



Master of Theology

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2025-2026



Santa Clara
Jesuit School of Theology

Welcome to the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University!

JST-SCU is a graduate school of Santa Clara University and a formation center of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the U.S. Our school serves as a global hub for theological studies and ministerial formation. Students and faculty from across the globe converge at JST-SCU to engage in its academically rigorous, socially engaged, contextually diverse, and spiritually vibrant community.

JST-SCU is also an ecclesiastical faculty accredited and approved by the Vatican Dicastery for Culture and Education to prepare Jesuits, lay men and women, religious women and men, and diocesan priests for vocation, ministry, service, and career in the Church, society, and academy. With a current student body from 34 countries, our global community benefits from the wisdom of one another's experiences in preparation for ministry leadership and service to the Church and the world.

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, Santa Clara University's vision and mission are firmly rooted in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition to educate citizens and leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion and build a more humane, just, and sustainable world. Santa Clara (www.scu.edu) blends high-tech innovation with a social consciousness grounded in the Jesuit educational tradition and engaged with various communities to foster an entrepreneurial mindset in view of helping shape the next generation of leaders and global thinkers.

Besides institutional and academic strengths in systematic theology, biblical studies, sacraments and liturgy, moral theology, social ethics, inter-religious dialogue, and Christian spirituality, JST-SCU has recently enhanced expertise in the following areas of study:

- Ignatian spirituality, including classes, research, and practicums; four spiritual directors trained in Ignatian spirituality are available for Jesuit students.
- Biblical studies, with an emphasis on textual knowledge and contextual interpretation.
- Social ethics, with expertise in reconciliation, ecology, family systems, and post-colonial perspectives.
- Theology of synodality, with focus on the understanding, knowledge, and practice of synodality in the global Church.

JST-SCU's small size allows our world-renowned faculty to personally engage our students in the highest quality of academic excellence. The Jesuit Community at JST offers an intercultural experience of friendship in the Lord that provides a conducive environment for those in formation. We are deeply committed to preparing Jesuits and ministers for service in a global, synodal Church.



A strong academic and ministerial formation is key to what the Society of Jesus can offer our Church and world in the second quarter of the 21st century.

For U.S. and international students, JST-SCU offers the Master of Divinity (MDiv); Master of Theological Studies (MTS); Master of Theology (ThM); and Ecclesiastical degrees at the Bachelor (STB), Licentiate (STL), and Doctoral (STD) levels in Sacred Theology.

- Our first cycle includes Jesuits and other students from all over the world, and the MDiv and STB are designed to prepare Jesuits for priestly ministry in a variety of contexts and lay students for dedicated church service. The Bay Area provides rich opportunities for ministerial and pastoral formation in various cultures and languages and socio economic conditions. This intercultural context counts as a distinct strength of our program
- The MTS offers students a foundation in theology and ministry, and the ThM allows students to explore a particular aspect of theology through classwork and a project or thesis.
- The STL allows Jesuits, diocesan priests and religious women and men to do serious academic research in a particular area of theology. Students work with a faculty member with expertise in their thesis topic, providing strong support across the spectrum of theological disciplines.
- Our STD program works with candidates moving directly from the licentiate as well as those who return to further studies to prepare for their assignments in universities and formation centers around the world. Here our Jesuit and lay faculty are at their best, offering strong mentoring and support—with an eye to finishing the degree on time!

For Jesuits and others who would like to come to JST-SCU for a period of academic engagement and spiritual renewal, we offer a Renewal Program for one or two semesters, led by an experienced spiritual guide. Renewal participants enhance the life of the whole community, contributing insight, wisdom, and depth in the courses they take, sharing the breadth and depth of their ministerial experience in formal and informal settings.

JST-SCU is marked by a strong diversity of its community of scholars, staff, and students. While classes require sufficient English proficiency, our professors speak French, Italian, German, Portuguese, Swahili, Vietnamese, and Spanish, among other languages, creating an environment conducive to global theological scholarship. To better serve the needs of our diverse student body, we offer tutoring and writing assistance and coaching for international students (including Jesuits) to help them develop the skills needed for academic writing and research.

We invite you to make your distinctive contribution to our academic and faith community, as together we enliven faith, promote reconciliation, labor for justice, and participate in God's mercy.

Welcome to JST-SCU!

Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, S.J.
Dean, Jesuit School of Santa Clara University

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Program Guidelines

Introduction

The Master of Theology program is a one-year program in advanced theological studies. Students requesting admission to the Th.M. program must have an earned Master of Divinity (M.Div.), a Master of Theological Studies (MTS), or a Master of Arts in Theology (MA). The Th.M. is intended to focus students toward an area of specialized interest. In keeping with the intellectual tradition and apostolic priority of the Society of Jesus, the program cultivates a critical fidelity to the Roman Catholic tradition, in service of the faith that does justice. It enables students to understand the interplay between faith and culture, preparing them to address theological and pastoral issues that emerge in diverse cultural contexts.

Goals/Objectives

Institutional Learning Goals

1. Students will gain a broad foundation in Christian theology, with a focus on the Roman Catholic tradition.
2. Students will demonstrate a critically-informed approach to faith that promotes social justice for the common good, especially for the benefit of those in greatest need.
3. Students will recognize the interplay between faith and culture in addressing issues that emerge in diverse cultural contexts.

ThM Program Student Learning Outcomes

One-year program in advanced theological study beyond the Master of Divinity and Masters degrees available in almost any area of specialized interest.

ThM Students will...

1. demonstrate advanced knowledge and research methods in their selected area of concentration
2. apply advanced theological competencies in their appraisal of theological or pastoral issues in light of their selected areas of concentration.
3. assess theological and pastoral issues in the socio-cultural contexts in which they emerge.

Advanced Standing

A student who has taken advanced graduate courses in theology not longer than six years prior to registration may petition for advanced standing in JST's Th.M. program. This petition may be included with the Application for Admission, or it may be submitted during the first semester of study at JST. No more than six units of advanced standing can be applied for the Master of Theology program. These units must be from courses which cohere with the courses taken at JST as a specialization.

No units will be transferred which have already been counted toward another degree. No units will be considered for transfer that are not from accredited institutions of higher learning or were not attained at a graduate level, or received a grade of less than a B.

Students formerly in the JST Master of Divinity program may petition to transfer courses completed during the program provided that the courses were completed in the final year of the program, were taken at an advanced level with a grade of B- or better, and were not counted toward the M.Div. degree. See FORMS – [Petition to Transfer Coursework](#).

Degree Requirements

A student may expect to complete the Master of Theology degree in one academic year, but must complete the program within two calendar years from the date of initial registration in the program.

Program Focus

Students in the Master of Theology program will be expected to select a focus for their studies. For example:

A. Students opting for a research Th.M. will focus their studies toward a deeper personal knowledge and scholarly advancement in some particular area of the theological disciplines. Such students will be expected to write a thesis.

B. Students opting for a pastoral Th.M. will focus their work toward the communication of the Christian Gospel. Pastoral Th.M. students may opt to do a project rather than a thesis.

Th.M. Program Requirements

- Students must complete 18 semester units of coursework at the 4000 level or above.
- All courses must contribute directly to the student's area of specialization. Th.M. degree candidates who choose a more pastoral emphasis may apply a maximum of 6 units of field education or special reading course project work toward the 18 units of course work.

- Of these 18 units, students must take RS 2092: Culture, Context, and Lived Religion, upgraded to the 4000 level (3 units), or some other course that teaches the same content as approved by the Associate Dean, to meet Goal III, Objective A.
- Students may upgrade the course content and assignments of a 2000 or 3000 level course to meet the Th.M. advanced course requirements. (Generally, a research paper of 15 pages or more is required.) See [FORMS – SRC 8888 \(Upgrade Form\)](#).
- Language requirements may be assigned at the beginning of the program as appropriate to the area of specialization. Coursework to attain mastery of a language will not be credited to degree requirements.
- A grade point average of at least 3.0 must be maintained. Students are not allowed to take courses as pass/no pass.
- In addition to coursework, students must complete a thesis of 75 pages, or a project of comparable scope.
- The student must register for 6 units of either research or project work in MA 5000 for their final semester of academic work. The grade for MA 5000 will include the student's achievement for the thesis/project. See below for Thesis Process.
- During their last semester of residence in the Th.M. program, or whenever it is offered in the school year, students must register for 1 credit of FE 4402.
- The Th.M. thesis/project proposal is due no later than the last day of class in the semester prior to expected graduation. [See FORMS – Th.M. Thesis Proposal](#).
- Completed Th.M. thesis/project must be submitted to the registrar's office by the first Monday in May, or comparable dates in the fall semester.

Continuing Registration

Th.M. students are considered to be in continuing registration once they have completed their course work plus the required registration for the final thesis, project or synthesis paper. Continuing registration students will be required to register and are expected to pay the continuing registration fee equivalent to 6.5 units of current tuition each semester. Such students will be considered fully registered students, and will have library privileges commensurate with that status. [See the Student Handbook for more information on continuing registration status].

Students who complete an STL degree can also receive a Th.M. degree concurrently by submitting a request to the Associate Dean. Students seeking the concurrent degrees must also take STL 3999, a one credit course, in the spring of their final year.

Satisfactory Academic Progress While In Continuing Registration Status

Generally, Satisfactory Academic Progress for Th.M. students is governed by the Academic Policies and Procedures, posted on [JST's website](#). This policy pertains only to students who are in continuing registration status.

- While a student is in continuing registration for the Th.M. program, the thesis director must certify by the last week of classes in each semester that the student is making satisfactory academic progress. This determination will be based on: (a) the depth of contact between the student and his/her director; (b) the student's adherence to a research plan, if applicable; and/or (c) the student's progress in drafting, editing and polishing the thesis or dissertation.
- If the student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the Associate Dean will place the student on academic probation, informing the registrar, the director and the student of this change in status. Students on academic probation will not be eligible for institutional aid from the school.
- Students who are on academic probation will be permitted to enroll in one additional semester of continuing registration in order to make progress toward their degree. If any student does not make satisfactory progress during the semester on academic probation, the Associate Dean will consult with the student's director to determine whether to dismiss the student for academic reasons or to continue the student and on what terms. The student, the director, and the Registrar will be informed of the outcome of the determination.



Thesis or Project

Thesis or Project Process

Committee: The thesis will ordinarily be directed by a committee of two people. The thesis/project director must be a member of the JST full-time permanent faculty. S/he should also serve as the academic advisor for most of the degree program, including the course work.

The second reader will ordinarily also be a member of the JST faculty. Requests for exception should be addressed to the Th.M. Program Director.

A third person may be added if appropriate, especially from a pastoral situation relevant to a project. In the event that there is a serious disagreement between the director and reader over the quality of the thesis or project, the Program Director will appoint a third reader to arbitrate the matter.

Proposal: The Th.M. proposal should include the Th.M. Thesis Proposal Form as a cover sheet. Attached to it should be a proposal of no more than six pages in length that presents the student's thesis statement and intended work. For a detailed description of the requirements for the thesis proposal, please see pages 11-12. For a copy of the Th.M. Thesis Proposal Form, please see page 14.

Thesis/Project Grade: The student should see that each member of the thesis/project committee receives a copy of the [grade sheet](#) along with the thesis or project.

The grade report sheet allows the reader the option of grading the thesis or project as is or with minor corrections. If the thesis/project has been approved with minor corrections, the student must have the corrected thesis/project approved by her/his director before turning it in to the JST Associate Dean's Office.

If, in the opinion of a reader, major revisions must be made, that reader should deal directly with the director and student until the thesis or project is acceptable. Grade sheets should be submitted to the Registrar's Office only after the thesis/project is deemed acceptable.

Readers should feel free to contact the student's thesis/project director for clarification or questions, but the major responsibility for seeing that everything is taken care of belongs to the student.

Th.M. Thesis Guidelines

- The minimum length of the thesis is 75 pages.
- The final typed original and copy of the thesis must be submitted to the JST Registrar's Office. All JST-SCU degree candidates who must submit a thesis for their program must submit two (2) archival quality copies of their thesis (after the approval of GTU library), and one additional copy (for SCU) in electronic format (see instructions below) to the JST

Registrar's Office. For those students writing theses focusing on matters pertaining to African nations, the electronic format copy will also be sent to the two Jesuit African theologates by the Registrar.

- After all of the readers have approved the thesis and the GTU Reference Librarian has approved the thesis format and paper, then the ORIGINAL and ONE COPY (both with original signatures) of the thesis must be submitted to the JST Registrar's Office. These will become the bound copies to be kept in the GTU Library. (Do not bind the thesis yourself.)
- A Thesis Binding Fee of \$60 will be charged to the student's account in the semester of graduation.



Th.M. Project Guidelines

Nature of the Project:

- The project should integrate academic study done in course work with pastoral practice. Due to the diversity of pastoral situations, it is difficult to spell out in advance what form this will take in every case.
- The knowledge displayed and the methods employed in the execution of any project should be equivalent to what is expected for any Advanced Master's thesis.
- Once the written component of the project is received, the committee will determine whether an oral examination (not to exceed an hour) is advisable. Faculty will not be expected to be available in the summer for consultation on the project.
- The completed project will be accompanied by written materials, the nature and length to be determined by the committee.

Instructions for Filing the Th.M. Project:

- Students doing the Th.M. project are expected to file one copy of the final, corrected, approved and signed project with the JST Registrar's Office. That copy should be bound. "Velo" or comb binding with a clear plastic cover is recommended.



Description of a Thesis Proposal

This guide offers a schematic outline of a thesis proposal; it provides a brief description of what each section of the proposal is to include. *The thesis proposal should be no more than six pages in length, including the title page and bibliography.*

I. Title Page

The title page of the proposal should provide the following:

TITLE OF THE THESIS

Subtitle [if applicable]

A Proposal for a Thesis

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the THM Degree from the
Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University**

By: (your name)

Directed by: (your director's name)

Second Reader: (second reader's name)

Date (of the submission of the proposal)

II. Thesis Statement

The thesis statement should appear as a single sentence, accompanied by a brief explanatory paragraph. This allows you to establish the subject matter of the thesis in a precise manner.

The thesis statement may be presented in terms of a problem that you wish to address, a question you wish to answer, or a contribution that you wish to make to an ongoing discussion.

III. Reasons for Writing the Thesis

The reasons for writing the thesis can be stated in terms of the goals you wish to accomplish, the theological resources that you wish to employ, or the ground you wish to break. This section of the proposal allows you to show where your work fits into a larger, ongoing theological conversation.

While the thesis statement identifies the subject of your thesis in a focused manner, this statement of reasons for writing the thesis demonstrates the relevance of your project for a wider audience.

IV. Synopsis of Intended Work

A typical Th.M. thesis consists of three chapters and introduction; the synopsis of your proposed thesis involves a chapter-by-chapter overview of the argument you wish to develop. Each chapter should be described in no more than one paragraph. This section illuminates the logic that will give your project its structure; it also allows you to substantiate your thesis statement.

V. Table of Contents

This one-page table of contents lists the chapters and chapter subdivisions of your proposed thesis. It should enable your director and reader to see even more clearly the logic of the whole work. At the same time it should help you to see the various parts of your project in relation to the whole, thus establishing a sense of proper proportions and limits.

VI. Bibliography

The thesis proposal should conclude with a working bibliography that contains the works you intend to consult to begin your research. The bibliography is likely to expand as you continue your work.





PROGRAM WORKSHEET

Th.M.

Master of Theology

Student's Name: _____

Date: _____

This worksheet is intended to assist you in determining your progress in the Th.M. program.

Coursework and thesis requirements:

- 15 semester units of coursework at 4000 level or above
- 6 semester units of MA 5000 (thesis/project research and writing)
- 3 semester units of RS 2092: Culture, Context & Lived Religion (upgraded to 4000-level) or an approved equivalent
- 1 credit FE-4402 Th.M. Practicum in the final semester of enrollment & take an online integration seminar

Course Number & Title

(If course is below 4000 level, please indicate with a Y or N whether it has been upgraded.)

Course # & Title	If below 4000, has course been upgraded? Y or N	# of units	Grade
RS 2092 - Culture, Context & Lived Religion (upgraded) or approved equivalent		3	
FE 4402	-----	1	
MA 5000	-----	6	

Paperwork etc. required	Date submitted	Notes
Proposal form		Including courses, committee signature, description
Grade Report Sheets		Give one to each reader along with copy of the thesis/project
Thesis/project submitted		2 library-ready copies and one electronic copy of thesis Or 1 copy of project fully signed to JST registrar
Graduation fees		
Thesis fee (not for projects)		

Please see the degree handbook for additional information.



THESIS OR PROJECT PROPOSAL

Th.M.

Master of Theology

Student's Name: _____

Title of Thesis/Project: _____

Area of Concentration: _____

COURSE TAKEN FOR DEGREE:

Course #	Course Title

READERS' SIGNATURES:

Thesis/Project Director: _____ Date: _____

Reader: _____ Date: _____

Second Reader (if applicable): _____ Date: _____

DESCRIPTION (This description should include a brief statement of the questions you are attempting to answer, how you intend to go about it, the methodology, and an indication of the availability of sources. Use the reverse side or attachments if necessary. For information about Th.M. project requirements, see the project guidelines.)

Associate Dean

Date

SUBMIT THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE ASSOCIATE DEAN'S OFFICE.

A copy will be returned to you.



GRADE REPORT FORM

Master of Theology

Student's Name: _____

Instructions to the Student:

1. Fill in your name and thesis title.
2. Give one copy to each thesis reader or project committee member including the director.

Title of Thesis/Extended Research Paper/Project: _____

Instructions to Director and Readers:

1. Please check one of the following grade options.
2. Return the signed form to the JST Registrar, 1735 Le Roy, Berkeley, 94709.

- _____ **Pass** with No Revisions
- _____ Pass with **Minor** Revisions
- _____ **Returned** for **Major** Revisions*
- _____ Does **Not** Pass

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

*If the reader feels major revisions are necessary, s/he should contact the student and thesis director, and retain this grade sheet until satisfied that the thesis requires only minor revisions.

Comments (if any): **PLEASE INDICATE IF THESE ARE CONFIDENTIAL TO THE ASSOCIATE DEAN.** *[Use the reverse side of this page or separate sheet if necessary.]*