

# THE MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGION

Drew University Theological School  
2022 - 2023

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# Purpose of the Handbook

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This handbook is a guide for the Master of Arts in Religion degree of the Drew Theological School. It provides information and structure to facilitate moving through the program without excessive technical distractions. A handbook is issued annually to ensure • Ecology and Religion (ECO) that students have up-to-date information. If there is any contradiction between this handbook and the academic catalog of the Theological School published on the Registrar's website, the catalog dated to the student's semester of entrance takes precedence.

Whether you want to apply for doctoral programs or deepen your understanding of a field of study, the Drew Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) degree provides an intensive period of training to achieve your goals. The degree features seminars in scholarly skills and communication, a focused area of study, and a capstone project experience.

This handbook provides:

- A quick view of key Master of Arts in Religion student expectations;
- Requirements and timelines for the program;
- A review of academic policies and processes most relevant to M.A.R. students;
- A program planning checklist.

In Seminary Hall and in virtual Drew learning spaces, you are invited to linger in the Forest even as you are always engaging contexts beyond Drew. The Theological School is a diverse, ecumenical, and open community that dares to pursue the love, wisdom, and justice at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our hope that this handbook will clarify your pathway to graduation and free your mind, body, and spirit for the deeply transformative work of theological education.

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# A Quick View of Student Expectations

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## √ Pay attention to Drew's deadlines and policies

Although you will work closely with your professors and fellow students, the responsibility for your degree progress rests with you. All students are expected to work within Drew policies and procedures. Familiarize yourself with the academic calendar and the deadlines related to withdrawals, grade extensions, and academic petitions. Information can be found on the Registrar's office webpage.

## √ Be conversant in academic writing styles

The M.A.R. is a master's degree that prioritizes engagement with scholarship and academic contexts. You should be familiar with the forms and formats of writing academic essays and research papers. In order to work continuously on your writing, take advantage of the Theological School's reference librarian, and the resources of the Center for Academic Excellence and the Theological Language and Learning Center.

## √ Plan for your thesis early

The M.A.R. has options for you to pursue individual academic and professional goals through extended academic research. If you want to do the thesis-track of the MAR, you should begin thinking about your plan in your second semester. You will need two semesters to complete the thesis project, usually in your third or fourth semester. There is also an option for a non-thesis track to complete the M.A.R. For this track, you can complete a M.A.R. portfolio of your work or an extended paper in one semester.

## √ Take Time for Professional Reflection

For many students, the M.A.R. program provides an opportunity to discern next steps on their academic and/or vocational path. Some M.A.R. students prepare to apply to doctoral programs, whether a Ph.D. or Doctor of Ministry. Some want to enhance their professional competency in a particular field. Others pursue an area of study based on their curiosity or for a range of professional and personal reasons. As you go through the M.A.R. Program, take advantage of opportunities to discuss options and develop skills that will move you toward your goals.

# A Quick View of M.A.R. Program Requirements

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DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (See Academic Catalog for more details)	Number of Credits
<b>Required Courses</b>	<b>7 credits</b>
REL 530 - Studying Religion and Theology	1
REL 531 - Research Methods in a Digital Age	1
REL 532 - Critical Pedagogy and Religion	1
REL 533 - Public Writing and Media Communication	1
One Interdisciplinary Seminar (550 level or higher course with one of the Following subjects or attributes: INTD, ECO, WSTT, AFAM, ARLT)	3
<b>Area of Study (see below)</b>	<b>15 credits</b>
<b>Electives</b>	<b>15 -21 credits</b>
<b>Capstone</b>	<b>0-6 credits</b>
Thesis Track CRW 975 A - Thesis Workshop (Fall term) AND CRW 975 B - Thesis Workshop (Spring term)	3 credits 3 credits
OR Non-Thesis Track CRW 692 - MAR Portfolio (0) OR one semester of CRW 975A/B to complete an extended paper (3)	0-3 credits
<b>Optional Concentration (see below)</b>	<b>No additional credits</b>
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>43 credits</b>

# A Quick View of M.A.R. Program Requirements

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Students choose one of five Areas of Study	
<b>General Studies</b>	<b>15 credits</b>
Fifteen credits distributed across at least three subject areas in the Theological School offerings	
<b>Bible and Cultures</b>	<b>15 credits</b>
Fifteen credits from BBCL and BBST offerings in consultation with advisor (3 credits can be used for biblical languages)	
<b>Theology and Philosophy</b>	<b>15 credits</b>
Fifteen credits from THEO and TPHL offerings in consultation with advisor)	
<b>Religion and Society</b>	<b>15 credits</b>
Fifteen credits from CSOC, CRES, RLSC, EETH, RPSY, SJA offerings in consultation with advisor	
<b>Self-Declared Interdisciplinary</b>	<b>15 credits</b>
Fifteen credits from courses with one of the following attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Africana and African American Religion and Culture (AFAM)</li> <li>• Ecology and Religion (ECO)</li> <li>• Women's and Gender Studies (WSTT)</li> </ul>	

## **Optional Concentration:**

An optional concentration may be added to the degree by completing nine credits in any of the areas of study listed above (including the interdisciplinary areas) or by completing courses in the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies for concentrations in Liberal Studies, Teaching and Learning, or Conflict Resolution. For more information, please see the catalog.

# Completing the Master of Arts in Religion Program

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The Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) provides advanced study in the disciplines of religion and theology and the interdisciplinary conversations they engage. The program consists of scholarly communication seminars, disciplinary and interdisciplinary study, and an integrative capstone project. Throughout the program, M.A.R. students study and practice written and oral scholarly communication and skills in multiple modes. Integrative capstone projects support individual academic and professional goals through extended academic research or a graduation portfolio.

## Coursework

The M.A.R. degree is usually completed in two years. In four semesters, full-time students select courses based on their interests and goals. As the degree is relatively brief, course selections should be strategic and focused.

The required online seminars of the M.A.R. provide students with scholarly skills in critical research, writing, and pedagogy. Students register for one of the four required seminars (REL 530, 531, 532, and 533) in each of their four semesters. These courses are 100% online and only one is offered in each semester. The interdisciplinary seminar may be taken in any semester, however, these courses are offered on a rotating basis. You should plan to take the seminar you are interested in as soon as you see it offered so as not to miss it.

At least five of the courses (15 credits total) should have a subject or thematic coherence. These courses serve as an area of study in the degree (see below). The remaining credits of coursework are reserved for electives. M.A.R. students choose primarily from master's level electives (500 and 600-level) and may take appropriate doctoral seminars on a case-by-case basis.

## The Area of Study

Each M.A.R. student selects one primary area of study:

**General Studies:** Pursue general study across several subject areas in the regular Theological School curriculum.

**Bible and Cultures:** Explore the Bible's rhetoric, material and political contexts, interpretation, and ethics within diverse cultures and theoretical frameworks.



# Completing the Master of Arts in Religion Program

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**Theology and Philosophy:** Study philosophical, constructive, pluralist, comparative, and systematic approaches to theology and theological themes.

**Religion and Society:** Examine the role of religion and Christianities in relation to social processes and meaning, structures of oppression, and struggles for liberation and wholeness for individuals, communities, and the natural environment.

**Self-Declared Interdisciplinary:** A student-selected interdisciplinary area of study based in one of the following fields:

- **Africana and African American Religion and Culture:** Study the histories, cultures, religions, philosophies, aspirations, and achievements of African Americans and peoples of African descent in regions of the world that share a history of specific kinds of colonialism.
- **Ecology and Religion:** Study the historical, philosophical, socio-political, and theological influences that have shaped the current planetary context and the array of contemporary global religious ecological voices and emerging eco-theologies.
- **Women's and Gender Studies:** Examine the diversity of women's experiences as they are informed by gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, age, ability, social location, and cultural and national identity. Engage theoretical and methodological insights of feminist thought and gender and queer scholarship.
- **Religion and Social Justice:** Examine the role of religion and Christianities in relation to structures of oppression and struggles for liberation and wholeness for individuals, communities, and the natural environment. Concentration not available for students declaring Religion and Society as an area of study.

## Optional Concentrations

M.A.R. students can add an additional concentration from the list above or from the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies:

**Liberal Studies:** Engage fields of humanistic inquiry foundational to the liberal arts such as history, literature, and fine arts. Concentrators draw on courses offered primarily in the Arts and Letters program of the Caspersen School.



# Completing the Master of Arts in Religion Program

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**Teaching and Learning:** Study human development, pedagogy, instructional design, and assessment alongside students in the Master of Education and Master of Arts in Teaching degree programs.

**Conflict Resolution:** Explore theories and topics of global peace and conflict resolution and practices of mediation and peacebuilding. The curriculum for courses in this concentration is built on three pillars: cultural awareness, contextual understanding, and conflict resolution.

## Capstone

Students use the capstone to demonstrate capacities developed during their course of study. Whether a thesis, portfolio, or extended paper, the capstone is intended to exhibit masteries of and expertise in research, analysis, assessment, and articulation of interdisciplinary concepts and their application to identified academic and intellectual problems.

## Graduation

Students may complete the degree in August, January, or May of each year. Commencement exercises are held in May of each year for all students who have completed their degrees in the August or January prior to each Commencement.

# Program Timeline

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Regular semester courses are offered in weekly (day and evening, Tuesday through Thursday), intensive, and online formats in Fall and Spring. Intensive, travel, and online courses are offered in January and summer terms.

This sample timeline provides an overview for completing the entire program.

*To reduce the credits in any semester add intensive or online area of study/elective credits in any January or summer terms. To shorten the time to graduation, add area of study/elective credits in semester, January, and summer terms.*

Year One: 22 credits			
Fall Semester** 10-13 credits	January	Spring Semester** 10-13 credits	Summer
1 credit required course 6-12 credits of Area/electives		1 credit required course 6-12 credits of Area/electives	
Year Two: 21 credits			
Fall Semester** 10-13 credits	January	Spring Semester** 10-13 credits	Summer
1 credit required course 6-12 credits of Area/electives Thesis Track or extended paper: CRW 975 A		1 credit required course 6-12 credits of Area/electives Thesis Track or extended paper: CRW 975 B Portfolio (Non-Thesis Track): CRW 692	

\*\* The interdisciplinary seminary may be taken in any semester.

# Special Programs and Opportunities

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## Caspersen School Graduate Courses

Courses offered in the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies by the Drew Faculty of Arts and Sciences are available to Theological School students. Courses in Education, Conflict Resolution, History, Arts, Literature, and Medical and Health Humanities may be taken for elective credit towards the Master of Divinity. Students may petition for a course to fulfill a pathway or learning enrichment requirement by completing a Petition to the Graduate Academic Standing Committee on the Resources for Current Students webpage.

## Partnership for Religion and Education in Prisons (PREP)

In this flagship program, Drew Theological School students learn together with students who are incarcerated. There is usually one PREP course on the course list each fall, spring, and summer.

PREP courses are taken for credit and can be used to fulfill pathway and elective requirements. PREP courses also fulfill the Off-Camps Learning (OCL) enrichment requirement. Students in the Social Justice Advocacy pathway are required to fulfill their Off-Campus Learning enrichment requirement with a PREP course.

## Chapel

At the center of Drew's worshipping and learning community is the historic Craig Chapel, located on the second floor of Seminary Hall. Weekly services, vespers, lectures, special ceremonies, and many more events bring the Drew community together for worship, learning, and celebration. Regular services are offered two times per week: Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon. The service is held in person and is livestreamed. Attendance and participation in leading worship is encouraged for all Theological School students and faculty. Students can plan and participate in chapel for up to 3 credits toward the M.Div. degree (TMUS 800 – Seminary Choir, or VOFC 806 – Chapel Practicum).

## Community Garden

At the Theological School Community Garden students, professors, and staffers plant, harvest, and eat organic food. Harvests are shared and also donated to local food pantries. Students can take VOFC 805 – Garden Practicum for 1 elective credit.

## Special Programs and Opportunities

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The Community Garden is a space for learning and thinking theologically about the interconnection of God's creation. As a founding member of the Green Seminary Initiative, Drew's commitment to ecological wellbeing is demonstrated across the Theological School community in recycling, reusing, and reviving our environment through a culture of awareness and activism.

### Student-Directed Immersive Learning

#### *Apprenticeships*

Students are encouraged to do an apprenticeship in their program (VOCF 873 – Vocational Apprenticeship). An apprenticeship with a church or other community organization focuses on a specific skill set or capacity in a distinct role in a vocational setting. Contact the Associate Dean of Vocation and Formation for more information and advising.

#### *Internship*

Students are encouraged to do internships in their program beyond the internship year. An internship with a church or other community organization offers a general, broad introduction to the responsibilities, programs, and roles of an internship placement context. Contact the Associate Dean of Vocation and Formation for more information and advising.

#### *Off-Campus Learning*

Students are encouraged to develop off-campus experiences that will deepen the learning in their program. These are usually in remote location, participating in various ways in learning, ministry, and leadership including chaplaincies, camping ministry, conferences, community projects, etc. Drew credit can be received for these experiences by building a curriculum mentored by a faculty member with a final project, reflection paper, or public demonstration/presentation. The tutorial petition is found on the Resources for Current Theo Students webpage.

# Frequently Asked Questions

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The Theological School Academic Policies are published annually in Drew University's Theological School catalog. This document can be accessed in its entirety from the Registrar's webpage. If there is any contradiction between this catalog and the FAQs below, the catalog dated to the student's semester of entrance takes precedence.

## How long do I have to complete the program?

Full-time students ordinarily complete the degree in four semesters. Full-time students register for a minimum of nine hours per academic term and a maximum of fifteen. Drew's financial aid awards are limited to a total of six semesters. All academic requirements for the M.A.R. must be completed within five years from the date of initial matriculation.

## How best can I use the M.A.R. to prepare for submitting Ph.D. applications?

Students planning to apply for Ph.D. programs should begin preparation in their first year and apply in the fall of their second year. Students need time for the following work: identifying schools they would like to apply to; developing their personal statement; taking the G.R.E.; and taking courses with professors from whom they might request recommendations. The M.A.R. thesis is usually too long to serve as a writing sample for applications. Thus, students should work with professors to develop a paper for this purpose from your second or third semester courses. Students should consult their advisor about plans and support available for M.A.R. students seeking to make December advance degree applications.

## How do I share a concern or grievance?

Drew University is committed to creating a positive environment for all students. The institution has established policies and procedures to foster such an environment. Information about raising concerns can be found in the Academic Catalog under Complaint Process.

## How do I get accommodations for a disability?

Students who require accommodations should contact the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR), in Brothers College, 973-408-3962, for a private, confidential appointment. Accommodation Request Letters are issued to students after documentation, written by a qualified professional, is reviewed and accommodations are approved by OAR. For more information, please review the Office of Accessibility Resources page on the Drew University website.

# Registration Status

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M.A.R. students are expected to maintain communication and connection with Drew throughout the entire program. Different registration statuses indicate your progress through the program.

## Active

Students who are consistently registered for classes will maintain “active” status with Drew. This status allows students access to all academic, support, and student life services at the University. Students who fail to register in any fall or spring semester will have their status revised to “inactive.” Students not registered for two consecutive semesters (fall-spring or spring-fall) will be automatically withdrawn from the program and will have to petition for re-entry through the Registrar’s webpage.

## Leave of Absence

Unexpected life events or personal challenges can interrupt a student’s ability to make progress in the degree. At times like this, students might reduce the number of credits they plan to take or consider a complete leave of absence. This status stops the clock on your allowed time to completion of your degree. Students are allowed two semesters of official leave from the program. As a leave of absence is intended to provide time away from the work of the degree, students do not have access to academic, support, and student life services at the University.

Students may apply for a leave of absence at any time during the program. To obtain a leave of absence from the program—whether for medical, financial, or personal reasons—students must file a leave of absence application online. This form is found on the Registrar’s web page. Any leave of absence that is approved becomes effective as of the date it is processed and is not applied retroactively.

Students who take the leave during a semester should be aware of the grading and refund policies of the university. A leave of absence does not exempt a student from receiving grades for courses they have been registered for nor does it guarantee a refund of tuition paid. The date a leave is requested determines the amount of tuition refund (if any). For example, a leave of absence requested and received in the middle or at the end of a semester will not be effective from the beginning of the semester. If you are considering a leave of absence, please review the leave policies and deadlines found on the Register and Business Office webpages.

# Registration Status

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*RE-ENTRY FOLLOWING LEAVE OF ABSENCE:* When a student plans to return to the program following a leave of absence, they must submit a Re-Entry form, which can be found on the Registrar's webpage. If a student does not return from a leave of absence in the semester following the leave, the student's status will be revised to "inactive." If the student is inactive for two semesters, they will be withdrawn from the program by the University.

## Medical Withdrawal from a Semester

Students with personal emergencies that occur after the drop/add dates have passed may apply for a medical withdrawal from an entire semester. The student must provide documentation of the medical situation. Upon approval by the Associate Dean for the Theological School, the student will be put on leave of absence and receive "Ws" for all courses in the semester. Regular tuition refund policies apply to medical withdrawals as to leaves of absence.

## Voluntary Withdrawal from the Program

If for any reason a student finds it necessary to withdraw from the program, it is important that this decision be discussed with the Associate Dean for the Theological School beforehand and that an appropriate and timely written notice is given to the Associate Dean and the University. In order to withdraw from the program, a student completes a Withdrawal form on the Registrar's page. Any notice of withdrawal from the program becomes official as of the date it is received. A student who has withdrawn from the program has no access to academic, support, and student life services at the University. A student wishing to re-enter a program after withdrawing must apply again to the program through the Graduate Admissions office.

All withdrawals are subject to the Drew University refund and grading policies and deadlines. Students are encouraged to review these policies with the Coordinator of Graduate Academic Services, the Registrar, and the Business Office before submitting an application for withdrawal.



# Academic Standing

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In addition to regular course grading and assessments, students are evaluated each semester according to the standards of academic achievement and progress. The Graduate Academic Standing Committee reviews each student's academic performance after each semester and may revise student standing based on this review.

## Good Standing

M.A.R. degree students must maintain a minimum 3.00 GPA.

## Warning or Probation

Students who do not achieve a 3.0 GPA in any semester will be placed on warning or probation based on the criteria outlined in the Theological School academic catalog posted on the Registrar's webpage. Students placed on academic probation are returned to good standing if they achieve an overall 3.0 GPA average or better at the next time of review.

## Required Withdrawal

A student may be withdrawn from the program by the University for any of the following:

- Receiving all "F" grades in any one semester;
- Being on probation and not returning to Good Standing at the end of the probationary semester;
- Having two or more non-consecutive semesters on Warning or Probation;
- A violation of the University's Academic Integrity or Human Rights policies.

Under exceptional circumstances only, a student on Required Withdrawal may appeal to the Graduate Academic Standing Committee to be re-admitted in the next term. If the appeal is approved, the student will be reinstated and placed on Probation. Such re-admissions are granted only in unusual cases, and in no cases may a student be re-admitted twice.

# Standards of Academic Integrity

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## Drew University Standards

Drew University has established standards of academic integrity and procedures. These basic standards apply to all work done at Drew. Students are expected to study and comply with these principles. You can find the Academic Integrity policy for the Theological School in the academic catalog on the Registrar's webpage.

The standards of academic integrity apply to information that is presented orally, in writing, or via the computer, in any format ranging from the most informal comment to a formal research paper or the writing of the final paper in reference to the project. These standards apply to source material gathered from other people, from written texts, from computer programs, from the Internet, or from any other location.

The following are examples of academic dishonesty, as defined in this policy:

**Duplicate Submission** – Submitting one's work in identical or similar form to fulfill more than one requirement without prior approval of the relevant faculty members is a breach of academic integrity. This includes using a paper for more than one course or submitting material previously used to meet another requirement.

**False Citation** – Listing an author, title, or page reference as the source for obtained material, when the material actually came from another source or from another location within that source, is a breach of academic integrity. See the *Turabian Manual of Style* (latest edition and/or online quick guide) for how to cite quotations within the body of another author.

**Plagiarism** – Plagiarism is the act of appropriating or imitating the language, ideas, or thoughts of another and presenting them as one's own or without proper acknowledgement. This includes submitting as one's own a thesis, a paper, or part of a paper written by another person, whether that material was stolen, purchased, or shared freely. It also includes submitting a paper containing insufficient citation or misuse of source material. When in doubt, err on the side of referencing material. Note that each syllabus will outline clearly the Drew University policy.

**Sanctions** – Sanctions are imposed for demonstrated breaches of academic honesty or scholarly integrity. See the section of the catalog on procedures for dealing with allegations of academic dishonesty. If dishonesty is determined, the sanctions may range from requiring that an assignment be redone to an automatic failure of a course to dismissal from the Theological School.

# Curriculum Planning for Master of Arts in Religion

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REQUIRED COURSES	SEMESTER TAKEN
REL 530 - Studying Religion and Theology	
REL 531 - Research Methods in a Digital Age	
REL 532 - Critical Pedagogy and Religion	
REL 533 - Public Writing and Media Communication	
Interdisciplinary Seminar	
	7 credits total

Area of Study:

15 Total Credits

AREA COURSES	SEMESTER TAKEN	CREDITS
ELECTIVE COURSES (15-21 Total Credits)	SEMESTER TAKEN	CREDITS

# Curriculum Planning for Master of Arts in Religion

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CAPSTONE	SEMESTER TAKEN	CREDITS
CRW 975 A - Thesis/Extended Paper Workshop	Fall	
CRW 975 B - Thesis/Extended Paper Workshop	Spring	
<b>OR</b> CRW 962 - MAR Portfolio		

Optional Concentration:

\* See Program Requirements Chart and catalog for number of credits and particular courses required for each optional concentration

CONCENTRATION COURSES	SEMESTER TAKEN	CREDITS