

# Theology

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## School

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (<http://www.stmarytx.edu/humanities/>)

## School Interim Dean

Betsy Smith, Ph.D. ([nlagreca@stmarytx.edu](mailto:nlagreca@stmarytx.edu))

## Department

Theology (<https://www.stmarytx.edu/academics/department/theology/>)

## Department Chair

Sara Ronis, Ph.D. ([sronis@stmarytx.edu](mailto:sronis@stmarytx.edu))

The interdisciplinary Theology curriculum at St. Mary's is rooted in the Catholic and Marianist tradition of service while offering courses that are inclusive of all students and faith traditions. Students of all majors take at least two courses in Theology as part of the Core Curriculum. Through the open, critical study of scripture, moral theology and systemic theology, majors build on a commitment to the compatibility of faith and reason.

In the Theology Department at St. Mary's University, students explore the sources and ideas central to Christian faith while searching for practical application that faith has for the way people and communities live. Through critical investigation and the use of diverse methods, students in the Theology program apply critical thinking and interdisciplinary knowledge to understand the origins of Christianity and its meaning for today.

The Theology Major at St. Mary's University cultivates in students the capacity to investigate fundamental questions of human life using the wealth of Catholic tradition. Courses in the department engage students in the systematic study of doctrine, moral theology, and scripture, taking up in a contemporary and diverse context Anselm's classic definition of theology as "faith seeking understanding." In the major, students develop information literacy, integrative understanding, self-reflection, intellectual humility, and effective communication.

## Major in Theology

- B.A. in Theology (<https://catalog.stmarytx.edu/undergraduate/majors-programs/humanities-social-sciences/theology/theology-ba/>)

Theology minor (<https://catalog.stmarytx.edu/undergraduate/majors-programs/humanities-social-sciences/theology/theology-minor/>)

### TH 1301. Introduction to Theology. 3 Semester Hours.

This course provides an introduction to the academic study of theology in Christian traditions, engaged with other traditions. The course introduces students to fundamental ideas, terminology, cultural contexts, literature, and texts that hand down human questions and understandings of God and what it means to be God's people. This course fulfills the core requirement for a first theology course. Successful completion of this course makes student eligible for TH33xx.

### TH 3301. Major Old Testament Themes. 3 Semester Hours.

A reading of selected Old Testament texts in their historical context, designed to introduce students to fundamental themes that run through the literature of the Old Testament period, or a reading of selected books of the Old Testament. The themes or books will be selected by the professor. The aim is to lead students to a broader understanding of human concerns and ultimate meaning, to religious self-transcendence, to a deeper relationship with God, and to a sense of responsibility for the world, gained through in-depth studies of particular sections of the Sacred Scriptures. The course may be repeated.

### TH 3302. Major New Testament Themes. 3 Semester Hours.

A reading of selected New Testament texts in their historical context, designed to introduce students to fundamental themes that run through the literature of the New Testament period, or a reading of selected books of the New Testament. The themes or books will be selected by the professor. The aim is to lead students to a broader understanding of human concerns and ultimate meaning, to religious self-transcendence, to a deeper relationship with God, and to a sense of responsibility for the world, gained through in-depth studies of particular sections of the Sacred Scriptures. The course may be repeated.

### TH 3304. Catholic School Mission and Identity. 3 Semester Hours.

This course examines the theological, moral, academic, human, and social elements that serve as the foundation of Catholic education. This course emphasizes the influence of Catholic theology and identity on the ethos, pedagogy, curriculum, and the overall mission of the school.

### TH 3310. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament. 3 Semester Hours.

This course surveys the Israelite scriptures that became the Bible for Jews, the Old Testament for Christians, and the Hebrew Bible for historical-critical scholars, along with the major questions and insights brought by those various authors and readers.

**TH 3311. The First Five Books of the Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the variety of approaches that interpreters have taken to the first five books of the Bible, variously referred to as the Pentateuch, the Torah, and the Law of Moses.

**TH 3312. Historical Books and Prophets. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the deep connections between retelling the story of God's people and the contemporary revelation of who we are and what God expects us to do.

**TH 3314. Psalms and Biblical Hebrew Poetry. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores how ancient Israelites used poetry and song to express a range of emotion through a wide variety of experiences, as well as how Jewish and Christian interpreters gave the poetry new meanings in their thought and practice.

**TH 3315. Wisdom Literature in the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores centuries of Israelite and Jewish efforts to articulate how we should understand and behave in the world around us, respond to new ideas from other cultures, and share our insight with the next generation.

**TH 3316. The Forbidden Books. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the books excluded from the Bible of Judaism as it survived, which nevertheless reflect the theological debates in Judaism in the time between the composition of the Old and New Testaments.

**TH 3320. Introduction to the New Testament. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course offers an immersion in the texts of the New Testament and introduces students to useful knowledge about the historical, cultural, social, political, and religious context of representative books. Students will learn about major literary genres (gospels, acts, epistles, apocalypses) and approaches to interpretation (traditional, historical-critical, and contemporary). Attention will be given to theological and practical questions that arise from the texts and the impact of the New Testament on contemporary life.

**TH 3321. The Gospel of Mark. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course introduces students to the Gospel according to Mark through close reading of select texts and an application of various interpretive methods for understanding the gospel. It will cover topics that are distinctive to Mark such as the messianic secret, the reign of God, the suffering servant, eschatology, and the theology of the cross. Students will explore the historical context of Mark's gospel and the history of its interpretation through to the contemporary period.

**TH 3322. The Gospel of Matthew. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course introduces students to the Gospel according to Matthew through close reading of select texts and an application of various interpretive methods for understanding the gospel. It will cover topics that are distinctive to Matthew such as righteousness, discipleship, authority, and intertextual engagement with the Hebrew Scriptures. Students will explore the historical context of Matthew's gospel and the history of its interpretation through to the contemporary period.

**TH 3323. The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course studies the two volume New Testament text Luke-Acts and its reception in popular culture and Christian communities. It will cover topics that are especially distinctive to Luke-Acts such as the infancy narratives, the Holy Spirit, the importance of women and the poor, ecclesiology, Saul/Paul, and mission. Students will explore the historical context of Luke-Acts and the ongoing story of its interpretation through to the contemporary period.

**TH 3324. The Gospels and Letters of John. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course will focus on a set of New Testament texts called the Johannine literature: the Gospel of John and the three epistles of John. Students will examine key themes from the Johannine material, especially views of Christ, the Holy Spirit, community life, and the relationship between faith and doubt. The course will give attention to historical context and various interpretive approaches, including a discussion of how Johannine themes had an impact in early Christian history and on contemporary Christian life.

**TH 3325. The Life and Letters of Paul. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course examines the life and writings of Saul/Paul as they are reflected in the New Testament. Major attention will be given to the Acts of the Apostles and letters attributed to Paul. Students will explore the variety of religious beliefs and practices reflected in biblical letters and narratives, situate the texts in their historical context, and develop an understanding of how Pauline thought and teaching transformed over time. This course will explore the contemporary relevance of ideas, concerns, and questions that arise from the Pauline material.

**TH 3326. Early Christian Literature. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course will examine selected readings from the first through the sixth centuries CE, including canonical and apocryphal texts, as well as writings by early Christians interpreting the Bible. Students will consider historical and theological developments in early Christian teaching, gaining insight into how literature can reflect and shape social life, liturgy and ritual, theology, and material culture. The course will explore the continued relevance of early Christian literature for communities today.

**TH 3330. Major Themes in the Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course varies from instructor to instructor and from year to year to allow an exploration of a theme of contemporary relevance to students.

**TH 3331. Politics, Prophets, and Priests: Judaism in the Second Temple Period. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course examines the diverse forms of Judaism that emerged from about 539 BCE to 200 CE and how these forms of Judaism continue to shape the modern world, with attention to primary texts written during this period, types of religious belief and practice, and the theological questions that arose during this period.

**TH 3332. The Catholic Church & the Christian Community. 3 Semester Hours.**

The nature and role of religious institution. Vatican II's notion of the Church, with a background leading to this development. Different meanings of "Church." The Catholic Church, other churches and ecclesial communities: their unity in shared elements of Christian life, faith and worship. Church and salvation. Co-responsibility, ministry, and authority in the Church. The Church's teaching function and the responses of believers. The Church's presence and service in the world today. The American Catholic Church: its history, its interaction with other American Churches, and its position in the modern Catholic world.

**TH 3333. Images of Women in the Hebrew Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course examines depictions of women across the Hebrew Bible. It explores depictions of specific women in biblical stories, as well as the ways that womanhood and femininity get used as metaphors and ideas in some biblical texts and in the reception and further interpretation of the Hebrew Bible.

**TH 3334. Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course examines depictions of men across the Hebrew Bible. It explores depictions of specific men in biblical stories, as well as the ways that manhood and masculinity get used as metaphors and ideas in some biblical texts and in the reception and further interpretation of the Hebrew Bible.

**TH 3335. Home, Exile, and Diaspora in the Hebrew Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

Like many people today, the ancient Israelites experienced forced migration and exile. This course examines the ways that the authors of the Hebrew Bible experience and talk about home, exile, and diaspora in sacred scripture with particular attention to the diversity and dynamism of texts, ideas, and groups in the ancient world. This course may require a service-learning component.

**TH 3341. The Holy Spirit in the Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course offers an introduction to the foundations of pneumatology (study of the Holy Spirit) through close reading of selected biblical texts. Students will gain insight into the historical, literary, religious, and social context of early Christian views of the Holy Spirit and will examine the reception of biblical pneumatology in various historical periods, including the present day. Attention will be given to interpretive methods in biblical studies and to Christian systematic theology.

**TH 3342. Apostles and Discipleship in the Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course examines literary depictions of Jesus' apostles and disciples in the New Testament and other early Christian texts. Students will study the identities, expectations, and perceptions of these people, gaining an understanding of the roles they played during Jesus' lifetime and how their work transformed after his death, during the period when Christ-believing communities were founded, grew, and changed. Through an examination of later historical cases students will explore the legacy of the disciples and apostles in the contemporary world.

**TH 3343. Miracles and Power in the Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

Looking at the New Testament portrayal of Jesus in its historical and cultural context, this course examines what it means to be a "savior," giving special attention to the competing claims of early Christ-believers, people devoted to healing and saving gods, and those who participated in the cult of the Roman emperors. In addition to a study of ancient soteriology, the course offers insight into ancient and contemporary understandings of "miracle" and "magic" in the Christian tradition.

**TH 3344. Kinship and Family in the Bible. 3 Semester Hours.**

Starting with the metaphorical "household of God," this course introduces ways early Christian authors used metaphors of kinship and belonging to build, describe, imagine, and restructure their human communities. The course gives special attention to Pauline imagery, historical context, and early Christ-believing communities in relation to the Roman Empire, to the Jews of their time, and to each other. In addition to a study of ancient kinship models, students will examine contemporary understandings of kinship and family in the Christian tradition.

**TH 3350. Introduction to Moral Theology. 3 Semester Hours.**

Moral theology, sometimes called Christian ethics or theological ethics, is reasoned reflection on moral experience and decision-making as informed by conscience, virtues, faith, values, moral principles, Church teaching, and human experience. Moral theology seeks to discern and promote the wellbeing of persons as situated within communities, social institutions, and all of God's creation. Selected ethical issues are included.

**TH 3352. Catholic Social Ethics. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course addresses the continuity and the development of Catholic thought and practice concerning social issues. It seeks to answer such questions as: Should Christianity be a force for social, economic, and political change? How might Christian values permeate and transform the neighborhood, the boardroom, the city the nation, the international community? What is the role of the Church in the world? Issues as economic justice, racism, church-state relations, human rights, and peacemaking will be treated, placed within an historical perspective. Special attention will be given to the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching (found especially in papal documents, the decrees of Vatican II, and pronouncements of the U.S. hierarchy).

**TH 3353. Health Care & Medical Ethics. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course will begin with a consideration of ethics and ethical method in light of the interaction of reason and an ecumenical religious perspective. Such an approach will enable a study of what constitutes the appropriate care for the human person, particularly in the realm of medicine and health care. In addition to such fundamental bioethical issues, this course will also examine relevant contemporary issues in medicine and the life sciences at both the individual and social level.

**TH 3354. Marriage and Family Today. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course considers themes including the nature of marriage as understood by the Catholic Church; the role of marriage and the family as the foundation of civil society; Natural Family Planning; and the specific social and personal challenges that married couples meet such as monogamy, fidelity, abstinence, finances, the extended family, and emotional differences.

**TH 3356. Personal Religious Transformation. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course considers themes including the nature of religious experience and the holy; the definition of the meaning of spiritual life; the presentation of how spiritual life has been imaged by Christians in the past, as well as aids for a spiritual life including: dialoguing with scripture and tradition, spiritual direction and spiritual friendship, prayer, liturgy, and sacraments in the spiritual life.

**TH 3357. Nonviolent Peacemaking. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores peacemaking and the lifestyle of nonviolence as integral to the Christian vocation and as resources and strategies for addressing the violence in ourselves, our culture, and our world. Figures such as Jesus, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. are considered along with contemporary practitioners of nonviolent peacemaking.

**TH 3358. Race and Racism. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course seeks to gain a theologically and ethically informed perspective on the construction of race and ethnicity as well as the workings of the social sins of racism and nativism in society and the Church. Social movements that promote racial justice are also considered.

**TH 3370. Major Themes in Systematic TH. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course varies from instructor to instructor and from year to year to allow an exploration of a theme of contemporary relevance to students.

**TH 3371. Christ and the Christian God. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the history of Christian efforts to articulate an understanding of Christ (e.g., fully human, fully divine) and the Trinity (the nature of God in three persons) in response to deepening human thought with changing historical circumstances and philosophical influences.

**TH 3372. The Catholic Church and the Christian Community. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the history of Christian efforts to articulate an understanding of the nature of the Church (traditionally called Ecclesiology) in light of changing metaphors and analogies from historical context.

**TH 3373. Sacraments, Rites and Rel Symb. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the history of Christian efforts to articulate an understanding of tangible objects and practices as having invisible meaning and a special role in connecting human individuals and communities with the sacred realm.

**TH 3374. The Afterlife and the End of the World. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the variety of attempts, especially in Christianity and its influences, to understand the fate of us as individuals and the world collectively when we will cease to exist in the familiar way, along with what those expectations imply for how we act in the present life in the present world. This exploration, traditionally called Eschatology (study of the last things) was formerly articulated as the study of death, judgment, heaven, and hell, and more recently generalized as the study of our ultimate Christian hope.

**TH 3375. Interreligious Dialogue and Ecumenism. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the theoretical foundation and best practices for talking about faith with people of other faiths or no faith.

**TH 3376. Faith and Reason, Science and Religion. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the history and especially contemporary issues of ways in which people of faith and religion, particularly in the Christian tradition, have struggled to find compatibility with reason and science in the face of substantial challenges.

**TH 3380. Major Themes in the History of Christianity. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course varies from instructor to instructor and from year to year to allow an exploration of a theme of contemporary relevance to students.

**TH 3381. Heretics and Heresies. 3 Semester Hours.**

Beginning with an examination of the concepts heresy and orthodoxy, students in this course will trace the development of selected religious teachings, giving attention to the communities, controversies, interpretive techniques, and social concerns that shape the transformation of theological ideas over time.

**TH 3382. Global Christianity. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the relationship between faith and culture and the variety of ways in which Christianity has been or could be enculturated in different contexts.

**TH 3383. Mary and the Marianists. 3 Semester Hours.**

Exploring our Marianist Heritage demands an understanding of Father Chaminade's spirituality, its scriptural and historical underpinnings. This course will also unfold some of Our Blessed Mother's legacy and some of her titles, and the concept of community within the Marianist little institute and within the Church as a whole.

**TH 3384. Theology in the Southwest. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course examines the theological questions arising from the experience of Christian life and worship in the Southwest. The sources of this study are directly applicable to this unique region and, in addition to theology, may include cultural and sociological studies related to identity formation, practices that uniquely manifest faith and worship, and a study of the historical development of the Christian tradition in this area.

**TH 3390. Introduction to Pastoral Ministry. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course varies from instructor to instructor and from year to year to allow an exploration of a theme of contemporary relevance to students.

**TH 3391. The Phenomenon of Religious Pilgrimage. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course examines the phenomenon of religious pilgrimage historically, phenomenologically, and/or comparatively, with attention to a range of pilgrimage experiences and iterations. It may include a required travel component.

**TH 3392. Sacred Texts and their Readers. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course will explore one or more sacred texts as a foundational text of religious life and culture. It will examine the ways that different communities throughout history have understood and read these texts and drawn meaning from them. It will also explore the particular challenges and opportunities that close readings of sacred texts have posed for readers in an ever-changing world.

**TH 3393. Comparative Studies in Theology. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores questions that have been asked by people of faiths generally perceived as mutually exclusive, and how their insights on those questions can be different or similar based on shared human experience, shared historical origins, and ongoing conversation.

**TH 3395. Introduction to Pastoral Ministry. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course explores the theoretical foundation and best practices of serving the needs of the faithful in a wide variety of contexts.

**TH 3396. Theology Internship. 3 Semester Hours.**

The theology internship for academic credit differs from other valuable work experiences and from coursework in that it blends practical service and intellectual formation.

**TH 4198. Selected Topics in General Studies in Religion. 1 Semester Hour.**

Specific topics may vary from semester to semester. May be repeated.

**TH 4298. Selected Topics in General Studies in Religion. 2 Semester Hours.**

Specific topics may vary from semester to semester. May be repeated.

**TH 4300. Advanced Theology. 3 Semester Hours.**

This course is required of theology majors and open to all students who have completed the two Theology courses of the Core Curriculum. Topics vary from year to year. Pre-requisite: 3XXX level Theology course or permission of instructor.

**TH 5188. Selected Topics in Marianist Studies. 1 Semester Hour.**

Specific topics may vary from semester to semester. May be repeated.

**TH 5358. Selected Topics in Religious Experience or Communication. 3 Semester Hours.**

Specific topics in Religious Experience or Communication (evangelization and religious education) may vary from semester to semester. May be repeated.