



SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO SEMINARY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

1400 Evans Road • Ambler, PA 19002

Phone: 610-785-6287 E-mail: sts@scs.edu Website: www.scs.edu

Student Handbook 2025-26

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
Mission Statement.....	3
Staff and Contact Information	3
School of Theological Studies Faculty	3
II. Academic Degree Programs	3
Master of Arts in Theology Programs	3
Degree requirements	4
Course Schedule	5
Transfer of Credit	5
Admissions	5
Application Process	6
Academic Advising and Course Registration	6
Independent Study	6
Single Course for Credit	7
Auditing a Course	7
Tuition and Fees	7
Withdrawal Policy	7
Financial Aid	7
Grading Scale.....	8
Grade Appeal Procedure	8
Grade Point Average Requirement.....	8
Academic Probation and Dismissal.....	8

Syllabi and Books	9
Turabian Manual of Style	9
Learning Disability Accommodation Policy	9
Course Evaluations.....	9
Attendance	10
Communications.....	10
Academic Honesty	10
Academic Freedom	11
Library Resources	11
Graduation.....	12
Transcripts	12
III. General Policies	13
Non-Discrimination Policy.....	13
Promotional Photography.....	13
Policy Prohibiting Title IX Misconduct	13
Grievance Policy.....	13
Campus Safety.....	14
Parking and Shuttle Service	14
Appendix I: 2025-26 Course Offering Schedule	15
Appendix II: Grievance Policy and Procedure.....	16

I. Introduction

Mission Statement

The School of Theological Studies (STS) serves the non-seminarian population of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary by providing Catholic theological education through in-person and online Master's-level courses to educators, catechists, parish ministers, religious sisters, and lay persons interested in studying the faith. The STS also assists the intellectual formation of candidates for the Permanent Diaconate and provides an opportunity for ordained clergy to continue their theological education. The STS answers the call made at the Second Vatican Council for Catholic graduate programs to prepare students in conformity with the Church's magisterium and in light of present-day needs.

Staff and Contact Information

Dr. Carmina M. Chapp, Dean, School of Theological Studies
Michele Pisano, Administrative Assistant

Office Location: St. Charles Borromeo Seminary
1400 Evans Road, Ambler, PA 19002

Student Life Center, Floor G1, Suite 001

Email: sts@scs.edu
Phone: 610-785-6287

School of Theological Studies Faculty

The School of Theological Studies is served by the full-time faculty of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. In addition, competent adjunct faculty assist in teaching when needed.

II. Academic Degree Programs

Master of Arts in Theology Programs

The Master of Arts in Theology is a general theology degree covering basic topics of Sacred Scripture, doctrine and morality. It is ideal for those seeking a broad Catholic theology degree that will empower them to teach a wide variety of subjects and to form others in the

Catholic faith. It also prepares the student for future graduate study. Candidates for the Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia take courses on campus in this program. For more information on the diaconate program, contact the School of Diaconal Formation.

The Online Master of Arts in Theology is identical to the on-campus program in its core course offerings, and can be completed solely online or in conjunction with on-campus offerings. It uses NEO by Cypher Learning as its Learning Management System. Courses are asynchronous, with modules made available to students, and assignments due, on a weekly basis.

The Summer Program is identical to the on-campus program in its core course offerings, in an accelerated six-week summer session with a residency option. Campus life provides the necessary spiritual environment to allow members of religious communities to meet the obligations of their vows and daily prayer life faithfully, including the Liturgy of the Hours, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and daily Mass.

Degree requirements

The Master of Arts in Theology degree requires thirty-six graduate credit hours, consisting of the following 3-credit courses:

Sacred Scripture

STS 501 Critical Introduction to Sacred Scripture (Prerequisite for all Scripture courses)

STS 502 Synoptic Gospels

STS 539 Johannine Literature

STS 541 Letters of Saint Paul

Systematic Theology

STS 601 Fundamental Theology (Prerequisite for all Systematic theology courses)

STS 602 Christology

STS 603 Ecclesiology

STS 606 Theology of Grace and Sacraments

Morality

STS 701 Moral Theology

Church History

STS 801 Church History

Two Electives

Culminating Assessment

Students have a choice of taking *Written and Oral Comprehensive Examinations* before a Board or writing a *Master's Thesis* under the direction of a Moderator. Comprehensive exams are offered each July and March. Master's Theses must be completed by March 1.

Course Schedule

The Master of Arts degree can be pursued on either a full-time or part-time basis. Comprehensive examinations are administered in March and in July.

Classes are offered on campus in the evening. All required courses are offered each year within the Fall and Spring semesters. One prerequisite is offered each Fall and Spring.

Online courses are offered in Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Required courses are offered on a rotating schedule. One prerequisite is offered each semester.

Summer courses are offered on campus during the day and in the evening. Courses are accelerated in a six-week session. Required courses are offered on a rotating schedule. Prerequisites are offered each summer. Residency is available.

(See Appendix for current course offerings)

Transfer of Credit

Credits accumulated from courses taken more than ten years past at other institutions are not accepted toward the Master of Arts degree. Transferred courses must be approved by the Dean. Credits earned at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary do not expire.

Admissions

New students can enter the program in any semester. Deadlines for submitting applications are:

- April 1 for Online Summer Semester and On-campus Summer Program
- August 1 for Fall Semester
- November 1 for Spring Semester

Prerequisites for admission

- An undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts or Science) with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 from an accredited college or university

- A minimum of nine (9) undergraduate credits in Theology and/or Philosophy, with a minimum GPA of 3.0

Application Process

Application for the Master of Arts in Theology consists of

An online application form, with a 400-500 word essay explaining the applicant's reasons for pursuing the degree, events that led to this decision, and his or her plans for the future. A fee of \$40.00 is payable online.

Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended sent directly to the School of Theological Studies

Two letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant's academic abilities and good character from individuals unrelated to the applicant, sent directly to the School of Theological Studies

Any STS 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 programs. Re-admittance for such a student is granted with the same academic status as when he or she left.

Academic Advising and Course Registration

Students meet with the Dean for academic advisement and course selection, then register for classes through Populi.

Independent Study

Candidates for the Master of Arts Degree who have completed eighteen or more graduate credits and have maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or higher may request to take an independent study to fulfill an elective requirement for the degree. An independent study may be taken to fulfill core requirements, if necessary. An individual student may not enroll in more than one independent study course within a single semester.

To enroll in an independent study course, a qualified student must contact the School of Theological Studies office to ascertain the feasibility of an independent study course and to request the appropriate application material.

Single Course for Credit

Students may take a graduate course before applying to the MA program provided they have a Bachelor's degree. Prerequisites apply.

Students who have obtained, or in the process of obtaining, a Master of Arts in Theology elsewhere are welcome to supplement their education with graduate courses in the School of Theological Studies.

Auditing a Course

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.

Tuition and Fees

See St. Charles Borromeo Seminary Catalog

Withdrawal Policy

Students may withdraw from a course no later than one week before the final examination. To withdraw from a class, an official Withdrawal Form must be submitted to the Dean. Failure to officially withdraw will result in a grade of zero (0.00) on any uncompleted work and may thereby result in an "F" for the course on the student's transcript.

Refunds of tuition will be made according to the following schedule:

Withdrawal before first class: 100% of total tuition refunded, less \$50 administrative fee.
Withdrawal before second class: 75% of total tuition refunded, less \$50 administrative fee.
Withdrawal before third class: 50% of total tuition refunded, less \$50 administrative fee.
Withdrawal after the third class: No refund.

Student must submit an official Withdrawal Form by the deadline to receive the corresponding refund.

Financial Aid

For information on Financial Aid, contact Donna Speranza, Financial Aid Coordinator, at 610-785-6582.

Grading Scale

The following grading system is used for all graduate courses:

4.00 A 93 - 100 Outstanding
3.00 B 85 to 92 Very Good
2.00 C 77 to 84 Good
1.00 D 70 to 76 Passing
0.00 F Below 70 Failed
0.00 I Incomplete 0.00
W Withdrawal (no penalty)

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, the student may then bring the matter to the attention of the Dean. Documentation supporting the student's appeal must be provided. The decision of the Dean is final.

Grade Point Average Requirement

Students are expected to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (B) in courses being taken for academic credit toward the Master of Arts degree. A student will be placed on Academic Probation if his or her grade point average falls below this minimum requirement.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

A student placed on Academic Probation must obtain the minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) within the next three courses taken, with no more than fourteen courses taken toward the degree. Failure to obtain the required grade point average will result in the student being liable to dismissal from the program. The Dean reserves the right to make the final decisions regarding dismissal.

A student who is dismissed from the program for academic or disciplinary reasons is not eligible for re-admittance.

Syllabi and Books

Course syllabi and book lists are available in Populi two weeks prior to the first day of class.

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary does not have a bookstore. Students are responsible for finding the required books to purchase.

Turabian Manual of Style

The use of the *Turabian Manual of Style* is required for all written work submitted by students, including term papers, reports, essays, etc. The St. Jerome Library offers assistance with the Turabian Style and its application to ecclesiastical documents and other sources commonly used in the academic study of theology.

Learning Disability Accommodation Policy

A learning disability or difference (LD) is a neurological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process, store, and respond to information. It is used to describe a person of at least average intelligence who has difficulty in acquiring basic academic skills.

The process by which a student in the School of Diaconal Formation or the School of Theological Studies is evaluated to determine if he/she has a learning disability can begin with the student, through a faculty member, or their respective Dean.

The student is responsible for making the appointment with the evaluator and is to inform the Dean of testing results. Immediately after the results of the testing, and then at the beginning of each academic semester, with the consent of the student, the Dean will inform the faculty members currently responsible for teaching the student regarding the approved and requested academic accommodations in the student's regard.

Course Evaluations

Students have the opportunity to evaluate courses and faculty at the end of each course. Evaluations are conducted through Populi.

Attendance

Students enrolled in the School of Theological Studies are required to attend all scheduled and rescheduled classes. They are expected to be present when the class is scheduled to begin. Lateness on more than one occasion may result in a lowering of the final grade.

Weather emergencies may prohibit classes to be held in person. In such cases, classes will be conducted via Teams Meeting during the regularly scheduled time.

Exceptional circumstances may necessitate that a student be absent from a class. Students are permitted two absences from class during each semester. They are required to notify the faculty member prior to the start of class from which they will be absent. In the event of an absence, it is the responsibility of the student, not the instructor, to obtain class notes and materials (including recordings made with the consent of the professor), learn the subject matter from the missed class, complete assignments, and be prepared for the next class. Absence from more than two classes may result in the lowering of the final grade.

Communications

All students receive a scs.edu email account, as well as a Microsoft 365 account, which includes Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, and One Drive.

Due to security protocols, all communications must remain within the SCS system. Students are not to forward their SCS email to any other accounts, nor use their outside personal email accounts when corresponding with faculty or any office of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. Teams must be used for any video calls, and OneDrive for saving and sharing documents.

Upon graduation or leaving the program, the student's Microsoft 365, including SCS email, will be deleted on August 31 of that year.

Academic Honesty

Observance of total honesty in pursuit of one's formal studies is required of each School of Theological Studies student. Academic work that is submitted by the student must be the student's own, original work; 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. Generation of assignments, papers or presentations by artificial intelligence (AI) and presenting it as one's own work is also a form of plagiarism. On the other hand, automated checking of one's own grammar and syntax may be an acceptable use of such technologies. For further specification, the student is expected to consult and

adhere to any and all current policies and guidelines concerning the use of computer assistance or artificial intelligence in completing assignments.

Plagiarism is a violation of academic honesty and, thus, is a serious offense. Plagiarism is defined as presenting either someone else's words or ideas or artificially generated content, in part or whole, as one's own. Activities such as direct copying, paraphrasing, summarizing, or otherwise putting someone else's work into your own words without proper citation constitute plagiarism. Also, any exact verbiage taken from other authors must be duly set off within quotation marks. Plagiarism is not defined by 'intent'; if a student claims he or she did not 'mean' to plagiarize or 'know' what plagiarism is, the student will still face severe disciplinary measures.

If a student is caught plagiarizing, the instructor has the prerogative to give the student an "F" for the course. Further, instructors will immediately report all instances of plagiarism to the Dean, who may impose further disciplinary measures regarding the student's status in the School of Theological Studies, including dismissal from the program.

Academic Freedom

The School of Theological Studies promotes responsible academic freedom. Faculty are encouraged, in their teaching function, to address all material relevant to their subject matter, while opposing 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. These legitimate inquiries are engaged with respect for individual dignity and the pursuit of truth and the common good.

Library Resources

The St. Jerome Library supports the mission of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary by facilitating its patrons' interaction with recorded knowledge in all its forms. It responds to the curricular, informational, and research needs of students and faculty by acquiring, housing, and providing access to books, periodicals, databases, audio-visual materials, digital media, and online resources, maintaining an appropriate environment for study and learning.

Located on the ground floor of the Student Life Center, it provides more than 60,000 circulating books, 2,000 audiovisual items, and over 400 journals and newspapers in paper and electronic format.

Graduation

Students who successfully complete the comprehensive exams or Master's Thesis may participate in the Baccalaureate Mass and Concursus in mid-May. Students who anticipate graduating must register for graduation with the School of Theological Studies by mid-March.

Transcripts

Transcripts are issued by the Registrar's Office at the written request of the student concerned. Requests through the National Student Clearinghouse are electronically signed by the student who owns the student record. The Registrar's Office releases academic record transcripts in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

No transcript will be released if there are outstanding library or financial holds. There is a \$12.50 per copy fee. The normal period required for processing transcripts is *5 business days*. **Please allow 10 business days during the beginning and close of the semester.**

III. General Policies

Non-Discrimination Policy

In compliance with state and federal laws, the School of Theological Studies does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, veteran's status, or any other criteria protected by applicable law in its educational programs and activities or admissions.

Promotional Photography

Images of students may be included in photographs and videos for promotional purposes. Students who do not wish to be included may opt-out by contacting the School of Theological Studies.

Policy Prohibiting Title IX Misconduct

Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary is committed to promoting a safe and healthy environment for all members of its community. All students, faculty, staff and visitors have the intrinsic right to remain free from any form of sexual violence, sexual harassment and stalking at all times, but especially while on St. Charles Borromeo Seminary property.

Any form of sexual violence, sexual harassment and stalking, and any attempt to commit such acts, to be serious misconduct that may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. In addition, acts of sexual violence, sexual harassment and stalking could violate federal, state and local laws, and perpetrators of such acts may be subject to criminal prosecution.

Grievance Policy

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary has a *grievance procedure* to provide for the resolution of student grievances, including allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination, academic challenges of grade, and the denial of reasonable accommodations to person with disabilities. (See Appendix for Grievance Procedure)

Campus Safety

All students must provide a headshot to the School of Theological Studies and will receive a photo identification card that also serves as a gate and door badge, giving students access to campus and the Student Life Center during class times. If a student needs to come to campus outside of classtime, he/she must call the office they are visiting to gain access.

Parking and Shuttle Service

Students may park anywhere on campus except those spaces marked Reserved.

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary students may use the Gwynedd Mercy University shuttle service to/from the Gwynedd Valley Train Station, serving the Lansdale/Doylestown SEPTA line.

Appendix I: 2025-26 Course Offering Schedule

Fall 2025

A Critical Introduction to Sacred Scripture
Synoptic Gospels
Christology
Ecclesiology
Elective: Catholic Social Teaching

Online Fall 2025

A Critical Introduction to Sacred Scripture
Christology
Elective TBD

Spring 2026

Fundamental Theology
Theology of Grace & Sacraments
Church History
Moral Theology
Letters of St. Paul
Johannine Literature

Online Spring 2026

Fundamental Theology
Ecclesiology
Letters of St. Paul
Elective TBD

Summer 2026

A Critical Introduction to Sacred Scripture
Fundamental Theology
Theology of Grace & Sacraments
Synoptic Gospels
Johannine Literature
Moral Theology
Elective TBD

Online Summer 2026

A Critical Introduction to Sacred Scripture
Theology of Grace & Sacraments
Johannine Literature
Elective TBD

Appendix II: Grievance Policy and Procedure

Purpose: The purpose of this academic and non-academic grievance procedure is to provide for the resolution of candidate grievances, including allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination, academic challenges of grade, and the denial of reasonable accommodations to person with disabilities. This policy is not applicable to issues of seminary formation or discipline.

Informal Resolution: Before initiating a formal grievance, a candidate should discuss the matter in dispute with the person against whom the candidate has a grievance and seek a mutual resolution of concerns. The candidate may be encouraged to return to this informal level of resolution at any time during this procedure.

Initiation of Complaint

If an informal resolution does not result, the candidate must submit a complaint form to the appropriate administrator to initiate a formal grievance. While initially a candidate's concerns may be communicated orally; a written grievance must be submitted soon after the candidate is aware of the subject problem. The complaint must specify the policy, procedure or norm violated, and specifically set forth all relevant factual details. The Appropriate Administrator will first determine whether the complaint's allegations warrant implementing the remainder of the grievance procedures. If sufficient criteria are not met, the Appropriated Administrator will inform the candidate in writing and copy the Rector. With sufficient criteria, the Appropriate Administrator will forward a copy of the complaint to the respondent to whom the allegation is being directed.

Witness Response

The Respondent shall be given five working calendar days from receipt of the complaint to return a written response to the Appropriate Administrator. Necessary extensions may be granted by the Appropriate Administrator.

Review by Designated Party

The Appropriate Administrator, with the consent of the Rector, may initiate a reasonable investigation into the matter. The investigation may include but is not limited to meeting the parties, talking with witnesses, and reviewing any supporting documents.

Recommendation to Rector

Within a reasonable time, the Appropriate Administrator shall make a recommendation to the Rector based on the written complaint, response and any other information deemed relevant.

Decision

A final decision will be rendered from the Appropriate Administrator with the approval of the Rector. Grievant and Respondent shall be notified in writing of the decision. A copy of the written decision shall be retained in the office of the Appropriate Administrator for one year after the final decision was issued.