



GRACE COMMUNION
SEMINARY

Academic Catalog

2022-2023



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www.gcs.edu

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I. Introduction to the Seminary

A. Message from the President

Welcome!

Scripture has long been a key component in spiritual formation and growth. But a person could memorize the entire Bible and still not understand how to live by it. When we read a random verse in Leviticus, we may know what it says, but we don't always know whether we should do it. For that, we need some theological perspective on the book of Leviticus.

Every believer should try to understand, but with a measure of humility—sincerity does not guarantee truth. One value of reading Scripture in a community is that we can compare our understanding with people who have studied it more than we have—and that includes people from the past, people in other places, and people in our own faith community. Scripture is like most subjects: people who spend more time on it learn more, and people who enroll in formal study generally learn much more.

For example, each of us does something for our health every day: we eat, get some exercise, and avoid dangers. We may be influenced by expert advice about what we eat, how we exercise, and what to avoid. The existence of experts does not eliminate the importance of our efforts, but if we are willing to listen, the experts can help us make our daily choices more effective.

Similarly, the church has various levels of specialization in theology and Scripture. This does not mean that believers should throw up their hands and passively absorb whatever the “experts” teach. But it does mean that believers should be willing to learn from people who have studied more, so that each believer might study Scripture more effectively, think about God more accurately, and live more fruitfully.

Grace Communion Seminary is designed to help you learn more about God, who he is, what he has planned for us, what he teaches us, and how he wants us to respond to him. In some respects, it is a simple message, but there is a profound depth to it. As the center of life and the center of all meaning, it's

worth exploring in greater detail by Christians who love God and are involved in teaching others.

We can help connect you with people who have explored the territory and have reported what it's like. We can connect you to other travelers on this journey. We don't have all the answers, but we believe that we have a perspective that can help us all go forward, a map that helps us understand the landmarks and points of interest. God is love, and those who worship him are transformed by that love. We seek to live and serve others in the love shown to us in the Father, Son, and Spirit. We invite you to join our traveling party!

Michael Morrison, PhD

B. GCS Purpose and Plan

1. Mission statement

“Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry.” We are committed to equip the saints for pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

2. Purpose

Grace Communion Seminary serves the needs of pastors and others engaged in Christian service who want to grow deeper in relationship with our Triune God and to be able to serve in the church more effectively.

Grace is the essence of our lives, because it is descriptive of the Triune God, in whose image we are made. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ reveals God to us, grants us life in him, leads us in forgiving and being forgiven, and gives us salvation. Our Triune God and his grace and love through Jesus Christ is the center of our theology.

Communion describes the relationship gives us with himself and with one another. The Holy Spirit binds us with Jesus, the head of the church,

enlivens God's love in our hearts, and unites us as followers of Jesus Christ. We live in inseparable unity in Christ in the perpetual effects of his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost.

Seminary describes the scope of our educational goal. Our mission is to equip men and women for church-based ministry. We accomplish this through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, and pastoral studies grounded in biblical, Christ-centered, historically orthodox faith — that is, a theology that is Incarnational and Trinitarian. (See pages 10-11 for details.)

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.” (2 Corinthians 13:13, NRSV, updated edition).

3. Educational philosophy

GCS provides holistic Christian education for Christian leaders to develop biblical and theological understanding by means of online lectures, directed readings, written assignments, practical application experiences, and interaction with colleagues and professors.

To accomplish these purposes, we are dedicated to the search for and dissemination of truth. We believe that students, faculty, staff, administrators, and board members should be committed to and supported in their pursuit of knowledge and truth.

4. Goals

Our institutional goals express our intent to educate pastors and other Christian leaders in graduate-level programs centered in a historically orthodox, Incarnational Trinitarian faith:

- a) Serve graduate-level educational needs of pastors and others engaged in Christian ministry who seek to grow deeper in relationship with our Triune God and to be able to serve more effectively in the life of the church in Jesus Christ.

- b) Provide formal programs of instruction and other learning opportunities that foster intellectual curiosity; facilitate the work of the Spirit in transforming the student; help the student be sensitive to the lead of the Spirit to the moral and social needs of the family, the church, and the surrounding society; and cultivate in them a willingness to respond as God leads them to address the global needs of humanity.
- c) Provide seminary education that conveys the Trinitarian nature of God in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.
- d) Provide courses and programs that meet traditional academic standards, but are designed to suit the needs of men and women who can study only on a part-time basis, and also allow fulltime students to progress at a traditional pace.

5. Educational objectives

Our institutional objectives further describe the scope of our distance education programs:

- a) Provide quality distance education programs for graduate students in biblical, theological, historical, and pastoral studies that are centered in a theology that is biblical, Christ-centered, and historically orthodox.
- b) Provide credentialed faculty members who have experience in teaching and in ministry-related areas.
- c) Provide administrative staff to facilitate direction and coordination of student services, faculty development, financial accountability, and technological support.
- d) Provide structured graduate-level programs in a semester-long format that is readily accessible to people engaged in Christian ministry. These courses are offered in a flexible manner through cost-effective educational systems.

- e) Provide holistic Christian education through online courses by means of directed readings, online lectures, written assignments, practical application experiences, examinations, and interaction with peers and professors.
- f) Provide a curriculum that enables students to meet personal goals in higher education, from taking courses of their choice in Master's Level Courses, to a master's degree program.
- g) Provide courses that give students a good foundation in biblical studies, theology, church history, and Christian ministry, suitable for personal enrichment, pastoral work or for further study.
- h) Provide effective interactions between students and faculty.

6. Student learning outcomes

Through maintaining the educational objectives in our curriculum, students are intended to gain competence in the following learning outcomes:

- a) Explain the revelation of the Bible in its historical and cultural setting as it relates to God, Jesus Christ, and salvation, and its application for faithful living today.
- b) Reason from a sound theological basis as Christians centered in a biblical, Christ-centered faith.
- c) Model the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit in congregations.
- d) Participate with Jesus Christ in the work of pastoral ministry, giving witness to and representing him through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- e) Integrate biblical exegesis with sound theological exposition that informs personal spiritual growth and that facilitates effective ministry directed by Jesus Christ.

7. Doctrinal foundation

The *Statement of Beliefs* of Grace Communion International provides the doctrinal foundation for GCS.¹

Here is a summary of what we believe:

- There is one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- God the Father made all things through the Son, sent the Son for our salvation, and gives us the Holy Spirit.
- The Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, was born of the virgin Mary, fully God and fully human, and is the perfect revelation of the Father and the perfect representative of humanity. He suffered and died on the cross for all human sin, was raised bodily on the third day, and ascended to heaven. Standing in for all humanity before the Father, Jesus Christ provides the perfect human response to God. Since he died for all, all died in him, and all will be made alive in him.
- The Holy Spirit brings sinners to repentance and faith, assures believers of their forgiveness and acceptance as God's dearly loved children, and works in them to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ.
- The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God that testifies to Jesus Christ. The Bible is fully authoritative for all matters of faith and salvation.
- Salvation comes only by God's grace and not by works, and it is experienced through faith in Jesus Christ. Christians respond to the joy of salvation when they gather in regular fellowship and live godly lives in Jesus Christ.
- We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life

¹ For the full *Statement*, go to <https://www.gci.org/articles/the-gci-statement-of-beliefs/>.

of the age to come.

Basic tenets of our theology:

We believe that theology should be rooted in the Bible, especially the New Testament. We see a reliable theology articulated by Irenaeus, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzus, and more recently, Karl Barth, Thomas F. Torrance, and many others. Our teachings include:

- The Triune God created all people through the Son of God, who also is known as the Word of God.
- We were created so that we could participate in the love relationship enjoyed by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- We are enabled and qualified to participate in this relationship of love through Jesus Christ.
- The Son became human, the man Jesus Christ, taking on our human nature.
- He did this to reconcile all humanity to God through his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension.
- The crucified, resurrected and glorified Jesus is the representative and the substitute for all humanity.
- As Savior and Lord of all humanity, Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, and he draws all people to himself by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- In Christ, humanity is loved and accepted by the Father.
- Jesus Christ paid for all our sins—past, present and future—and there is no longer any debt to pay.
- The Father has in Christ forgiven all our sins, and he eagerly desires that we receive his forgiveness.

- We can enjoy his love only as we believe/trust that he loves us. We can enjoy his forgiveness only when we believe/trust he has forgiven us.
- When we respond to the Spirit by turning to God, believing the good news and picking up our cross and following Jesus, the Spirit leads us into the transformed life of the kingdom of God.

C. Institutional Authorization

1. Legal authority

Grace Communion Seminary is an educational institution affiliated with Grace Communion International (GCI), a member of the National Association of Evangelicals. We are committed to the development of the whole person to serve in the ministry of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Grace Communion Seminary is a business name of Ambassador College, a California non-profit religious corporation with federal 501(c)(3) status, which commenced operations in 1947 in Pasadena, California, as a church-related liberal-arts college.

As a non-profit religious organization teaching our own doctrines, and not offering any non-religious degrees, GCS is authorized by the state of California to function as an educational institution exempt from California Education Code, Title 3, Division 10, Part 59, Chapter 8, which regulates private postsecondary institutions.

Our main office is in North Carolina. Degree programs of study offered by Grace Communion Seminary have been declared exempt from the requirements for licensure, under provisions of North Carolina General Statutes Section (G.S.) 116–15 (d) for exemption from licensure with respect to religious education. Exemption from licensure is not based upon assessment of program quality under established licensing standards.

2. History

Over the years, Ambassador College operated campuses in California,

Texas, and England. All those campuses are closed and our work is now done online. This enables us to serve students without removing them from their current areas of ministry.

In 2003 Ambassador College began offering courses online in biblical studies, theology, and Christian ministry, with an undergraduate program and a graduate program. In 2005, the undergraduate and graduate programs were separated.

- The undergraduate program uses the name Ambassador College of Christian Ministry. It is administered by the GCI affiliate in Australia at www.ambascol.org. It is not accredited.
- The graduate program is now doing business as Grace Communion Seminary, administered from Charlotte, NC. It is accredited.
- There is no formal connection between ACCM and Grace Communion Seminary; they have different boards and officers. Courses taken through ACCM are not accepted for credit at GCS.

Grace Communion Seminary limits its educational programs to graduate-level distance-education courses in Bible, theology, church history, and ministry. All programs are administered online, and are open to academically qualified people who want to expand their education and ministry based in a biblical, Christ-centered theology.

3. Accreditation

Grace Communion Seminary is accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission.² The Distance Education Accrediting Commission is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a recognized accrediting agency. The Distance Education Accrediting Commission is recognized by the Council for Higher Education



² The address of DEAC is 1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808, Washington, D.C. 20036. Their telephone number is 202-234-5100. The website: www.deac.org.

Accreditation (CHEA).³

As with most institutions of higher learning, the transferability of credits earned at Grace Communion Seminary is at the discretion of the institution to which the student seeks to transfer. If a student wants to transfer credits to another institution, or wants to use a GCS degree to meet admission requirements of another institution, the student is advised to confirm in advance with that other institution that the GCS credits or degree will be acceptable. The acceptance of credits and degrees is entirely the prerogative of the receiving institution and acceptance cannot be guaranteed.

³ CHEA's website is www.chea.org; recognized institutions are listed at http://www.chea.org/userfiles/Recognition/CHEA_USDE_AllAccred.pdf.

D. Administration

1. Board of Directors

- a) Randy Bloom, Chairman of the Board of GCS and Chairman of the Board of Grace Communion International; retired district superintendent for Grace Communion International, part-time Professor in Christian Ministry at Grace Communion Seminary; M.Div. from Liberty University
- b) Gary W. Deddo, Professor of Theology at Grace Communion Seminary; Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Aberdeen
- c) Eric Larison, pastor of a GCI church in Syracuse, NY; Master of Arts in English, California State University Los Angeles; Certificate of Advanced Study in educational administration and supervision from the State University of New York in Oswego
- d) Michael Morrison, President and Professor of New Testament at Grace Communion Seminary; Ph.D. from Fuller Theological Seminary
- e) Gabriel Ojih, pastor of a GCI church near Dallas, TX; Master of Divinity from Brite Divinity School.
- f) Linda Rex, pastor of a GCI church in Nashville, TN; Master of Pastoral Studies from Grace Communion Seminary
- g) Secretary: Georgia McKinnon, GCS Registrar; Master of Arts in Teaching, University of South Carolina and Master of Theological Studies from Grace Communion Seminary

Advisors to the Board

- a) Mathew H. Morgan, Chief Financial Officer, GCI and GCS; Master of Business Administration from University of Phoenix
- b) Robert Meade, GCS Treasurer, Comptroller for Grace Communion International

2. Administration

- a) Chief Executive Officer/President: Michael Morrison, PhD in New Testament from Fuller Theological Seminary. He teaches courses in biblical studies. He can be contacted at president@gcs.edu.
- b) Chief Academic Officer/Dean of Faculty: Lance McKinnon, Master of Theological Studies from Grace Communion Seminary; DMin from Shiloh University. lance.mckinnon@gcs.edu
- c) Registrar: Georgia McKinnon. Master of Arts in Teaching, University of South Carolina; Master of Theological Studies, Grace Communion Seminary. registrar@gcs.edu

3. Faculty

Full-time faculty

name	degrees	area of teaching specialization
Lance McKinnon	MTS, Grace Communion Seminary; DMin, Shiloh University	Christian Ministry; Chair of the Department of Christian Ministry

Part-time faculty

name	degrees	area of teaching specialization
Randy Bloom	MDiv, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary	Christian Ministry
Jeff Broadnax	Master of Science in Counselor Education, Western Connecticut State University; Master of Pastoral Studies, Grace Communion Seminary	Christian Ministry
Gary Deddo	PhD in Systematic Theology,	Theology; Chair of the Department of

	University of Aberdeen	Theology and Church History
Stephen Dolson-Andrew	PhD in Theology (Church History), Fuller Theological Seminary	Church History
Tim Finlay	PhD in Old Testament, Claremont Graduate School	Old Testament
Charles Fleming	Doctor of Missiology, Fuller Theological Seminary	Christian Ministry
Jeannine Graham	PhD in Theology, University of Aberdeen	Old Testament
Larry Hinkle	DMin in Formational Counseling, Ashland Theological Seminary	Christian Ministry
Ted Johnston	MA in Liberal Studies: Psychology, Regis University; MA in Christian Studies, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School	Christian Ministry
Michael Morrison	PhD in Theology (New Testament Studies), Fuller Theological Seminary	New Testament; Chair of the Department of Biblical Studies
Dan Rogers	PhD in Religious Studies, Union Institute and University	Acts and Homiletics
Greg Williams	DMin, Drew University	Christian Ministry

4. Advisory Council

Our advisory council meets annually and is comprised of members of the Board, administration, faculty, and other educators. The council includes Elmer Colyer, Gerrit Scot Dawson, Gary Deddo, Georgia McKinnon,

Michael Morrison, and Geordie Ziegler.

E. Contact Information

Mailing address: Grace Communion Seminary
3120 Whitehall Park Drive
Charlotte, NC 28273

Phone numbers:

1-980-495-3978

Fax 1-844-350-3419

Computer support: 1-980-495-3979

Website: www.gcs.edu

Email: registrar@gcs.edu

F. Calendar

1. Hours of operation and holidays

GCS offices are normally open 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Thursday. GCS offices are closed during the following holidays: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Week, and the final two weeks of December through New Year's Day.

2. Availability of administrators and faculty

The Registrar is generally available each day the office is open. Electronic messages are the best way to correspond with the instructors. Contact information is given within each course. Since most instructors are part-time, they do not necessarily check their messages every day. If an instructor does not respond to a message within two days, or it is an urgent matter, please email the GCS office at registrar@gcs.edu, or phone us.

3. Academic calendar

GCS has three 13-week semesters each year. In each semester, there are lectures for ten weeks (posted each Monday, unless Monday is a holiday in the U.S.), two more weeks for completing final papers and projects, and one week for final papers to be graded and returned. Most semesters also have a holiday week during the semester. The dates for the next three semesters are:

	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Fall 2023
Academic advising and registration	Jan. 4–12	May 1–11	Aug. 28 – Sept. 7
Lectures and lessons are posted	Jan. 16 – March 20	May 15–July 24	Sept. 11 Nov. 13

Holiday week	April 3	June 26–July 2*	Nov. 20 – 26
Final papers due	April 16	August 13	Dec. 10

*GCS Graduation Ceremony will be held on June 30 in Concord, NC.

For assignment schedules and faculty hours, see the course syllabi.

4. Course scheduling

Short syllabi listing the required textbooks are updated on our website at least four weeks before each course begins. Students can see the assigned readings, order the books, and begin reading ahead of time.⁴ International students may need to pay for expedited shipping, or buy electronic books, so their books arrive on time.

Lectures are posted each Monday, by 9 a.m. Eastern time, and students may access them any time after they are posted. (If we forget to post them, phone or email us.) In some weeks, students are required to participate in online discussions. There is no specific time that all students must be online – students post their comments any time between Monday and Thursday, for example, and respond to other students between Friday and Sunday. Because these online discussions involve interactions with other students, they must be done on the week assigned; there is usually no way to “make up” the interaction at a later date.

Most classes have something due each week. If students need an extension in order to complete final projects or papers, we will sometimes be able to arrange this, *if requested in advance*. There is a fee for an extension, because it involves additional work for the instructor and support personnel.

⁴ If fewer than five students sign up for a course, that course may be cancelled, or it may continue, depending on the discretion of the instructor.

G. Study options and degree programs

GCS offers three degrees: Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS), Master of Theological Studies (MTS), and Master of Divinity (MDiv). The first two degrees require at least 14 courses, or 42 semester units of credit, with a minimum GPA of 2.7 out of 4. The MDiv degree requires a minimum of 72 units, or 25 courses, with a minimum GPA of 3.0.

All students begin in a category that is not a degree, but involves credits that may be used toward a degree.

1. Non-degree study: Master's Level Courses

All GCS students are initially enrolled in Master's Level Courses. This permits students to take courses according to their own interest and need. All courses will automatically transfer into a GCS degree program, if the student reaches that point, and the courses are less than 10 years old. For suggestions about which courses to take first, see section V.B, "Suggested sequence."

Some students simply want to increase their ministry skills and understanding; this is a lifelong need of all who serve in the church. GCS wants to help in this by providing guidance, structure, training, and verification of these educational achievements. If you begin your studies with a specific interest, such as youth ministry or one section of the Bible, you are welcome to take whatever course interests you most.

In this non-degree category, we provide graduate-level courses in biblical, theological, and ministry studies according to the students' interests and needs, as students wish to improve their pastoral skills or fulfill personal interests.

1. Students will be able to choose topics that have historically been foundational to pastoral and theological education, and in each course, will receive lectures from a qualified instructor, relevant readings in published textbooks, and discussions that help the student articulate ideas and learn from other students. The specific competencies

attained will vary depending on the course. Student learning outcomes are described in each course syllabus.

2. Students will receive courses that are academically sound, comparable to courses taken at other graduate theological schools, and useful for pastors and interested lay persons.
3. Students may go at their own pace, up to three classes per semester for a full-time student, or a slower pace.
4. Students will receive graduate credit that may be applied toward a master's degree program, if the student wishes to eventually matriculate into a degree program. The courses are academically identical regardless of whether the student intends to eventually get a degree.

a. Certificate of Theological Studies

The certificate requires four courses: any Bible course, any theology course, and two additional courses from any discipline. This gives students a lot of flexibility to take courses of special interest.

However, we recommend the following four courses:

- BI501 Biblical Interpretation
- BI520 New Testament Survey
- CM501 Foundations of Christian Ministry (formerly known as Pastoral Leadership)
- TH507 Theology of C.S. Lewis (This course covers the full range of theological topics, and has relatively easy-reading textbooks. If you can take only one theology course, this is probably the best one.)

After a student has taken four courses, and maintained a grade point average of at least 2.5, we will mail the student a Certificate of Theological Studies. This acknowledges that a student has achieved a significant milestone in our educational programs. There is no formal enrollment or application for this award.

b. Diploma in Christian Ministry, general studies track

The diploma awards require seven courses. In the general studies track, students have many options:

- Any Bible course
- Any church history course
- Any theology course
- Any two Christian ministry courses⁵
- Two more courses from anywhere in our curriculum

We recommend (but do not require) the following: BI501, BI520, CH501, CM501, CM504, TH507, and one of the first three theology courses (TH501, 502, or 503). These seven courses will provide a good foundation for further work toward one of our degrees.

There must be at least 21 units, with a GPA of at least 2.5. Six units may come from credit transferred from another accredited institution, or through documented prior learning.

The Diploma is not a degree, but an academic achievement award, recognizing that the student has achieved another noteworthy milestone in ministry training. There is no formal enrollment for this diploma. When the required courses are completed, the diploma will be mailed to the student.

c. Diploma in Christian Ministry, with focus on discipleship, worship, or witness

These academic achievement awards are designed for lay leaders

⁵ For those who have the MTS degree as a goal, TH503 (which includes the theology of the church) can count as a ministry course for the diploma program.

within Grace Communion International,⁶ although students of any denomination are welcome to take this group of courses. They are focused on Christian ministry courses. The requirements are:

1. Either BI501 Biblical Interpretation or BI520 New Testament Survey
2. CM504 Practice of Ministry
3. CM508 Church Planting and Development
4. CM510 Polity of Grace Communion International
5. TH503 The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Last Things
6. Either a second Bible course or a second theology course
7. An elective appropriate to the area of focus
 - a. For the worship focus, CM513 Trinitarian Worship
 - b. For the discipleship focus, either CM506 Trinitarian Youth Ministry or CM512 Small Group Bible Study Leadership
 - c. For the witness track, either CM501 Foundations of Christian Ministry (formerly known as Pastoral Leadership) or another applicable future elective

There is no formal enrollment for this award. When the required courses are completed, the diploma will be mailed to the student.

2. Masters Degrees

After students have completed seven or more courses with a GPA of 2.7 or better, they have the option of enrolling in one of our master's degree programs.

⁶ Within GCI, these are labelled the Faith (discipleship), Hope (worship) and Love (mission) Avenues.

a. Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS)

Students may enter the MPS program if the following requirements are met:

- a) Must have completed 21 semester units with a GPA of 2.7 or better.
- b) Must have completed at least two courses in Christian ministry.
- c) Students must commit to taking courses at a rate that would allow them to complete the program within ten years of when they first began taking GCS courses.⁷

If students meet these requirements and wish to be classified as a master's degree student, they will be accepted as a candidate for the MPS degree. (This is also called matriculation.)

The degree requires a total of 14 courses (42 units).⁸ Up to 21 units may be transferred from other appropriately accredited schools, and

⁷ For example, if a student took the first GCS course in fall 2017 and completed the seventh course in spring 2022, six of those ten years have already elapsed, and the remaining seven courses must be taken in the next four years. The student would therefore have to increase the number of courses taken per year. In calculating the rate required for completion, the student should take into consideration that the thesis course may take more than one semester.

All GCS coursework must be completed within ten years. If the student takes longer than that, the student cannot graduate without re-taking or replacing courses that are older than ten years. An academic leave of absence may extend this limitation (see below).

If a student cannot commit to completion within the ten-year framework, the student is welcome to take courses at whatever pace is desired, by remaining in the Master's Level Courses category. If the student's circumstances change and permit a quicker pace, the student may apply for a master's degree program at a later time.

⁸ GCS courses completed in our non-degree programs will be automatically counted toward this degree as long as they were taken ten or fewer years before graduation.

nine units may come from documented experiential learning.⁹

The requirements for the degree are:

- 1) BI501 Biblical Interpretation
- 2) Two additional courses in Old Testament or New Testament
- 3) One church history course
- 4) CM501 Foundations of Christian Ministry (formerly known as Pastoral Leadership)
- 5) CM504 Practice of Ministry¹⁰
- 6) Two additional courses in Christian ministry
- 7) TH501 Nature of God and Jesus Christ, or TH505 Doctrine of the Trinity
- 8) Two additional theology courses
- 9) Two additional courses in any subject area
- 10) Either CM549 Christian Ministry Thesis or TM501 Theology of Ministry. Either course requires a summative exam as a prerequisite. CM549 is recommended for those who hope to go on to get a MDiv degree.
- 11) The student must inform the Registrar that the MPS degree is desired.¹¹

⁹ Credit must come from courses relevant to the GCS curriculum, from appropriately accredited institutions, and must not be older than eight years prior to enrollment at GCS. See below for details on transfer credits and credit for previous learning based on experience.

¹⁰ CM504 is required for all students who begin their studies in 2019 or later. It is highly recommended for those who started their studies earlier.

¹¹ Some students may qualify for the MPS but do not wish to receive it, because their real goal is the MDiv, and more courses will be required if two degrees are desired.

12) Grade point average of 2.7 or higher.

Program Goal: In the Master of Pastoral Studies degree, we seek to prepare the student for the spiritual responsibilities of the clergy.

Program Outcomes:

1. Students who complete the MPS requirements will be able to interpret the biblical text, and will be able to describe the biblical text as a historical document and an inspired and authoritative guide for Christian life and ministry.
 - This objective is verified by the students' ability to write papers in biblical studies courses.
2. Students will be able to think theologically, to analyze differences between various Christian traditions, and to synthesize central themes of the nature of God and Christian proclamation of the word of God.
 - This objective is verified through student papers in theology courses.
3. Students will gain a broad perspective on acts of the Holy Spirit in the developing church since the first century.
 - This objective is attained by a church history course and verified with papers and a proctored exam.
4. Students will grow in spiritual maturity and in leadership skills needed in churches and other Christian ministries.
 - This objective is attained and verified by Christian ministry courses.
5. Students will develop pastoral skills such as preaching, counseling, teaching, training, mentoring, and leading in service.
 - This objective is attained by Christian ministry courses; the specific skills learned will depend in part

on which courses the students choose to take.

6. Students will be able to evaluate themselves as unique persons building strong relationships within the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

- This objective is verified in ministry courses, and especially in the capstone course.

b. Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

Students may enter the MTS program if the following requirements are met:

- a) Must have completed 21 semester units of GCS courses with a GPA of 2.7 or better.
- b) Must have completed at least two courses in theology.
- c) Students must be able to take courses at a rate that would allow them to complete the program within ten years of when they first began taking GCS courses.¹²

If students meet these requirements and wish to be classified as a master's degree student, they can be accepted as a candidate for the MTS degree. (This is also called matriculation.)

The degree requires a total of 14 courses (42 units).¹³ Up to 21 units may be transferred from other appropriately accredited schools, and

¹² See footnote 7 for details.

¹³ GCS courses completed in our non-degree program will be automatically counted toward this degree as long as they were taken ten or fewer years before graduation. If a student wants to receive *both* the MPS and the MTS, a total of 78 units must be completed, including the specific courses required for each degree.

nine units may come from documented experiential learning.¹⁴

The requirements for the degree are:

- 1) BI501 Biblical Interpretation
- 2) Two additional courses in biblical studies
- 3) Two church history courses
- 4) CM501 Foundations of Christian Ministry
- 5) Two additional courses in any subject area
- 6) TH501 Nature of God and Jesus Christ
- 7) TH502 Nature of Humanity and Salvation
- 8) TH503 The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Last Things
- 9) Two additional theology courses
- 10) TH519 Theological Thesis, which requires a summative exam as a prerequisite and requires a substantial research paper.
- 11) Student must inform the Registrar that the MTS degree is desired.¹⁵
- 12) Grade point average of 2.7 or higher.

Program Goal: In the Master of Theological Studies degree, we seek to help students attain a solid theological foundation for personal reflection, to clarify the underpinnings of work within the church, or to be an entry point for further study in the academy.

¹⁴ Credit must come from courses relevant to the GCS curriculum, from appropriately accredited institutions, and must not be older than eight years prior to enrollment at GCS. See below for details on transfer credits and credit for previous learning based on experience.

¹⁵ Some students may qualify for the MTS but do not wish to receive it, because their real goal is the MDiv, and more courses will be required if two degrees are desired.

Program Outcomes:

1. Students who complete the MTS requirements will be able to interpret the biblical text, and will be able to describe the biblical text as a historical document and an inspired and authoritative guide for Christian life and ministry.
 - This objective is verified by the students' ability to write papers in the introductory hermeneutics course, and will be further developed and verified in additional biblical courses.
2. Students will be able to think theologically, to analyze differences between various Christian traditions, and to synthesize central themes of the nature of God and Christian proclamation of the word of God.
 - This objective is verified through student papers in three required theology courses and additional electives.
3. Students will gain a broad perspective on acts of the Holy Spirit in the developing church since the first century to the modern era.
 - This objective is attained by two church history courses and verified with papers and exams.
4. Students will be able to conduct theological research and develop an argument in favor of a theological position, using generally accepted academic conventions.
 - This outcome will be verified by the capstone course.
5. Students will develop the capacity for critical reflection on the implications of a Christ-centered faith for Christian character, ministry, and social responsibility.
 - This will be verified in essays and exams, particularly in CM501, CM504, TH503, 515, and 519.

c. Master of Divinity (MDiv)

Students who wish to enter the Master of Divinity program must meet the following requirements:

- a) Must have a previous bachelor's or master's degree.
- b) Must have completed 36 semester units (either at GCS or relevant courses at another graduate school) with a GPA of 3.0 or better.
- c) Must have completed at least three courses in Christian ministry and three courses in theology.
- d) Students must inform the Registrar of their desire to obtain the MDiv, and they must plan on taking courses at a rate that will allow them to complete the program within ten years.¹⁶

The MDiv degree requires at least 72 units.¹⁷ GCS courses completed in our non-degree program will be automatically counted toward a master's degree as long as they were taken ten or fewer years before graduation. Up to 36 units may come from a combination of transfer credit or documented previous learning.¹⁸

¹⁶ If the student does not have another degree, the ten years begins when the student first takes a GCS course. If the student has a degree from another appropriately accredited school, the ten years begins when the student first takes a GCS course. If the student has the MPS or MTS degree from GCS, the situation is similar to having a degree from another school: a) up to 36 previous semester units may transfer in to the MDiv program, and b) the ten years begins when the student first takes a GCS course after obtaining the MPS or MTS. A student who wishes to have two GCS degrees (e.g., MTS and MDiv) must take at least 78 units.

¹⁷ The MDiv normally entails 25 courses: 22 courses at 3 units each, and 3 courses at 2 units each. The actual number of courses may vary if students have transfer credits, experiential learning, or independent study.

¹⁸ Credit must come from graduate-level courses relevant to the GCS curriculum, from accredited institutions, and must not be older than eight years prior to enrollment at GCS. See below for details on transfer credits and credit for previous learning based on experience.

The requirements for the degree are:

Biblical studies: 5 courses, 15 units

- 1) BI501 Biblical Interpretation
- 2) BI522 The Gospels
- 3) BI524 Epistles of Paul
- 4) One Old Testament course
- 5) One additional course in biblical studies

Church history: 2 courses, 6 units

- 6) Two church history courses

Christian ministry: 7 courses, 21 units

- 7) CM501 Foundations of Christian Ministry
- 8) CM503 Christian Counseling
- 9) CM504 Practice of Ministry
- 10) CM510 Polity of Grace Communion International
- 11) CM511 Homiletics
- 12) Two additional courses in Christian ministry

Field Education: 3 courses, 6 units

- 13) FE501, FE502, FE503 Field Education 1, 2 & 3

Theology: 6 courses, 18 units

- 14) TH501 Nature of God and Jesus Christ
- 15) TH502 Jesus Christ, Humanity and Salvation
- 16) TH503 The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Last Things
- 17) TH515 Theological Ethics
- 18) Two additional theology courses

Additional

- 19) One additional course from any subject area
- 20) A research thesis, written for CM549¹⁹ or TH519. This counts as a ministry or theology elective, depending on the topic.
- 21) CM599 Master of Divinity Capstone, which requires a summative exam as a prerequisite. Some students will have taken the summative exam while seeking the MPS or MTS.
- 22) All courses must be passed with a grade of C+ or better; the grade point average must be 3.0 or higher.

Program Goal: In the Master of Divinity program, we seek to help students attain a solid biblical and theological foundation for personal reflection, to clarify the underpinnings of work within the church or parachurch ministry, to help the student attain skills needed in ministry, and, if the student desires, be an entry point for further study in the academy.

Program Outcomes:

1. Students who complete the MDiv requirements will be able to interpret the biblical text, and will be able to describe the biblical text as a historical document and an inspired and authoritative guide for Christian life and ministry.
 - This objective is verified by the students' ability to write papers in the introductory hermeneutics course, and is developed and further verified in additional biblical courses.
2. Students will be able to think theologically, to analyze differences between various Christian traditions, and to synthesize central themes of the nature of God and Christian proclamation of the

¹⁹ TM501 option B, taken before 2021, is equivalent to CM549.

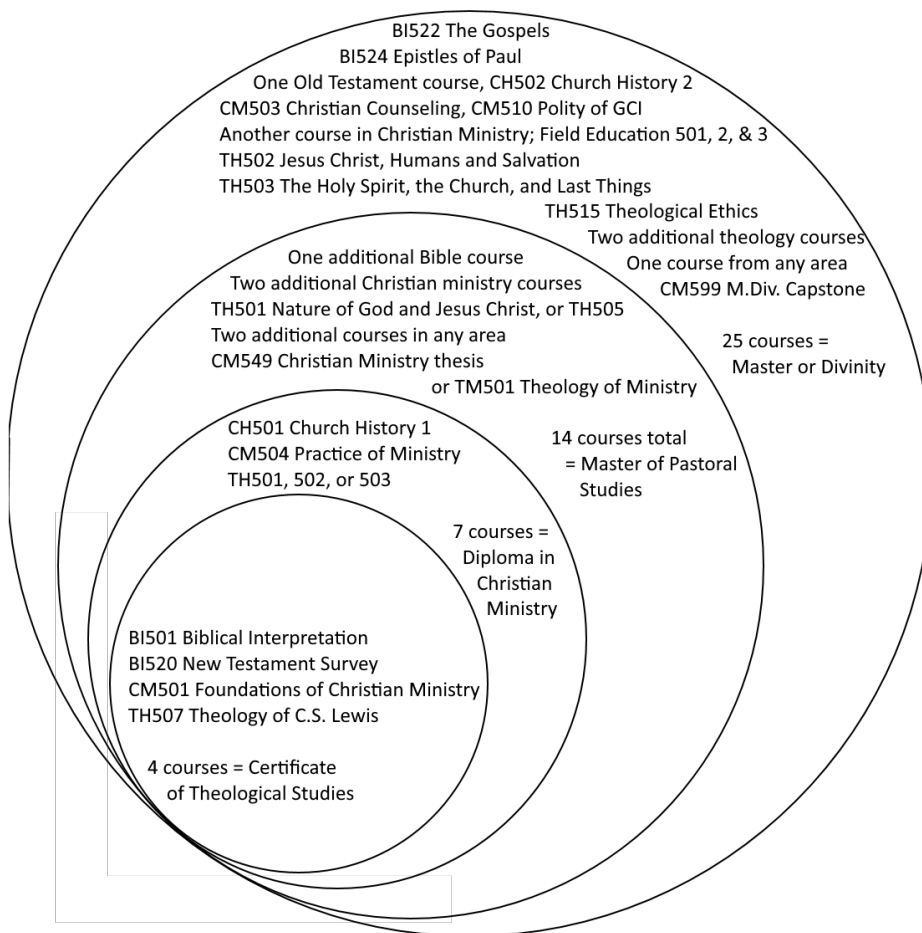
word of God.

- This objective is verified through student papers in three required theology courses and additional electives.
3. Students will have a theological foundation for thinking about contemporary social and ethical issues.
 - This objective is attained and verified in the course on Theological Ethics.
 4. Students will gain a broad perspective on how the Holy Spirit has been working in the church from the first century to the current era.
 - This objective is attained by two church history courses and verified with papers and exams.
 5. Students will grow in spiritual maturity and in leadership skills needed in the church and related ministries.
 - This objective is attained and verified by Christian ministry courses.
 6. Students will develop pastoral skills such as preaching, counseling, teaching, training, mentoring, and leading in service.
 - This objective is attained by Christian ministry courses.
 7. Students will be able to evaluate themselves as unique persons who discern their calling and build strong relationships that draw on and bear witness to the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.
 - This outcome will be verified by CM501 and other ministry courses.
 8. Students will see themselves as called by God to serve the church

(or church related ministries) in which they continually integrate their personal skills, spiritual gifts, and theological academic training. This will help students see the value of education, leading to a lifelong commitment to continuing education even after they graduate.

- This objective is attained and developed throughout the program, but especially in the capstone course.

The 4-course certificate, the 7-course diploma, the 14-course MPS and the 25-course MDiv are a progressive sequence – the early awards build toward the MDiv, as shown in the diagram below:



II. Admissions Policies

A. Location of student

Some U.S. states have regulations that make it financially prohibitive for us to do business with students in that state. For this reason, we are not currently accepting students in Alabama, Iowa, or Michigan. This may change in the future. If you are from one of those states, please let us know of your interest.

B. Technological requirements

You must have access to a computer connected to the internet. If you are reading this *Catalog*, you probably already meet the requirements. Dial-up connections will be sufficient for most classes, but a few classes have video materials, which will display better if you have a broadband connection.

You may use any of the common browsers: Chrome, Edge, Firefox, etc.

Most of our course lectures and lessons are in PDF format. The PDF pages are designed for full-size computers; tablets may provide an adequate display, but the materials may be difficult to read on smaller devices.

We require that you have a word-processing program, such as Microsoft Word. Other word-processing programs are also suitable, such as the free programs [Google Docs](#), [LibreOffice](#), and [WPS Office](#).

We recommend that you also have a webcam with a microphone, for taking proctored exams. The oral defense of the master's thesis must be done either by webcam or in person. The internet connection must be able to transmit video.

For an orientation of how to navigate the website, see below.

C. Academic requirements

Pastoral and theological education involves a significant amount of

reading and writing, and our program requires extensive use of computers connected to the internet. If any prospective student has difficulty with any of these tasks, the student should contact us regarding the details and concerns they may have.

Applicants must be at least 21 years old.

GCS offers graduate-level courses that may be used for a master's degree. A bachelor's degree²⁰ is required for entry into the master's degree programs; see exception below. Proof of degree in an official transcript is required.²¹ Transcripts from institutions outside of the U.S. and Canada may need to be evaluated by World Educational Services and (if necessary) translated into English. Students must pay the WES fee.²² Contact us to see if this will be needed for your transcripts.

Applicants must have attained a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (on a 4 point scale), in their highest degree earned. Those with a GPA between 2.5 and 3.0 receive provisional acceptance; they must attain a grade of B or better in each of their first four GCS courses for the student to be granted full acceptance status at GCS. Those with a GPA less than 2.5 may be considered, but are not automatically accepted, even for provisional status. Provisional students may take only one course in their first semester, only one in the second semester, and if their GPA is then above 3.0, they may take more than one in

²⁰ The degree must come from an institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or the U.S. Department of Education, or a foreign equivalent listed in the *International Handbook of Universities*.

²¹ If the student submits an application and there is not enough time for official transcripts to arrive, in some circumstances the student may be admitted on a provisional basis and may register and pay the tuition. No credit will be given if an acceptable transcript is not received before the end of that semester; no refunds will be given.

²² In February 2022, the WES Course-by-course fee was \$163.

subsequent semesters.

If English is not the student's native language, and if the student has not earned a bachelor's or higher degree at an accredited institution where English is the language of instruction, then students must have a TOEFL score of at least 550 on the paper-based test, or 80 on the internet-based test. The student must have the test results sent to the GCS Registrar.

Individuals with a high school diploma, extensive ministry experience²³ and some college courses, but without an accredited bachelor's degree, may petition for provisional acceptance. They must submit an essay or other evidence that they are able to do graduate-level work.²⁴ Students must earn a GPA of at least 3.0 in their first four courses. If the student is accepted, there is no guarantee that they can be accepted into any master's degree program. No more than 10 percent of the students in a master's degree program can be admitted without a bachelor's degree. Students must have either a bachelor's degree or a master's degree to enter the Master of Divinity program.

D. Notification of acceptance

Students will be notified of acceptance or non-acceptance within two weeks after all application materials are received. After we receive the applicant's transcript(s), letter of recommendation, and all other required documentation, and we accept the student, we send the student an enrollment agreement. The student is to sign this and mail it to the Registrar. The student is not officially enrolled until the signed enrollment agreement is on file in our offices. We will also

²³ "Extensive ministry experience" means at least ten years' experience as a senior pastor or in a full-time (either paid or unpaid) ministry position.

²⁴ One way to demonstrate graduate-level ability is to document that you have successfully completed training programs comparable to graduate-level courses, and write an essay about what you have learned through such programs and experiences. A written essay is important, because all GCS courses require a substantial amount of writing.

sign it, and mail it back to the student within one week. If the student is admitted on a provisional basis, that will be noted on the enrollment agreement. See below for our enrollment agreement.

E. Credit for prior learning, also called experiential learning

Candidates for the master's degree may be given up to nine units of credit for previous learning, including pastoral experience, correspondence courses, pastoral training programs, seminars in a relevant topic, or self-directed study. The application for credit involves documentation of work done, what was learned, and how it is applied in your ministry. Credit is granted based on the extent of learning, not for length of the experiences. For further details and to apply for this credit, see the document on <https://learn.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23#section-3>.

For the fee, see "Fees" section below. We cannot award credit for previous learning if a person does not have a bachelor's degree.

F. Transfer credit

If another seminary offers a course we do not offer, or offers it at a more convenient time, you may want to take the course there, and transfer the credits to GCS. Please contact us before you do this, because not all credits will transfer. Graduate courses taken from appropriately accredited institutions will be considered for credit toward the DCM or toward one of the master's degrees. We reserve the right to refuse transfer credits for any reason. Note the following:

1. Credit can be given only for graduate-level courses in which the student has received B or higher, or a "pass" in pass/fail systems.
2. The courses must come from an institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or the U.S. Department of Education, or an accepted foreign equivalent listed in the *International Handbook of Universities*.

3. We will consider courses that were taken in traditional schools, online schools, military schools, etc., as long as they have the appropriate accreditation.
4. Transcripts from institutions outside of the U.S. and Canada may need to be evaluated by World Educational Services and (if necessary) translated into English. Students must pay the WES fee. Contact us to see if this will be needed for your transcripts.
5. A maximum of 21 semester units may be transferred into a master's degree program.²⁵
6. The courses must have been taken within eight years before enrollment at GCS.
7. Courses must be relevant to the GCS curriculum. If the course is not directly comparable to a course offered by GCS, the course may in some cases be accepted as counting for an elective in our program. For example, a graduate-level course in public speaking, coupled with experience in giving sermons, might be accepted as equivalent to Homiletics in our Christian ministry category.
8. Documentation must include 1) an official sealed transcript sent to us directly from the institution in which the course was completed, and 2) a description of the course from the institution's catalog or from the course syllabus. The student will generally need to supply this description.
9. Fill out and send the form for transfer credit²⁶ to Registrar, Grace Communion Seminary, 3120 Whitehall Park Dr., Charlotte, NC, 28273.

²⁵ Since our programs are built around three-unit courses, transfer students may need to supplement the credits to bring them to a multiple of three. This may be done with an independent study class or with credit for previous learning.

²⁶ See the home page of our website, under the heading "Admissions & Records."

10. We will inform you by e-mail of whether transfer credit has been granted within 30 days. If credit is denied, we will inform you of the reasons. If you wish to appeal this decision, you should send a written explanation to the Dean of Faculty, explaining why you disagree with our reasons. The Dean will discuss the matter with the President, and no further appeal is possible.

G. Terms of Admission

To access our course material, you will need access to the Internet, and you will need to be able to read PDF documents. For final exams in some courses, you may need a camera connected to your computer so that your exams can be proctored. For a master's degree you must satisfactorily complete a thesis.

Our Admission Agreement includes the following:

Student obligation: All GCS students are initially enrolled in the Master's Level Courses study option. Students register online for each graduate course and may select any course in keeping with any prerequisites. To receive a Master's degree (usually fourteen courses, each course = 3 credits), you must satisfactorily complete the specific requirements of the program, including the capstone course, paper, and presentation (if required). To access course material, you will find it helpful to have Adobe Acrobat Reader or some other PDF reader (free) which can be downloaded by clicking the link on our student information page, <https://learn.gcs.edu/course/view.php?id=23>. All course material is copyrighted by GCS and cannot be distributed without prior written permission.

Institution's obligation: GCS will provide the course(s) in which you enroll so that you can complete it within a thirteen-week semester. Courses will be placed online in a timely manner to enable you to schedule your available time over the thirteen weeks of the course. All material will be readily accessed online.

Course Extension: You will be provided the courses on a trimester

basis. A student may request a course extension of three weeks to complete assignments and tests. If students determine they will need a course extension, they must email the instructor and Registrar to request the extension on or before the Monday of the 10th week of the course (which is also the day final lectures are posted). The fee for an extension is \$65. If the extension is granted, all missing course work must be made up in consultation with the instructor within three weeks after the final paper was due, unless otherwise arranged. All course work and exams must be completed prior to registering for a new course.

Allowable program completion time: All courses at GCS must be completed within ten years, unless a formal leave of absence is requested by the student and granted by GCS.

Program cancellation requests: Students who wish to cancel their registration within five days of signing this enrollment agreement will be due a refund of all tuition paid. **Course cancellation requests** must be conveyed in writing to the registrar, as required by the state in which we are incorporated. This will be sufficient for ensuring any refund owed you. Refunds will be given within thirty days of requests. [See refund policy below.]

Privacy statement: Grace Communion Seminary respects your privacy and the privacy and security of the information you provide. Except as required by our accreditation agency, the Seminary does not sell, disseminate, or disclose to entities outside the Seminary the information you provide. The Seminary may use some of the information you provide to analyze trends and create summary statistics for the Seminary and the accreditation organization, and/or any government report as may be required by law.

Transfer credits: Acceptance for transfer of GCS academic credits is determined by the receiving institution.

Fees: see page 49.

Refund policy: see page 45.

Complaints/grievances: see page 46.

H. Course enrollment agreement

In the enrollment agreement that students must sign electronically before they can register for a course, we include the following:²⁷

COURSE FEE: \$735.²⁸ (Must be paid in full during course registration period.)

COURSE LOCATION: Distance Education: www.gcs.edu

CREDITS/LESSONS: 3 Semester Credits/ 10 lectures

COURSE DESCRIPTION: [varies according to course; it is included on the Course Registration Site and descriptions are linked from <https://www.gcs.edu/academics/list-of-courses/>]

COURSE REGISTRATION: Registration begins two weeks prior to each semester start (Spring Semester, approximately first 10 days of January; Summer Semester, approximately first 10 days of May; Fall Semester, approximately first 10 days of September.) For exact dates, see the PDF document “Course Schedule” at <https://www.gcs.edu/course-schedule/>.

COURSE LESSONS AND MATERIALS: Course lectures and other online materials are provided on the GCS website on a weekly basis.

INSTITUTION’S OBLIGATION: You will be provided this course on a semester basis. Courses will be placed online in a timely manner to enable you to schedule your available time over the thirteen weeks of each course. All material will be provided so that it can be readily

²⁷ The course enrollment agreement for capstone courses and Field Education is slightly different, since there are no lectures, and the extension fee is different for capstone courses.

²⁸ This fee, like others, may change in future years.

accessed online.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY: Grace Communion Seminary admits students of any race, sex, color, creed, age, or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, age, or national origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

STUDENT'S OBLIGATIONS: Acquiring required textbooks before the start of the course is the responsibility of the student. No textbooks are sold by GCS; a list of textbooks for each course is found on the GCS website. (Go to <https://www.gcs.edu/academics/list-of-courses/>, click on the course, then “short syllabus.”)

Students are required to meet the posted dates for completion of assignments; when hardships are encountered that may cause delay in completing assignments, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor for consideration of an extension. If a course extension is needed, the student must follow the process stated under **COURSE EXTENSION**.

TERMINATION DATE OF AGREEMENT: The Course Enrollment Agreement ends 20 weeks after the course start date. Students must request a Course Extension if they wish to extend completion of assignments beyond the 13th week of the course.

COURSE EXTENSION: The student may request a course extension of three weeks to complete assignments and tests. If students determine they will need a course extension, they must email the instructor and Registrar to request the extension on or before the Monday of the 10th week of the course (which is also the day final lectures are posted). Contact the Registrar at 800-851-2611 (registrar@gcs.edu). The fee for an extension is \$65. If the extension

is granted, all missing course work must be made up in consultation with the instructor within three weeks after the final paper was due, unless otherwise arranged. All course work and exams must be completed prior to registering for a new course.

COURSE CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY: Cancellation requests must be in writing²⁹, sent to the Registrar. This will be sufficient for ensuring any refund owed you. Refunds will be given within 30 days of requests.³⁰

Refund policy for courses for credit:

1. Students who cancel before the first class will receive a full refund (\$735.00).
2. For students who cancel during the first week, a refund of tuition shall be \$735.00 (100% of the tuition cost).
3. If a student withdraws from a course after the first week, the refund shall be \$588.00 (80% of the tuition cost).
4. If a student withdraws from a course after the second week, the refund shall be \$514.50 (70% of the tuition cost).
5. If a student withdraws from a course after the third week, the refund will be \$441.00 (60% of the tuition cost).
6. If a student withdraws from a course after the fourth week, the refund will be \$367.50 (50% of the tuition cost).
7. If a student withdraws from a course after the fifth week, the refund will be \$294.00 (40% of the tuition cost.)
8. If a student withdraws from a course after the sixth week, the

³⁰ For example: If you paid \$735 tuition and withdrew during the sixth week, the refund would be 40 percent, or \$294.

refund will be \$220.50 (30% of the tuition cost.)

9. If a student withdraws from a course after the seventh week, the refund will be \$147.00 (20% of the tuition cost.)
10. If a student withdraws from a course after the eighth week, the refund will be \$73.50 (10% of the tuition cost.)
11. There will be no refund after the ninth week. A grade will be assigned based upon course requirements.

Courses may be dropped with the posting of a grade of withdrawal (W) at any time through the ninth week of the semester. See the *GCS Academic Catalog* [i.e., this document; see below] for grading policies regarding course withdrawals. Refunds for audits are at the same weekly percentage as refunds for courses taken for credit.³¹

TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS: As with all institutions of higher learning, the transferability of credits earned at Grace Communion Seminary is at the complete discretion of an institution to which the student may seek to transfer. If a student wishes to transfer credits to another institution, or wishes to use a GCS degree to meet admission requirements of another institution, the student is advised to confirm in advance with that other institution that the GCS credits or degree will be acceptable.

COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES: If a student has a grievance with a specific instructor, whether about student grades or conduct, course content, or serious deviation from the published syllabus, the student should first attempt to resolve the problem with the instructor. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached within two weeks, the student should contact the Dean of Faculty (dean@gcs.edu) with a full description of the situation. (If the Dean of Faculty is the instructor,

³¹ Refunds will be given within 30 days after the student has given notice of withdrawal. If special circumstances exist, such as serious health problems or a death in the family, GCS may deem that a larger refund is appropriate.

then contact the President, (president@gcs.edu). The Dean will consult with the instructor and the President and will notify the student of the decision within 30 days.

If the grievance is about academic disqualification, dismissal, financial matters or GCS policies, the student should first attempt to resolve the problem with the Registrar (registrar@gcs.edu). If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the student should contact the Dean of Faculty. The Dean will consult with the Registrar and will notify the student of the decision.

Students may appeal financial and academic matters to the North Carolina Post-Secondary Education Complaints, c/o Student Complaints, University of North Carolina General Administration, 910 Raleigh Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2688.³² Students may also contact our accrediting agency, the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, 1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808, Washington, D.C. 20036, phone 202-234-5100, email info@deac.org. website: www.deac.org.

Grace Communion Seminary is registered with Maryland's Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to offer online education to Maryland students. Students from the state of Maryland may also appeal to the Office of the Attorney General or the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Complaints should be directed to:

Maryland Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division, 200 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21202. 410-528-8662/888-743-0823 (toll

³² If students are unable to resolve a complaint through the institution's grievance procedures, they may review the Student Complaint Policy, complete the Student Complaint Form (PDF) located on the State Authorization webpage at <https://www.northcarolina.edu/stateauthorization>, and submit the complaint to studentcomplaint@northcarolina.edu or at the address given above.

free)

Grace Communion Seminary has received a Letter of Exemption from Certification issued by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education to offer church-related programs/courses and grant church-related degrees.

III. Fees and Financial Aid

A. Tuition and Fees

1. Application fee: \$50

2. Transcript –

A transcript of your previous education is required, but that fee is set by and paid to the sending institution.

Transcripts that are not in English must be sent to us by way of World Education Services, and WES requires a fee for the evaluation of an international transcript.

If you want GCS to send a transcript to another institution, the fee is \$10 for normal service, \$25 for expedited service within the U.S.A. You are allowed one transcript at no charge.

3. Cost per course taken for credit: Tuition, \$245 per credit hour, \$735 for most courses – must be paid by credit or debit card at the time of registration for the course.

4. Cost of books

a. Cost of assigned textbooks ranges from about \$20 to \$100 per course.

b. The “average” course requires textbooks costing \$50.

c. Students in some nations may need to pay for expedited shipping in order to get textbooks on time, or will need electronic versions that do not require shipping.

5. Course extension fee, for three weeks: \$65.

6. Audit cost per course: \$367.50.

7. Assessment fee for previous learning: \$82 for each unit requested.
This fee is not refundable, even if no credit is awarded.

8. Capstone continuation fee: \$245 (if more than two semesters are needed for the capstone project).
8. Graduation fee – \$165. Attendance is not required, but if you participate in the ceremony, the fee is required.
9. Incidental costs that vary from one student to another:
 - a. Costs to remain connected to the internet
 - b. Costs involved in taking proctored exams – either a webcam or paying third-party proctoring fees
 - c. Costs involved in using a library – perhaps interlibrary loan fees, or postage to return books to the GCS library
10. Total costs for the Master’s Degree: At our current tuition charges, the cost of the program would total to about \$10,290, plus \$700 to \$750 for books. The cost for the MDiv program would total to about \$17,890, plus \$1000 to \$1200 for books.³³ The cost may be less if the student is able to document previous experiential learning; the total will increase if our tuition increases before the student has completed the program.

For cancellation and refund policies, see page 45.

B. Financial aid

Partial scholarships are available to GCI pastors and to those who are part of the official GCI internship program. For details, ask the Registrar. There are no other discounts. The most likely source of additional financial assistance is the congregation in which the student is currently ministering.

³³ This does not include any costs for computer equipment or internet connections; these costs vary widely and in most cases the student would incur them anyway.

GCS does not participate in federal Title IV programs, and student loans may not be deferred by enrolling in GCS.

IV. Academic Policies

A. Dual registration

A student who wishes to register at another college while in attendance at this institution may do so without formal approval.

B. Time limits

All courses at GCS must be completed within ten years. Requirements for a degree are based on GCS policies on the date that the student first enrolled, or the current *Catalog*, whichever the student chooses. We keep electronic copies of our older catalogs, but students should download a copy for themselves when they first enroll.

C. Length of program

Since most of our students are part-time students, it often takes them three years to take the first seven courses, when they can matriculate into a master's degree program. After that, it is usually necessary to take another three years to complete the MPS or MTS, or another six years for the MDiv. Fulltime students can complete the degree in less time. The maximum length of time is ten years (which may be extended if a formal leave of absence was obtained). We recommend that new students take only one course in their first semester. A student must get advance approval to take more than three courses per semester. Students also need advance approval to register for another course if they have not yet completed a course from the previous semester.

D. Registration deadlines

Students must register before the first week of the course and pay for the tuition and fees with credit or debit card at the time of registration. Students should consult the short syllabus online to order textbooks in advance of the start of the course. GCS does not sell textbooks; they must be obtained from online booksellers or local bookstores.

E. Auditing courses (access to course materials, with no credit)

Students auditing a course receive no grades or course credit for the class toward completion of the degree. Instructors sometimes require audit students to read the textbooks and participate in the discussions. Students who are enrolled in a course and wish to change their status to an audit can do so at any time before the final assignment is due. Some tuition may be refunded if this change is made in the first two weeks; see “Tuition and Fees.” Access to lectures and other course materials will be granted throughout the semester. Auditing students should introduce themselves in the first discussion forum; instructors may have additional requirements for those who audit. Auditing students should treat the course materials and discussions as confidential (see Student Code of Conduct, part 6.)

F. Students with disabilities

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, we will provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities on a case-by-case basis. If special services are needed, please contact the Dean of Faculty, dean@gcs.edu.

G. Grading policies

Grades are the means by which instructors tell students whether they are meeting the goals of the course. If you are not learning what you should, then we do you a disservice if we cause you to think you have mastered the material.³⁴

We want GCS classes to be helpful in your ministry, but the classes

³⁴ If you are unable to do a particular task of ministry well, and yet we make you think that you are fully capable of the task, and we thereby encourage you to accept ministry responsibilities that exceed your capabilities, then we have done a disservice to you and to all those affected by that ministry. If you attempt further academic work at another institution because we have overrated your academic abilities, then we have done a disservice to you and to the other academic institution.

are not a measure of your value in ministry. Grades are merely an academic measurement to give you feedback – they are not a measure of intelligence or spirituality. If you did the best you could in the time that you had available, and got a B, then that is an honorable grade. Just as no believer has every spiritual gift, so also no student is good at every subject. People who are good pastors may not be particularly gifted at academic work (and vice versa!).

A indicates *outstanding* work, with evidence of *remarkable* skill, creativity or energy. We are pleased with the quality of work that GCS students submit, but if we judge everyone as “remarkable” and “outstanding,” our expectations are too low.

B is an honorable grade, showing work and comprehension beyond the minimum, with some evidence of extra effort, achievement or improvement.

C is for students who fulfilled the assignments, but did not do very well in them.

C- = Below expectations, either because some aspect of the assignment has not been fulfilled or because the number of errors interferes with clear communication. A grade of C- may also indicate failure to follow directions, or failure to demonstrate effort and improvement.

D is given for unsatisfactory work, with no credit given.

F is given when the student did not complete the assignments as directed, or because the level of performance is well below an acceptable level for graduate level work.

The final grade is usually calculated based on a 100-point scale. In most courses, letter grades are assigned as follows:

95 - 100 % = A	77 - 79 % = C+
90 - 94 % = A-	74 - 76 % = C
87 - 89 % = B+	70 - 73 % = C-

84 - 86 % = B

60 - 69 % = D

80 - 83 % = B-

00 - 69 % = F

In general, GCS students are capable of doing good academic work, and they rarely get a C if they devote at least 135 hours for the course. If they receive a C, it is usually because (sometimes through no fault of their own) they did not give the course the time that it needed. However, simply putting in the time is no guarantee that you will receive a B or higher – grades are given based on the quality of the work that we receive.

If you have a complaint about a grade, you should first attempt to resolve the problem with the instructor. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the student should contact the Dean of Faculty (if the Dean is the instructor, then contact the President) with a full description of the situation. The Dean will consult with the instructor and the President, and will notify the student of the decision.

H. Computing grade point averages

Grade point averages are used as criteria for continued enrollment at the Seminary and for graduation. The grade point average for a particular period is determined by dividing the total number of semester hours of all courses for which the student received a grade into the total number of grade points. If a student has taken a course more than once, only the higher grade is included in the calculation. The following table shows the grade points allocated, for each semester unit, to each letter grade:

Letter	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
Points	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.7	0	0

I. Student records

Students may change their own email address on the GCS website,³⁵ but such changes should also be sent to the Registrar. Students should also notify the Registrar if there is a change in phone number or physical mailing address.

GCS does not issue student ID cards. We can set up a gcs.edu email address if the student needs one.

J. Verifying student identity

We know many of our students personally. Nevertheless, to provide objective, third-party assurance of academic integrity and student identity, some of our courses require proctored exams. Proctored final exams are required in the following courses: BI501, CH501, CH502, CM549, TH501, TH505, TH519, TM501, and CM599. Students may have the exam proctored in either of two ways:

1. Proctoring by video

The student may take the exam while being watched on video, and must provide verification of identity with a government-issued form of identification. Students must have a camera connected to the computer, such that the student can be observed by GCS personnel while the exam is being taken. (The webcam and video connection is not needed at other times, but will need to be tested before the exam, to allow time to resolve problems if they arise.)

- a. You must have a camera connected to your computer. Some computers have a camera and microphone built in. Or you may purchase a small webcam with microphone and connect it to the computer. You may purchase a webcam from many electronic stores. If you allow a few weeks for delivery, you can purchase an

³⁵ After logging in to the website, click on your name in the extreme upper right corner, select “profile,” then “edit profile.”

inexpensive webcam for less than \$10 from dx.com. Inexpensive cameras sometimes work best because there are fewer adjustments to make – just plug it in, and it will work, if you have a recent version of Windows. A small number of pixels is often better because it takes less bandwidth.

- b. There are various ways to activate a video connection, including the free programs Zoom and Skype. We can work with either of these – just let us know if you have one of them, and if you don't, we can help you set one up.
- c. We need a color copy of a government-issued photo ID, such as a drivers license or passport. (Most students have already submitted that with their application for admission.) With a scanner or a digital camera, copy the ID and send it to registrar@gcs.edu. Or you may mail a color photocopy to us.
- d. Test the video connection to make sure it is working properly. Do this in advance, so that any problems may be resolved before the actual exam begins.
- e. For the exam, you will make the video connection before you begin the test. The proctor will communicate with you to confirm that the connection is working. Then begin the test. You will keep your webcam and microphone on, but the proctor will turn the camera and microphone off. You will no longer be able to see the proctor, but the proctor will still be able to see and hear you. (The proctor may have other work to do at the same time, and we don't want you to be distracted by what we are doing.) We may record the video transmission to watch at a later time, if necessary. This recording will not be used for anything other than academic verification.
- f. When the exam is over, just talk to the proctor, and hopefully the proctor will be there to turn the camera and microphone back on and confirm with you that the process has been successful. If the proctor has stepped away from the desk and does not respond, just

end the connection, and send us a message saying that you are done.

- g. You should alert other people in your home that you are taking a video-proctored exam. This means that they should not interrupt you, and be aware that they are not in visual or verbal privacy.

2. Proctoring with a third party

- a. If students do not wish to be proctored by video, they should inform us that they want to be proctored by a third party. Each student must select a proctor well in advance and verify that the person is willing and able to proctor the exam during the approximate time period in which the exam must be taken.
- b. The proctor may be a librarian, a professional educator (a teacher or administrator from primary, secondary or tertiary schools), or an ordained person.
 - 1. The person cannot be related to the student by marriage or by birth. Second cousins and more distant relationships are permitted, as long as the person meets the other qualifications.
 - 2. The proctor cannot be under the supervision of the student in any capacity, either on the job or in the church. (However, the proctor may be a supervisor over the student.) Lead pastors cannot be proctored by anyone in their congregations.
- c. One more factor involved in selecting a proctor: The proctor does not have to watch every minute of the test, but should be *able* to see the computer monitor at all times, and can testify that the student did not access unauthorized materials while taking the exam. (This does not apply if the exam is open-book.)
- d. Once the student has identified a possible proctor, the student should send us the proctor's name, qualification (e.g., teacher or pastor), email address and phone number. The proctor must have an employer-issued email address; accounts at Gmail and Verizon, for

example, are not verifiable and therefore not acceptable. We must be able to visit the website that corresponds to the email address of the proctor to verify the identity and validity of the proctor.

- e. GCS will then contact the proctor to verify that the person meets the qualifications, and is willing to proctor the exam during the time period that the exam should be completed.
- f. GCS will then notify the student whether the proctoring arrangement is acceptable, and if so, will leave it up to the student to set up a more specific time for the exam. This will most likely be done about a week before the exam. The student must then send the Registrar, the instructor and the proctor an email confirming the appointed time, location, and whether you will use your own computer, or one belonging to the proctor.
- g. GCS will send further instructions to the proctor.
- h. The student will take the exam at the appointed time. Our website records the time and the computer's IP address.
- i. All programs should be closed except for the internet browser and a word-processing program, with only a blank document being open. (Turn off email notifiers, instant messaging, etc.) Unless the exam instructions allow the student to use other websites, only one window or tab should be open on the browser – the GCS website on which the exam is being taken.
- j. Some proctors charge a fee; that is the student's responsibility.
- k. Even if the proctor knows you personally, you must show a government-issued photo ID, and the proctor must sign a statement that the ID has been shown.

K. Academic freedom

GCS offers education from a specific theological perspective. Our courses are biblically based, and representative of the tenets of our

sponsoring denomination, Grace Communion International. For the *Statement of Beliefs*, go to <https://www.gci.org/articles/the-gci-statement-of-beliefs/>.

In course content where GCI does not have a denominational position, we endeavor to present a balanced evangelical, orthodox view.

Instructors may present their own position on areas that are speculative, on which GCI has not taken a position.

Students may exercise academic freedom in critical thinking.

Therefore, in research papers, discussion forums, etc., students are permitted to argue in favor of a position different than that promoted by the course. When GCS instructors grade such submissions, they should grade on the quality of the research and analysis, not solely on the specific conclusions that have been reached.

When papers are evaluated by academic criteria, the acceptance of a paper as sufficient for the program does not necessarily imply that the conclusion has been accepted by the instructor, the seminary, or the sponsoring denomination.

If a student believes that the instructor is teaching something false, the student should first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the student and instructor cannot agree, the student may appeal to the Dean of Faculty. The Dean will discuss the matter with the instructor, and respond to the student within 14 days. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, either the Dean or the student may request that the matter be discussed by the Curriculum Committee, which will then make a recommendation to the President. Depending on the meeting schedule of the Curriculum Committee, this may take several months. In any case, the student should realize that we do not have time to write detailed responses to all the theological controversies that exist within Christianity, and even the most detailed of responses would not convince everyone. No further appeal is possible.

L. Privacy policy

U.S. federal law (FERPA) mandates that:

1. Students have a right to see what is in their educational files.
2. Students have the right to challenge information in the file, or to insert a statement into the file if the student believes that the records are inaccurate, misleading or a violation of privacy.
3. Students can, but are not required to, waive the right to see certain items in their educational files, such as letters of recommendation.
4. Grades are confidential. If faculty use student assignments as samples for future classes, all identifying details must be removed from the document. Grade information may be shared with other GCS faculty and staff for academic purposes.
5. GCS has the right to release basic facts about the student to anyone who asks:
 - student's name and years in which the student took classes at GCS.
 - whether the student is currently enrolled in a class.
 - whether the student has earned a degree.
6. Additionally, we may release more information about our students to an accreditation agency or government agency so they can contact those students to verify what we are doing. This includes names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and previous educational qualifications. We will not release this information for other purposes.
7. Other than the above-listed information, GCS will not release additional information about the student without signed consent. Transcripts, grades and other personal information will not be released without written permission.

8. If students believe that GCS is not complying with the requirements of the federal law, they may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

M. Transcript requests & grades

Student records are confidential, so we cannot process a transcript request unless we receive a signed request and the appropriate payment. We cannot send a transcript if you have any outstanding obligations to the Seminary, such as library fines. Send all requests to the Registrar and include instructions on where the transcript should be mailed. We will retain your academic records permanently. You are allowed one transcript at no charge for your own records.

You can obtain your GCS Program Course Fulfillments (your grades/progress report) by logging into your GCI account (online.gci.org). Once you are logged in, locate the “Education” tab at the top of the screen. If you click on it, it will take you to the GCS website — but don’t click. Just position the cursor over “Education” and a dropdown menu will appear. Click on “My GCS Program Course Fulfillments.” Your Course Fulfillments form will then appear, and you can print and/or download the form for your records.

V. Academic Progress

GCS offers several academic milestones. Students may proceed step-by-step from one to another, toward one of the degrees:

1. Master's Level Courses – take courses as desired
2. Certificate of Theological Studies – four courses
3. Diploma of Christian Ministry – seven courses
4. Master of Pastoral Studies – 14 courses
5. Master of Theological Studies – 14 courses
6. Master of Divinity – 25 courses

A. Maintaining satisfactory progress

Since all coursework for a master's degree must be completed within ten years, and at least 14 courses are required for a degree, students who want to obtain a degree should plan on taking at least two courses per year.³⁶ We advise that you begin by taking program requirements rather than electives. Since a GPA of 2.7 is required for graduation, you should aim for a grade of B- or better in all your classes.

Most courses require you to log in to the website at least once or twice a week, either to participate in a forum or to submit a written assignment. Failure to do so may hurt your grade; see the respective courses for their policies on forum participation.

B. Suggested sequence

Most courses do not have formal prerequisites. However, your educational experience may go smoother if you follow the steps given below:

³⁶ This can be reduced if the student has transfer credit or credit for previous learning.

1. We recommend (but do not require) that you begin with the foundational courses:
 - BI501 Biblical Interpretation – to establish Bible study skills.
 - BI5120 New Testament Survey
 - CM501 Foundations of Christian Ministry (formerly known as Pastoral Leadership) – to understand your strengths and weaknesses for service in the church.
 - TH507, which is a survey of all theological topics through the writings of C.S. Lewis.
2. Take courses depending on your interests and our schedule of courses. If you have no particular goal in mind, aim to fulfill the requirements of the Certificate first, and then meet the requirements of the Diploma of Christian Ministry. See the diagram on page 35.
3. After you have taken seven courses, decide whether you wish to seek a master's degree, and which degree you prefer. All courses for the degree must be completed within the ten years previous to your graduation. Calculate how many courses you will need, how much time you will have, and how many courses you will need to take each year. If you can commit to that pace, and have a GPA of 2.7 or higher, then you may apply for one of the master's degree programs.
 - a. If your primary interest is theology, and you are willing to do a research thesis, you might wish to seek the Master of Theological Studies degree (14 courses).
 - b. If your primary interest is pastoral work, you may wish to seek the Master of Pastoral Studies degree (14 courses).
 - c. If you are interested in professional pastoral work, pastoral supervision, or further studies in chaplaincy or doctoral work, you might wish to pursue the Master of Divinity degree (25 courses).

The MDiv is a considerable commitment. Since all work must be done within ten years, you would need to take about three courses each year, for ten years. Or if you study full-time, taking nine courses each year, you could finish the MDiv in three years.

d. We suggest the following strategy: Even if the MDiv is your primary goal, aim to meet most of the requirements of the MPS or MTS first. As you near completion of those requirements, you will be in a better position to estimate whether you will be able to finish the MDiv within ten years. If you don't think you can, then you can opt for the 42-unit degree as a good (and possibly transferrable) academic achievement. You may be able to resume your MDiv studies after that.

e. Aiming for the MPS or MTS might also be good if you want the MDiv but are able to take only two courses (6 units) each year. The first degree requires 42 units, so you could finish that in seven years. At that point you could “reset the clock” by getting the first degree, then transfer 36 units of that degree into the MDiv program and have up to ten more years to complete the remaining 42 units. If the requirements of the MDiv have changed, you will need to meet the requirements in effect at the time you resume your studies after the MPS/MTS. You will have taken at least 78 semester units over a span of 16 years or so.

4. You may also request transfer credit, if any, and request credit for relevant experiential learning. See our website for further instructions on those.
5. Choose your next courses to ensure that you will meet the requirements of the degree, including the required number of biblical studies courses, theology courses, church history, and ministry.³⁷

³⁷ On online.gci.org, you can see an unofficial transcript of courses you have taken so far. Go to <https://online.gci.org/live/ScriptContent/Index.cfm> and login. Hover the cursor over the

6. Before you can register for a capstone course (CM549, TH519 or TM501), you must have earned at least 30 semester units, and you must pass a summative exam. Before you can register for the MDiv capstone, you must have at least 66 units, and pass a summative exam. See the syllabus of CM549, CM599, TM501, or TH519 for what that exam will include and how it will be administered.

C. Incompletes

A student will be given an *Incomplete* grade when all the following conditions apply:

- 1) whenever required course work is missing,
- 2) when that missing work would result in the student receiving a lower final grade and
- 3) when the student has formally requested an extension and paid the extension fee.

In all other instances, a regular letter grade is given with the missing work counted as “zero” or “fail.” If the extension is granted, all missing course work must be made up in consultation with the instructor *within three weeks after the final paper was due*, unless otherwise arranged. In cases of health or other personal difficulties, a grade of W may also be given.

Students cannot register for more courses if they have an incomplete.

D. Withdrawing from courses

Courses may be dropped any time prior to the due date of the final examination or paper. These requests should be conveyed in writing to the Registrar and the instructor(s). (See “Course Enrollment Agreement,” above, for our refund policy.)

Education tab at top. A drop-down menu will appear; click on My GCS program course fulfillments. You may also discuss program requirements with our Registrar.

If a student drops a course before the tenth lecture is scheduled to be posted online, a refund will be made and a grade of W will be assigned whether or not the student is passing.

If the withdrawal is initiated after materials have been posted for the tenth week of the semester, a mark of W for Withdrawal will be assigned if the instructor informs the Registrar that the student had a passing grade at the date of the official withdrawal. A mark of F will be assigned if 1) the student is failing at the time of withdrawal and 2) the student withdraws after the tenth lecture is posted.

You may also wish to consider changing your status to Audit – you will continue to be able to access course resources, but receive no grade.

E. Examination and course re-takes

In general, we do not allow students take an examination again. We *do* allow students to take a course again (if they pay the tuition again), and only the highest grade is then counted in the GPA.

F. Academic leave of absence

If health or other unforeseen circumstances make it impossible for you to continue your GCS studies for six months or more, please contact the Registrar for a leave of absence. There is no charge for this, and it will extend the length of time you have to complete your degree.

The granting of a leave of absence indicates a continuing relationship with the Seminary and allows students to resume studies at a specific time without reapplying for admission to the Seminary. A leave of absence generally does not exceed four semesters in length. GCS courses taken more than ten years previous will not be counted toward degree requirements unless a formal leave of absence was requested.

G. Inactive students

If a student in Master's Level Courses has not taken a course in the

past two years, or a student admitted to a master's degree program has not taken a course in one year, the student will be considered "inactive." A student may re-activate their status by contacting the Registrar and registering for a course.

H. Academic probation

Although a GPA of at least 2.7 is required for the degree (3.0 for the MDiv), students are not put on academic probation unless their GPA falls below 2.5. Academic probation serves as a warning that a student is in danger of academic disqualification. A student who has not achieved both a term and cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (C) or higher at the close of a semester will be placed on academic probation. The student will be notified of this probationary status. The student may take only one class per semester, or two, with permission from the Dean.

I. Academic disqualification

A student becomes academically disqualified and may not continue enrollment under any of the following conditions:

- 1) A student fails in six or more hours of course work in any given year.
- 2) A student on academic probation fails to achieve both a term and cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C) or higher.

The student will be notified within one week of any disqualification. The President and Dean may waive academic disqualification if individual circumstances warrant such action.

J. Appeal of disqualification

A student who becomes disqualified may appeal the disqualification by filing an appeal at the Registrar's Office within two weeks of the date of notification of disqualification.

After the appeal has been considered by the President and Dean, the

Registrar will notify the student of the decision. Once this decision has been made, no further appeal is allowed.

Disqualified students are not eligible for readmission until at least three semesters have elapsed. If readmitted, the student will be on academic probation and will be expected to satisfy the requirements for removal from probation by the end of the term.

K. Student code of conduct

GCS students are expected to:

- 1) Do their own work. Presenting another person's work as if it were your own is called plagiarism. Even if it is done accidentally, such as by carelessly failing to acknowledge a source, it is a serious violation of academic integrity. In general, any quote of more than five words in a row should be put within quote marks, and the source noted. The penalty for plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional, is a failing grade for the assignment in which it occurs, or on the second offense, failure of the course. If plagiarism occurs a third time, the student will be terminated from the program and not allowed to take any more classes.

For more information about plagiarism, see Purdue University's Online Writing Lab:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/avoiding_plagiarism/index.html. For tips on avoiding plagiarism, either by paraphrasing or by using quote marks, see https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/avoiding_plagiarism/is_it_plagiarism.html.

Extensive quoting does not fit the definition of "plagiarism" if the sources are given credit, but it may still be unethical. Quotes should not comprise more than 25 percent of any of your papers. We want to see your thoughts, not how much you can copy. Use quotes when they support your thoughts – do not use them as a substitute for your thinking. Most quotes need some sort of

introduction or commentary from you, to indicate why you are including them – as an authoritative definition, for example, or a well-said conclusion to your research, or as a view you are trying to refute.

- 2) Do honest work. Honesty and integrity are foremost in the responsibility of the servant and minister of Jesus Christ. Inventing sources or quotes is a violation of academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty also includes cheating on an exam. You may be copying your own notes, but if notes are not allowed on the exam, then that is dishonest, and cause for failure of the course. You must assume that you cannot use *any* materials unless you are specifically authorized to do so by your instructor. For example, some instructors permit the use of plain Bibles, those without study notes or chain references. In general, if external materials are permitted, you will need to be familiar with them already—otherwise you will not have enough time to complete the exam.

Helping other students cheat on exams or papers is also forbidden. It is also a violation of academic integrity to assist another student in plagiarism. For example, if you give your paper to another student knowing that they will probably copy it, you are participating in the dishonesty. If you give another student a copy of the exam questions, you are engaging in academic dishonesty.

Submitting the same paper, or substantial portions of a paper, for credit in more than one class is not allowed without advance permission.

- 3) Conduct themselves in a civil manner in online discussions. Students should refrain from name-calling, imputing motives or other *ad hominem* attacks on instructors or other students. Students should not use profanity or offensive terms; the discussion is to be conducted in a manner appropriate to academic discussions. Online discussions should be treated confidentially. The class website, and

any email addresses obtained through the class, are not to be used for commercial activity, political activities, or for airing grievances. The topics permitted on discussion forums are at the discretion of the instructors.

- 4) Communicate. If problems arise that make it difficult for the student to participate in the class, it is the student's responsibility to communicate this to the instructor.
- 5) Remain connected. GCS classes are conducted online. We have the responsibility to keep our website functioning; it is the student's responsibility to be able to access our website. If a student's computer breaks down or if an internet connection is lost, it is the student's responsibility to find another way to connect to the class, or to withdraw from the class. Students should check their email on a regular basis and ensure that email from gcs.edu is allowed through any spam filters. Check your spam folder the first week of each class.
- 6) Respect GCS copyrights and other properties. Students are not to attempt to damage or disrupt any part of the GCS website, nor attempt to enter parts of the website for which they are not authorized. Class materials may not be published in any form, or presented orally, without written permission from the President. Students should not make marks in any book from the GCS library, and should return books on time.

Class lectures, forum discussions, quizzes and exams should not be shared with others. Online discussions are confidential, and what a student writes in a forum should not be publicized in other places, unless permission has been granted in advance by the student. Even so, students should realize that confidences are not always kept, and should not write things that would cause them substantial harm if they were accidentally made more public.

Students should abide by all copyright laws – they are not to post

copies of copyrighted materials on our website, for example. Students are allowed by the “fair use” provision of copyright law to make copies for research purposes – not to copy an entire book, but to copy a small part of the book.³⁸

- 7) Repeated violations of these policies may lead to failure of a course and, if violations occur again in another course, dismissal from the seminary.

L. Disciplinary disqualification

If students have repeated failures in academic honesty, repeated violations of student conduct (see above), or repeated failures of a course, GCS will terminate them as a student, and they will not be allowed to register for any more courses.

If students wish to withdraw from the Seminary, they may send that request in writing to the Registrar. They will no longer be counted as a student, and they will not receive any email information about upcoming courses or registration.

M. Holding of records

Student records may be placed on a hold status because of financial or other obligations to the Seminary. While a student’s records are on hold, registration will not be allowed, nor will transcripts of credits be released. Records will be held until the obligation is cleared.

N. Graduation

Students must have a minimum GPA of 2.7 in order to graduate (3.0 for the MDiv). A student cannot graduate if there are any outstanding obligations to the Seminary, such as library fines. In order to graduate,

³⁸ One rule of thumb (but not the only consideration) is that copying should not affect the commercial market for the book. It may be acceptable to make copies in lieu of using a library, but not to make a copy instead of purchasing the book. Further details on copyright law can be seen at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/strategies_for_fair_use.html

students must complete a thesis *and* inform the Registrar that they want to graduate (in some cases MDiv students might complete a thesis well before they want to graduate). A diploma will be sent to the student when all requirements have been met.

Formal GCS graduation ceremonies will be held in conjunction with GCI denominational conferences, for all students who completed degree requirements since the previous ceremony. Attendance is not required. For those who want to participate, there is a fee to offset the costs of the ceremony. GCS does not give graduation honors or participate in an honor society.

O. Counseling and Placement Services

GCS does not offer any career services, job counseling or placement services. We do not promise any ordination, pastoral appointment, or employment. Our program is designed to assist personal and professional development in the roles in which our students are already serving, or those who simply want to learn more about the Bible, theology, and ministry.

P. Alumni

GCS allows alumni to audit courses for half price; we also give alumni electronic access to the GCS thesis library.

VI. Courses Offered

Almost all of our courses are three-unit courses.³⁹ For more details on each course, including textbooks, schedule, and assignments, see the short syllabi. They are linked from the “list of courses” page, <https://www.gcs.edu/academics/list-of-courses/>.

Each course is designed to require a student to work between 135 and 150 hours (i.e., about 12 hours each week) for satisfactory attainment of the course outcomes. This includes the time it takes to read the lectures and textbooks, participate in online discussions, research and write papers, and study for and take exams.

A short syllabus is posted for each course, so students can see how the course is structured before they register. However, the required textbooks mentioned in each syllabus are not necessarily the textbooks that will be required the *next* time the course is offered. The short syllabi are updated about two weeks before registration begins, so please wait until then to print the syllabi or to purchase the textbooks. International students may need to order the books further in advance, and should check with the instructor to see if any textbook changes are being considered.

GCS does not sell any of the textbooks – they must be obtained from elsewhere. The website www.bookfinder.com may help students locate discount prices for the books.

Following are the courses that we offer, with brief descriptions.

A. Biblical Studies

BI501 [Biblical Interpretation](#) (Hermeneutics)

Michael Morrison, PhD

This course surveys various methods of analyzing the biblical text, gives a brief introduction to using biblical Greek, and discusses how to use various forms of

³⁹ Exceptions: Independent study courses may vary from one to four units; Field Education courses are 2 units each.

analysis in exploring the original meaning and contemporary applications of biblical passages.

BI510 [Old Testament Survey](#)

Jeannine Graham, PhD

This course will plunge you into a blitzkrieg romp through the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) in which you will gain an overview of the varied genres, themes, structures and core messages of this fascinating anthology of sacred writings. Spanning many centuries, the books of the Old Testament are marvelously diverse in their historical, geographical, cultural and textual settings. Yet at the same time their diverse portrayals are interwoven like threads composing an utterly unique tapestry that bears witness to the glory and wonder of the same Almighty Creator-Redeemer Triune God whose presence underlies them all. Attention will be paid to the relevance of historical, geographical, literary, cultural and theological contexts for faithfully and reliably interpreting the core message of each biblical book as well as how those diverse writings contribute to and connect with the overarching redemption trajectory realized in and through Jesus Christ.

BI512 [Prophets](#)

Developed by Dr. John McKenna; edited and administered by Tim Finlay, PhD

This course studies the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Canon, the Former and Latter Prophets in order to grasp the foundation and formation of the Kingdom of God. We will seek to apprehend the establishment and development of the Monarchy with Ancient Israel as moved by the renewal of the Biblical Covenant Relationship that we are taught by the Prophets.

BI520 [New Testament Survey](#)

Michael Morrison, PhD

This course gives students an overview of the New Testament documents: the authors, dates, places, genre, structure, and themes. Attention is given to individual documents, and how the documents work together for canonical unity.

BI521 [New Testament Background](#)

Dr. Michael Morrison

This course explores the cultural background of the New Testament, including Jewish history, literature and religion, and Gentile culture and religion, so that students might interpret the writings in their original context. This course also covers matters that involve the entire New Testament: canonization, textual transmission, and chronology.

BI522 [The Gospels](#)

Dr. Michael Morrison

This course examines the four canonical Gospels to see what each of these four portraits of Jesus tells us. Students will explore the literary and theological relationships between the Gospels, and the major themes each one presents. Students will describe how the teachings of Jesus can be used in our very different circumstances today.

BI523 [Acts of the Apostles](#)

Developed by Dr. Russell Duke; edited and administered by Dr. Dan Rogers

This course chronicles the characters and events in the book of Acts to study the early development of the Christian church from its Jewish base to the inclusion of all peoples. The lives of the Apostle Peter and Apostle Paul set the background for studies of the General Epistles and Pauline Epistles.

BI524 [Epistles of Paul](#)

Dr. Michael Morrison

Students in this course examine the 13 letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament. Students will learn the circumstances in which each letter was written – the problems Paul was attempting to address and the way he responded to them. Lectures will include questions of date and authorship, theological considerations involved in what Paul wrote, and how students can find modern significance in these letters. Prerequisite: BI501 Biblical Interpretation.

BI540 [Using Biblical Greek Study Tools](#)

Dr. Michael Morrison

This course uses an inductive approach to learning New Testament Greek, discussing features of Greek as they occur in the letter of 1 John. Bible study websites and programs supply information about declensions and conjugations, so we will focus on how we can use that information to understand how the words work together to convey meaning. We will learn the words used frequently in this letter.

B. Church History

CH501 [Church History: The First Millennium](#)

Course developed by Neil Earle, and administered by Stephen Dolson-Andrew, PhD

Church History: The First Millennium is a survey of the events, people, and ideas of Christianity from Jesus' ascension to the Great Schism of 1054. The focus is on mastering the key dates and events of the period as well as introducing the student to the writings, thought and theology of key people from this period.

CH502 [Church History: The Second Millennium](#)

Course developed by Neil Earle, and administered by Dr. Stephen Dolson-Andrew

This course surveys the Christian Church from the time of the Crusades (1095) down to today's latest renewal movements. "The Church reformed must always reform itself" is a central theme. It addresses the Western Church at the height of its power, the crisis that triggered the Reformation and the "great ideas" of Luther and Calvin. It examines the Enlightenment, modern Scientism, and pivotal American experience. Culture, theology, and grass-roots spirituality are seen as constantly interacting in this broad overview.

C. Christian Ministry

CM501 [Foundations of Christian Ministry](#)

Lance McKinnon, DMin

This course seeks to integrate a biblical, Christ-centered, and historically orthodox theology (grounded on Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and return), with Christian ministry (including worship, fellowship, discipleship, service, and witness). Through this integration a foundational understanding of the identity and purpose of the church will be explored along with ministerial implications for pastoral leaders and lay members.

CM502 is no longer offered.

CM503 [Christian Counseling](#)

Ted Johnston, M.A., M.A.

This course examines a multi-disciplinary approach to counseling, which draws upon insights from Scripture, theology, and psychology regarding God, humanity (including sin, human change and well-being) and Christian ministry. Application of these insights is then made to the practice of short-term, church-based counseling ministries that participate effectively, through the Holy Spirit, in the ongoing counseling ministry of Jesus Christ.

CM504 [Practice of Ministry](#)

Ted Johnston

This course applies incarnational Trinitarian theological perspectives to the practice of ministry with an emphasis on pastoral ministry within a local church (with an emphasis on GCI practice). This approach views pastoral ministry as real sharing, through the Spirit, in the ongoing ministry of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ. Though the course focuses primarily on ministries performed by pastors, much of it also applies to the work of ministry leaders and ministry workers.

CM505 [Women and Men in Leadership](#)

Michael Morrison, PhD

This course explores the issue of women and men serving together as leaders in the church. Students will survey biblical evidence about women in leadership. Discussion will include differences in the way that women and men tend to think, and challenges that women often face in this role that has historically been dominated by men.

CM506 Trinitarian Youth Ministry

Course developed by Greg Williams and Ted Johnston; administered by Jeff Broadnax, MA, MPS

This course examines the relationship of theology and youth ministry practice as it has developed in North America. The course explores the centrality of Jesus in all ministry in the relationship that Jesus already has with young people. That relationship is explored in its post-Christian, postmodern cultural context, with an emphasis on the importance of mentoring as a relational/incarnational tool in youth ministry.

CM507 Experiencing the Trinity

Larry Hinkle, DMin

This course studies spiritual formation. Participation is required in a three-day retreat that presents students with the opportunity to come to know God more intimately through silence, solitude, meditative prayer, communion, worship, and other spiritually formative activities. This retreat experience is informed by a study of the dynamic of these practices as they relate to Scripture and the call of the Triune God to know him better.

CM508 Church Planting and Development

Randy Bloom, MDiv

This course explores the practical application of starting new churches centered on God, led by the Spirit, culturally relevant, sharing the gospel and making disciples of Jesus. We will teach principles and practices of pastoral leadership to those who hear a call to plant or re-plant congregations.

CM510 Polity of Grace Communion International

Course developed by Dr. Greg Williams and Dr. J. Michael Feazell; edited and

administered by Dr. Williams

This course is designed to help students understand denominational life and polity within Grace Communion International. We give the student an overview of the church's history, its leaders, and its theological journey. The primary objective is to help the student understand the culture and organizational structure and ably function within the denominational system.

CM511 [Homiletics](#)

Dan Rogers, PhD

This course surveys various methods of analyzing the biblical text in order to develop an expository sermon. This course involves peer and instructor evaluation of sermon outlines prepared by the student and a sermon given by the student to a congregation, with responses by an ecclesiastical supervisor and the instructor.

Prerequisite: BI501 Biblical Interpretation, or New Testament Background prior to 2015.

CM512 [Small Group Bible Study Leadership](#)

Gary Deddo, PhD, and Cathy Deddo, M.A.

This course will train students to lead a small group for church congregations that are centered around Bible studies that contribute to a growing faith, hope and love for Jesus Christ. Students will learn and practice the skills needed to prepare for and lead Bible studies that foster fellowship, spiritual maturity and a vision for service, outreach and mission.

CM513 [Trinitarian Worship](#)

Lance McKinnon, D.Min.

Trinitarian Worship explores in depth the who, what and how of the church's corporate (public) worship. Exploring the who takes us to the theological foundations that undergird Christian worship. We'll see that this worship flows from and is shaped by incarnational Trinitarian faith—the knowledge of the triune God revealed in the person and work of Jesus. Throughout the course, we'll emphasize that Christian worship is our participation, by the Holy Spirit, in Jesus' ongoing worship of the Father.

CM514 [Missional Living](#)

Charles Fleming, D.Miss.

Mission is the outworking of God's very nature and is exemplified in Jesus Christ who is described as the apostle, or the One Sent, who, in turn sends his church into his Father's harvest field. This course explores the practical implications of participating with Jesus Christ in his on-going mission to the world. Building on the premise that Jesus is God's Sent One, students will explore ways in which they can personally join Jesus in the work he is already doing in the lives of the people they interact with. Perspectives, principles and practices discussed in this course can be applied by pastors and ministry leaders to help their church to effectively participate in Jesus' ongoing mission in their context.

CM549 [Christian Ministry Thesis](#)

Professor to be arranged

This course integrates learning from biblical, theological, and ministry studies into a research thesis that explores one aspect of ministry, or an overview of the student's philosophy of ministry. This three-unit course often covers two semesters, and it is conducted as an independent study under the guidance of the professor. **Prerequisite:** Student must have at least 36 units, and must pass a summative exam.

CM599 [Master of Divinity Capstone Course](#)

Lance McKinnon, DMin

This capstone course integrates previous academic work with ministry experience to reflect and evaluate the student's educational progress towards biblically and theologically informed ministry applied in the student's cultural context. Reflection will also contribute to an evaluation of the student's call and giftedness for ministry in Jesus Christ. Throughout the course students will reflect on personal goals achieved in the degree program and will analyze their growth in ministry. Students will define and analyze the cultural contexts in which they carry out both personal and professional ministry. **Prerequisites:** At least 66 hours and a thesis must have been completed (CM549, TH519, or TM501 option B).

D. Field Education

FE501 [Field Education 1](#)

Randy Bloom, MDiv

FE501 is 2 credit hours. Students are to reflect on the theological foundations of their ministry work and how their ministry work is centered in Christ. The course entails 90 hours of student work per semester on a ministry-related project. The course includes

1. developing and implementing a Ministry Action Plan (MAP) for a project
2. forum discussions
3. project summary/reflection paper, which integrates the student's previous academic studies with the ministry projects they select.

FE502 [Field Education 2](#)

Randy Bloom

FE502 is 2 credit hours. Students are to reflect on the theological foundations of their ministry work and how their ministry work is centered in Christ. This course entails 90 hours of student work on a ministry-related project. Students should select only one ministry project for FE502; the project for FE502 must differ from that for FE501. Prerequisite: FE501. Details are like FE501.

FE503 [Field Education 3](#)

Randy Bloom

FE503 has 2 credit hours. Students are to reflect on the theological foundations of their ministry work and how their ministry work is centered in Christ. The class entails 90 hours of student work on a ministry-related project.

Prerequisites: CM501, CM504, FE501, FE502. The project for FE503 may be a repeat (updated and improved) of a project done for FE501 or FE502. Details are like FE501.

E. Theology

TH501 [The Triune God Revealed in Jesus Christ](#)

Drs. Gary Deddo and Lance McKinnon

This course studies the nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the two natures of Jesus Christ as human and God against the backdrop of biblical revelation and inspiration from the writing of the texts to the canonization of the New Testament.

TH502 [Jesus Christ, the Nature of Humans and Salvation](#)

Dr. Gary Deddo

This course explores the person and work of Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God according to biblical revelation. In that light we also consider the nature of the salvation accomplished and offered in and through Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit. This will include reflecting on the nature of human beings, of evil, and the inherent effects of sin. Issues of predestination and how we receive and participate in that saving relationship with our Triune God are studied.

TH503 [The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Last Things](#)

Dr. Gary Deddo

This course covers the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Christian understanding of the church, and Christian teaching about biblical eschatology.

TH505 [Doctrine of the Trinity](#)

Dr. Gary Deddo

This course explores in depth the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity, with its biblical foundations in God's revelation, the nature of theology, the foundational historic creeds and controversies, key elements and current obstacles to a fully Christian faith in the Triune God. This course examines vital implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for ethics, worship, the church and proclamation of the Gospel of the Grace of God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit. Prerequisite: at least one previous theology course.

TH507 [Theology of C.S. Lewis](#)

Dr. Gary Deddo

In this course we will survey C.S. Lewis's primary works and two of his fictional works to see how Lewis understood the central tenets of Christian faith and their inter-relationships. We will consider how Lewis conveyed Christian faith in his context through his fiction and how we might more faithfully communicate the Christian gospel in our day.

TH508 Christology of T.F. Torrance

Dr. Gary Deddo

This course surveys the Christological thought of Thomas F. Torrance with a focus on the person, life and work of Jesus Christ. Consideration will also be given to the topics of the church and eschatology (the last things), as explicated in his two-volume series of edited lectures on Christology originally delivered to students at New College Edinburgh.

TH515 Theological Ethics

Dr. Gary Deddo

This course describes the theological foundation for Christian ethics. We will identify and explore many modern approaches to ethics and see what difference a theological approach makes. We will also give extensive consideration to how pursuing moral faithfulness fits in with a life of discipleship to Jesus Christ and with the church's worship and witness in this present fallen age. A number of contemporary moral issues will be addressed and there will be opportunities for students to look into several of personal interest and relevance to the church.

Prerequisite: at least 30 units, including six in Bible, six in theology, and three in ministry.

TH519 Theological Thesis (capstone course for the MTS)

Instructor: to be arranged, based on topic of paper and instructor availability

This course integrates learning from biblical, theological, and ministry studies into a research thesis on a theological topic. This three-unit course normally covers two semesters, and it is conducted as an independent study under the guidance of the professor as the capstone course for the Master of Theological Studies degree.

F. Independent study

This course allows students to study additional materials and perform additional research relevant to areas of interest, primarily in topics for which GCS does not have a specific course. *This course may carry from one to four units in Biblical Studies, Christian Ministry or Theology.* **Prerequisite:** at least two previous courses in the discipline, with a grade of B or better. The course will be numbered BI509, CM509, or TH509, depending on the discipline.

Students may find this course useful for the following situations:

1. The student wants to study a topic that is not currently covered in a GCS course, or to study in greater depth a topic that is covered only briefly.
2. The student wishes to graduate soon, and needs hours in a specific discipline (theology, biblical studies or ministry), but the student has already taken all the courses being offered in that discipline in a given semester.
3. The student has received transfer credit, or credit for experiential learning, but the student needs one or two units to bring the total to a multiple of three, since our program is designed for courses of three units.
4. The student expects to be too busy during the next few months to be able to handle a three-unit course, but the student is confident of handling one or two units, perhaps by dedicating a few weeks to full-time independent study.

The topic, textbooks, and instructor must be approved in advance. The course requires a *minimum* of 300 pages of reading for each unit of credit. See the syllabus for more information.

G. Theology of Ministry

TM501 Theology of Ministry (capstone course for the MPS)

Lance McKinnon, DMin

This course integrates learning from biblical, theological, and ministry studies into a capstone paper that expresses one's theology of ministry in a particular setting.

This three-unit course is conducted as an independent study under the guidance of the professor as the capstone course for the Master of Pastoral Studies degree.

Prerequisite: Student must be within six units of completing the Master's program and must pass a summative exam.