



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Program Handbook



The Doctor of Philosophy is a degree program with specific interdisciplinary concentrations at the most advanced level of study. It's designed to prepare religious leaders to work at the highest levels of teaching, counseling, research, ministry and administrative positions.



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD) PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Revised July 2026



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Statement of Mission and Commitments

Chicago Theological Seminary, a graduate school affiliated with the United Church of Christ, serves God, diverse religious and spiritual communities, and the larger world by educating persons theologically and cultivating the intellectual, spiritual, and ethical capacities of lay and ordained religious leaders, scholars, activists, and others who contribute to the increase of justice and mercy.

Guided by the Spirit of the Divine, inspired by ancient and contemporary prophets, sages, and sacred texts, informed by numerous religious and philosophical traditions, and nurtured by faith and culture, we strive to create a sacred learning community that educates for public ministry, based upon the following interwoven commitments:

- We are committed to a life of mutual teaching and learning, to academic excellence, to open inquiry, and to critical engagement of texts, contexts, and practices in all of our educational programs;
- We are committed, in a world suffering from spiritual impoverishment, which is characterized by meaninglessness, lovelessness, and hopelessness, to proclaim a message of divine purpose, compassion, and promise;
- We are committed, in a society structured by white supremacy and racism, to challenge white privilege, to combat the forces of racial division and domination, and to equip leaders who embrace and celebrate racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity;
- We are committed, in a global context of religious conflicts and a society structured by Christian privilege, to joyous embrace of religious diversity, expanding our groundbreaking work in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Studies to advance understanding and collaboration among the rich multiplicity of spiritual traditions and lifestances;
- We are committed, in a world governed by sex and gender binaries, to advocate gender justice, to nurture movements for women's equality, and to liberate humanity from restrictive gender norms;
- We are committed, in world governed by the presumption of heterosexual expression, to challenge homophobia, to celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other individuals within the spectrum of human sex and sexuality, and to develop leadership to encourage faith communities to become more open and affirming;
- We are committed, in a world stratified by economic and social class, to challenge the structures that sustain poverty and economic disenfranchisement, and to join the struggle, as companions with the poor, for liberation of all from want, homelessness, hunger, and disease;
- We are committed, on a fragile planet threatened by pollution and exploitation, to interrogate ecological policies, theologies, and practices, and to challenge materialism and the devaluation of creation; and,
- We are committed, in recognition that social divisions are local, national, and global, to international collaboration among individuals and institutions with similar commitments to our own.

In all these ways, we embrace not only the rhetoric but the reality of diversity, and recognize the vital intersectionality of our commitments, working together to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. We invite others to join us.

CTS PhD Program Mission Statement

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program of the Chicago Theological Seminary educates persons to reflect synthetically on religion, social justice, and culture by encouraging interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to texts and contexts. We advise and mentor leaders to become scholars who will work at the highest levels of teaching and research within the academy, religious communities, and the public square.

I. Introduction

Founded in 1855 in the Congregational Tradition, Chicago Theological Seminary is the oldest continuing institution of higher learning in the city of Chicago and has offered PhD degrees since 1895. It has as its mission the preparation of persons for transformative leadership in religion and society. It was established to be open to all denominations and currently enrolls students from more than twenty Protestant denominations, as well as the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, and Islamic traditions.

Today, the PhD program is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary degree emphasizing cultural criticism and textual hermeneutics oriented toward social justice. Students in the program have multiple **areas of inquiry** around which they can focus their studies. “Area of Inquiry” is not a substitute language for concentration: while concentrations normally determine the student’s research focus, the areas of inquiry design allows students’ research interests to determine their scholarly trajectory.

These areas of inquiry represent some of the strengths and commitments across CTS through which students can develop their program of study:

- Sacred Texts and Hermeneutical Strategies
- America as an African Diaspora
- Womanist Religious Studies
- World Feminisms
- Interreligious Studies
- LGBTQ Studies
- Theology and Cultural Criticism

PhD Program Goals

1. Graduates should have a thorough understanding of designated fields of study and sufficient mastery of supporting language and research tools.
2. Graduates should be able to apply knowledge in a teaching context.
3. Graduates should be able to engage in original research that advances theological, ethical, and/or biblical knowledge.

PhD Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate ability to conduct original research that advances theological, ethical, and/or biblical knowledge.
2. Demonstrate skills appropriate for teaching college or graduate level classes.
3. Demonstrate ability to synthesize interdisciplinary knowledge.
4. Demonstrate ability to relate texts to contexts.
5. Demonstrate capacity for critical analysis.
6. Demonstrate a breadth and depth of understanding of primary fields.

Freedom of inquiry is fundamentally important for research doctoral programs. As written in CTS's Statement of Mission and Commitments, the institution assures that faculty and students have freedom to conduct research in their respective disciplines and the freedom to communicate the findings of their research.

The Chicago Theological Seminary has been accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) since the Association's accrediting process began in 1938. It is also accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

II. General Admission Requirements

Admission to the PhD program normally requires:

- A. A master's degree or equivalent in theology or religious studies from an accredited college, university, seminary, or professional school.
- B. A superior academic record in previous undergraduate and graduate education.
- C. Three letters of reference and recommendation from relevant referees, e.g., faculty and/or clinical supervisors.
- D. Applicants for whom English is not a first language are required to submit language test scores. They may submit TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores that have been completed no more than two years prior to application, or they may take the Duolingo English Proficiency Test; the minimum test score for Duolingo is 120. The language test requirement may be waived if the applicant has completed another degree, in English, in the US.

Admission is by application to the PhD program faculty. Applications may be obtained by contacting the Chicago Theological Seminary Admissions Office (admissions@ctschicago.edu) or on the CTS webpage (www.ctschicago.edu). Chicago Theological Seminary is committed to fostering the full humanity of all its members. All forms of discrimination and harassment impugn the full humanity of any human being and for this reason are not tolerated in this Seminary. Chicago Theological Seminary does not discriminate, or tolerate discrimination or harassment, against any member of its community on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex/gender, age, religion, disability, pregnancy, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other status protected by

applicable federal, state, or local law in matters of employment or admissions or in any aspect of the educational programs or activities it offers.

III. General Academic Requirements

Note: The following applies to students who began in the PhD program in Fall of 2016 or later. Students who began before Fall 2016 should consult Appendix 4.

1. Minimum residence of two academic years, maximum of nine years (five years to ABD). Twelve courses (36 credits), at least eight of which are taken at or registered through CTS. Normally, PhD students will receive letter grades for all courses, but can be graded pass/no pass at the discretion of individual faculty members when appropriate. During the first year of coursework, the student submits a Program of Study for approval by the PhD Committee.
2. Two modern languages are normally required. In exceptional cases, one language and demonstrated competence in an approved alternative research tool (e.g., statistics) may be approved if the alternative research tool is appropriate to a student's doctoral research. See pp. 12-13 for more information about language examinations.
3. A candidacy examination process consisting of four written area examinations and an oral examination focusing on a preliminary dissertation proposal. An annotated syllabus and accompanying lectures may be substituted for one of the written exams; see p. 14 for more information. See pp. 15-16 for more information about the dissertation proposal.
4. A final dissertation proposal completed following admission to candidacy and in consultation with the candidate's doctoral committee.
5. A dissertation presented to the candidate's doctoral committee, approved by all three members of the committee as "ready for examination" and successfully defended by the candidate. See p. 18 and Appendix 3 for details about the dissertation requirements and the dissertation defense.
6. As of June 2020, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), one of the accrediting bodies of CTS, no longer provides guidelines on course statute of limitations. CTS has set a limit for completion time at nine years after admission. Students surpassing the nine-year mark need to petition the PhD program committee for an extension. Students should also check with financial aid staff about loan compliance.

Review of Students

Every year, the PhD program committee evaluates the progress of all PhD students. At this annual review of students, each student is carefully evaluated and may be counseled on the advisability of continuing in the PhD program.

IV. The Course of Study

The PhD program is divided into three phases: coursework, pre-candidacy, and candidacy.

Phase 1: Coursework

Required Courses

Students are required to complete 12 courses (36 credits), at least 8 of which should be taken at or registered through CTS. Two of these are required courses (see below), and the other 10 are electives.

The following courses are required of all PhD Students:

1. Contemporary Hermeneutical Strategies (RH 601), an advanced introduction to contemporary theories and methods of interpretation.

2. Engaged Pedagogy and Course Design (TEC 604), a course that covers different teaching methods and will require students to develop a course syllabus of their own design. The course also encourages students to write a teaching philosophy statement and lecture on a topic of their choice.

* The Professional Development Workshop Series (TEC 699) is a required non-credit course that will meet periodically over the course of an entire academic year. It covers various aspects of professional development including areas such as writing conference papers, journal articles, grant applications, CVs, and job application cover letters; thinking through dissertation strategies; maximizing value within professional organizations and conferences; coaching about the application process for academic positions; and considering alternative career paths. This series does not count as one of the 12 required courses.

Each of these courses will be offered at least once in every two-year cycle of courses. However, because the courses are sometimes offered only in alternate years, students need to consult with their advisors and/or the Program Director in order to ensure that the courses are taken when available. Failure to do so can result in a delay of the completion of courses and, consequently, a lengthening of the time in the PhD program as a whole.

Choosing Electives

All courses except the required courses listed above are elective and are selected in consultation with the student's PhD advisor and advisory committee. Both in-depth study and the broad background knowledge necessary for grounding the more specialized foci need to be taken into account in choosing courses.

In 2023, the CTS PhD program received a change to the accreditation rules and thus no longer requires students to be on campus for coursework. Courses may now be taken online, but students must ensure that at least half of their online coursework is taken in a synchronous (in real time) format. Online courses that are 100% synchronous will meet for three hours each week on Zoom.

Other courses may meet on Zoom for a portion of this time. When all 12 of a student's courses are considered together, the average amount of synchronous course time should be equivalent to at least six fully synchronous online courses.

Other formats that elective courses may take include:

- Semester-long face-to-face courses at CTS or another of the ACTS schools or at the University of Chicago
- Intensive courses and study tours
- Directed reading courses (see below)

PhD students are allowed to take intermediate and advanced masters-level courses with core and affiliated faculty members if they agree to enhance the course of study to bring it to the doctoral level (generally additional reading, sometimes a teaching assignment, and a major research project). Students who would like to work out a doctoral adaptation for CTS 300-level courses, courses with adjunct professors, or ACTS courses should consult with their advisor.

Grading

Normally, PhD students will receive letter grades for all courses, but they can be graded pass/no pass at the discretion of individual faculty members when appropriate.

Auditing

Students paying tuition for credit courses who wish to audit courses in any given term and have that fact recorded on their transcript, may do so for no additional charge. PhD students may audit classes during any term (Fall, J-Term, Spring, May Term, and Summer) for no cost if they are registered for courses, in pre-candidacy status, or in candidacy status the previous term, and if they have received the permission of the instructor to audit. Students who audit and seek a recorded audit participate in class and do class readings but do not take exams or write papers for the course. At the conclusion of the term, the instructor must verify to the Registrar that the student did, in fact, audit the course.

Directed Readings

A portion of a PhD student's coursework will normally consist of Directed Reading courses. When faculty members agree to lead a directed reading, they are doing this on top of a heavy teaching load and institutional responsibilities; while they are committed to teaching these courses, students should be sensitive to the demands on faculty time. Since the number of directed readings any one faculty member can do is limited, students should arrange directed readings early. They should also consider coming together with other students to think creatively about directed reading courses they can take together. Once enrolled in a directed reading, students are expected to follow the commitments established at the beginning of the course in terms of deadlines and dates for meetings.

1. A normal faculty load for directed readings should normally not exceed one per semester.
2. Ordinarily, directed readings will not be offered where a similar subject is offered in the ACTS Catalog, so students must consult the ACTS Catalog before requesting a directed reading.
3. Directed reading courses are normally reserved for doctoral students. Students are encouraged to consult the CTS Course Listing; if a course is listed but is not being offered, the student may consult with the faculty member offering the class that interests them to see if that course would make an appropriate directed reading.
4. The student who wishes to take a directed reading course will draw up a reading list and a proposal of expectations to be approved or revised by the faculty member in advance of pre-registering for the course, i.e., during the semester prior to the term in which a reading course will be taken.
5. Normally, faculty and student(s) will meet at least five times for at least an hour each session. Sessions are to be scheduled in advance.
6. Since relatively less time is devoted to “class” time in comparison with other courses, it is expected that the work done by the student will exceed that for a normal PhD seminar. Instructors will consult the CTS policy on credit hour definition to ensure that the amount of work requested meets at least minimal standards for earning credit hours.
7. The faculty member may require the student to submit a written analysis (for example, 3-5 pages single-spaced) of the assigned reading in advance of the meeting with the student. If the analysis is not ready (e.g., 24 hours in advance) the faculty may postpone the session until the work is done and a new time is agreed to.
8. Normally, the student will be expected to cover five (5) to fifteen (15) books, and prepare five written analyses and a synthetic or research paper.

Petitioning for a Program of Study (POS)

Students admitted to the PhD program must submit a petition for a Program of Study to the PhD program committee during their first two semesters of residence. Petitions are ideally submitted after the completion of three but before the completion of six courses. However, students are encouraged to consult with their advisors and submit a draft of their POS during the first semester. A student who fails to submit a Program of Study petition at the appropriate time may be prevented from registering for classes until the petition is submitted.

Each petition must:

1. Discuss areas of scholarly interest and identify a tentative topic for dissertation research, with appropriate research methodology.

2. Name advisor (chosen from the CTS PhD program faculty) as well as two additional faculty members (usually at least one of them is also from the CTS PhD program faculty); together they form an advisory committee. The student should obtain the tentative agreement of faculty to participate on the committee and should discuss the substance of the POS with members of the advisory committee.
3. List 12 proposed courses (with anticipated dates) that lay the groundwork for the students' areas of inquiry, developing both breadth and depth. Remember that at least 8 of the 12 courses must be taken at or registered through CTS.
4. Propose research languages and dates by which competence in those languages will be demonstrated. Particular research languages are often more important for some areas of specialization than for others. Thus, students should consult with their advisors when thinking about appropriate research languages. Students for whom English is a second language may choose to list either English or their native language (but not both) as one of their research languages.
5. Describe four exam areas, identifying an examiner for each and explaining how each area contributes to a coherent program of study. It is the student's responsibility to secure agreement by the examiner that they are willing and able to give the exam. The topic for each exam area must be sufficiently focused for in-depth research yet broad enough to represent a substantial body of scholarly literature. In choosing their exam areas, students should keep in mind that prospective academic employers sometimes use exam areas to gauge a job applicant's areas of teaching and research competence. See pp. 13-14 for the description of the exam topics.
6. Provide a tentative bibliography for each exam area. These bibliographies, worked out in consultation with the examiners, should indicate the direction in which a student's research will go but are not intended to be exhaustive.
7. Indicate how the student hopes to meet the teaching requirement or demonstrate teaching experience (see p. 11).

The Program of Study Proposal should include any requests for exceptions to any of the above. It is normal that certain revisions to the proposed plan will occur during the course of the completion of the PhD. However, all revisions must be approved by the student's advisor and advisory committee; and certain revisions may need the approval of the PhD program committee.

Models of POS proposals are available for review from the PhD Program Director or faculty advisors.

When the student's advisor has reviewed the proposal and agrees that it is ready to be submitted to the PhD program committee for approval, the student must email the proposal to the PhD Program Director, who will bring it to the PhD program committee. Students are encouraged to consult all members of their proposed committee before submission. In some cases, an advisor may choose to share a draft proposal with the PhD program faculty for feedback before a final version is submitted for approval. The program of study will require approval by the PhD program committee, who will consult with the student's advisor in its approval granting decision.

Incomplete Policy

All students requesting to take an Incomplete in any given course must check with their instructor in advance. It is strongly recommended that students contact instructors in advance of the end of the term, because not all instructors allow incompletes. The instructor may require the student to complete an Incomplete Form, which is to be filled out by the student and professor and filed with the Registrar. In some cases, instructors will choose to give a student an Incomplete grade at the end of the term without being previously contacted by the student. This is at the discretion of the instructor.

In all cases, incomplete work will be due by August 15 (for all courses from the previous Summer, Fall, J-Term and Spring). The instructor may request assignments be submitted via email or on Canvas; in either case, a copy should be sent to the Registrar.

If work is not turned in to the Registrar by August 15, the student will automatically receive a grade of Permanent Incomplete (PI), except in cases where faculty and students have agreed on a variation to the above policy (a different due date, a different default grade, etc.), using the Incomplete Form.

Note: For students matriculating in Fall 2015 and later: Each Fall, students with any remaining incompletes will not be able to begin Fall courses, and will be placed on inactive status until all incompletes have been resolved.

PhD students who matriculated prior to Fall 2015 are not covered by this policy, but PhD students with excessive or long-standing incompletes may be prevented from registering for additional courses by the PhD program committee.

Teaching Requirement

Every PhD student is required to participate in one or more teaching experiences or to demonstrate teaching experience. This requirement is normally fulfilled in one or more of the following ways:

1. Teaching Assistantship in CTS Master's courses (paid or unpaid). *See the policies and procedures pertaining to CTS Teaching Assistantships on pp. 19-21.*
2. Teaching in freestanding adjunct offerings at CTS, either during the school year or in the summer.
3. Teaching an approved course at another institution (see the PhD Program Director for approval).
4. Demonstrating prior postsecondary teaching experience. Students who wish to fulfill the teaching requirement on the basis of prior teaching experience should include a petition to that effect on their Program of Study proposal.

If for some reason a student is unable to meet the teaching requirement in any of the above ways, they should consult with their advisor or the PhD Program Director.

Selecting an Advisory Committee

A student's initial advisory committee consists of an advisor, who is a core CTS faculty member, and two other faculty members, at least one of whom will also be from the CTS PhD program faculty. The student should obtain the agreement of all advisory committee members to participate on the committee and should work with their advisor to make sure the faculty representatives are well chosen to support their work.

Students who wish to change their advisor must first discuss this with the new advisor to confirm the new advisor's readiness to serve in this role, and then the student must have a conversation with the initial advisor to clarify the change. After both the initial advisor and new advisor have agreed, the name of the new advisor should be reported to the Registrar and the Director of the PhD Program. Changing an advisor should be done by the end of a student's coursework so that the new advisor is part of preparation for exams and the dissertation proposal.

Phase 2: Pre-Candidacy – Preparing the Dissertation Proposal and Taking the Written Examinations

Language Examinations

Students are required to take 2 language exams. Knowing foreign languages is an important aspect of doctoral education and allows students to access to materials they would not otherwise be able to access. The goal in learning a language for this doctoral program is to be able to read and understand scholarly articles written in other languages. Therefore, the languages chosen for examination should be in the student's area of interest. Language exams are approved when the student's program of study is approved by the PhD Committee.

Students may fulfill their 2 language requirements in the following ways:

1. Written examination prepared by a CTS faculty member or an examiner chosen or approved by the PhD Program Committee (specific requestions should be included in the POS). This method of meeting the language requirement is the preferred method at CTS.

1. Language exams are normally three hours. Students for whom English is a second language may request an additional hour to complete the language exam (four hours total) from the Registrar when scheduling the exam.
2. Possible results of the exam include:
 - i. No pass – must be re-examined
 - ii. Low pass – may be re-examined
 - iii. Pass
 - iv. High pass

2. A grade of B or better in a second-year college/university course in the approved language.

3. Students for whom English is not a native language may waive one of the language exam requirements.

4. Alternative methods of fulfilling the language requirement must be approved by the PhD Program Director and may require a petition to the PhD program faculty. In some cases, a research tool that is used in the acquisition of data (rather than as an interpretive tool) may work as a substitution for one language exam. Alternative research-gathering tools that have been approved to date include statistics and ethnography; an exam in a general methodology is not a valid substitute for a language exam.

5. Intensive reading courses are insufficient for completion of the language requirement *unless the course is approved by the PhD program committee and the student also takes and passes a translation examination as part of the course*. The result of such an examination must be submitted to the Director of the PhD Program.

Qualifying Examinations

Students are required to take four written qualifying examinations. The standard structure for these exams is as follows, although students may adapt the structure to fit their academic foci and project, in consultation with their advisor:

Exam #1: History and Theory of a Primary Field

Demonstrate mastery of your primary field (e.g., theology, ethics, hermeneutics of sacred texts, psychology and religion, etc.) that anchors your interdisciplinary work. The exam should broadly frame the historical development of the field, along with major thinkers and theories that have defined the field from the beginning to the present. You can select a particular emphasis, such as liberation theology, but do not draw your circle too narrowly for this field exam.

Exam #2: Choose 1 of 2 options:

a) Major Figure(s)

Focus on one major figure or a comparison of two major figures in your primary field or area of interest. Develop deep expertise regarding the body of work, the figure(s)' relation to and reception within the field. Your bibliography should include works both by and about the figure(s), if possible.

b) Sacred Text/Body of Sacred Texts

Focus on a sacred text or body of texts in your primary field or area of interest, developing expertise regarding the texts and their interpretation. Given the tremendous amount of material, you should select a particular lens or interrelated lenses, e.g., womanist/feminist/mujerista interpretation. Alternatively, you may focus on a particular time period or intertextual hermeneutic, such as reading early rabbinic literature in comparison with New Testament texts.

Exam #3: Concentration

Demonstrate critical fluency regarding a specific area of historical and/or theoretical importance within or that intersects with your primary field of study. Within the field of History of Religion, for example, you may concentrate on the Great Awakening or Islam in America. If your field is Hebrew Bible and you have focused on the 8th-century prophets for your body of texts, you might elect to concentrate on gendered metaphors in Tanakh or theologies of the prophetic books. In chaplaincy, you might elect to explore the framework for pastoral care in diverse lifestances.

Exam #4: Issue

Frame an issue that requires synthetic, interdisciplinary analysis. This exam might be a way to begin preliminary investigation regarding your dissertation topic. If you plan to utilize queer theory to frame a theological critique of the carceral state, for example, you might explore the historical, theological, and political influences that shape our current system; or you might employ ethical and theological disciplines to explore theories on the nature of sin and repentance and how they may frame an approach to restorative justice.

Exam Substitution Option: PhD students have the option of replacing one of their exams with an annotated syllabus plus two recorded lectures related to segments of the syllabus. As with other written exams, the student will work with an appropriate faculty member for oversight and to examine the work.

- Students will propose the exam substitution as part of their Program of Study (POS) approval process, and the approval will be made by the PhD committee. The POS should describe the focus, scope, and purpose of the syllabus just like it does for the other exams. The syllabus is NOT included in the POS, but it does include a preliminary bibliography (as for the other exams).
- The POS must identify an examiner for the syllabus. Presumably, it would be the same person who would be the best choice if mastery was going to be demonstrated in exam form.
- Students may argue for which level course they are teaching and which exam they are substituting, in consultation with their advisor and the examiner; the advisor and examiner may reject the proposal if the idea is not sound.
- Students will be required to provide lectures that total 90 minutes on two or more topics (these could be two lectures of 60 and 30 minutes, or three lectures of 30 minutes each, or two of 45 minutes each; the choice of how this is done is up to the student but the lectures must total 90 minutes).
- The annotation of the syllabus is key. The reader should understand how each reading and assignment advances the course objectives, aligns with the student's pedagogical convictions, and reflects the range of commitments that the student seeks to embed. In the process, the reader should also be able to discern the student's understanding of the assigned material.
- The syllabus and accompanying lectures need to be complete before sitting for the other exams.
- Students may request a syllabus template form that includes details about the content and annotation requirements for their syllabus from the PhD Program Director. The syllabus and lectures will be due to the examiners by the date of the first written exam.

Before the examinations can be scheduled, students must have completed a draft of their program of study proposal that has been approved for examination by the student's advisory committee.

Students should consider the examiners' residency schedule when planning for the exams, as not all faculty are in residence every term. Faculty sabbaticals and residency schedules are listed in Appendix 5.

Preparing for Written Examinations

As students conclude their coursework, they should establish a timeline for exam preparation. In consultation with their advisors, students should reach out to the examiners for preparatory guidelines and materials. These commonly include a study guide designed by the student and examiner, study questions prepared by the faculty member, and/or study questions prepared by the student and revised by the faculty member.

While preparing for exams, students also prepare their dissertation proposals (see below for more information about the substance of the dissertation proposal). When the dissertation proposal has been deemed examinable and the student is ready to take the exams, the advisor will notify the Registrar and Director of the PhD program. Then the student contacts the Registrar to propose specific dates for taking the exams, prepared for the possibility that the dates may need be negotiated. The written exams are taken over a two-week period and the oral examination on the dissertation proposal should be scheduled to take place within four weeks after the final written exam concludes.

The faculty team for the oral examination of the dissertation proposal includes the candidate's advisor and advisory committee. It is common to add an outside examiner, someone who is well-versed in significant aspects of the dissertation topic.

Dissertation Proposal

Normally the dissertation proposal is ten to fifteen double-spaced typewritten pages (excluding the bibliography). It must not exceed twenty pages (excluding the bibliography). The following elements should all appear, though not necessarily in this order:

- a. Statement of the Problem: The central issue, topic, or problem the dissertation proposes to investigate should be formulated as sharply and succinctly as possible. The statement should note the way in which the proposed dissertation engages other work on the problem, topic, or issue. It should introduce the theoretical perspective informing the candidate's approach to the central theme and the basic direction this argument will take. The significance of the issue, topic, or problem should be addressed.
- b. Research Methods to Be Used: The research methods to be used should be described and a rationale for their application to the argument should be demonstrated. Be sure to answer the question of why your methodology is the best one to help you answer the questions you are asking.
- c. Review of the Literature: The literature review is a section within the proposal where you discuss the scholarly context in which you will anchor your research. Normally this would begin by summarizing and explaining an overview of the contemporary literature that exists

on your topic, highlighting the dominant approaches or arguments people make when discussing the topic. Since your dissertation is supposed to be original research, you will want to identify how you will contribute to that field of literature. This might involve finding a gap in the existing literature that you hope to fill, or might just be a unique twist on the normal kinds of arguments made about it, or maybe you are bringing together two topics that each have their own bodies of literature but little work is done looking at their intersections. Whatever that uniqueness might be, your job is to explain the current status of the literature that is out there as a scholarly context in which you are writing, then to position your own work within that context, while explaining your unique position within the field and how you are contributing.

- d. Tentative Outline of the Proposed Dissertation: The proposal should include a tentative outline of the dissertation and a projection of the approximate length of the various parts. While this outline will probably be modified in the course of the work, it provides a helpful overview of the shape of the proposed dissertation.
- e. Human Research Statement: If the proposed research involves any human subjects, a separate proposal to the Internal Review Board should be submitted before research is begun. Guidelines for making this proposal can be found in Appendix 2. Human subject research conducted without such a proposal and written approval of methods is grounds for separation from the program.
- f. Select Bibliography

Please see the PhD Program Director for samples of successful student dissertation proposals.

Taking the Written Qualifying Exams

Normally, candidates take their four written examinations over a two-week period once their preliminary dissertation proposal has been deemed “examinable,” which means the dissertation proposal is finished or mostly finished, as agreed upon by the student’s advisory committee.

On each of the four written examinations, the candidate will be asked to write answers to two questions. The examination questions will be grounded in the study materials but will be formulated to test the candidate’s creative and analytical capacities. While preparing for the exam, students should always have direct communication with the examiner about expectations for the exam.

Each written examination will be six hours in length (approximately three hours per question). Students for whom English is a second language may request an additional hour for each written exam (seven hours total) from the Registrar when scheduling the exam. All written examinations will be “closed book.”

Students will work with the Registrar to secure a proctor for exams. If students are taking exams in the Chicago area, CTS can suggest a location and a proctor for the exams. Students taking exams outside of Chicago should identify a proctor themselves and then put that person in touch with the Registrar. Students should discuss this process in advance with the Registrar.

Evaluating the exams

Qualifying examinations will be evaluated based on PhD program learning outcomes (see p. 5). No single exam will be evaluated on the basis of all learning outcomes.

Possible results of the exam include:

- No pass – must be re-examined
- Stipulations – student must meet stipulations to receive pass
- Low pass
- Pass
- High pass

In some cases, examiners may allow a student to rewrite an exam response to seek a higher pass.

In any written exam, when the response to one question is acceptable and the response to the second question is unacceptable, the examiner may require the student to do one of the following:

1. Rewrite the question response in a non-exam context.
2. Complete a research paper.
3. Schedule and take a separate exam on the content of the unacceptable question.
4. Schedule and complete an oral conversation with the faculty examiner on the exam content.

Admission to candidacy can be delayed if written examinations need to be retaken or stipulations need to be met.

The results of a student's written qualifying examinations will normally be reported to the student prior to the oral examination. In some cases, exam results may be reported at the oral examination.

Oral Qualifying Examination

The basis for the oral qualifying exam will be a preliminary draft of the dissertation proposal, written according to the guidelines as set out in the section above, and determined by the student's advisor and advisory committee to be adequate to serve as the basis for an oral qualifying examination.

The faculty team for the oral examination of the dissertation proposal includes the candidate's advisor and advisory committee. It is common to add an outside examiner, someone who is well-versed in significant aspects of the dissertation topic.

Scheduling of the oral qualifying examination is done in consultation with the Registrar after the student's advisor has deemed the dissertation proposal "examinable." Normally, the oral qualifying examination takes place within four weeks of the last written examination. If the exams are taken over the summer, then students should expect to have the oral examination by the end of September. The dissertation proposal draft should be provided to all examiners when the oral exam is scheduled.

The oral exam is assessed with the same scale as the written qualifying exams.

After all exams (language, written, oral) have been successfully completed, the student is formally admitted into candidacy for the PhD Degree. (Congratulations, you are now ABD!)

Phase 3: Candidacy – Writing the Dissertation

Dissertation Committee

After a student is admitted to candidacy, the student selects a dissertation committee. It is often composed of the original advisory committee plus the outside examiner added for the oral qualifying exam to make a committee of four members. Retirements, shifts in focus, or other factors may suggest a change, however. The student and advisor should notify the Registrar and PhD Program Director of any changes in the advisory committee. Normally, the advisor and at least one other member of the dissertation committee must be members of the CTS faculty. Exceptions to this policy require approval by the PhD program faculty.

Content

The dissertation should be a substantive piece of original research. The length of the dissertation will vary according to content. Normally, however, a dissertation will range from 150 to 250 pages. Dissertations should not exceed 300 pages. Students may consult a professional editor if desired. Students are strongly encouraged to submit the first chapter they draft to the Learning Commons or Writing Center to ensure that it conforms to citation and formatting guidelines. It is *much* easier to do it right the first time than to go back and fix it all when you are done. See Appendix 3 for dissertation guidelines.

Oral Dissertation Defense

When the candidate's advisor and committee approve the dissertation as examinable, an oral defense will be scheduled by the Registrar.

This examination must take place at least one month prior to the end of the semester in which the candidate hopes to graduate, and the examination copy of the dissertation must be submitted to all examiners of the dissertation at least two weeks prior to the oral defense.

Dissertation defenses are normally closed, but students may invite guests, including other PhD students, with advisor approval. Questions from visitors posed during the exam will be vetted by the student's advisor.

When scheduling a dissertation defense, students should email a copy of their dissertation to the Director of the Lapp Learning Commons, who will provide recommendations for any additional formatting and citation corrections that are required.

If the dissertation is passed by the committee, the student must provide a copy of the dissertation to the library no later than three weeks before the date of graduation. Students must upload the final draft of their dissertations through the submission portal on Canvas in order to be allowed to graduate. Students should consult the submission requirements for their dissertation which can be found at this link: https://libguides.ctschicago.edu/grad_checklist and in Appendix 3.

V. Teaching Assistant Policies and Procedures

Purposes of the Doctoral Teaching Assistant Program

The purposes of the doctoral Teaching Assistant Program are:

1. To provide doctoral students with the opportunity to fulfill the CTS PhD teaching requirement and expose doctoral students to online teaching. This can happen in a variety of ways that are up to the discretion of the supervising faculty member, possibly including (but not limited to) supervised work on the construction of the syllabus, lectures, discussion group leadership, responding to online discussion forums, grading, and evaluation by students and supervising faculty member.
2. To provide academic assistance to the supervising faculty member in large classes.
3. To support the CTS MDiv and other master's programs.

Eligibility and Access to Teaching Assistant Positions

1. All required MDiv courses, especially those at the lower levels, are eligible for teaching assistant positions, assuming sufficient enrollment. Doctoral students may apply for these positions during the application period each year. Courses other than those required for the MDiv may be deemed eligible by the PhD program committee for teaching assistant positions (normally only if enrollment is above 12) but no guarantee will be possible for such courses until enrollment is set.

Note: Given limited financial resources, all eligible courses may not be staffed by TAs at all times. The staffing of all eligible courses by doctoral TAs occurs at the discretion of the PhD program committee.

2. The PhD program committee assigns Teaching Assistants by means of an application process announced by the Director during the preceding semester. Applicants should normally submit a list of previous TA positions at CTS (including course titles, supervising faculty member, and dates), a prioritized list of eligible courses to which the student would like to be assigned as a Teaching Assistant, and a brief (one-two sentence) rationale for each course for which he/she/they want to be considered.
3. The PhD program faculty will determine TA assignments based upon available funds, fairness of access, approval of the participating faculty member, and student interest.

Execution of Teaching Assistant Duties

1. It is expected that regular meetings will take place between the Teaching Assistant and supervising professor, including an initial meeting prior to the start of the class in order to discuss roles and expectations for the Teaching Assistantship, and a meeting after the conclusion of the class for the purpose of evaluation. Meetings prior to and during the term will concern academic and pedagogical matters in the class that either the faculty member or teaching assistant wish to pursue. The schedule for meetings will be determined in advance by the supervising professor and Teaching Assistant.
2. Teaching Assistant duties commonly include leading discussion groups, grading student work, communications, Canvas maintenance, and other substantive support functions. There may be opportunity to give/record a lecture and engage students in Q&A. If Teaching Assistants will be expected to grade assignments, the supervising professor will explain the grading criteria in advance and provide the Teaching Assistant with feedback afterward.
3. Teaching Assistants may consult the CTS website (www.ctschicago.edu) for textbook lists in advance of the course. As soon as it is available, the supervising faculty member will also provide the Teaching Assistant with the syllabus.
4. The PhD program committee will provide assigned Teaching Assistants with a copy of the Teaching Assistant Policies and Guidelines.

Note: No other types of student employment are governed by these guidelines.

Compensation

Normally, all Teaching Assistant positions are paid a standard stipend determined by the Academic Dean. Only in exceptional circumstances will unpaid teaching assistant positions be approved by the PhD program committee, and only when such circumstances clearly benefit the professional advancement of the TA.

Commitment to Teaching Assistant positions

1. While all attempts will be made to honor Teaching Assistant assignments, the appointment and termination of teaching assistants occurs at the sole discretion of the PhD program committee, and an arrangement for a teaching assistant is never a guarantee of employment. Classes sometimes must be canceled due to low enrollment. In these cases, a promised teaching assistant position will also be cancelled. In some unusual cases, a class may not be cancelled, but a teaching assistant position may still be terminated up to the scheduled start of class (with immediate notification of the teaching assistant), if enrollment does not warrant the presence of a teaching assistant and the funds can be better used in a course that has higher enrollment.

2. The ultimate responsibility for the course in which a Teaching Assistant participates lies with the supervising faculty member. If a Teaching Assistant does not fulfill the tasks agreed upon in the initial meeting with the supervising faculty member, or in some other way sufficiently hinders the work of the faculty member responsible for the class or the work of the class itself, the PhD program committee reserves the right to terminate the appointment of the Teaching Assistant at any point during the course of the term.
3. In cases where the Teaching Assistant has a concern about the execution of the supervising faculty member's responsibilities, the Teaching Assistant should first, if possible, raise that concern with the supervising faculty member. However, if the Teaching Assistant believes that the concern is not able to be addressed in this manner, s/he should meet with the PhD Program Director. Further action regarding TA concerns will be taken at the discretion and judgment of the PhD program committee.
4. Students are encouraged to engage faculty or the PhD Program Director with questions or concerns about all aspects of Teaching Assistantships.

Evaluation of Teaching Assistants

1. Student course evaluations include two questions inviting students to evaluate the TA's fulfillment of teaching responsibilities. The responses to these questions will be provided to the TA by the faculty supervisor early in the following term.
2. Faculty supervisors will provide written evaluative comments to the Teaching Assistant.
3. Faculty supervisors will discuss both course evaluation results and written faculty comments with the Teaching Assistant as part of a final evaluative meeting.
4. When appropriate, CTS may provide Teaching Assistants the opportunity to record themselves giving a classroom lecture or leading a discussion group. The recording will provide a further means of self-evaluation and may be discussed by the TA and the faculty supervisor.

VI. The Faculty of the PhD Program

Brad R. Braxton, Professor of Public Theology and President; BA, University of Virginia-Charlottesville; MDiv, University of Oxford; PhD, Emory University.

Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, Professor of New Testament; BS, Howard University; MDiv, United Theological Seminary; MA, Vanderbilt University; PhD, Vanderbilt University (on sabbatical Spring 2025).

W. Scott Haldeman, Associate Professor of Worship; BA, Oberlin College; MDiv, MPhil, PhD, Union Theological Seminary in New York (on sabbatical Fall 2024).

Kamilah Hall Sharp, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible and Public Ministry; BS, Florida A&M University; BA, Bethel University; JD, Indiana University School of Law; MDiv, Memphis Theological Seminary; PhD, Brite Divinity School.

Rachel S. Mikva, Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman Professor of Jewish Studies; AB, Stanford University; MA, Rabbinic Ordination, Hebrew Union College; PhD, Jewish Theological Seminary.

José Francisco Morales Torres, Associate Professor of Comparative Theology and Philosophy; BA, Judson University; MDiv, McCormick Theological Seminary; PhD, Claremont School of Theology.

Kameelah Mu'Min Oseguera, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Muslim Studies; BA, Med, University of Pennsylvania; MRP, International Institute of Restorative Practices; PsyD, Chestnut Hill College.

Christophe Ringer, Associate Professor of Theological Ethics and Society; BA, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana; Graduate Certificate, University of Illinois at Chicago; MDiv, Vanderbilt Divinity School; PhD, Vanderbilt University (on sabbatical Summer 2025).

Bo Myung Seo, Professor of Theology and Cultural Criticism; BA, Drew University; MA University of Chicago; MDiv and PhD, Chicago Theological Seminary.

Ken Stone, Professor of Bible, Culture and Hermeneutics; BA, Lee College; MDiv, Church of God School of Theology, Cleveland, Tenn., ThM, Harvard Divinity School; MA, Vanderbilt University; PhD, Vanderbilt University.

Emily Vogt, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Ethnography and Academic Dean; BA, Colorado College; MA and PhD, University of Chicago.

Responsibilities of Faculty When Out of Residence or On Leave

Faculty members serve the PhD program during the two terms each year that they are in residence. The remainder of the year is at the disposal of individual faculty members, in consonance with their overall professional responsibilities. Students may request that faculty members assist them with their programs during the terms when they are not in residence, but faculty members are under no obligation in this matter.

Faculty members normally continue to work with their PhD advisees during a regularly scheduled sabbatical. Because availability may be limited, however, students should consult with their advisors prior to a sabbatical to determine how they will communicate and interact during the sabbatical period. Because of faculty projects that take place while they are on sabbatical, it is not always possible for professors to be available at all times.

Students should bear in mind that qualifying examinations and dissertation defenses will normally be arranged on dates within the regular academic year (approximately September through May). It is highly unlikely that a PhD Committee can be convened during the summer for this purpose since most faculty members are not in residence in the summer.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: PhD Program of Study Sequence

1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year or 4 th Year	4th+ Year ****
First Term Coursework (three courses recommended, possibly including a required course, plus the first half of the Professional Development Workshop series ¹) Program of Study Proposal	First Term Coursework (complete required seminars, continue with electives) Teaching Assistantship²	Written Exams⁴ (study for exams; take remaining language exams)	Dissertation research and writing
Second Term Coursework (three courses recommended, possibly including a required course, plus the second half of the Professional Development Workshop series)	Second Term Coursework³ (complete required seminars, continue with electives) Teaching Assistantship²	Written Exams (four written exams, taken during a two-week period, followed immediately by the oral exam and proposal defense) Dissertation Proposal and Oral Exam⁵	Dissertation writing and revision^{5, 6} Graduation
Other Terms Language Study Language Exams	Other Terms Language Study Finish Language Exams	Begin Dissertation	

¹ The Professional Development Workshops are offered every other year, so this sequence might be taken in the second year.

² Every PhD Student is required to participate in one or more teaching experience, or to demonstrate teaching experience. One way to do so is to be a Teaching Assistant for a CTS MA/MDiv course. This may take place at any time except the first year in the PhD program.

³ Students complete their coursework at different paces, depending on course availability, etc. However, if a student takes a full load of 3 courses per semester, that student will complete the required coursework by the end of the second year of studies.

⁴ Students complete written exams when they are prepared for them, rather than at a predetermined time. The language exams and written qualifying exams are to be taken before the Dissertation Proposal is examined.

⁵ The statute of limitations is five years to ABD and nine years to completion of the degree.

⁶ If the dissertation is passed by the committee, the student must provide a copy of the dissertation to the library no later than three weeks before the date of graduation. See Appendix 3 for guidelines.

Appendix 2: Human Subjects Protocol

All students intending to use human subjects in CTS PhD dissertations, STM, MDiv, and MA theses, or DMin projects must follow these guidelines, which will be reviewed by CTS's Institutional Review Board. The purpose is to ensure an adequate review of the research regarding two central ethical concerns:

1. Human subjects must be treated with dignity and autonomy, specifically that they give informed consent freely to participate in the research;
2. Human subjects are protected from any risks or harms posed by the research.

There are two documents to complete: 1) Research Overview, and 2) Consent Form. The research review is **NOT** intended to assess either the value of the thesis/dissertation topic or the research design.

I. Research Overview (Be as specific as possible)

- A. Describe the nature and purpose of the research, including the number of human subjects that will be involved and the research instrument(s) to be used, such as interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- B. The Research Procedures: How will the research be conducted? What will it entail? e.g. *(For example, "I will interview the subjects in their homes or a place of their own choosing. I intend only one interview per subject; the interview should last about one hour. I will take notes during the interview, and I will only tape record the interview with the subject's permission.")*
- C. Subject recruitment and selection: How will you recruit, select, and generate a pool of subjects?
- D. Relationship to these subjects
 - a. Pastor/Imam/Other Religious leader
 - b. Teacher
 - c. Relative
 - d. Associate
 - e. Other
- E. Risks and Benefits: State the possible benefits and risks you perceive the research poses to the subjects. Since the purpose of this review is to ensure research subjects are protected from any harm, please be especially thorough in your assessment of potential risks.
- F. Confidentiality and/or Anonymity: Explain how the confidentiality and anonymity of data/subjects will be preserved. Consider the following questions in your overview:
 1. How will data be stored? The suggested standard is to: 1) store data in a secure/locked manner, and 2) store any key that links the data to the names or identifiers of subjects in a secure/locked manner away from the data.
 2. How long will the data be retained (note: data must be retained for three years), and what is the plan for destroying the data?

3. What will happen to the data if something happens to you, that prevents you from taking the provisions outlined here?
 4. If applicable, how will you collect and analyze the data to ensure anonymity?
 5. If applicable, how will you officially report that data to ensure anonymity?
- G. Provide a list of sample questions you will use in interviews, surveys, or focus groups.

II. Consent Form

The researcher should keep the original signed document and provide a copy to the subject. The subject should also receive a copy of the survey instrument or schedule of questions used in the research. If the instrument is not yet completed or the interview is to be open-ended, include some sample questions, indicating the nature of the information/data sought from the subject. Also, if the consent form provided does not meet the needs of a specific project, the researcher can create an adapted version in cooperation with the advisor for approval by the Institutional Review Board.



Sample Consent Form – Please adapt for your own project

Title of the Project _____

Name of Researcher _____

I _____ (print) have been asked to participate in a research study as a part of the [PhD/DMin/STM/MA] program at Chicago Theological Seminary. I understand that this research will focus on _____

_____ and will involve [interviews/surveys/focus group discussions, etc.] that will take place _____ and will last until _____.

I understand that the risks involved in this project include _____, my anonymity will be protected and the records and information will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to them and they will be discarded after the study is completed. I also understand that I am free to refuse to answer any specific questions and to terminate or withdraw completely from the research at any time. While the researcher has copyright protection and retains all intellectual and commercial rights to the materials, I can have access to cite or quote the work for my own purposes. By signing this document I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Subject _____ **Date** _____

Signature of Researcher _____ **Date** _____

For information contact Researcher at:

Email _____ **Phone number** _____

Adapted for use from the Doctoral Council, GTU, 2014.

Appendix 3: PhD Dissertation Guidelines

Doctor of Philosophy regulations at CTS require that you deposit a copy of your dissertation in the Lapp Learning Commons. This document will outline the formatting and submission requirements for submitting your dissertation.

The Lapp Learning Commons requests that you use Kate Turabian's **9th edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), for footnote and bibliographic citations. You can choose another style manual such as SBL in consultation with your advisor. The Learning Commons provides access to the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#).

Below is a general overview of the CTS guidelines you must follow.

General Format Guidelines

- ☐ Paper: White, cotton bond paper
 - Use resume, business, thesis, or dissertation bond paper (i.e. acid free paper)
 - 8 ½ " x 11" paper size
 - Acid-free paper
- ☐ Printing: single-sided
- ☐ Fonts
 - 12 point font for main body, Times New Roman
 - 10-12 point font for footnotes
- ☐ Line Spacing
 - Double spacing for: Acknowledgements, Abstract, Main body of dissertation
 - Single spacing for: Footnotes, block quotes (indented), Bibliography, Appendix
- ☐ Pagination
 - Roman numerals for all of the Front Matter (Table of Contents, Tables/Figures/Illustrations, List of Abbreviations, Acknowledgements, Abstract, etc.)
 - Arabic numerals for the dissertation body, Appendix, Bibliography.
 - All numbers must be on the bottom of the page (centered or right justified)
- ☐ Margins
 - Left margin must be 1.5"; right margin must be 1"
 - Top and bottom margins must be 1", except for the title page which should be 1.5" from the top of the page;
 - Margins for each new chapter heading should be 1.5" from the top

☐ Dissertation Title

- If the title of the dissertation is long, a short title to be used on the spine volume in binding should be typed on a separate sheet of paper

Submit the dissertation in an envelope or folder to the Learning Commons two weeks prior to your dissertation defense. Do NOT staple or punch holes. *A certificate of approval signed by the Academic Dean is to accompany the dissertation.* The style and form of the dissertation must be approved by the seminary's librarian prior to convocation at which the PhD degree is to be conferred. The librarian will certify approval with the registrar.

Front Matter

List preliminary pages in the order below. Unless otherwise indicated, all front matter must be included in your dissertation. Use lower-case roman numerals for all pages in this section.

☐ Title Page *

- Use all caps
- Center horizontally and vertically on the page
- No page number displayed (page is still counted in Roman numeral front matter pagination)
- Use provided title page template

☐ Copyright page

- No page number displayed (page is still counted in Roman numeral front matter pagination)
- Copyright notice should be at bottom of the page, flush left, in this manner:
Copyright © 20XX by Your Name
All rights reserved

☐ Abstract *

- Must be included in your dissertation and the final page in your front matter
- label the page ABSTRACT
- Leave two blank lines between the title and first item listed
- Must be double-spaced, roman numeral pagination at bottom of page
- Abstracts should be less than one page, and ideally limited to 150-200 words.

☐ Dedication page (optional)

- No page number displayed (page is still counted in Roman numeral front matter pagination)
- No heading is placed on this page
- Different from Acknowledgements

- Keep brief, fuller statements should be moved to Acknowledgments.

☐ Table of Contents *

- Label page CONTENTS (do not label Table of Contents)
- If more than one page, do not repeat the heading on subsequent pages
- Leave two blank lines between the title and first item listed
- Single space individual items, double space between items
- Page numbers must be right-justified, lower case roman numbers for all Front Matter
- Leaders (a line of dots) can be used between the title and page number
- Match page numbers in TOC with dissertation text
- Include top-level headings in your TOC (Front matter, Chapters, Appendix, Back Matter) that occur after your TOC (i.e., do not include title page, copyright page, dedication)
- Do not include headings beyond second-level subheadings
- Roman numeral pagination at the bottom of the page(s)

☐ List of figures, tables or illustrations (optional, used only if 5 elements included).

- If the list is more than one page, do not repeat the heading
- If your dissertation includes both figures and tables, list the first page ILLUSTRATIONS (centered, bold font) but divide the page into two sections labeled Figures and Tables (left aligned, bold font)
- Leave two blank lines between the title and first item listed
- Page numbers for tables, figures, illustrations must be justified right, use arabic numerals.
- Single space individual items, double space between items.
- Figure/Table/Illustrations titles and captions should match the wording in the dissertation.
- Roman numeral pagination at bottom of page.
- See A.2.1.8 of Turabian, 9th edition (page 393) for additional information.

☐ Acknowledgements page (optional)

- Label the first page ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
- Stick to one spelling
- Leave two blank lines between the title and first item listed.
- If your acknowledgements are longer than one page, do not repeat the heading
- Include in the TOC

☐ List of abbreviations (only if needed)

- Label the first page ABBREVIATIONS
- Leave two blank lines between the title and first item listed
- Single space individual items, double space between items
- If your list is longer than one page, do not repeat the heading
- List alphabetically by abbreviation, not full term

- Abbreviations are flush left, with spelled out terms aligned under one another
- Include in TOC
- Heading in TOC must be **List of Abbreviations**, with corresponding page
- Roman numeral pagination at bottom of page

☐ Glossary (only if needed)

- Label the first page GLOSSARY
- Leave two blank lines between the title and first item listed
- If your glossary is longer than one page, do not repeat the heading
- List terms alphabetically, flush left, followed by a period (you can use a colon or em dash —)
- Terms can be in italics or bold font
- If the definition is more than one line, indent the runovers by a half inch (similar to bibliography indentation)
- Definition/translation should be in sentence case and end with a period
- Include in TOC
- Roman numeral pagination at bottom of page

Body of Dissertation

☐ Thesis Main Text

- Double spaced, pagination in arabic numerals, align left, do not justify
- Footnotes, block quotes, bibliography, tables, appendices are single spaced
- Each list, chapter, and appendix starts on a new page
- Label Chapters at the top of the page followed by the chapter number in arabic numerals
- List chapter descriptive title two lines below chapter heading (centered, all caps and bold)

CHAPTER 1.

REPLACE WITH YOUR CHAPTER TITLE

☐ Footnotes

- Place footnotes at the bottom of the page, use arabic numerals
- Cite the work in full the first time it is referenced in chapter, even if you cited it in a previous chapter. Use the shortened form (author–title) thereafter.
- Single space footnotes
- Do not use *ibid.* or *op.cit.* Instead, use the shortened form of the citation.
- Restart footnote numbers with each new chapter
- If a note consists of a citation and a comment, list the citation first with a period after it, then the comment
- Be judicious in your use of substantive comments in footnotes
- Do not use same format for bibliography in footnotes, there is a difference

☐ Sections and Subsections

- Do not use point size to differentiate headings
- Do not leave headings isolated by itself at the bottom of the page
- Use the following formatting styles to differentiate sections:

Subheadings First Level (Centered, Bold, and Capitalized First Initials)

Subheadings Second Level (Centered and Capitalized First Initials)

Subheadings Third Level (Left-justified, Bold, and Capitalized First Initials)

Subheadings fourth level (Left-justified and Capitalized only; sentence capitalization)

Subheadings fifth level. (Run-in heading at the beginning of paragraph with italicized font and a period at the end)

☐ Quotations

- Short direct prose quotations should be incorporated in the text, and enclosed in double quotation marks.
- Other quotations (prose quotations of four or more typewritten lines, short prose quotations which are to be displaced for purpose of emphasis or comparison, and quotations of poetry) should be set off from the text, without quotation marks, in single-spacing, and indented from the left and right margins. Standard procedures as to notation for ellipses, interpolations, etc., is to be followed.

Back Matter

☐ Appendix (optional, if needed)

- List individually in TOC
- Label A,B,C or 1,2,3 (only if more than one appendix, otherwise just label APPENDIX)
- Match Appendix heading, with listing in the TOC
- Appendix heading must be centered, all caps and bold

☐ Bibliography

- Do not use the same format for your footnotes
- Use three em dash when listing more than one work by the same author
- If no author, list alphabetically ignoring stop words like A, An, and The
- Single space individual entries, double space between entries
- If the entry is more than one line, indent the runovers by a half inch

Appendix 4: The PhD Program Structure Prior to Fall, 2016

Students who began the PhD program before 2016 entered under a different program structure and will follow the old structure unless they petition to switch over to the new program. The previous program requirements were as follows:

Students were to choose one of two distinct concentrations within the PhD program: **Bible, Culture and Hermeneutics** (formerly Jewish and Christian Scriptures) and **Theology, Ethics and the Human Sciences**. Both programs emphasized interdisciplinary methods, the encounter between texts and contexts, and critical reflection.

General Academic Requirements, by concentration

The Concentration in Theology, Ethics and the Human Sciences (TEHS)

1. Minimum residence of two academic years, maximum of nine. Seven semester courses in theology and ethics and seven semester courses in a human science discipline or another approved cognate area, for a total of fourteen semester courses. Normally, at least three of the human science or cognate courses must be taken at or registered through CTS, but the remaining four courses of human science or cognate work can be taken in an accredited university or approved institute. The seven courses in theology and ethics are normally taken at CTS or taken in one of the ACTS schools but registered through CTS. A minimum of four of the candidate's courses in the theological area must be taken with the CTS PhD faculty. Normally, PhD students will receive letter grades for all courses, but can be graded pass/no pass at the discretion of individual faculty members when appropriate.
2. Two modern languages. In exceptional cases, one language and demonstrated competence in an approved alternative research tool (e.g. statistics) may be approved if the alternative research tool is appropriate to a student's doctoral research. See p. 11 for more information about language examinations.
3. A candidacy examination process consisting of six written area examinations (one in "Twentieth Century Theology"; one in either "Models and Methods in Theology, Ethics and the Human Sciences" or another methodological exam that makes use of the human sciences; and four others) and an oral candidacy examination focusing on a preliminary dissertation proposal. See pp. 14-15 for more information about the dissertation proposal.

The Concentration in Bible, Culture and Hermeneutics (Jewish & Christian Scriptures) (BCH)

1. Minimum residence of two academic years, maximum of nine. Fourteen courses, at least ten of which are taken at or registered through CTS. Normally, PhD students will receive letter grades for all courses, but can be graded pass/no pass at the discretion of individual faculty members when appropriate.

2. Language requirement:
 - a. Hebrew Bible: Two modern languages and at least two ancient languages, normally Hebrew and Greek. Some work in a third language such as Aramaic is normally also required. See p. 10 for more information about language examinations.
 - b. New Testament: Two modern languages and at least two ancient languages, normally Hebrew and Greek. Some work in a third language such as Aramaic may be required. See p. 10 for more information about language examinations.
3. A candidacy examination process consisting of six written area examinations (one in "Contemporary Hermeneutical Strategies") and an oral candidacy examination focusing on a preliminary dissertation proposal. See pp. 14-15, for more information about the dissertation proposal.

Both Concentrations

4. The following three courses are required of all PhD Students in both concentrations:
 - a. Contemporary Hermeneutical Strategies (RH 601), normally offered in the fall semester.
 - b. Philosophical Thought (TEC 602), normally offered in the fall semester.
 - c. Twentieth Century Theology (TEC 605), normally offered in the spring semester.

Note: Work in TEC 605 will serve as the basis for the Twentieth Century Theology area examination for students in the TEHS concentration. Work in RH 601 will serve as the basis for the Contemporary Hermeneutical Strategies area examination for students in the BCH concentration.
5. A final dissertation proposal completed following admission to candidacy and in consultation with the candidate's doctoral committee.
6. A dissertation presented to the candidate's doctoral committee, approved by all three members of the committee as "ready for examination" and successfully defended by the candidate. See p. 15 and Appendix 3 for details about the dissertation requirements and the dissertation defense.
7. Terminal dates: The written area qualifying examinations and the oral candidacy examination must be passed within five years after admission to the doctoral program. Normally, all requirements, including the dissertation, must be completed within nine years after admission to the program. Extensions may be obtained by a written appeal to the Center Faculty. Students who exceed these dates will need to petition the PhD Center for an extension.

Preparing and Taking the Written Examinations Under the Previous Program Structure

Area Examinations

- a. Students in the TEHS concentration should note that qualifying examinations in “Twentieth Century Theology” and one methodological exam (either “Models and Methods in Theology, Ethics and the Human Sciences,” or an alternative exam, approved by the faculty, which is methodological in orientation) are taken first, and may be taken whenever a student has received appropriate preparatory materials from the examiners, by way of the Registrar, and is prepared to take the examination. Students in the BCH concentration should note that the qualifying examination in “Contemporary Hermeneutical Strategies” and one other exam are taken first, and may be taken whenever a student has received preparatory materials from the examiners, by way of the Registrar, and is prepared to take the examination. Additional questions about these examinations can be directed to the Registrar, the faculty examiners, or the Director of the PhD Program.
- b. On each of the six written examinations, the candidate will be asked to write answers to two questions. The examination questions will be grounded in the study materials but will be formulated to test the candidate’s creative and analytical capacities. While preparing for the exam, students should always have direct communication with the examiner about expectations for the exam.
- c. Normally, candidates take two examinations at any point when they are prepared to do so. The remaining four examinations are taken over a two-week period once their preliminary dissertation proposal has been deemed examinable and the student has submitted a Petition for an Examination of a Dissertation Proposal.
- d. Examinations will be “closed book” for all students matriculating after 2003. Students who matriculated prior to 2004 may take “open book” examinations in accordance with the policy in place at that time. However, they are strongly discouraged from doing so. Faculty examiners will be notified whether a student’s written examinations were completed in a “closed book” or “open book” format.
- e. Shortly after (and normally within four weeks of the last of) the written examinations, the faculty will conduct an oral examination based on (1) a preliminary dissertation proposal prepared by the student and (2) the written exams. *This oral examination should be scheduled, at least on a tentative basis, at the same time as the written examinations, in consultation with the Director of the PhD Program, the Registrar, and/or the Assistant Academic Dean.*

The oral qualifying exam, the dissertation proposal, dissertation, and the oral dissertation exam follow the same guidelines in the new program that they did in the previous program.

For copies of a previous year's PhD Program Handbook, please contact the PhD Program Director.

Transition for Current Students to New Program Structure

All students who began prior to 2016 will follow the program structure that was in place when they began. Depending upon their stage in the program, a student may petition to transition into the new program. No one will be required to shift to the new program. For those who do wish to petition,

- Students who are ABD stay in their original program structure
- Students who are in pre-candidacy can choose whether to shift their exams to the new structure:
 - Exam shift is all or nothing – if student shifts, their four exams must fit the new structure.
 - Shift requires new approved Program of Study proposal
- Students in coursework can choose one of three options:
 - Stay with old structure
 - Stay with old coursework requirements, shift exams to new structure
 - As above, exam shift is all or nothing.
 - Shift both coursework and exams to new structure
 - As above, exam shift is all or nothing.
 - Coursework shift is also all or nothing – students switching to new coursework structure must meet new curricular requirements.
 - Students with approved POS will need new POS if shifting to new structure for exams or exams and coursework.

For students who shift:

- Students should consult with their advisor about whether the new structure is a good fit for their specific program and academic goals.
- Requires a new POS proposal that fits with the new structure, to be approved by advisor, dissertation committee, and PhD Program committee.
- New program of study should be on file with Registrar and PhD Program Director.
- In deciding whether to shift to the new structure, students (especially those who have already taken one or two exams) should keep in mind the purpose of written exams:
 - Support writing of dissertation
 - Demonstrate broad and deep knowledge base
 - Provide evidence of areas of teaching competency for prospective employer

Appendix 5: Academic Calendar 2026-2027

2026

Fall Term begins	September 8
Last day to add/drop courses	September 18
Tuition & fee payment due	September 21
Late fee charged – 10%	September 22
Reading week	October 26-30
Registration for Winter and Spring Terms	November 16
Thanksgiving Recess	November 26-27
Fall Term ends	December 18

2027

“J” Term begins	January 4
“J” Term ends	January 15
Spring Term begins	January 19
Last day to add/drop courses	January 29
Tuition & fee payment due	February 1
Late Fee Charged – 10%	February 2
Reading week	March 1-5
Registration for May, Summer, Fall Terms	March 29
Spring Term ends	April 30
Commencement	April 30
May Term begins	May 17
May Term ends	May 28

Faculty Schedule

Faculty Sabbaticals	Fall Residence	Spring Residence	Summer Residence
Summer 2026 – Mikva Fall 2026- Hall Sharp Spring 2027 – Seo, Morales	Braxton Crowder Hall Sharp Johnson Mikva Morales Oseguera Seo Stone Vogt	Braxton Haldeman Hall Sharp Johnson Ringer Morales Oseguera Seo Stone Vogt	Braxton Mikva Ringer Vogt



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