

THE SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES

Master of Christian Studies

Purpose Statement

The Master of Christian Studies exists to raise the level of ministry competence among church staff and laypersons in the churches of the Mid-South region.

Program Emphases

Two primary emphases are at the core of the Master of Christian Studies program. First, the courses offered are foundational, both in terms of the student's ability to think biblically and theologically, as well as in terms of specific ministry skills. The courses in Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, Ethics, and Church History lay a foundation that grounds students both biblically and theologically. The courses on Bible Study, Communicating Biblical Truth, Evangelism and Missions, Leadership, and Counseling, are designed to help the student grow in these vital ministry skills. These two areas, thinking rightly and ministering effectively, must be seen as working in a synergetic relationship. The goal is to think biblically and theologically to make ministry more effective. Well-developed ministry skills then become the natural means of living out biblical and theological truths.

A second primary emphasis of the Master of Christian Studies program is integration. Too often theological education is fragmented into isolated classes that are unconnected and coursework that is not directly linked to ministry in the church. The M.C.S. program will integrate courses, with pairs of courses being strategically integrated to demonstrate how the subject matters interrelate. For instance, Preaching and Old Testament II might be taught during the same term. In that semester students might be asked to reflect on the Old Testament foundations of preaching, as well as how they should preach from the Old Testament. In addition, classroom assignments will encourage students to apply classroom learning to the ministry of the local church. This will happen not only in the ministry skill courses, but also in biblical and theological foundation classes. For example, assignments in Theology I might require students to design and teach a substantive, ten-week seminar on the doctrine of God. Other classes might call for students to write a case study on how the doctrine of humanity relates to a particularly difficult counseling situation in the church.

The M.C.S. program seeks to advance God's kingdom in the churches of the Mid-South by laying a solid foundation for ministry and by teaching students to integrate their studies with their real world ministry.

Required courses include:

Old Testament I: Promise, Covenant, and Praise 3 hrs.

Old Testament II: Wisdom, Justice, and God's Rule 3 hrs.

New Testament I: Gospels and Acts 3 hrs.

New Testament II: Letters of the New Testament 3 hrs.

Bible Study for Preaching and Teaching 3 hrs.

Theology I: God, Revelation and Humanity 3 hrs.

Theology II: Christ, the Spirit, and Last Things 3 hrs.

Church History I: Early and Medieval Christianity	3 hrs.
Church History II: Reformation and Modern Christianity	3 hrs.
Communicating Biblical Truth	3 hrs.
Evangelism and Missions	3 hrs.
Introduction to Christian Ethics	3 hrs.
Christian Leadership	3 hrs.
The Ministry of Biblical Counsel	3 hrs.
Total:	42 hrs.

Expected Outcomes

Students will deepen their analytical skills as they reflect seriously on the biblical text, theology, church history, and how these apply to the various tasks and ministries of the church.

Students will integrate what they learn in class with ministry done from week to week in their local churches.

Students will serve their churches more effectively as they become more biblically literate, historically, theologically, and ethically reflective.

Students will serve their churches more effectively as they become more skilled in various aspects of ministry, including Bible study, preaching, teaching, counseling, and leading.

Students will be more motivated to participate, and lead their churches in advancing the kingdom of

6. An Autobiographical Essay of 3-5 pages, describing the applicant's spiritual pilgrimage.
7. If English is not a student's first language, minimum scores of 560 or 220 computer must be achieved on the TOEFL.

Transfer of Credit

Up to nine semester hours of graduate credit from a regionally accredited college or university may be transferred into the degree program at the time the student is admitted provided the grades earned were B or higher.

Financial Information

Application Fee: \$25

Graduation Fee: \$25

Tuition per Semester Hour: \$245

Financial Aid

The M.C.S. does not qualify for Federal Stafford Loans. However, the student may contact the Financial Aid Office about private alternative loans.

Graduation Requirements

- A. The completion of 42 hours of course work with a GPA of 3.0 or higher
- B. The fulfillment of all financial obligations
- C. The approval of the faculty

Course Descriptions

Master of Christian Studies (MCS)

500. Old Testament I: Promise, Covenant, and Praise (3)

An investigation of the theological implications of God's promises that were given to his covenant people, as well as the people's response to God in praise and lament. This course will analyze these themes through the study of the history, background, literary genre, structure, and theology of Genesis through Psalms. Exegetical methodologies for analyzing narrative and poetic texts will be introduced.

505. Old Testament II: Wisdom, Justice, and God's Rule (3)

An investigation of how practical principles of divine wisdom impact human behavior and doubting, how God's plan to create a world of justice and trust impacted Israelite and world history, and how God's sovereign power will one day triumph and usher in the messianic kingdom. This course will introduce a method of analyzing the prophet's messages in order to perceive how they attempted to transform the worldview of their audiences by persuading them to change their thinking and behavior.

510. New Testament I: The Gospel and Acts (3)

A survey of the Gospels and Acts with more intensive study of selected texts and issues. Included are a survey of New Testament background, evaluation of various critical approaches to the life of Christ, consideration of the historical reliability of the Gospels, and a survey of central theological themes in the teaching of Jesus, the individual Gospels, and the book of Acts.

515. New Testament II: The Letters of the New Testament (3)

A survey of the Pauline epistles, the general epistles and Revelation, with more intensive study of selected texts and issues. Included is a survey of basic issues in Pauline theology, issues in interpreting New Testament letters and the hermeneutics of the book of Revelation.

520. Bible Study for Preaching and Teaching (3)

An exploration of the methods, tools, and practices associated with the interpretation and application of the Bible. Students will exegete selected biblical passages, moving from the ancient text to the modern world.

530. Church History I: Early and Medieval Christianity (3)

A survey of the history of Christianity from the late first century through the fifteenth century, focusing on the development of pivotal doctrines and ecclesiastical institutions in the Patristic and Medieval periods.

531. Church History II: Reformation and Modern Christianity (3)

A survey of the history of Christianity from the early sixteenth century to the early twenty-first century, focusing on the development of pivotal doctrines and ecclesiastical institutions in the Reformation and Modern periods.

535. Communicating Biblical Truth (3)

Communicating Biblical Truth is a study of the basics of sermon development and delivery, as well as the art and craft of teaching biblical truth.

536. Evangelism and Missions (3)

An introduction to the ministry of evangelism and missions that moves from its biblical basis and theological foundations to a study of contemporary strategies, methodologies, movements, and trends with a focus on their practical application.

537. Introduction to Christian Ethics (3)

An introduction to Christian ethics that focuses on ethical methodology and application of Christian ethical principles to key issues in church and society.

538. Christian Leadership (3)

579. External Domestic Study Programs (1-4)

All courses and their application must be defined and approved prior to travel.

580. Study Abroad Programs (1-4)

All courses and their application must be defined and approved prior to travel.

585. Special Study (1-4)

Group studies which do not appear in the department course offerings. Course content will be determined by need.

598. Seminar (1-4)

Graduate studies seminar to be used at the discretion of the department.

655. Independent Study (1-4)

Individual research and study under the guidance of a graduate faculty member.