to the participant; and
c. how participants will be able to leave the experience if it becomes uncomfortable or damaging to the participant

4. **Project**

During the internship the student is to take the initiative in arranging conferences with the project advisor. Normally, these conferences should take place at least monthly.

If a project advisor is on leave, on sabbatical, or leaves the faculty of the school, the need for replacement should be discussed by the candidate with the Dean who will appoint a substitute in consultation with the appropriate faculty member.

The student is responsible for providing the project advisor with final evaluation forms from her or himself, and from the project director (see Appendix H and I), together with any other assessment materials described in the proposal, by three weeks before proposed graduation.

5. **Project Paper**

Upon completion of the project, the candidate prepares a paper of 2000-4000 words which includes

a. a description and analysis of the project;
b. a reflection on the project's theological, biblical, and historical bases and goals; and
c. an evaluation of the project and its implementation.

6. **Project Review**

The project advisor schedules a review with the student and the second member of the review panel, to take place no later than a week before proposed graduation. At this meeting the faculty readers engage in conversation with the student about the project and how it demonstrates facility in the degree outcomes. The dean serves on this panel *ex officio*, but may also serve as the second member of the panel. The project advisor takes into account the work of the review in assigning a grade and filling out a descriptive report for the project.

APPENDIX A [Sample Thesis Proposal Cover Page]

THESIS PROPOSAL COVER PAGE
for the degree of
Master of Arts in Religion (MAR)

STUDENT NAME: _____

THESIS ADVISOR: _____

PROVISIONAL THESIS TITLE:

_____

_____

APPROVAL:

_____ _____
Thesis Advisor Date

_____ _____
MAMS/MAR Committee Chair Date

POSSIBLE SECOND READER FOR THESIS DEFENSE
(3 names of faculty members, provided by Committee Chair):

APPENDIX B [Sample Internship Proposal Cover Page]

INTERNSHIP PROPOSAL COVER PAGE
for the degree of
Master of Arts in Religion (MAR)

STUDENT NAME: _____

INTERNSHIP ADVISOR:_____

INTERNSHIP CONTEXT:_____

INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR:_____

APPROVAL:

_____ _____
Thesis Advisor Date

_____ _____
MAMS/MAR Committee Chair Date

POSSIBLE SECOND MEMBER OF POST-INTERNSHIP REVIEW PANEL
(3 names of faculty members, provided by Committee Chair):

APPENDIX C [Sample Project Proposal Cover Page]

PROJECT PROPOSAL COVER PAGE
for the degree of
Master of Arts in Religion (MAR)

STUDENT NAME: _____

PROJECT ADVISOR:_____

PROJECT DIRECTOR:_____
(If different from Project Advisor)

PROVISIONAL PROJECT TITLE:

_____

_____

APPROVAL:

_____ _____
Thesis Advisor Date

_____ _____
MAMS/MAR Committee Chair Date

POSSIBLE SECOND MEMBER OF PROJECT REVIEW PANEL
(3 names of faculty members, provided by Committee Chair):

APPENDIX D [Sample Thesis Title Page]

(**TITLE HERE IN CAPS**)

A THESIS SUBMITTED BY

(Student Name)

TO THE FACULTY OF

THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT GETTYSBURG

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGION

(date using month and year only [May 2008])
The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg

APPENDIX E [Sample Thesis Approval Page]

APPROVED

_____ Date:_____
(Type name of thesis advisor underneath line)

_____ Date:_____
(Type name of faculty panel member underneath line)

I hereby affirm that all work done for this thesis is my own, and that this work has not been previously presented for credit towards any other academic degree or for any other academic course.

_____ Date:_____
(type name of student underneath line)

APPENDIX F [Final Evaluation Form—Internship Supervisor]

Student's Name: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Internship Site: _____

Address: _____
_____

Internship Outcomes (from the student's Internship Proposal)	**Failure**	**Basic**	**Good**	**Superior**

Summary Comments:

_____
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Please Answer the Following Questions in 2 to 3 paragraphs:

1. **In what areas did the intern most excel?**
2. **In what areas did the intern demonstrate the most improvement?**
3. **What are the areas in which the intern needs continued growth?**
4. **In what ways did your professional context benefit from the intern's presence and work?**

Supervisor's Signature:_____ Date:_____

APPENDIX G [Final Evaluation Form—Intern]

Summary Evaluation:

Internship Outcomes (from the student's Internship Proposal)	**Failure**	**Basic**	**Good**	**Superior**

Summary Comments:

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Please Answer the Following Questions in no more than 2 to 3 paragraphs:

1. **In what areas did you most excel?**
2. **In what areas did you demonstrate the most improvement?**
3. **What are the areas in which you need continued growth?**
4. **How did this internship prepare you to fulfill the degree outcomes:**

   (This degree program prepares students to:

   - Demonstrate competency in a selected area of theological study
   - Engage selected areas of theological studies with attention to their breadth and depth
   - Develop skills in theological research, critical thinking, and communication.)

APPENDIX H [Final Evaluation Form—Project Director]

Student's Name: _____

Name of Project: _____

Director's Name: _____

Project Outcomes (from the student's Project Proposal)	**Failure**	**Basic**	**Good**	**Superior**

Summary Comments:

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Please Answer the Following Questions in 2 to 3 paragraphs:

1. **In what areas did the student most excel?**
2. **What are the areas in which the student needs continued growth?**
3. **Who might benefit from wider distribution or use of the project?**

Project Director's Signature: _____ Date:_____

APPENDIX G [Final Evaluation Form for Project—Student]

Summary Evaluation:

Project Outcomes (from the student's Project Proposal)	**Failure**	**Basic**	**Good**	**Superior**

Summary Comments:

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Please Answer the Following Questions in no more than 2 to 3 paragraphs:

1. **In what areas did you most excel?**
2. **What are the areas in which you need continued growth?**
3. **How did this project help you to fulfill the degree outcomes:**

   (This degree program prepares students to:

   - Demonstrate competency in a selected area of theological study
   - Engage selected areas of theological studies with attention to their breadth and depth
   - Develop skills in theological research, critical thinking, and communication.)