

**DOCTORATE IN SACRED THEOLOGY
WITH A SPECIALIZATION IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
(S.T.D.)**

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Introduction

The S.T.D. is a post-S.T.L. degree completing academic formation in conformity with the mission statement of the Institute; it qualifies the graduate for teaching posts in Roman Catholic seminaries, colleges, and universities. As an ecclesiastical degree, the S.T.D. is granted by the authority of and in the name of the Holy See.

The S.T.D. conforms in its specifications to the requirements set forth in *Veritatis gaudium*.

Admissions Requirements

Admission to the S.T.D. program requires the S.T.L. degree (*magna cum laude* or higher) from a session of the John Paul II Institute. Other requirements are enumerated in the application

for the program. While receiving a *magna cum laude* or higher for the S.T.L. degree is a prerequisite for consideration for admission into the S.T.D. program, possession of this degree with a *magna cum laude* does not guarantee admission.

Residency and Finances

This degree program requires two semesters of full-time study in residence. The completed dissertation must be defended within *five* years of the date the student enters the S.T.D. program at the Institute. If a student is unable to defend the dissertation within five years, the student may petition the Dean for a one-year extension. If a student fails to defend the dissertation within this period, he or she ceases to be a candidate for the S.T.D. In all cases, total tuition payments for the degree must equal at least the cost of two full-time semesters, in addition to a minimum of one semester's dissertation fee.

In exceptional cases, completing the program coursework on a part-time basis (one seminar per semester instead of two) may be permitted. In the case of part-time S.T.D. students, the normal part-time tuition rate per course does not apply. Rather, tuition per course for the semesters the part-time student is enrolled in coursework is calculated at 50% of full-time tuition, in order to equal the required total payments noted above.

Degree Requirements

S.T.D. students are required to complete four doctoral seminars (two per semester) maintaining a grade-point average of at least 3.5 on a 4.0-point scale. The student will register each semester while in the S.T.D. program both during coursework and during dissertation direction.

Competency in four languages must be demonstrated by S.T.D. students before the *second year* of the program in preparation for the dissertation research. The dissertation must be defended within five years of the student's entry into the program.

Languages

The purpose for verifying a student's ability in languages is to ensure that they are able to work with and use original languages in both research and in the writing of the dissertation.

Reading proficiency in scholastic Latin is presupposed at admission and must be demonstrated by successful completion of a written examination. This requirement must be fulfilled during the *first semester* of residency.

Students are required to demonstrate reading proficiency in biblical Greek by successful completion of a written examination. This requirement must be fulfilled during the *first year* of

residency. Alternatively, students who successfully complete one of the Institute-sponsored Greek summer courses (offered periodically) with a B+ grade on the final exam may substitute that course for the proficiency exam.

Students must demonstrate reading proficiency in two modern languages from the following list: French, Spanish, Italian, or German. Proficiency is ordinarily demonstrated by successful completion of a written examination administered by Institute faculty. To satisfy the language requirement in one of the modern languages, the following CUA language courses may be substituted for the proficiency exam: TRS 501 Theological German; GER 500 Reading for Comprehension; FREN 500 Reading for Comprehension; ITAL 500 Reading for Comprehension; or SPAN 500 Reading for Comprehension. These courses must be completed with a grade of at least B+ (in a course with letter grades) or Pass (in a Pass/Fail course). Students wishing to register for a language course at CUA should follow the usual cross-registration procedures. This requirement must be fulfilled by the end of the third semester, but students are urged to fulfill it by the end of the first year.

Language examinations are administered four times per year, in September, November, January, and April as announced. Language examinations are two hours long, and the use of a dictionary is allowed. Examination responses are to be typewritten on computers provided by the Institute.

Performance Standard

A “Pass” is required for all language examinations. The focus of the examination is the translation of a specific written document in the target language. A satisfactory level of achievement is demonstrated by translation into English of substantially all of the content expressed in the subject language so that the substance of the document and specific meaning are reflected with substantial accuracy. “Substantial” is defined as allowing minor or incidental errors of translation that do not misconstrue or fail to convey the essential and substantive essence of the translation, so that the submitted translation document is essentially accurate. Retakes are permitted with the focus being on the eventual demonstration of language proficiency. Students may meet privately with the faculty grader to discuss the unsatisfactory mark to discuss the ongoing language preparation and evaluation.

Symposium

S.T.D. students may choose to enroll in the Ph.D. Symposium during the first year in the S.T.D. program, alongside their regular coursework. Students who remain in residence for additional years may elect to continue their participation, thus completing the three-year cycle of readings. Registration for the Symposium is part of the regular registration process each

semester, and S.T.D. students should consult the Program Advisor regarding participation in the Symposium.

The Symposium consists in monthly evening seminars on selected “Great Books” (and occasionally works of art or music), for the purpose of developing a community of conversation among all doctoral students and the faculty around the themes of God, person, love, marriage, and family as these have been articulated by, and shape, the tradition of Christianity and the West. This community of conversation is integral to both the method and the substance of the educational mission of the Institute. An overarching concern of the conversation is to explore the sense in which the meaning and dignity of human life are recognized and can finally be sustained only from within a culture of obedient and free gratitude. John Paul II wrote often of a “civilization of love” or again a “culture of life.” The Symposium examines civilization, love, and life as matters above all of what the Greeks termed “*morphosis*,” or “*morphe*,” of being formed, hence of “form.” Literature and art (along with the theology and philosophy comprising the rest of the curriculum) constitute a primary mode of this fully human formation.

Each student submits a 1200-word type-written, double-spaced essay the day prior to each Symposium discussion. The question for the reflective paper will be distributed approximately a month prior to each Symposium.

If a student misses the Symposium, he is required to submit a 3000-word essay to the leader of the missed seminar no later than 7 days after the Symposium has been held.

A student must receive a grade of “pass” for each Symposium discussion, based on the short paper and on participation in the discussion. Each student is required to participate actively in the discussion at each Symposium.

The Symposium reading list follows a three-year cycle. The 2026-27 academic year will cover Year B, as listed below.

Year A

1. Homer, *The Iliad*
2. Plato, *The Symposium*
3. Homer, *The Odyssey*
4. Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*
5. Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*
6. Virgil, *The Aeneid*
7. Dante, *The Divine Comedy (Inferno)*

Year B

1. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*
2. Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
3. Goethe, *Faust*
4. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
5. Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*
6. Péguy, *The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc*
7. Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

Year C

1. Undset, *Kristin Lavransdatter* (3 vols.)
2. Bernanos, *The Diary of a Country Priest*
3. Claudel, *The Satin Slipper*
4. Wilder, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* and *Our Town*
5. Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited*
6. O'Connor, *Wise Blood* and selected stories
7. Wojtyła, *Radiation of Fatherhood*

This list is subject to revision. The books for each semester are announced in advance.

Dissertation

The dissertation is an integral part of the S.T.D. curriculum, requiring several years of planning, research, analysis, exposition, revision, and discussion. It entails both the independent investigation of some significant question arising from the work of the program and a defense of the conclusions reached. The dissertation should demonstrate maturity of theological judgment based on advanced graduate study. It should give evidence of research skills commensurate with doctoral level study, the ability to perform independent scientific work, and mastery of the candidate's chosen field of study. The dissertation director, more a critic than a teacher, assists in defining the question to be examined and comments on the progress of the dissertation as it progresses.

The dissertation should be of sufficient quality to constitute a genuine contribution to that field of study and to warrant publication. The dissertation should be at least 175 and no more than 300 pages in length, exclusive of bibliography.

Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus (proposal) is prepared under the guidance of the dissertation director, who is normally selected by the student by the end of the first semester, with the advice and consent of the Program Advisor. At this time, the Program Advisor, in consultation

with the dissertation director, appoints two other faculty members to a board under the chairmanship of the dissertation director.

By the deadline (i.e., the midterm of the second semester), and in consultation with the dissertation director, the student prepares and submits to the Program Advisor a dissertation prospectus (c.3,000 words excluding the bibliography) that makes explicit the main argument of the dissertation.

Students are expected to submit a prospectus by the midterm of the second semester of enrollment. Any student who fails to complete a prospectus for review by midterm of the third semester will be required to petition the Dean to continue in the program and must meet all conditions for continuing, including deadlines, set forth by the Dean.

Components of Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus should consist of all the following parts:

1. Proposed Title
 - The title can consist of a main title and subtitle and should indicate the thesis of the dissertation in some form.
2. Introduction to the Thesis
 - The introduction to the thesis should be brief (1-2 paragraphs) and should situate the topic of the thesis in the general current cultural and academic context: Why is the thesis needed? What problem does it address, in general terms? The Introduction prepares the general reader to understand the relevance of the thesis and motivates further engagement.
3. Thesis Statement
 - In a paragraph or less, state the argument of the thesis in its essence. What proposition will you be arguing?
4. *Status Quaestionis*
 - To show the originality of the thesis's contribution, it is necessary to outline the historical and theological context of the topic and the thesis. Who are the major contributors and what solutions and theses have they proposed? What are the questions at stake in the debate and how does the argument of the thesis aim to answer them in a new and helpful fashion?
5. Methodology
 - Give an account of the sources you plan to base your thesis on, describe the research methods you use to engage the sources, and make transparent the theological perspective of the thesis's engagement with the topic.
6. Description of Chapters
 - Lay out the development of the thesis's argument through each of the planned chapters, and why each chapter is a necessary step in the whole argument.

7. Table of Contents

- Provide a proposed table of contents, with chapter names and major sub-headings.

8. Bibliography

- The bibliography should include significant primary and secondary sources that will be consulted and should list the two kinds of sources separately, both in alphabetical order.

Each of the more substantive sections [see sections 4-7 above] should begin on a fresh page in the document. A sample prospectus may be requested from the Administrative Assistant in Room 313 for reference.

The key elements of the dissertation prospectus are the research and articulation of the dissertation's argument and the collegial process of guidance by the dissertation director and the first and second readers of the dissertation.

Dissertation Prospectus Evaluation

Once the dissertation director deems the prospectus acceptable, it is circulated among the entire faculty. Within two weeks of the reception of the prospectus, the faculty must submit any comments, objections, or questions regarding the dissertation to the director and Program Advisor. Once the two-week period has elapsed, all faculty who have not submitted comments, objections, or questions will be deemed to have approved the prospectus for formal review.

Within two weeks after the end of the faculty review, the student meets with the board, comprised of the director and two readers, for a formal evaluation of the proposal. The prospectus evaluation is an opportunity for the candidate to present the plan of his dissertation, its importance and historical or scholarly context, and the intended methodological approach to the panel members. The board can pose questions, offer comments or criticisms, and suggest or require changes, whether large or small, to the prospectus and intended dissertation.

The dissertation director, the other board members, and the Program Advisor may accept or reject the proposal, or they may specify required modifications to it (acceptance *sub conditione*). If substantial revision is required, the board and Program Advisor will meet again with the student, either accepting or rejecting the proposal or requiring further modifications.

The board may make the following dispositions of the prospectus as a result of the evaluation meeting: "pass," "pass with minor modifications," "revise and resubmit," or "fail."

- If the prospectus is deemed “passed,” the panel members (the director and the two readers) must sign the approval form and deliver it to the Program Advisor for his signature and placement in the student’s permanent file.
- If the prospectus is deemed “passed with minor modifications,” the panel members must withhold their signatures until they are satisfied that the modifications have been made. The student must make the necessary modifications with the oversight of the director and gain the panel’s signatures prior to mid-term of the following semester. A new evaluation meeting is not necessary.
- If the student is requested to “revise and resubmit,” the panelists must withhold their signatures. Once the necessary, more substantial modifications have been made with the oversight of the director, the student must meet with the board for the re-evaluation of the prospectus by mid-term of the following semester.
- If the prospectus is deemed “failed,” the student must submit a new prospectus and successfully pass the evaluation by the last day of the following semester. If the student fails to meet any of these conditions or deadlines, he must petition the Dean to continue in the program.

Note: If a student changes his dissertation topic, the new topic must be approved by the dissertation director, the Program Advisor, and the Dean and go through the same process as above. If the dissertation director or any of the readers is to be changed, the approval of the Dean is required.

Once the Prospectus Approval Form has been signed by the dissertation director, the first and second readers, and the Program Advisor, and deposited in the student’s permanent file, the student may begin to write the dissertation. Once the dissertation is completed, the defense follows.

Defense of the Dissertation

Requirements

- The defense of the dissertation cannot be scheduled until all language and course work requirements have been met.
- Before the deadline for the submission of dissertations (as noted in the academic calendar), the student’s dissertation must have received approval from his dissertation director that the dissertation is defensible and can be submitted. Once the approval is given, the student is to submit to the Program Advisor six copies of the ‘approved’ dissertation, accompanied by six copies of an abstract of 350 words.

- The dissertation copies must be bound with a black spiral binding, a black vinyl back cover, and a clear plastic front cover. The text of the dissertation may be printed double-sided, and the text should be double-spaced in 12-point New Times Roman font, left-margin-justified. The margins should be 1.25” at the right and left of the page and 1” at the top and bottom of the page. The dissertation should follow the Chicago Manual of Style. A sample title page and table of contents may be requested from the Administrative Assistant.
- After the dissertation is submitted, the Program Advisor, in consultation with the dissertation director, will select an external reader who is not a member of the faculty to participate at the defense.
- The other board members, in consultation with the director, may disqualify the dissertation for defense by submitting their written objections to the dissertation director within *four weeks* following the submission of the dissertation. If no objection is registered, the defense date will be confirmed.
- At least eight weeks must elapse between the submission of the dissertation and the defense; the summer months and official holidays will not be counted as part of the required eight weeks. The fall and spring deadlines for submission of dissertations will be listed in the academic calendar for each year, and all candidates will be strictly bound by those dates.
- The completed dissertation must be defended within five years of the date the student enters the S.T.D. program at the Institute. If the student is not able to defend the dissertation within five years, the student may petition the Dean for a one-year extension. If a student fails to defend the dissertation within this period, he ceases to be a candidate for the S.T.D. degree.

Defense of the Dissertation

Once the dissertation has been approved to go forward for defense, the student will defend the dissertation in an oral examination of at least two hours. The student will begin with a fifteen-minute presentation of the dissertation, which will be followed by a period of questions from each member of the dissertation board. In the opening presentation, the student may speak from notes of no more than one page (single-sided) but should not read from a prepared text.

At the end of the defense, both the written dissertation and the oral examination will be graded separately. A vote will be taken in secret and supervised by the chairman of the examining committee. The final grade is the average of the grades submitted by each board member and is based on the Roman system. If a candidate fails the oral examination, he must obtain

permission from the Dean to repeat the examination. A candidate will not be permitted to retake the examination until at least one semester or an equivalent period of time has elapsed since the date of the failure. If the student fails a second time, he ceases to be a candidate for the S.T.D. degree.

Performance Standard

In addition to the procedural requirements noted above, to pass the candidate must satisfy the professional judgment of the dissertation board that the dissertation defense (a) represented a satisfactory independent investigation of a significant question/topic arising from the program's curriculum; (b) satisfactorily defended the conclusions reached in the document; (c) reflected evidence of sufficient training to conduct doctoral research resulting in contributions to theological or philosophical knowledge; (d) demonstrated comprehensive familiarity and usage of basic methods and techniques of research; (e) evidenced mastery of a limited topic; (f) indicated the ability to exercise sound theological judgment; and (g) evidenced the capability of formulating accurate conclusions.

Publication

Roman Session

Following successful defense of the dissertation and any required revisions, a portion of the approved dissertation, selected by the board at the time of the defense, must be published through the Rome Session of the Institute in order for the diploma to be issued. The publication form, approval form, and cost details can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant in Room 313. The student should review these a month before the defense. This application to Rome must be completed one month after the defense. If this is not possible, approval by the Dean must be sought for an extension.

UMI

In addition to the required publication through the Rome Session, S.T.D. graduates have the option to submit their dissertations for publication by UMI ProQuest. UMI ProQuest is a national dissertation archive that allows doctoral dissertations to be accessible, via abstract or full text, to the scholarly community. Submission for publication may be completed through the Institute's private institutional online portal. Instructions for the submission process will be distributed upon request to the Administrative Assistant. Depending on the author's selection of services from UMI ProQuest, the publication process may be free or may require the payment of a nominal fee. The student should consult with his dissertation director and the Program Advisor regarding whether to publish via ProQuest.

Review of Academic Progress

The S.T.D. Program Advisor conducts an interview with each doctoral student at the end of each year of study to review the student's academic progress and to receive comments from the student regarding his or her progress and concerning the program itself. At this time, the Program Advisor communicates to the student the results of the periodic evaluation of his or her progress by the faculty members of the faculty academic committee.

After successful completion of the dissertation defense, each student will meet with the S.T.D. Program Advisor for an exit review of the program. A written review of the program is also requested at this time.

Timeline for Completion of S.T.D. Degree

Please note that the S.T.D. student is required to register each semester—whether taking courses or under dissertation direction—to be considered a student in the S.T.D. program.

Year 1

First Semester

- Meet with Program Advisor prior to semester to select seminars and decide on Symposium participation
- Select dissertation director
- S.T.D. Advisor selects the first and second reader of the dissertation
- Successfully pass scholastic Latin exam by end of semester

Second Semester

- By the end of term, successfully pass Greek exam
- If possible, submit S.T.D. prospectus by the official midterm deadline
- Successfully pass the prospectus review
- Beginning research and writing dissertation following prospectus approval
- At term's end, meet with Program Advisor for first-year review

Year 2

Third Semester

- By end of term, successfully pass two modern language exams
- If not already done, the S.T.D. prospectus must be submitted by the official midterm deadline.
- Continue dissertation research and writing as appropriate

Fourth Semester

- Continue dissertation research and writing
- At term's end, meet with Program Advisor for second-year review

Year 3

Both Fall and Spring semesters

- Continue dissertation research and writing

Year 4

Both Fall and Spring semesters

- Continue dissertation research and writing

Year 5

Both Fall and Spring semesters

- Continue dissertation research and writing
- Submit and defend dissertation
- Meet with Program Advisor for exit review