LICENTIATE IN SACRED THEOLOGY
OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
(S.T.L.)

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Introduction

The S.T.L. program prepares the graduate for teaching posts, especially in Roman Catholic seminaries, colleges, and universities, as well as for further studies at the doctoral level. This is a post-S.T.B. program offering further academic development and research skills in accordance with the mission statement of the Institute. As an ecclesiastical degree, the licentiate is granted by the authority of and in the name of the Holy See. The S.T.L. program conforms in its specifications to the requirements set forth in *Veritatis gaudium*.

Admissions Requirements

Admission to the S.T.L. program requires the pontifical Bachelor of Sacred Theology (S.T.B.). Further requirements are enumerated in the application for the program.

Residency and Finances

The S.T.L. program requires four semesters of full-time study in residence. In certain cases, the Dean will consider requests to fulfill course requirements on a part-time basis.

All the requirements for the S.T.L. degree must be completed within five years of the date the student enters the S.T.L. program at the Institute. If a student does not complete all requirements within five years, the student may petition the Dean for a one-year extension. If a student fails to complete all requirements within this period, he ceases to be a candidate for the S.T.L.

In all cases, total tuition payments for the degree must equal at least the cost of four full-time semesters, in addition to at least one semester of the thesis fee.

Degree Requirements

S.T.L. students must complete 48 credits of prescribed three-credit courses which include selected seminars (as announced during each school year), with a grade-point average of at least 3.3 on a 4.0-point scale. These courses will be selected, with the guidance of the S.T.L. Program Advisor, from among the S.T.L.-level courses. S.T.L. students must write and defend a thesis and satisfactorily present a *lectio coram* in order to receive the degree.

Students whose GPA drops below the required 3.3 minimum are automatically under academic probation. If students are unable to raise their GPA above the minimum by the end of the next semester, they must petition the Dean to remain in the program.

Languages

Students are required to demonstrate reading proficiency in scholastic Latin and in one modern language from the following list: French, Spanish, Italian, or German. Proficiency is ordinarily demonstrated by successful completion of a written examination administered by Institute faculty.

The Latin requirement is to be fulfilled during the first year of residency, and the modern language 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. Students obtain a pass when their translation of the text administered shows

that the student possesses an adequate capacity to read, understand, and use a text in its original language.

To satisfy the language requirement in one of the modern languages, the following CUA language courses may be substituted for the proficiency exam: TRS501 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, after consulting with the S.T.L. Advisor, should follow the usual cross-registration procedures. In addition, students who successfully complete the Institute-sponsored summer Latin course (when available) with a B+ grade on the final exam may substitute that course for the proficiency exam.

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 foreign 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.

Lectio Coram

S.T.L. students must satisfactorily present a *lectio coram – a twenty-minute public lecture* – during the final semester of study, to be presented on the same day as the thesis defense. Before a panel of examiners consisting of the thesis director and two readers of the thesis, the *lectio coram* should demonstrate the candidate's competence in theology *and* as a teacher. It must be clearly and logically organized, manifest the candidate's familiarity with a wide range of relevant literature, and exhibit soundness of theological judgment. As the name implies, the *lectio coram* is open to the public.

Thesis

The thesis is an integral part of the S.T.L. curriculum, requiring several months' 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. It should give evidence of training in research and make a contribution to theological and/or philosophical knowledge involving a limited yet significant issue. It must demonstrate the student's familiarity with basic methods and techniques of research, mastery of a limited topic, and ability to exercise sound theological judgment and to formulate accurate conclusions. The thesis director, more a critic than a teacher, provides assistance in defining the question to be examined and throughout the writing process. The student alone is responsible for working out the question and its resolution.

Schedule of Production of the Thesis Proposal

By the end of the first semester, and in consultation with the S.T.L. Program Advisor, the student asks a faculty member to direct his thesis. Once a faculty member agrees to direct the thesis, the Program Advisor, in consultation with the thesis director, appoints two other faculty members to a thesis board. One of the two faculty members is designated the first reader of the thesis.

By midterm of the second semester, and in consultation with the thesis director, the student prepares and submits to the Program Advisor a thesis proposal, organized according to the sections outlined below.

Components of Proposal

Excluding the bibliography, the prospectus should contain c. 3000 words.

It 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 a 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 [#4-7 above] should begin on a fresh page in the document. A sample proposal may be requested from the Administrative Assistant in Room 313 for reference.

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

Approval Review of the Proposal

Within two weeks, the thesis board meets with the candidate to review and analyze the proposal. The thesis director, 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 meets again with the student, either accepting or rejecting the proposal or requiring further modifications. The proposal is deemed to be approved when the approval form has been signed by the thesis director, the other two board members, and the Program Advisor. The proposal, with original signatures, is held in the student's official file.

Once the proposal has been approved, the student is free to commence writing the thesis in consultation with the thesis director and the other board members.

Production of the Thesis

At least six weeks prior to the expected date of defense, and on or before the S.T.L. thesis deposit date listed in the academic calendar, the student is to submit to the Program Advisor five copies of the thesis. Prior to submission, the student's thesis must have received approval from his thesis director that the thesis is defensible and can be submitted.

The thesis must be 60 to 70 pages in length, excluding the bibliography (page limits are strictly enforced), and written according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Details regarding formatting and print layout may be requested from the Assistant to the Program Advisors in Room 313.

The other board members, in consultation with the director, may disqualify the thesis for defense by submitting their written objections to the thesis director within *three weeks* following the submission of the thesis. If no objection is registered, the provisional defense date will be confirmed. The defense of the thesis cannot be scheduled until all language requirements have been met.

Lectio Coram Presentation

On the day of the thesis defence, the student will also give a *lectio coram*. The thesis director will propose a topic for the lecture unrelated to the thesis. The candidate is notified of the selected topic *48 hours prior* to the *lectio coram*.

The candidate may present the lecture using a one-page (single-sided) written outline. The lecture may not be delivered from a written text. If an outline is used by the candidate, copies must be submitted to the board prior to the lecture. At the conclusion of the lecture, the board poses questions on the presentation for 25 minutes. After the *lectio coram*, each examiner gives a secret grade, and the final grade is the average of those grades. If the candidate fails this examination, the student is not permitted to defend the thesis, which otherwise occurs immediately following the *lectio coram*. The Dean, in consultation with the chairman of the panel of examiners, will determine whether the examination may be repeated. Should a candidate fail a second time, the student ceases to be a candidate for the licentiate degree.

Defense of the Thesis

After the successful completion of the *lectio coram*, the student must defend his thesis by oral examination on the same day, to be conducted by the thesis board (the thesis director and the two readers). The student begins with a 5-minute presentation of his thesis. The student may speak from notes but should not read from a prepared text. This presentation is followed by a 25-minute questioning period by the panel. At the end of the defense, the written thesis and the oral examination are graded separately by the members of the defense board. The votes are taken in secret and supervised by the chairman of the examination. The final grade is the average of the grades submitted by each board member. If a candidate fails this examination, he must obtain permission from the Dean to schedule another defense. 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 licentiate degree.

Performance Standard

In addition to the procedural requirements noted above, the candidate must satisfy the professional judgment of the thesis board that the S.T.L. thesis 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 research resulting in contributions to theological or philosophical knowledge; (d) demonstrated sufficient familiarity and usage of basic methods and techniques of research; (e) evidenced mastery of a limited topic and the literature related to this topic; (f) indicated the ability to exercise sound theological judgment; and (g) evidenced the capability of formulating accurate conclusions.

Review of Academic Progress

The S.T.L. Program Advisor conducts an interview with each licentiate 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 thesis defense, each student will meet with the S.T.L. Program Advisor for an exit review of the program. A written review of the program is also requested at this time.