

MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGION DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The degree of Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) certifies either completion of a comprehensive program of study in preparation for one of the many forms of ministry or service, or completion of one of the concentrated programs of advanced study described below.

The minimum requirement for the M.A.R. degree is the successful completion of forty-eight credit hours and a two-year residency (defined as enrollment in at least one three-credit course that meets on campus on a regular basis throughout the term) with the following caveats:

1. Students with heavy responsibilities outside of school are strongly advised to reduce their course load, but the total program of study for the M.A.R. degree shall not be expanded beyond four years. Students will not receive financial aid for coursework beyond the requirements.
2. The residency requirement of two years may be reduced when credits, up to a maximum of twelve hours, are transferred. In order to receive the M.A.R. degree, students who transfer credits must complete at least three terms of resident work at YDS, one of which must be the final term.
3. Exceptions to the final-term residency requirement may be made for students on approved exchange or joint-degree study. In all cases a minimum of twenty-four credits must be earned through course work at Yale.

Students are encouraged to elect courses in other schools and departments of the university. Any student who takes more than nine hours in another school or department of the university comes under the regulations for interdepartmental study; see Interdepartmental Studies, in the chapter Other Curricular Considerations. See the chapter Areas and Courses of Study for information about credit for undergraduate courses.

Students awarded the M.A.R. degree who continue their studies for the M.Div. degree will not be awarded both degrees for less than four full academic years of study.

M.A.R. students may opt to complete a thesis or project by following the procedures outlined below.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENT

Students in the M.A.R. degree program are required to participate in a program assessing their progress. Each student builds an online portfolio of work that demonstrates progress toward the degree's learning goals. Learning goals for students in M.A.R. concentration programs are determined by the faculty in each area; learning goals for students in M.A.R. comprehensive programs are developed, beginning in the second term of study, by the students themselves, in consultation with their academic adviser and with the associate dean for ministerial and social leadership. M.A.R. students will upload work demonstrating fulfillment of their goals, beginning early in the second year of study. Students will post a brief narrative outlining how the goals are

being fulfilled. Faculty members in each concentration will meet to discuss the progress of students studying in their area; academic advisers will review the work of advisees in comprehensive programs. Each M.A.R. student must participate in an end-of-degree conversation as part of the assessment requirement.

COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

Minimum requirements of the comprehensive M.A.R. program include the following distribution of courses in the curriculum:

Area I Six credit hours. Elementary Hebrew and Greek do not meet this requirement but are counted toward the total number of hours needed for graduation.

Area II Six credit hours.

Area III Six credit hours.

Area IV Six credit hours.

Area V Six credit hours.

Elective Eighteen credit hours.

No course may be counted toward meeting the distributional requirements simultaneously in more than one area. The distributional requirements of the M.A.R. degree are sufficiently flexible that students can devote a significant part of the program to specialized interests.

CONCENTRATED PROGRAM

The concentrated M.A.R. program offers the opportunity to pursue advanced work in one of the disciplines of theological study. The faculty limits the number of applicants accepted into the concentrated program and reviews the progress of each upon completion of the first term. If progress is not satisfactory, the student becomes responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the comprehensive program. Concentrations are offered in Asian Religions; Black Religion in the African Diaspora; Ethics; Hebrew Bible; History of Christianity; Latine and Latin American Christianity; Liturgical Studies; New Testament; Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion; Practical Theology; Religion and Ecology; Religion and the Arts; Second Temple Judaism; Theology; Women's, Gender, and/or Sexuality Studies in Religion; and World Christianity/Missions.

Asian Religions

The concentration in Asian Religions requires twelve credit hours of language study and a minimum of twelve credit hours of study in Asian religions. At least eighteen credit hours of YDS course work is required of all candidates.

Black Religion in the African Diaspora

The concentration in Black Religion in the African Diaspora is an interdisciplinary program based in the YDS curriculum that includes a broad range of courses that illumine the theology, history, philosophy, aesthetics, and practices of black religion. Students are encouraged to take courses pertinent to African American religious studies in other departments or programs of the university (for example, in Anthropology,

Religious Studies, History, African Studies, African American Studies, Music, History of Art, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies). Through the careful study of manuscript, printed, visual, and aural/oral sources, students learn an array of methodologies and approaches to inventively engage black religion and explore current movements and debates on topics such as race, gender, sexuality, popular culture, politics, and media. A minimum of eighteen credit hours must be taken in courses focusing on black religion representing at least four of the five curricular areas. In addition, six credit hours of foundational study are required in Bible and twelve in history and theology. Although not required, up to six hours of credit may be given for a major paper or project.

Ethics

Ethics is concerned with the evaluation of character and action. It examines the sorts of people we ought to be, the ways we should act in relation to others, and the social structures we collectively inhabit, transmit, and transform. The concentration in Ethics is an inherently interdisciplinary course of study that trains students in Christian theological traditions of ethical reflection and in contemporary social-ethical thought. Courses in ethics address questions of the good life, social justice, and the common good, both as these have arisen in the past and as they take shape with reference to pressing concerns of our own historical moment, from immigration to environmental justice. All students are encouraged to pursue work across the theological disciplines as well as in pertinent areas of the university outside of the Divinity School, including the Departments of Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Political Science, the School of the Environment, and the Law School. The Yale Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics offers further resources for interested students. At least eighteen credit hours must be taken in ethics; in addition, six credit hours in the biblical disciplines and twelve in history and theology are ordinarily required. The program trains students for intellectual leadership both inside and outside the academy, with graduates of the program entering top doctoral programs in the field as well as work in the nonprofit sector, advocacy, secondary education, journalism, and law.

Hebrew Bible

The concentration in Hebrew Bible prepares students for the critical study of the Hebrew Bible, its languages, texts, and contexts. The curriculum encompasses: (1) the study of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, as well as offerings in relevant ancient languages; (2) a wide range of interpretive courses, both textual and thematic; and (3) courses in the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean context and in the history of interpretation. Students frequently make use of the rich resources at Yale in the Departments of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Religious Studies, Classics, Comparative Literature, History of Art, and Anthropology, as well as the holdings of Yale's many collections. The concentration in Hebrew Bible requires eighteen credit hours of Hebrew and Hebrew-based courses, six credit hours of Greek, the foundation courses in Hebrew Bible and New Testament Interpretation (REL 503, REL 504, REL 505, and REL 506), and six credit hours of exegetical, thematic, or historical courses. It is expected that entering students will have successfully completed at least one year of Biblical Hebrew, so that they may immediately begin taking courses that require Hebrew, such as exegesis courses. Admitted students who have not yet taken Biblical Hebrew are required to successfully

complete an intensive online summer language course in Biblical Hebrew the summer before enrolling. This course is offered without charge to all YDS students, including incoming students, and counts for six course credits. Many students in this concentration advance to do doctoral work in Hebrew Bible and related areas.

History of Christianity

The concentration in the History of Christianity trains students in the history of Christianity and in historical methods of analysis for the study of religion. The curriculum includes a wide range of courses, from early and medieval Christianity to the Reformation and the contemporary world, and is enriched by many other departments and programs across the university (including Religious Studies, History, American Studies, African American Studies, History of Art, and Classics). Students are challenged to engage with the past in ways that treat earlier cultures with integrity, while exploring how those pasts continue to inform our present. Through the rigorous study of manuscript, printed, visual, and oral sources, students learn a range of methodologies and approaches to history as well as enter current debates on topics such as memory, war, race, gender, and sexuality. The program aims to reverse the historiographical exclusions of a field that for too long privileged European men as the only makers of history and to think both critically and comparatively about how various societies have managed human difference. Faculty emphasize the historical study of theology and religious thought; the diverse cultural contexts in which religious ideas and practices were formulated, expressed, and disseminated; the varied roles of Christianity in making social and political change; and the historical intersections of Christianity with other religious traditions around the world. The concentration requires at least eighteen credit hours in historical studies and, in the second year, the completion of either an academic or professional thesis.

Latine and Latin American Christianity

The Latine and Latin American Christianity concentration is an interdisciplinary program for students who wish to study Latine and Latin American religious culture, theology, and history. Students can choose to focus their studies on Latine Christianity in the United States or Christianity in Latin America, or to explore both with an eye toward developing a more hemispheric perspective in relation to these fields and geographic areas (i.e., the United States and Latin America). The concentration requires eighteen credit hours to be taken in Latine and/or Latin American Studies, twelve of which must be in Latine and/or Latin American religion courses and six of which can be in other related departments and disciplines. Students are also required to take courses in biblical studies, history, ethics, and theology for the purposes of a well-rounded program of study. Students who do not speak Spanish and/or Portuguese are encouraged to take relevant language courses.

Liturgical Studies

The concentration in Liturgical Studies requires eighteen credit hours of study in the major area, including the introductory core course of the program, REL 682, Foundations of Christian Worship. Students must take nine credit hours of electives in liturgical studies, three with an historical focus, three with a theological focus, and three with a strong methodological or practical component. The remaining six credits

may be taken as electives, but students are strongly encouraged to seek out a course in their own denominational worship tradition. The remaining thirty credits required for the M.A.R. with a concentration in liturgical studies will be taken in the various areas of study of the YDS and Institute of Sacred Music (ISM) curricula, according to a student's academic interests and professional goals and in consultation with faculty in the area of concentration.

New Testament

The concentration in New Testament trains students in the reading of early Christian texts and the surrounding literature, in the diverse methodologies used to read those texts, and in their ongoing significance. The program trains students in the reading of Greek texts and in one other relevant ancient language (normally Hebrew, but other languages may be substituted). Students are encouraged to explore widely and to take some courses in related departments at Yale that are relevant to their interests. The requirements include fifteen hours of Greek and Greek-based courses (including courses offered by the Classics department), six hours in another relevant language, six hours in relevant thematic or critical theory courses, and the foundational sequences in Hebrew Bible and New Testament interpretation (REL 503, REL 504, REL 505, and REL 506) or their equivalents. If students have substantial experience in diversely oriented foundational Hebrew Bible and New Testament interpretation courses, they may, in consultation with the program faculty, waive this requirement. All courses are selected in consultation with an adviser. It is expected that entering students will have successfully completed at least one year of Ancient Greek, so that they may immediately begin taking courses that require Greek, such as exegesis courses. Admitted students who have not yet taken Ancient Greek are required to successfully complete an intensive online summer language course in koine Greek the summer before enrolling. This course is offered without charge to all YDS students, including incoming students, and counts for six course credits. The purpose of the program is to provide solid grounding in New Testament scholarship broadly understood.

Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion

Individual programs are planned for each of the students concentrating in philosophical theology and philosophy of religion. Eighteen credit hours are required in biblical and theological studies – the latter including but not limited to moral, historical, liberation, and systematic theology – with at least six in biblical and six in theological studies. At least eighteen hours must be taken in philosophical theology or philosophy of religion. Courses in the social sciences and in historical and philosophical study of religion may be taken in other departments of the university, especially in Religious Studies and Philosophy. Students' course work must include a course that addresses in a sustained and focused way questions concerning how theological and philosophical discourse is influenced by white supremacy and the privileging of white and male voices.

Practical Theology

The Practical Theology concentration is an interdisciplinary academic program for students anticipating Ph.D. studies in the field of practical theology as well as for others who wish to engage in theologically grounded study of the lived religious practices of persons and communities. Students may focus their work within one of practical

theology's subdisciplines (e.g., homiletics, liturgical studies, pastoral care, religious education, spirituality), or they may design a focus of study across subdisciplines in consultation with practical theology faculty. The concentration requires twenty-four hours to be taken in practical theology courses, six hours of which must include the required practical theology proseminar and the course in research methods. Also required are nine credit hours in Divinity courses beyond Area IV and fifteen elective credit hours. Students' course work must include two courses that focus centrally on the study of class, gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, disability, or global/cultural diversity.

Religion and Ecology

The concentration in Religion and Ecology is an interdisciplinary program based in the YDS curriculum and draws on faculty resources in biblical studies, ethics, liturgical studies, pastoral care, spirituality, theology, and world religions and ecology. It spans the study of eco-theology; eco-spirituality; eco-feminism; theologies of embodiment, place, land, race, and indigeneity; environmental ethics; liturgy and creation; and cosmology and ecology. At least fifteen credit hours must be taken in the area of religion and ecology, as well as six credit hours in the Yale School of the Environment. In addition, fifteen credit hours of study in Bible, theology, and/or history are required, with a minimum of three credit hours of each.

Religion and the Arts

Students in the Religion and the Arts concentration elect one of three tracks: Literature, Visual Arts, or Music. The emphasis in each track is on history, criticism, and analysis of past and present practice. Each requires twenty-one credits in the area of concentration: in visual arts or music, twelve of these credits must be taken with ISM faculty; in literature, six must be taken with ISM faculty. In addition, at least fifteen credits shall be devoted to general theological studies: six credits in Area I, six credits in Area II, and three credits in Area III. Twelve credits of electives may be taken from anywhere in the university, though the number of electives allowed in studio art, creative writing, or musical performance is at the discretion of the adviser and requires the permission of the instructor. In total, one-half of the student's course load must consist of YDS credits. An undergraduate major in the field of concentration or its equivalent is required.

Second Temple Judaism

The M.A.R. in Second Temple Judaism has a primary focus in the period between the Babylonian Exile (586–539 BCE) and the Jewish revolts against Rome in the period 66–135 CE. The rich literature of Second Temple Judaism includes many of the books of the Hebrew Bible and many New Testament texts, as well as a wide variety of texts not included in the later Jewish and Christian canons. Coursework therefore includes extensive work in Hebrew Bible and/or New Testament in addition to courses on other Second Temple literature. Students are expected to acquire high-level competence in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Study of Syriac and Latin is also encouraged. Students are also encouraged to take courses in rabbinic Judaism, in the Department of Religious Studies, as well as in Classics and the Archaia interdisciplinary program. The goal of the program is to familiarize students with the history and literature of Judaism in the

Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods and to read at least the literature that is extant in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in the primary languages. The concentration requires twelve credit hours in advanced Hebrew, twelve in other ancient languages, and twelve in the history and literature of the period, and allows twelve elective credits. It is expected that entering students will have successfully completed at least one year of Biblical Hebrew or Ancient Greek, so that they may immediately begin taking courses that require these languages. Admitted students who have not yet taken either of these languages are required to successfully complete an intensive online summer language course in either Biblical Hebrew or koine Greek the summer before enrolling. (Those students who have already taken one of these two languages are encouraged to use the summer course to begin work on the other.) This course is offered without charge to all YDS students, including incoming students, and counts for six course credits.

Theology

The program in Theology permits concentration in theological studies with a sequence of courses totaling eighteen credit hours selected for this purpose. Suggested concentrations are systematic, historical, or liberation theology. Ordinarily, six credit hours are required in Bible, and six credit hours in the history of Christian theology. Individual programs are designed utilizing these guidelines.

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies in Religion

The concentration in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) trains students in a number of skills pertinent to gender and sexuality studies, including textual interpretation and analysis, historical thinking, and approaches to visual and material culture, all with a relation to the religious (broadly construed). Students are encouraged to develop their own research agendas, which may be thematic, historical, theological, theoretical, or take a number of other forms, and to make use of resources from other departments and programs in the university, especially American Studies; Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies; and Ethnicity, Race, and Migration. Students typically pursue courses of study that prepare them for further work, whether in a professional or academic context, which is enabled by the flexibility of degree requirements for the WGSS M.A.R. Students work closely with faculty advisers to create a coherent program of study, which might focus on topics like queer art, women's history and biblical interpretation, gender and liturgy, queer theology, or the effect of religion on gender, sexuality, and health care, to name a few examples from recent years. Faculty interests include biblical interpretation, theology and ethics, preaching and pastoral care, visual and material culture, and liturgy. The concentration requires six credit hours in Bible (or other sacred texts, with the adviser's permission) and six credit hours in historical or theological study, in addition to eighteen credit hours in the WGSS concentration.

World Christianity/Missions

The concentration in World Christianity/Missions is designed for students who are interested in the historical expansion of Christianity and/or who wish to spend a period of time working with churches and organizations in other countries or who wish to pursue graduate studies in a relevant field. Students are required to take a range of courses dealing with Christianity in its historical, biblical, and theological

dimensions as well as Christianity's interface with culture and with other religions. Students may opt either for *Missions* or for *World Christianity* as their emphasis within the concentration. Twelve credit hours are required in the core curriculum of each emphasis. For either emphasis, six credit hours in foundation courses in biblical studies are required, as are six credit hours of work in theology and/or ethics and six credit hours in the history of Christianity. There are six credit hours of electives. Students who opt for the Missions emphasis will take a minimum of six credit hours in one of four geographic area studies programs of the university (Latin American, African, East Asian, or Southeast Asian studies) as well as six credit hours in World Christianity. Relevant courses in the other departments of the university may also be included after consultation with the adviser. For those emphasizing World Christianity within the concentration, six credit hours in Missions are required as well as six credit hours in world religions. Students may also opt for a major research writing project as part of their course requirement in consultation with their adviser.

THESIS AND PROJECT OPTIONS

A thesis or project in the second year is required of students enrolled in the History of Christianity concentration; for all other M.A.R. students, a second-year thesis or project is optional.

Candidates interested in a thesis or project must initiate the process by selecting first and second readers (either of whom may or may not be the academic adviser) appropriate to the topic who are willing and able to work with the student. Readers will ordinarily be Yale faculty members. However, with permission of the M.A.R. program director, the first reader can be a part-time or visiting Yale faculty member, and the second reader may be external to Yale.

Students must submit their thesis proposal form by the last day of classes in the semester prior to the term in which they hope to begin the project.

Key elements of the process include (1) a one-page description of the thesis or project; (2) signatures of the first reader, second reader, and academic adviser; (3) in the event the first reader is not a full-time member of the YDS faculty, a statement of support from a person who is a full-time member of the YDS faculty; (4) specification of what must be submitted as evidence of progress achieved by the Monday of the end of the open add/drop period in the semester in which the project or thesis is begun.

The M.A.R. program director reviews the completed application and makes a determination on whether or not the proposal is approved. Students who have not obtained approval prior to the start of the term in which the thesis or project will be initiated are advised to register for another class in the event that approval is not granted.

For M.A.R. concentrated program students, the academic adviser will determine area credit. Theses or projects written for the M.A.R. comprehensive program are eligible for elective credit only. The length of manuscripts for the thesis or project will vary depending on the subject matter, but a one-term thesis or project is typically thirty to fifty pages long; a two-term thesis or project, typically 60–100. All thesis and project students must register for the M.A.R. Thesis or Project course (REL 3899) for one or two terms.

Further details on thesis and project requirements are described in the document “Yale Divinity School Timeline Requirements for M.A.R./M.Div. Theses,” available in the registrar’s office.

In order to fulfill the library’s mission to collect, describe, and preserve intellectual content created by and within the school, M.A.R. students have the option to supply a PDF copy of their thesis, along with a thesis abstract of less than 300 words, to the registrar for archiving by the library. Students who wish this option must also complete a form with regard to authorship and access. The thesis copy must have a title page, be free of typographical errors, and employ an acceptable literary style, including standard forms for references.

EXTENDED DEGREE PROGRAM

An extended degree program is offered for selected students in the concentrated M.A.R. program. This allows students planning to apply for doctoral programs to strengthen their preparation through an additional year of academic study.

Each year, the number of openings available for the extended year is determined in late August/early September. The selection committee can fill no more than this number of openings but may develop a waiting list if warranted. There may be two selection rounds, the first in the fall term and a possible second round in the spring term. If students are not selected in the fall, they may reapply in the spring, if there are spaces available, along with students who did not submit their applications for the fall-term selection round.

Applications in the fall term are due by October 15; notifications are sent by November 15. Students must notify the YDS Admissions Office of their decision by March 20. Applications in the spring term are due by March 1; notifications are sent by March 26. Students must notify the YDS Admissions Office of their decision by April 15. Current ISM M.A.R. students interested in applying for the third year should contact the ISM Office of Admissions for details.

Students must include the following items in their applications:

1. address and email address;
2. area of concentration;
3. whether the student is or is not an ISM student;
4. a completed M.A.R. course plan (blank copies are downloadable online), with current/anticipated fourth-term courses included;
5. a statement explaining why the student wishes to extend the concentrated M.A.R. program, including the planned course of study for the third year (ordinarily, it is expected that students will pursue full-time study during the third year; if a student wishes to study part-time, the application must indicate how many courses will be taken);
6. a description of the doctoral program to which the student will be applying and how it fits into the statement of interest above;

7. two letters of recommendation from Yale faculty (One of these letters must be from a faculty member in the area of concentration. These letters should be sent directly to the Office of Academic Affairs); and
8. a copy of their Yale transcript.

Admission into the program is highly competitive and therefore it is advisable that students also make alternate plans.

Students receiving financial aid who are accepted into the extended degree program must submit a new financial aid application for their additional year of study. In their extended year, students are eligible for the same level of need-based YDS scholarship funding and federal loans as other MAR students, provided that Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is maintained.