ACADEMIC HANDBOOK

SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO SEMINARY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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INTRODUCTION

The Graduate School of Theology (GST) serves the non-seminarian population of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, providing Catholic theological education at all levels, from non-credit catechesis to graduate work.

Though the primary mission of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary is the formation of Catholic priests, it is dedicated to the education of lay leaders in the Catholic community by offering academically challenging and theologically orthodox programs for the study of Catholic theology through GST. Curricula are developed and students are taught by the same quality faculty who educate the seminarian population. The aim of GST is to form future lay ministers to work collaboratively with future priests, each respecting the other’s unique role in the Church.

The Graduate Program of GST offers a Master of Arts Degree in Theology. The Undergraduate Program offers two Certificates: the Roman Catechetical Diploma (which is granted with the approval of the Congregation for Clergy of the Holy See), and the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry to Black Catholics (MBC). In addition to these certificate programs, students may enroll in further college level studies in Liturgy, Youth Ministry, Christian Initiation (RCIA), Marriage and Family, and Religious Education.

The Catechetical Institute provides non-credit Catholic catechesis for adults and training for catechists and Catholic school teachers. All programs serve to enable a student to gain a deeper understanding of the faith that contributes to the growth of his or her relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Church Ministry Institute is three-year program of study set in a small-faith community environment that includes prayer, faith sharing, retreat days, theological reflection, ministry projects, book sharing, and pastoral skills formation.

GST offers a residential Summer Program for Religious which provides academic formation for Religious Communities. Room
and Board are provided alongside studies towards an MA in Theology or towards an Undergraduate Certificate. Laity are also welcome to participate in the Summer Resident Program.

The GST Division is an evening program on the campus of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary and at various satellite locations throughout the Philadelphia area. Some programs are also available from anywhere in the world in a completely online format.
1. Graduate School Faculty

The Graduate School of Theology is served by the full time Faculty of St. Charles Seminary. In addition, competent adjunct faculty assist in teaching when needed. The Theology Division Faculty and the GST Academic Affairs Committee act as advisory bodies in order to assist the Academic Dean in the administration of the Academic Programs of the Graduate School. One particular role of the Faculty is to serve as that body with which the Academic Dean ordinarily consults or from which he receives advice regarding the curriculum and operation of the Academic Programs of the Graduate School.

2. Academic Honesty and Integrity

Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary presumes that all Graduate School students come to Saint Charles with a desire to embrace the demands of intellectual formation and study. They take upon themselves the desire to grow in wisdom and knowledge of the faith and its development. As they enter into the realm of academic life they seek to fulfill all the requirements with honesty and seek excellence in their work.

Accordingly the policy of the Graduate School of Theology, is as follows: “Observance of total honesty in the pursuit of one’s formal studies is required of each GST student. No instance of plagiarism, cheating, or falsification of research work, examinations or academic records will be tolerated and will make the student liable to dismissal.”

3. Academic Probation

All students pursuing the Master of Arts degree must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (B) to remain in good academic standing. If a student’s GPA falls below the
requirement, the student will be placed on Academic Probation. A student placed on Academic Probation must obtain the minimum cumulative GPA within the next three courses taken, with no more than fourteen courses taken towards the degree. Failure to obtain the required GPA will cause the student to be subject to dismissal from the program. The Academic Dean reserves the right to make final decisions regarding dismissal.

4. Audits

To audit a class, an official Audit Request Form must be submitted to the Academic Dean before the fourth class period. Auditors must have permission to audit from both the instructor and the Academic Dean. Normal tuition and fees apply when auditing courses, unless otherwise stated in the Registration Packet.

5. Books

Students must obtain their books from third-party vendors as the Seminary does not have a bookstore.

6. Course Syllabi

A course syllabus is to be generated by the professor for each accredited course taught in the Graduate School. The syllabi are distributed to the students in the beginning of each class and should provide them with the following information: a description of the course, expected outcomes of the course, the methods used for evaluation of the seminarian’s learning, a schedule of topics to be covered in the course, a list of the expectations for the students and a bibliography for further reading.

7. Credit Hours

Course sessions are described in terms of credit hours. In the Graduate School, a class is normally a three-credit course. Normally, three credit classes meet once a week in 3 hour sessions.
during the Fall and Spring semesters, and twice a week in 3 hour sessions during the Summer semester. A total of at least 42 rigorous classroom hours of instruction is achieved for each 3 credit course, not including exam hours. Normally, this means 14 regular class sessions per semester at 3 hours per session plus a 15th meeting for a final exam, or some other means of final assessment outside of the classroom (take home exam, research papers, etc).

8. Computation of GPA

The grade point average (GPA) is formulated in the following manner.

First, the course mark value (A=4.00; B=3.00; C=2.00; D=1.00; F=0; I=0; W is not included) is multiplied by the number of credit hours for each course.

Second, the total value for all the courses is calculated.

Third, this figure is divided by the total number of credit hours resulting in the grade point average.

9. Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are completed every semester for all accredited courses taught in the Graduate School. GST uses the Student Instruction Report II of Educational Testing Services, Inc. Each class is given the last fifteen minutes of the penultimate class of each course to complete the evaluation. When the course evaluations are completed, the forms are returned to the Academic Dean. At the conclusion of the semester all the reports are sent to ETS for processing. When the evaluation reports are returned to Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, the Academic Dean distributes them to each professor with a complete set being sent to the Rector and Vice Rector.
10. **Records Policy**

All current academic records are kept on file in the GST Office. Pertinent records are transferred to the Office of the Registrar when a student either completes all the degree programs for which he is registered or if he leaves the graduate program. The records are retained permanently through the Registrar’s Office. Student records are considered private and St. Charles complies with FERPA regarding privacy of student records.

11. **GST Style Sheet**

The General Faculty of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary has elected to use *Turabian Manual of Style* as the “style sheet” for all written work submitted by students. The style sheet is to be used as the basis of all term papers, reports, essays, etc. Students are encouraged to be familiar with the guidelines in this text.

12. **Transcripts**

Grade Sheets are distributed by the Office of the Registrar at the conclusion of each semester. Students may request copies of official transcripts at any time from the Registrar.

13. **Transfer of Credit Policy**

**Master of Arts Transfer of Credit Policy**

A student may transfer a maximum of six credits from other accredited graduate programs. No courses will be accepted in transfer that were taken more than eight years before the request is made or in which a grade of “B” or higher has not been attained. To obtain transfer credit, the student must apply in writing to the Academic Dean.

**Undergraduate Certificate Transfer of Credit Policy**
A maximum of six undergraduate credits in Catholic theology from other colleges and universities may be accepted towards the certificate. Courses taken more than six years before the request is made or in which a grade of at least “C” has not been attained will not be accepted in transfer. Requests to transfer credits should be directed to the Academic Dean.

Many undergraduate courses fulfill requirements for multiple certificates. Students may apply a maximum of six credits to two certificate programs. Up to six credits earned toward one certificate may be applied to one other certificate with no more than six credits per student being applied to multiple certificates. Credits transferred from other institutions can be applied to only one certificate.

Students seeking to obtain the Roman Catechetical Diploma (Vatican Diploma) may not apply any transfer credits towards that certificate.

14. Attendance Policy

Attendance in all regularly scheduled and re-scheduled classes is required for all GST students. Permission to be absent from class will be given only for serious reasons. Except for times of emergency any student who needs to be excused from class attendance for a particular day or for a particular period of time should contact his/her professor well in advance of the absence. Providing the student has the permission of the professor to be excused from class, the student has the responsibility to make-up the class assignments for that day or period.

Occasionally a student may be absent from class due to illness. The student must notify the particular professor – before the scheduled class meeting if possible – to inform him/her of the
absence. Students are responsible to make up any missed work, including lecture notes, tests, handouts, viewing of videos, etc.

Any unexcused absences may, at the discretion of the professor, negatively impact the student’s course participation grade and/or reduce the overall course grade.

Any excused absences in excess of two class sessions may, at the discretion of the professor, result in a reduction of course grade.

Students must be on-time for class. Lateness on more than one occasion may, at the discretion of the professor, negatively impact the student’s course participation grade and/or reduce the overall course grade.

15. Parking

Parking is regulated by the Security Office. Permits are required for student vehicles. For all questions related to security policies and procedures, students should inquire with the Security Office for more information.

16. Persons With Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, facilities, and activities. All applicants to the Graduate School of Theology are reviewed through the admissions process and the applicant’s qualifications and record of achievement are considered without regard to a disability.
17. Service Member Re-Admittance Policy

Any GST student who serves in a branch of the US military and is called away from formal schooling by the military may not be denied re-admittance to the program. Re-admittance for such a student is granted with the same academic status as when he/she left. A student who is dismissed from the program for disciplinary or academic reasons is not eligible for re-admittance.

18. Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment and other forms of harassment offend the God-given dignity of the human person and subvert the mission of the Graduate School as a Catholic entity. They often exploit the power differential in a relationship such as teacher/student or supervisor/subordinate. It can also occur between persons of equivalent status such as student to student or employee to employee.

It is against our policy for anyone in the Graduate School of Theology community to engage in sexual harassment against another member of the community. Similarly, it is against our policy for anyone in the community to harass another member because of his or her race, age, ethnicity, natural origin, religion, or other category specified by law.

Incidents of harassment should be reported to an appropriate authority so they may be dealt with in a timely manner. If, due to such factors such as potential conflict of interest, the appropriate authority within the GST or the Seminary judges that an internal investigation would be insufficient and/or inappropriate, the Graduate School and/or the Seminary may seek the assistance of qualified persons outside of the Seminary to assist in the investigation of charges.
Retaliation against anyone making an informal or formal allegation is strictly prohibited and constitutes a separate incident of harassment/sexual harassment. Conversely, it would be a serious act of misconduct to knowingly bring untrue charges of misconduct against an innocent party. If the conclusion of administrative inquiry determines that this has occurred, the person making the false charges will be subject to disciplinary action.

19. Academic Freedom Policy

The Graduate School of Theology in its purpose is a teaching institution, which values research primarily for advancing the scholarship of the faculty and the education of its students.

The accredited programs of the Graduate School of Theology require specific courses and some elective courses in order to achieve its programmatic goals in the field of Catholic theology.

The Graduate School of Theology promotes responsible academic freedom. GST also encourages the Faculty, in their teaching function, to address all material relevant to their subject matter but, opposes the promotion of propositions and values contrary to Catholic teaching. This in no way impinges on true academic freedom, as the Catholic Church accepts all that is true and rejects all that is false.

Students should not be intimidated, harassed, or discouraged from voicing legitimate academic inquiry, when appropriate to the context and structure of a specific course, and within the framework of the goals of the program in which they chose to enroll. GST and faculty should engage these legitimate inquiries with respect for individual dignity and the pursuit of truth and the common good.
20. **Grade Appeal Procedure**

An appeal of a final course grade must be made within two weeks of the issuance of grades. A student must first discuss the matter directly with the professor. If this step does not result in a satisfactory explanation or resolution of the perceived problem, the student may then bring the matter to the attention of the Academic Dean. Documentation supporting the student’s appeal must be provided. The decision of the Academic Dean is final.

21. **General Grievance Policy**

A student in the Graduate School of Theology with a grievance against a faculty member for any reason should meet first with the faculty member with whom the grievance exists. This meeting needs to take place no later than twenty-one (21) days after the occurrence that gave rise to the complaint. If the grievance is not resolved, the student may make a formal complaint by filing a written statement with the Academic Dean. Such a statement should include a reference to some policy that Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary is pledged to uphold and that has been allegedly violated, as well as details about the alleged violation and attempts to resolve the matter with the faculty involved. Such policies may be found in the Seminary Catalog or the Student Handbook.

22. **Non-Discrimination Policy**

In compliance with state and federal laws, the Graduate School of Theology does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran’s status (or any other criteria protected by applicable law) in its educational programs and activities, or admissions.
23. **Undergraduate Program Diploma or GED verification Policy**

Any student who is required to prove that he or she has earned a high school diploma or GED must do so with a formal high school transcript or verification of GED completion in order to be accepted.
MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY
DEGREE PROGRAM

1. Program Description

The Master of Arts degree is designed as an academic degree that investigates the theological disciplines in an in-depth manner focusing on speculative and historical aspects of knowledge received in the various courses offered in the Theology Division. The program is open to Seminarians who have already earned the Master of Divinity degree and have met all other program prerequisites. Students from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia who meet the prerequisites for the Master of Arts degree program are expected to complete the requirements for the Master of Arts degree program. Exceptions may be given, only for serious reason, by the Academic Dean, Theology Division after consultation with the Vice Rector and the Rector.

2. Degree Requirements

The following is a description of the Master of Arts Degree requirements:

Admissions Requirements:

1. An undergraduate degree with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 from an accredited college or university.

2. A minimum of eighteen undergraduate credits in Theology and/or Philosophy, with a minimum grade point average of 3.00.

Degree Requirements:

1. Successful completion of 36 credits of graduate theology with a minimum grade point average of 3.00.
2. Passing the written and oral Comprehensive Examinations.
3. Comprehensive Examinations

Description of the Comprehensive Examination

Master of Arts degree candidates are required to take both written and oral comprehensive examinations. The comprehensive examinations are designed to:

1. Foster the student’s ability to synthesize the content of the various courses in the Master of Arts Degree Program.
2. Provide the student an opportunity to demonstrate the scope of his/her knowledge.
3. Encourage in the student a scholarly attitude, critical thinking, and a sustained personal commitment to independent reading within the field of Catholic Theology.

Students are eligible to enroll for the comprehensive examinations only after the completion of at least thirty-six and no more than forty-two graduate credits in which a minimum grade point average of 3.0 has been maintained. The comprehensive examinations are scheduled in February and in July.

Preparation for the comprehensive examinations should be aimed toward integrating and expanding one’s knowledge. Each student is provided with a Comprehensive Exam Study Guide based upon coursework and a common list of required readings.

The Comprehensive Exam is divided into two sections, a three hour written exam and a thirty minute oral exam.

The grading of the comprehensive examinations is based upon mastery of the material, ability to synthesize rather than merely memorize information, and clarity/organization of presentation. Both the written and oral examinations are graded by two professors. The two grades from the written examination are averaged for the final written examination grade; the two grades from oral examination are
averaged for the final oral examination grade; the average of the written and oral examination grades must be 85 or above.

GST maintains the written and oral comprehensive examination as an essential component of the Master of Arts Degree Program. Neither extra course work nor a research paper are acceptable substitutes for this examination.