

Ascension Theological College

2025-26 CATALOG

ASCENSION ALLIANCE *& Community of Ascensionists*

AN ECUMENICAL PART OF THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST
ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH

AND AMONG THE "OTHER CATHOLICS"

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LEGAL NOTICE: RELIGIOUS EXEMPT STATUS

The Washington Student Achievement Council has determined that Ascension Theological College qualifies for religious exempt status from the Degree-Granting Institutions Act for the following programs: Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.); Master of Divinity (M.Div.); Master of Pastoral Counseling (M.P.C.); Master of Spirituality (M.Sp.); Master of Theological Studies (M.T.S.); and Doctor of Ministry (D,Min.). The Council makes no evaluation of the administration, faculty, business practices, financial condition or quality of the offerings by this institution. Any person desiring information about the requirements of the act or the applicability of those requirements to the institution may contact the Council at P.O. Box 43430, Olympia, WA 98504-3430 or by email at degreeauthorization@wsac.wa.gov.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Ascension Theological College admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, or sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, or sexual orientation, in the administration of our educational policies; scholarship and loan programs; and athletic and other school-administered programs.

PURPOSE *The Ascension Alliance and Ascension Theological College exist to provide a “free and protected space” where all who cherish the teachings of the Christ and the sacraments of the Church may experience them in their own way, embrace diverse spiritual practices, and grow in love, wisdom, and service.*

MISSION *Our mission is to nurture the transformation of heart, mind, and spirit by providing a healthy spiritual environment in which people and communities can grow and develop. Through sacramental life, theological education, and compassionate service, we endeavor to empower seekers and clergy to embody and express God’s boundless love.*

An educational program ... must not be only a school, but a movement in spirit that goes beyond the reason of the academy. It must nurture the roots of life with balanced rations of mysticism. Only mysticism sustains the vitality and reality of faith. Education nowadays is often an attempt to serve the status quo. It shall not be so with us. We will lead you into brighter horizons and out into greater fulfillment. We will share many treasures with you that will open new vistas into a better and finer life.

– Archbishop Herman Adrian Spruit, 1959

UNDERSTANDING ASCENSION

In order for us to define our purpose and mission I think we have to be clear about what we mean by Ascension.

EXOTERIC (exterior focus)

Looking at it in an exoteric, traditional, religious, sense, we can think of the **Ascension of Jesus' true Self**, or soul, becoming united (in consciousness) with his Creator. He became complete. He fulfilled his destiny.

ESOTERIC (inner focus)

Us. We are not complete and we have not yet fulfilled our destiny. We can understand our **individual purpose** as one of **personally ascending** in terms of 1) our own *personal growth* and 2) our own *spiritual transformation*, or to use a theological term, *conversion*. In other words becoming authentic Christians, being followers of Jesus the Christ, **living the great commandments, doing our own interior and spiritual work**, and in the process helping others and the planet.

PRAXIS (practice)

This may involve all kinds of spiritual practices: *journalling*, being in *therapy*, all kinds of *meditation* and *prayer*, *working for social justice*, *serving those in need*, *sharing the sacraments*, *spiritual direction* and engaging in a range of other possible spiritual practices, or praxis, that we undertake depending on personal inclination, charism, knowledge, skill, resources, and calling.

ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE

We believe the purpose of our organization, Ascension Alliance, and its educational branch, Ascension Theological College, should be to provide the environment, or the "*free and protected space*" necessary in which to accomplish that Holy Work, including: providing a credible seminary program; tax-exempt status for doing ministry; clergy credentials and ordinations; and ministry charters.

INTRODUCTION TO ASCENSION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Ascension Theological College is a non-accredited, highly decentralized, program of study that offers structured guidance and mentorship to those willing to undergo rigorous study and practice that may lead to ordained or non-ordained ministry within the context of an “independent” Catholic spiritual renewal movement.

We accept applications from those who wish to study for ordination, to earn a degree, or both. We offer the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Divinity degree to those who do not already have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution; the Master of Divinity to those who do; the Master of Pastoral Counseling for qualified candidates who feel called to do counseling within a spiritual context; the Master of Spirituality for those interested in personal enrichment or non-ordained creative ministry; the Master of Theological Studies for those interested in ordained non-sacramental ministry; and the Doctor of Ministry to select students who have a master’s degree and extensive ministry experience, see below, under “Doctoral Studies.” The course of studies is both structured and individualized. The educational expectations are comparable to those of other seminaries though the curriculum reflects our unique renewal philosophy and style of learning.

DECENTRALIZATION AND INDIVIDUALIZATION

A hallmark of our approach is that we recognize there are many legitimate ways to learn and that our candidates may come from almost anywhere in the world, with diverse needs, resources, and local study opportunities. These may include but need not be limited to the following:

- Distance learning courses through our program
- Ascension workshops, “intensive” courses, and retreats held at the Hermitage or other locations
- Graduate studies at accredited institutions of higher learning
- Distance learning courses taken at accredited institutions
- Independent study courses done with an approved instructor according to the provisions of an independent study contract
- Individualized readings courses (by theme or author) done under the supervision of an approved reader, to include assignments and the submission of a final Integration Paper
- Hands-on projects
- Practica, CPE, or other supervised applied learning experiences
- Attendance at approved specialized workshops

FORMATION DIRECTOR

Because the program requirements are complex, and the ways of fulfilling the stated outcomes are varied, the Program assigns a Formation Director to supervise the candidate's studies. Formation Directors are renewal oriented clergy and scholars whose background and training gives them the needed competence for this work.

FORMATION COMMITTEES

In addition to the candidate's Formation Director, each candidate recruits at least one other mentor to serve on the candidate's Formation Committee. Collectively, the candidate, Formation Director, and other committee members shall constitute the candidate's Formation Committee, which works closely with the candidate's bishop.

ROLE. Its role is to offer guidance, instruction, help, and support. The members of committees are usually clergy, educators, spiritual directors, counselors or individuals poised to support and help the student. Thus, the candidate's progress and journey through the program is assisted by the committee, offering encouragement, guidance, support, and feedback.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS. Formation Directors shall serve as the Chairs of Formation Committees.

LEARNING COVENANT

The candidate and committee develop an overall Learning Covenant for the candidate's program. This will address all the required Program Outcomes as well as an outline of how the individual candidate will accomplish these outcomes. All mentors, including the Formation Director, must formally sign on to the student's comprehensive Learning Covenant. This written covenant shall be regarded as a *sacred document*. It will guide the candidate's journey through the program, but can be re-negotiated as needed.

ANNUAL LEARNING CONTRACTS

Candidates will work with their committee to develop Annual Learning Contracts.

TIMING. Typically, these should be submitted in advance of the academic year.

CONTENTS. It is a detailed description of what the student will actually be studying, the methodologies, the learning formats (e.g., university course, seminary course, tutorial, directed reading, internet course, course on DVD, internship, practicum, workshop series, etc.), the forms of ongoing assessment, and details of what knowledge the student expects to acquire.

ASSESSMENT. The contract must specify how the learning will be supervised and evaluated, and what competencies the student is expected to demonstrate at the conclusion of the contract.

AMENDMENTS. These contracts may be amended in consultation with the Formation Committee, especially when unique learning opportunities arise.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT. At the close of the year, the candidate's Formation Committee will review the candidate's progress and submit a brief report.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

OVERVIEW. The required program outcomes provides an outline of the minimum values, knowledge, and skills needed for the informed practice of ordained or non-ordained ministry within the context of a free Catholic spiritual renewal. However, preparing to become a priest or minister capable of supporting others on the spiritual journey is more than mere learning *about* religion.

OUTCOMES. Candidates must become grounded in spiritual practice; fluent in tradition and scripture; competent in liturgy (priesthood ordination track); able to craft innovative worship experiences; and be fully "present" to the pastoral needs of others.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES. Mastering the academic component of the curriculum is itself a prodigious undertaking. Although the process of (re-)learning the basics of tradition may feel like an obstacle, this intensive study grounds our creativity and helps establish balance. Inflexible adherence to tradition fosters rigidity; neglect of it, to "flakiness" and a superficial spirituality. It is the work of the Formation Committee to help the candidate craft and refine an overall program that is both personally meaningful and that integrates the essentials of ministry with the organic charism of a free Catholic renewal.

CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC PRIESTHOOD

(BACHELOR & MASTER OF DIVINITY)

FUNDAMENTAL AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

The following Fundamental Areas of Knowledge provide a general organizational framework for those wishing to pursue priesthood ordination in the Independent Catholic movement through preparation in the Bachelor of Divinity or Master of Divinity degree programs. The course of studies is intended to be comparable to that of other seminary programs. The total program requires 29 Units of work in 12 content areas. *We consider 1 Unit to be equivalent to one 3-semester-credit course, one 5-quarter-credit course, or about fifty hours of direct instruction, in addition to outside reading and completion of a final written paper.* Students working at the baccalaureate degree level take courses numbered 300-499; those working at the master's degree level take courses numbered 500-699. Detailed course descriptions follow in the section titled, "Baccalaureate & Master's Course Offerings."

- Introduction to Theological Formation (THEO 301/501, 1 Unit)
- Introduction to Contemplative Praxis (THEO 302/502, 1 Unit)
- Mysticism (3 Units Total)
 - Introduction to Jewish Mysticism (THEO 303/503, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Introduction to Christian Mysticism (THEO 304/504, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Introduction to Eastern Mystical Traditions (THEO 305/505, 1 Unit)
- The World's Religions (THEO 306/506, 1 Unit)
- New Cosmology (THEO 307/507, 1 Unit)
- Story of Christianity (5 Units Total)
 - History of Christianity (THEO 308/508, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Other Christianities (THEO 309/509, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Independent Catholicism (THEO 310/510, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Christology (THEO 311/511, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Ecclesiology (THEO 312/512, 1 Unit)
- Scripture (4 Units Total)
 - Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures (THEO 313/513, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Introduction to Christian Scriptures (THEO 314/514, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Non-canonical Writings (THEO 315/515, 1 Unit) *and*
 - Scriptural Interpretation (THEO 318/518, 1 Unit)

- Liturgy (6 Units Total)
Introduction to Liturgy (THEO 321/521, 1 Unit) *and*
Sacraments of the Church (THEO 322/522, 1 Unit) *and*
Science of the Sacraments (THEO 323/523, 1 Unit) *and*
Eucharist (THEO 324/524, 1 Unit) *and*
Creative Liturgy (THEO 325/525, 1 Unit) *and*
Liturgical Practice (THEO 326/526, 1 Unit)
- Homiletics (THEO 327/527, 1 Unit)
- Pastoral Care & Counseling (3 Units Total)
Introduction to Pastoral Care (THEO 331/531, 1 Unit) *and*
Introduction to Pastoral Counseling (THEO 332/532, 1 Unit) *and*
Religious-Spiritual Dimensions of Death, Dying, and Bereavement (THEO 533, 1 Unit)
- Theological Reflection (THEO 341/541, 1 Unit)
- Practica I & II (THEO 351-352/551-552, 2 Units)

PASTORAL COUNSELING

(MASTER OF PASTORAL COUNSELING)

FUNDAMENTAL AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

For those interested in non-ordained ministry as pastoral counselors, we offer the degree of Master of Pastoral Counseling. The goal of the program is to train counselors who are able to integrate counseling skills and spiritual knowledge as a holistic foundation for effective pastoral counseling practice. The following Fundamental Areas of Knowledge provides a general organizational framework for those wishing to pursue this degree. Specific courses offered at Ascension Theological College, which meet these requirements, are indicated in parentheses. The total program requires 23 Units of work in 9 content areas. *We consider 1 Unit to be equivalent to one 3-semester-credit course, one 5-quarter-credit course, or about fifty hours of direct instruction, in addition to outside reading and completion of a written paper.* Detailed course descriptions follow in the section titled, "Baccalaureate & Master's Course Offerings."

- Introduction to Theological Formation (THEO 501, 1 Unit)
- Introduction to Contemplative Praxis (THEO 502, 1 Unit)
- The World's Religions (THEO 506, 1 Unit)
- New Cosmology (THEO 507, 1 Unit)
- Christology (THEO 511, 1 Unit)

- Scripture (2 Units Total)
Hebrew Scriptures (THEO 513, 1 Unit) *and*
Christian Scriptures (THEO 514, 1 Unit)
- Pastoral Care & Counseling (9 Units Total)
Introduction to Pastoral Care (THEO 531, 1 Unit) *and*
Introduction to Pastoral Counseling (THEO 532, 1 Unit) *and*
Religious-Spiritual Dimensions of Death, Dying, and Bereavement (THEO
533, 1 Unit) *and*
Pastoral Theology and Counseling Theory (THEO 534, 1 Unit) *and*
Pastoral Counseling Skills (THEO 535, 1 Unit) *and*
Pastoral Counseling Across the Lifespan (THEO 536, 1 Unit) *and*
Pastoral Counseling & Mental Illness (THEO 537, 1 Unit) *and*
Pastoral Counseling Theory (individuals), (THEO 538, 1 Unit) *and*
Pastoral Counseling Theory (systems), (THEO 539, 1 Unit)
- Specialization, Project, or Thesis (4 Units Total)
Pastoral Counseling Specialization (THEO 540A, 4 Units), *or*
Pastoral Counseling Project (THEO 540B, 4 Units), *or*
Pastoral Counseling Thesis (THEO 540C, 4 Units)
- Theological Reflection (THEO 541, 1 Unit)
- Pastoral Counseling Practica I & II (THEO 553-554, 2 Units)

MINISTERIAL ORDINATION

(MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES)

FUNDAMENTAL AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

For those interested in ordained non-sacramental ministry in such areas as interfaith ministry, chaplaincy, spiritual direction, spiritual healing, outreach ministry, spiritual midwifery, and so forth. The following Fundamental Areas of Knowledge provides a general organizational framework for those wishing to pursue the degree of Master of Theological Studies (MTS). Specific courses offered at Ascension Theological College, which meet these requirements, are indicated in parentheses. The total program requires 23 Units of work in various content areas. *We consider 1 Unit to be equivalent to one 3-semester-credit course, one 5-quarter-credit course, or about fifty hours of direct instruction, in addition to outside reading and completion of a written paper.* Detailed course descriptions follow in the section titled, "Baccalaureate & Master's Course Offerings."

- Introduction to Theological Formation (THEO 501, 1 Unit)
 - Introduction to Contemplative Praxis (THEO 502, 1 Unit)
 - Introduction to Christian Mysticism (THEO 504, 1 Unit)
 - The World's Religions (THEO 506, 1 Unit)
 - New Cosmology (THEO 507, 1 Unit)
 - Independent Catholicism (THEO 510, 1 Unit)
 - Christology (THEO 511, 1 Unit, 1 Unit)
 - Scripture (3 Units Total)
- Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures (THEO 513, 1 Unit) *and*
 Introduction to Christian Scriptures (THEO 514, 1 Unit) *and*
 Scriptural Interpretation (THEO 518)
- Science of the Sacraments (THEO 523)
 - Creative Liturgy (THEO 525)
 - Introduction to Homiletics (THEO 527)
 - Pastoral Care & Counseling (3 Units Total)
- Introduction to Pastoral Care (THEO 531, 1 Unit) *and*
 Introduction to Pastoral Counseling (THEO 532, 1 Unit) *and*
 Religious-Spiritual Dimensions of Death, Dying, and Bereavement (THEO
 533, 1 Unit)
- Specialization, Project, or Thesis (4 Units Total)
- Theological Studies Specialization (THEO 540G, 4 Units), *or*
 Theological Studies Project (THEO 540H, 4 Units), *or*
 Theological Studies Thesis (THEO 540I, 4 Units)
- Theological Reflection (THEO 541, 1 Unit)
 - Practica I & II (THEO 551-552, 2 Units)

SPIRITUALITY

(MASTER OF SPIRITUALITY)

FUNDAMENTAL AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

For those interested in personal spiritual growth and non-ordained ministry in such creative areas as interfaith ministry, chaplaincy, spiritual direction, spiritual healing, outreach ministry, spiritual midwifery, and so forth. The following Fundamental Areas of Knowledge provides a general organizational framework for those wishing to pursue the degree of Master of Spirituality (MSp). Specific courses offered at Ascension Theological College, which meet these

requirements, are indicated in parentheses. The total program requires 18 Units of work in various content areas. *We consider 1 Unit to be equivalent to one 3-semester-credit course, one 5-quarter-credit course, or about fifty hours of direct instruction, in addition to outside reading and completion of a written paper.* Detailed course descriptions follow in the section titled, “Baccalaureate & Master’s Course Offerings.”

- Introduction to Theological Formation (THEO 501, 1 Unit)
- Introduction to Contemplative Praxis (THEO 502, 1 Unit)
- Introduction to Christian Mysticism (THEO 504, 1 Unit)
- The World’s Religions (THEO 506, 1 Unit)
- New Cosmology (THEO 507, 1 Unit)
- Independent Catholicism (THEO 510, 1 Unit)
- Christology (THEO 511, 1 Unit, 1 Unit)
- Creative Liturgy (THEO 525, 1 Unit)
- Pastoral Care & Counseling (3 Units Total)

Introduction to Pastoral Care (THEO 531, 1 Unit) *and*
Introduction to Pastoral Counseling (THEO 532, 1 Unit) *and*
Religious-Spiritual Dimensions of Death, Dying, and Bereavement (THEO
533, 1 Unit) (THEO 533, 1 Unit)

- Theological Studies Specialization (THEO 540G, 4 Units) *or*
- Theological Studies Project (THEO 540H, 4 Units)
- Theological Reflection (THEO 541, 1 Unit)
- Practica I & II (THEO 551-552, 2 Units)

BACCALAUREATE & MASTER’S COURSE OFFERINGS

The decentralized nature of our program allows students to master the Fundamental Areas of Knowledge through work done in a variety of venues. One option is through distance learning courses in our program. Those currently offered through our college are described below. Ordination candidates without a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution work at the undergraduate level. Those with a bachelor’s degree work at the master’s degree level. Pastoral counseling candidates must hold a bachelor’s degree and will take courses at the master’s degree level. The courses in our program numbered 300-499 are upper division undergraduate-level courses; those numbered 500-699 are graduate level courses, with commensurate expectations about rigor and depth. Unless indicated otherwise, all courses are 1 Unit. *We consider 1 Unit to be equivalent to*

one 3-semester-credit course, one 5-quarter-credit course, or about fifty hours of direct instruction, in addition to outside reading and completion of a written paper.

THEO 301 / 501 INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGICAL FORMATION

A first course on the introduction to theological formation, a la Ascension. Seminarians look into the nooks and crannies of theological formation through an exploration of their Myers-Briggs personality type, W. P. Jones' Theological Worlds, and Jung's Map of the Soul.

THEO 302 / 502 INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPLATIVE PRAXIS

An overview of the desert mothers and fathers as an introduction to their contemplative practices, with a discussion of how their wisdom and praxis may inform ours today.

THEO 303 / 503 INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH MYSTICISM

An introduction to Jewish Mysticism, a rich approach to spirituality. The student learns about Kabbalah, the Tree of Life, the Four Worlds perspective, and are exposed to the use of story in Jewish spirituality and mysticism.

THEO 304 / 504 INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

An introduction to Christian mysticism that distinguishes between the exoteric, or the outer, traditional understanding of Christianity, and the esoteric, or inner mystical understanding. Explores streams of thought that have contributed to the evolution of contemporary mystical Christianity, including: alchemy, astrology, Gnosticism, the Gospel of Thomas, Jungian psychology, Kabbalah, early monasticism, and the ancient mystery schools. Includes a Jungian deep-dive into the mystical interpretation of the Gospel according to John.

THEO 305 / 505 INTRODUCTION TO EASTERN MYSTICAL TRADITIONS

This course introduces graduate-level students preparing for ministry to the contemplative and mystical dimensions of the dharmic religions—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, with a particular emphasis on Zen as a bridge between East and West.

- THEO 306 / 506 THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS**
An introduction to the world's great religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- THEO 307 / 507 NEW COSMOLOGY**
In addition to the cosmological speculations of Teilhard de Chardin, the learner explores the contemporary cosmologies of such figures as Brian Swimme, Ken Wilber, Rupert Sheldrake, Matthew Fox, Amit Goswami, and Gary Zukav. Includes content on the Divine Feminine and Gaia.
- THEO 308 / 508 HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY**
A history of Christianity from the time of Jesus to the present. Includes discussion of the ecumenical councils, development of the creeds, and various splits and schisms, including the theological perspectives which sparked them.
- THEO 309 / 509 OTHER CHRISTIANITIES**
Recent discoveries, such as those at Nag Hammadi, suggest that early Christian communities may have been much more diverse than we later supposed. This course asks students to delve into the faith, practice, and teachings of these other Christianities.
- THEO 310 / 510 INDEPENDENT CATHOLICISM**
An introductory examination of the Old Catholic split in Holland and the emergence of a fledgling Independent Catholic movement after the First Vatican Council.
- THEO 311 / 511 CHRISTOLOGY**
An exploration of the nature of Jesus, who is called Christ. Includes an examination of the transformation from Jesus to Christ, table fellowship in first century Judea, and recent revelations about the "historical Jesus."
- THEO 312 / 512 ECCLESIOLOGY**
A survey of various views about the role of the Church, its nature, mission, and organizational patterns.

- THEO 313 / 513 INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW SCRIPTURES**
 An introductory examination of the Hebrew scriptures, including the Pentateuch, prophets, and other writings.
- THEO 314 / 514 INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES**
 An introductory examination of Christian scripture, including the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and other writings. Compares Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant canons.
- THEO 315 / 515 NON-CANONICAL WRITINGS**
 The discovery of non-canonical writings at Nag Hammadi and elsewhere is evidence of a more diverse Christianity than was once thought. This course examines selected non-canonical writings and explores their implications.
- THEO 318 / 518 SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION**
 This course is an introduction to biblical interpretation: exegesis (critical examination of the Bible) and hermeneutics (the study, art, or the theory and practice, of interpretation).
- THEO 321 / 521 INTRODUCTION TO LITURGY**
 Liturgy, sometimes called the “work of the people,” is the practice of public worship according to customary patterns and rituals. This course examines the nature, uses, and effects.
- THEO 322 / 522 SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH**
 Augustine of Hippo defined a Christian sacrament as "a visible sign of an invisible reality." The Roman church celebrates seven while the Eastern churches recognize a plethora of “sacramentals.” This course helps learners crystalize their understanding and use.
- THEO 323 / 523 SCIENCE OF THE SACRAMENTS**
 An introduction to C. W. Leadbeater’s esoteric understanding of the sacraments.
- THEO 324 / 524 EUCHARIST**
 The word Eucharist means ‘thanksgiving.’ In Church use, however, it usually refers to the celebration of Holy Communion, or partaking of Christ’s Body and Blood. This course explores the nature of the Eucharist, its elements, and

asks the candidate to craft an innovative eucharistic celebration.

THEO 325 / 525 CREATIVE LITURGY

Celebration, initiation, blessing, and transformation, are all things that can be expressed in liturgy. In this course we ask our clergy to use their understanding of liturgy to craft a new creative liturgy that can be used in public worship.

THEO 326 / 526 LITURGICAL PRACTICE

A supervised and reflective experience in liturgical practice.

THEO 327 / 527 INTRODUCTION TO HOMILETICS

The application of the general principles of rhetoric to the practice of public preaching. Includes discussion of classic patterns and emerging forms.

THEO 331 / 531 INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL CARE

An introduction to pastoral care – the ministry of providing care and counseling within a faith-based framework. Includes new content on law and ethics in pastoral care.

THEO 332 / 532 INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

An introduction to the kind of helping in which the helper integrates psychologically oriented approaches to counseling with religious intuitions in an effort to address psycho-spiritual concerns. Includes new content on law and ethics in pastoral counseling.

THEO 333 / 533 RELIGIOUS-SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF DEATH, DYING, AND BEREAVEMENT

An exploration of the role of religion and spirituality in caring for those facing death, dying, and bereavement. Includes content on law and ethics in pastoral care and counseling.

THEO 534 PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND COUNSELING THEORY

This course focuses on the integration of pastoral theology and the pastoral counseling process. It will explore how the students' understanding of specific theological themes can impact their work in pastoral counseling.

THEO 535**PASTORAL COUNSELING SKILLS**

This course provides an introduction to the skills used in the practice of pastoral counseling, including an exploration of the theoretical foundations of professional counseling and theological emphasis in pastoral counseling.

THEO 536**PASTORAL COUNSELING ACROSS THE LIFESPAN**

Explores pastoral counseling in relation to age-related life-stages, key life events, intergenerational modeling, and socialization. Includes discussion of developmental theories. Participants will also explore their personal and professional development, as well as identify trajectories, transitions, and turning points in their personal and spiritual lives.

THEO 537**PASTORAL COUNSELING & MENTAL ILLNESS**

This course explores the role of the pastoral counselor and practice with individuals who have mental illness. The course provides a grounding in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV, or V), with its multi-axial classification system; an examination of a variety of disorders and psychopathologies; and a pastoral emphasis on the lived experience of people with mental illness.

THEO 538**PASTORAL COUNSELING THEORY (INDIVIDUALS)**

This course focuses on pastoral counseling theory with individuals. Students also engage in personal self-reflection, empathy building, and pastoral counseling skill development. Puts emphasis on the process of creating “sacred space.”

THEO 539**PASTORAL COUNSELING THEORY (SYSTEMS)**

This course focuses on pastoral counseling theory with people in intimate relationships, nuclear families, multigenerational groups, and larger social systems.

THEO 540A**PASTORAL COUNSELING SPECIALIZATION**

An approved “collage” of work equivalent to four graduate-level courses that supports a specific pastoral counseling theoretical orientation, modality, or skill set. May be done through a combination of coursework, supervised workshops, independent readings, and specialized trainings.

Given a descriptive designation on the transcript, i.e. "Pastoral Counseling Specialization in ..."

THEO 540B

PASTORAL COUNSELING PROJECT

A innovative pastoral counseling project comparable in breadth and depth to four graduate-level courses, or a master's thesis (as described above and below). Must include a detailed rationale and description of the project, to include appropriate examples (e.g. photographs, recordings, digital videos), a final written report, and be approved by the candidate's Formation Committee.

THEO 540C

PASTORAL COUNSELING THESIS

A thesis of approximately 25,000 words, or about 100 pages, approved by the Formation Committee, reporting on the candidate's original qualitative or quantitative research in pastoral counseling. Must be conducted in accord with the guidelines of the current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

THEO 540G

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES SPECIALIZATION

An approved "collage" of work equivalent to four graduate-level courses that supports a specific area of theological studies, such as spiritual direction; spiritual healing; outreach ministry; and so forth. May be done through a combination of coursework, supervised workshops, independent readings, and specialized trainings. Given a descriptive designation on the transcript, i.e. "Theological Studies Specialization in ..."

THEO 540H

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES PROJECT

A innovative theological studies project comparable in breadth and depth to four graduate-level courses, or a master's thesis (as described above and below). Must include a detailed rationale and description of the project, to include appropriate examples (e.g. photographs, recordings, digital videos), a final written report, and be approved by the candidate's Formation Committee.

THEO 540I	THEOLOGICAL STUDIES THESIS
	A thesis of approximately 25,000 words, or about 100 pages, approved by the Formation Committee, reporting on the candidate's original qualitative or quantitative research in theological studies. Must be conducted in accord with the guidelines of the current edition of the <i>Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association</i> , <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> , or other recognized academic thesis-writing system.
THEO 341 / 541	THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
	An introduction to the art and discipline of theological reflection – the conversation between one's lived experience and a faith tradition.
THEO 351 / 551	PRACTICUM I
	A first supervised and reflective ministry experience of at least 150 hours in a parish or social service setting.
THEO 352 / 552	PRACTICUM II
	A second supervised and reflective ministry experience of at least 150 hours in a parish or social service setting.
THEO 353 / 553	PASTORAL COUNSELING PRACTICUM I
	A first supervised and reflective pastoral counseling experience. Requires at least 150 hours of direct client contact supervised by a professionally qualified person.
THEO 354 / 554	PASTORAL COUNSELING PRACTICUM II
	A second supervised and reflective pastoral counseling experience. Requires at least 150 hours of direct client contact supervised by a professionally qualified person.
THEO 361 / 561	SPECIALIZED STUDIES IN THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
	Specialized, reflective, and assessed work in an area of theological study or ministry practice. Specialized studies courses are given designators, e.g., THEO 561A ... B ... C, etc., and descriptive designators, e.g., "Divine Feminine" ... "Desert Fathers" ... "Systemic Pastoral Counseling," etc.

DOCTORAL STUDIES

Individuals coming into our program with a master's degree in divinity, theology, or the equivalent, and significant experience, theological preparation, and personal predisposition for doctoral-level studies in ministry may apply for admission to the Doctor of Ministry program. The program requires 23 Units, which includes 13 Units in content areas plus 10 Units for the doctoral project/dissertation*. It is intended to be equivalent to at least one year of full-time study plus completion of a doctoral project and written dissertation.

D.MIN PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The program requires extensive integration of prior learning with current ministry and reflective interaction with other ministry students.

PREREQUISITES

A master's degree in divinity, theology, or ministry and significant experience, theological preparation, and personal predisposition for doctoral-level studies in ministry.

D.MIN COURSE REQUIREMENTS

THEO 701 (1 Unit) Advanced Spiritual Formation

Ten courses (10 Units) Work in ten of the Fundamental Areas of Knowledge, selected by the candidate and approved by the candidate's Doctoral Committee, to both prepare the candidate for advanced ministry and contribute to our body of knowledge about ministry.

THEO 761 (1 Unit) Doctoral Colloquium

THEO 771 (1 Unit) Research Methods in Advanced Ministry

THEO 781 (10 Units) D.Min Project/Dissertation*

* The candidate must complete a culminating project/dissertation of approximately 37,500 words, or 150 pages.

DOCTORAL COMMITTEES

Similar to the process used in our other programs, each D.Min candidate becomes part of a Doctoral Committee. The program will appoint a Chair of the candidate's committee. In addition, the candidate recruits at least one other member to serve on the committee. With the exception of the candidate all members of the committee must possess an earned doctorate from an accredited

institution. Collectively, the candidate, Chair, and the other committee member shall constitute the candidate's Doctoral Committee.

ROLE. The committee's role is to offer guidance, instruction, help, and support. The members of committees are usually clergy, educators, spiritual directors, counselors or individuals poised to support and help the student. Thus, the candidate's progress and journey through the program and project/dissertation is assisted by the committee, offering encouragement, guidance, support, and feedback. Ultimately, the committee must approve the culminating project and written dissertation.

DOCTORAL OUTCOMES

We expect doctoral graduates to be leaders in spiritual practice; theological and ministerial knowledge; creative liturgy; and pastoral care. *We consider 1 Unit to be equivalent to one 3-semester-credit course, one 5-quarter-credit course, or about fifty hours of direct instruction, in addition to outside reading and completion of a written paper.*

DOCTORAL LEARNING COVENANT

The candidate and committee develop an overall Learning Covenant for the candidate's program. This will address all the required Program Outcomes as well as an outline of how the individual candidate will accomplish these outcomes. All Doctoral Committee members, including the Committee Chair, must formally sign on to the student's comprehensive Learning Covenant. This written covenant shall be regarded as a *sacred document*. It will guide the candidate's journey through the program, but can be re-negotiated as needed.

DOCTORAL ANNUAL LEARNING CONTRACTS

Candidates will work with their committee to develop Annual Learning Contracts.

TIMING. Typically, these should be submitted in advance of the academic year.

CONTENTS. It is a detailed description of what the student will actually be studying, the methodologies, the learning formats (e.g., university course, seminary course, tutorial, directed reading, internet course, course on DVD, internship, practicum, workshop series, etc. ...), the forms of ongoing assessment, and details of what knowledge the student expects to acquire.

ASSESSMENT. The contract must specify how the learning will be supervised and evaluated, and what competencies the student is expected to demonstrate at the conclusion of the contract.

AMENDMENTS. These contracts may be amended in consultation with the Formation Committee, especially when unique learning opportunities arise.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT. At the close of the year, the candidate's Formation Committee will review the candidate's progress and submit a brief report.

DOCTORAL LEVEL OFFERINGS

Doctoral level courses are numbered 701-781. Courses numbered 701-771 are 1 Unit each. THEO 781 (Dissertation) is 10 Units.

THEO 701

ADVANCED MINISTRY FORMATION

An advanced introduction to theological formation, a la Ascension. Learners look into the nooks and crannies of doctor of ministry education, as well as explore their Myers-Briggs personality type and Theological Worlds.

THEO 702

ADVANCED CONTEMPLATIVE PRAXIS

An advanced overview of the desert mothers and fathers as an introduction to their contemplative practices, with a discussion of how their wisdom and praxis may inform ours today.

THEO 703

ADVANCED STUDIES IN JEWISH MYSTICISM

The doctoral level study of Jewish Mysticism, a rich approach to spirituality. The student learns about Kabbalah, the Tree of Life, the Four Worlds perspective, and are exposed to the use of story in Jewish spirituality and mysticism.

THEO 704

ADVANCED STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

Christian mysticism that distinguishes between the exoteric, or the outer, traditional understanding of Christianity, and the esoteric, or inner mystical understanding. Explores streams of thought that have contributed to the evolution of contemporary mystical Christianity, including: alchemy, astrology, Gnosticism, the Gospel of Thomas, Jungian psychology, Kabbalah, early monasticism, and the ancient mystery schools. Includes a Jungian deep-dive into the mystical interpretation of the Gospel according to John.

- THEO 705** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN EASTERN MYSTICAL TRADITIONS**
This course introduces doctoral-level students preparing for advanced ministry to the contemplative and mystical dimensions of the dharmic religions—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, with a particular emphasis on Zen as a bridge between East and West.
- THEO 706** **ADVANCED STUDIES OF THE WORLD’S RELIGIONS**
A doctoral level exploration of the world’s great religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- THEO 707** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN NEW COSMOLOGY**
Advanced study of the cosmological speculations of Teilhard de Chardin and an in-depth exploration of other contemporary cosmologies, such as those of Brian Swimme, Ken Wilber, Rupert Sheldrake, Matthew Fox, Amit Goswami, and Gary Zukav.
- THEO 708** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY**
An in-depth exploration of specific issues or periods in the history of Christianity.
- THEO 709** **ADVANCED STUDIES OF OTHER CHRISTIANITIES**
Recent discoveries, such as those at Nag Hammadi, suggest that early Christian communities may have been much more diverse than we later supposed. This course is an in-depth exploration of the faith, practice, and teachings of these other Christianities.
- THEO 710** **ADVANCED STUDIES OF INDEPENDENT CATHOLICISM**
An examination of the Old Catholic split in Holland and the emergence of a fledgling Independent Catholic movement after the First Vatican Council.
- THEO 711** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN CHRISTOLOGY**
An advanced exploration of the nature of Jesus, who is called Christ. Includes an examination of the transformation from Jesus to Christ, table fellowship in first century Judea, and recent revelations about the “historical Jesus.”

- THEO 712** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN ECCLESIOLOGY**
 An advanced examination of the role of the Church, its nature, mission, and organizational patterns.
- THEO 713** **ADVANCED STUDIES OF HEBREW SCRIPTURES**
 An in-depth examination of specific Hebrew scriptures.
- THEO 714** **ADVANCED STUDIES OF CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES**
 An in-depth examination of specific Christian scriptures.
- THEO 715** **ADVANCED STUDIES OF NON-CANONICAL WRITINGS**
 The discovery of non-canonical writings at Nag Hammadi and elsewhere is evidence of a more diverse Christianity than was once thought. This course examines selected non-canonical writings and explores their implications.
- THEO 716** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN EXEGESIS**
 An advanced exploration the contextual meaning of the text which may then help in unraveling its significance or relevance.
- THEO 717** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN HERMENEUTICS**
 Advanced study of interpretation, especially of the Bible.
- THEO 718** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION**
 An advanced course on biblical interpretation: exegesis (critical examination of the Bible) and hermeneutics (the study, art, or the theory and practice, of interpretation).
- THEO 721** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN LITURGY**
 Liturgy, sometimes called the “work of the people,” is the practice of public worship according to customary patterns and rituals. This course examines the nature, uses, and effects.
- THEO 722** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH**
 Augustine of Hippo defined a Christian sacrament as "a visible sign of an invisible reality." The Roman church celebrates seven while the Eastern churches recognize a plethora of “sacramentals.” This course helps learners deepen their understanding and use.

THEO 724**ADVANCED STUDIES IN EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY**

The word Eucharist means 'blessing.' In Church use, however, it usually refers to the celebration of communion, or partaking of Christ's Body and Blood. This course explores at the doctoral level the nature of the Eucharist, its elements, and asks the candidate to craft an innovative eucharistic celebration.

THEO 725**ADVANCED STUDIES IN CREATIVE LITURGY**

Celebration, initiation, blessing, and transformation, are all things that can be expressed in liturgy. In this course we ask our doctoral candidates to use their understanding of liturgy to craft a new creative liturgy that can be used in public worship.

THEO 726**ADVANCED STUDIES IN LITURGICAL PRACTICE**

An advanced supervised and reflective experience in liturgical practice.

THEO 727**ADVANCED STUDIES IN HOMILETICS**

The application of the general principles of rhetoric to the practice of public preaching. Includes discussion of classic patterns and emerging forms.

THEO 731**ADVANCED STUDIES IN PASTORAL CARE**

An advanced course in pastoral care for experienced ministers. Includes new content on law and ethics in pastoral care.

THEO 732**ADVANCED STUDIES IN PASTORAL COUNSELING**

An advanced course in pastoral counseling for experienced practitioners that strives to refine and deepen psychologically oriented approaches to counseling with religious intuitions in an effort to help people resolve psycho-spiritual concerns. Includes new content on law and ethics in pastoral counseling.

- THEO 733** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN THE RELIGIOUS-SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF DEATH, DYING, AND BEREAVEMENT**
- An advanced exploration of the role of religion and spirituality in caring for those facing death, dying, and bereavement.
- THEO 741** **ADVANCED STUDIES IN THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**
- An advanced dialog on the art and discipline of theological reflection – the conversation between one’s lived experience and a faith tradition.
- THEO 751** **DOCTORAL STUDIES IN THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY**
- Specialized, reflective, and assessed work in an area of theological study or ministry practice. Advanced studies courses are given designators, e.g., THEO 751A ... B ... C, etc., and descriptive designators, e.g., “Divine Feminine” ... “Desert Fathers” ... “Systemic Pastoral Counseling,” etc.
- THEO 761** **DOCTORAL COLLOQUIUM**
- Doctoral students have an opportunity to worship and interact with other ministry students in a collaborative colloquium experience.
- THEO 771** **RESEARCH METHODS IN ADVANCED MINISTRY**
- Exploration of contemporary research methods in advanced ministry. Requires submission of a research proposal as the culminating assignment.
- THEO 781** **PROJECT/DISSERTATION**
- Ongoing consultation between the doctoral candidate and the Doctoral Committee culminating in a satisfactory doctoral project and written dissertation of approximately 37,500 words.

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UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE
BALTIMORE, MD**

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

We expect candidates in any of our programs to have an ongoing formal relationship with a spiritual director (ordination program) to offer ongoing spiritual direction, guidance, and consultation. Candidates are financially responsible for this expense.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Candidates for admission shall be required to undergo a criminal and child protective background check to determine their suitability for admission. On a case-by-case basis, they may be asked to undergo a psychological evaluation. Expenses for background checks and/or psychological evaluation shall be the responsibility of the candidate.

PERSONAL COUNSELING

On a case-by-case basis the college or Formation Committee may require candidates to have prior personal counseling or to participate in a program of ongoing personal counseling. Candidates are financially responsible for this expense.

TITHES AND FEES

Current tithes and fees of the Program, as currently in effect, are summarized below. Changes in tithes and fees shall be made by a vote of the Council and approved by the Presiding Bishop, which then become effective with 30 days notice.

APPLICATION FEE: \$25

REVIEW OF PRIOR LEARNING: \$25

MONTHLY TITHE: \$20 (Includes Administrative, Academic, and Committee Support)

DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES TAKEN THROUGH ATC: \$75

RETREATS & WORKSHOPS AT THE HERMITAGE: Fee to vary according to expenses for presenter(s), food, materials, etc.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Students entering the program will have ten years to complete the program in accord with the Learning Covenant established at the time of admission to the program.

MINOR AND MAJOR ORDERS

As discussed in our guiding literature, we accept minor and major orders as progressive initiations. See Article IV and Article IX of Ascension by-laws.

ORDINATION

The candidate's Formation or Doctoral Committee determines eligibility for ordination to minor and major orders by a review of the candidate's readiness, as partially determined by their progress on the Learning Covenant and Annual Learning Contracts. Final decisions about the suitability of any candidate for ordination or commissioned ministry, however, is always discerned by the ordaining or commissioning bishop, or archpriest, in consultation with the candidate's Committee, the Rector of Ascension Theological College, and the Presiding Bishop of the Ascension Alliance.

Ascension Theological College

ASCENSION ALLIANCE

MAILING ADDRESS: PO BOX 167, VAUGHN, WA 98394+ (253) 961-9775

Application

NAME: _____ SSN: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PROGRAM: INCARDINATION ONLY PERSONAL ENRICHMENT ONLY
 BACHELOR OF DIVINITY MASTER OF DIVINITY
 MASTER OF SPIRITUALITY MASTER OF PASTORAL COUNSELING
 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE: _____

OTHE PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: Briefly describe your undergraduate education. Please include unofficial transcripts.

GRADUATE EDUCATION: Briefly describe your graduate education. Please include unofficial transcripts.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: Briefly describe any prior theological education. Please include unofficial transcripts.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY: Please provide a brief description of your spiritual journey (approximately 5 pages). Be sure to tell us how your journey has led you to our door.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Please provide any additional relevant information on separate attached sheets.

APPLICATION FEE: \$25

ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING: \$25

DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES TAKEN THROUGH ATC: \$75 for each 1-Unit course

BACKGROUND CHECK FEE: TBA