



Graduate Programs in Spiritual and Pastoral Care

Department of Religious and Pastoral Studies | COLLEGE OF MOUNT ST. JOSEPH



Spiritual and Pastoral Care

The Mount's graduate programs in spiritual and pastoral care are designed to enhance students' capacity to provide authentic and meaningful care. Through graduate studies, students increase their ability to provide spiritual leadership in a diversity of roles and situations while integrating attention of the person with the Christian message and the social context.

Whether in a master's or certificate program, students examine what the virtue of caring means, and how it is an essential part of who we are as people and as professionals in our community. Furthermore, with a deeper understanding of care giving and its relationship to one's own religious heritage and spirituality, as well as the religious and cultural heritage of those served, graduate students will learn to nurture the wholeness and wellness of the spirit of persons and communities.

“Once or twice I thought ‘God, why am I here, a Baptist at a Catholic institution?’ But I was where I needed to be because of the size of the classes and the personal relationships the staff and faculty had with the students.”

Teresa Langford '98

Graduate Programs

Master of Arts in Religious Studies

- Major concentration in spiritual and pastoral care

Graduate Certificates

- Spiritual and Pastoral Care
- Pastoral Administration
- Religious Education
- Spiritual Direction

The graduate programs are designed to enhance and integrate the interpersonal systems and the theological skills of health care professionals, educators, ministers, business professionals, and religious leaders who serve within diverse professions and contexts.

For the convenience of working professionals with limited time, courses are offered through intensive evening and weekend formats. Students can continue working while completing the program requirements.

Small classes, academic advising and personal attention provide an environment conducive to learning, the development of pastoral competence and a true sense of community. The Department of Religious and Pastoral Studies retains nationally recognized experts from a variety of disciplines who bring their knowledge, skills and perspectives to the program.



Master of Arts in Religious Studies

Earn a Master of Arts in Religious Studies degree with a major concentration in spiritual and pastoral care. The two-year program is comprised of course work that explores topics such as theology, family and community systems, ethics, and socio-ecological dimensions of pastoral care. Additionally each student is required to choose between two in-depth field experiences as well as complete an integrating project.

Spiritual and Pastoral Care in Systems Courses

A total of 18 credit hours must be completed in the following courses:

- Faith, Crisis and Adult Development
- Family and Community Systems
- Pastoral Care and Counseling
- Socio-Ecological Dimensions of Pastoral Care
- Theology of Community and Leadership
- Theology of Ministry and Pastoral Care.

Theology Core Courses

To ensure theological breadth, successful completion of the following 12 hours in graduate theology courses is required:

- Biblical Themes in Spiritual and Pastoral Care
- Critical Issues in Ethics
- Critical Issues in Systemic Theology: God, Jesus, Church, Sacrament
- Spirituality and Wellness.

Pastoral PRAXIS Component

Students can choose between two in-depth field experiences to complete this three-hour requirement:

- A pastoral practicum in a mentored ministry setting designed to enhance pastoral knowledge, skills and the habit of theological reflection
- Participation in a transcultural immersion course experience, designed to examine pastoral care issues across cultures. The experience enhances cultural systems analysis and the habit of theological reflection.

Integrating Project

To ensure a student's ability to practically apply and integrate the spiritual and pastoral care theology and PRAXIS components of the program, a final three-hour synthesizing project that meets the following criteria is required:

- The research, design, implementation, and evaluation of a pastoral ministry area based on the learning accomplished in the program. It must blend theory with practice and academic studies with work experience.
- It must be linked as closely as possible to the student's present or projected ministry. The project is completed under the supervision of program faculty.
- The thesis paper will integrate and reflect the spiritual and pastoral care and theological learning from the curriculum.



Master's Degree Course Schedule

Year 1 Course Schedule

Fall Term

RPS 500 – Theology of Ministry and Pastoral Care
RPS 501 – Biblical Themes in Spiritual and Pastoral Care
RPS 575 – Integrating Project

Winter Term

RPS 502 – Family and Community Systems
RPS 503 – Critical Issues in Systematic Theology: God, Jesus, Church, Sacrament
RPS 510 – Socio-Ecological Dimensions of Pastoral Care
RPS 512 – Pastoral Practicum

Summer Term

RPS 527 – Faith, Crisis and Adult Development
RPS 590-595 – Theology and Anthropology Immersion Course
Summer Spirituality Institute

Year 2 Course Schedule

Fall Term

RPS 508 – Theology of Community and Leadership
RPS 542 – Critical Issues in Ethics
RPS 575 – Integrating Project

Winter Term

RPS 506 – Spirituality and Wellness
RPS 510 – Socio-Ecological Dimensions of Pastoral Care
RPS 512 – Pastoral Practicum
RPS 560 – Pastoral Care and Counseling

Summer Term

RPS 512 – Pastoral Practicum
RPS 527 – Faith, Crisis and Adult Development
RPS 590-595 – Theology and Anthropology Immersion Course
Summer Spirituality Institute



Visit www.msj.edu/catalogs for course descriptions and the most current course schedules. Details for the Summer Spirituality Institute can be found at www.msj.edu/spirituality.


Graduate Certificates

In addition to the master's degree, the Department of Religious and Pastoral Studies offers four cross-disciplinary graduate certificates for professionals who wish to enhance their careers in a spiritual context in the fields of education, health care, religious leadership, and business. Each certificate explores unique courses in theology as well as in business, education, communications, or legal studies. All certificates require the student to hold a bachelor's degree with the exception of the spiritual direction certificate, which is available for students with an existing graduate degree.

Spiritual and Pastoral Care

This 18-hour graduate certificate is specifically designed for students who are seeking a special focus in spirituality and pastoral care, or those seeking further graduate education.


Over the two-year curriculum, students increase their knowledge of self and spirituality and use it to provide competent pastoral/spiritual care. With the ability to think theologically about oneself as pastoral care provider, students can examine, assess and respond to a pastoral situation in terms of an individual, family, congregation, and community perspective.

 Visit www.msj.edu/spiritual-pastoral-care for a course schedule and course descriptions.

Pastoral Administration

Students who wish to combine the principles of ministerial administration, human resource management and organizational development benefit from this 18-hour graduate certificate. Based upon past education and experience, students select one of four academic tracks, one of which results in a master's degree plus the certificate.

Through the cross-disciplinary curriculum, graduate students identify and evaluate human, financial, spiritual, physical, and mission resources in the implementation of pastoral planning. This certificate will enable a graduate to adapt and integrate pastoral resources, theological content and theories of organizational leadership with opportunities in ministerial leadership. Additionally, one can critique the effectiveness of different models in ministerial problem solving.

 Visit www.msj.edu/pastoral-administration to learn more about the four academic tracks and the courses.

Religious Education

Designed for religious educators, this 18-hour graduate certificate helps students become knowledgeable about the learning process as well as the nature of faith and spiritual formation. Through a combination of education and religious studies courses, one will integrate human learning theory, educational practice and fundamental applications in a catechetical context.

After course work and a practicum, students will construct, implement and evaluate learning models based on faith and spiritual formation theory. This certificate will enable graduates to facilitate theological reflection.

 Visit www.msj.edu/religious-education for a course schedule and course descriptions.

Spiritual Direction

This 21-hour certificate prepares students to spiritually companion others in one-on-one and group models of spiritual care, providing a foundation for knowing and using diverse styles of prayer and techniques for spiritual direction. Students must possess an existing graduate degree.

The curriculum includes religious studies course work plus three practicums, which take place at the Sisters of Charity Spiritual Center. Students will understand the distinctive character of spiritual direction in the Christian tradition while applying and evaluating methods and models of spiritual direction in a ministerial setting. With the certificate, graduates will be able to develop one's ministerial identity as a spiritual director.

 Visit www.msj.edu/spiritual-direction for a course schedule and course descriptions.

Summer Spirituality Institute

The Mount's Department of Religious and Pastoral Studies sponsors the Summer Spirituality Institute, created in response to a growing interest in Christian spirituality within contemporary culture. The Institute features a week of dynamic speakers, engaging lectures and valuable courses centered around a current theme.

The courses and workshops are designed to attract professionals who draw upon principles of spiritual and pastoral care such as religious leaders, chaplains, counselors, nurses, and teachers as well as individuals who seek a deeper understanding of Christian spirituality for growth and development.

Courses are scheduled in the mornings, afternoons and evenings. Attendees can register for individual courses or the Institute in its entirety. The Institute is an excellent opportunity for graduate students to earn credit for successfully completed courses.

Visit www.msj.edu/spirituality for information on the upcoming Summer Spirituality Institute.

Admission Requirements

1. Completed application
2. A \$50.00 non-refundable application fee payable to the College of Mount St. Joseph
3. Academic transcripts: official undergraduate transcript(s) from a regionally accredited college or university, with a baccalaureate degree noted, sent directly from the undergraduate institution to the College's Office of Admission.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available to all students enrolled at the Mount, with priority given to those demonstrating financial need. Any student requesting financial aid must complete a FAFSA form; the Mount's code is 003033.

A special grant is available to any student enrolled in the graduate program in spiritual and pastoral care who is a paid or volunteer minister serving in a congregation, hospital, health care facility, social service agency, diocese, or educational institution. This College of Mount St. Joseph Ministry Tuition Grant reduces tuition during the summer semester to \$250 per credit hour, and tuition in all other semesters to \$300 per credit hour. Verification of employment/volunteer service and submission of an FAFSA form are required.

The Sisters of Charity Scholarships for Women in Graduate Education and Religious Pastoral Studies are available to female students who plan to enroll for 12 credit hours and who demonstrate financial need.

Note: Rates are subject to change. Visit www.msj.edu/financial-aid for the most current information.

Other Financing Options

Loans

Educational loans are available for students who are enrolled at least half time (six credit hours). Teacher Loan Forgiveness programs are available at www.ed.gov/fund. Students need to complete a FAFSA form; the Mount's code is 003033.

Payment Plans

The College offers an interest-free monthly payment plan with Tuition Management Systems. There is an annual fee to participate. You may enroll in this plan by calling 1-888-285-3052 or by visiting www.afford.com.

Your current employer may offer tuition remission, and you may consider our tuition deferment plan. We'll guide you through the options and opportunities for financing your education.



About the Mount

The College of Mount St. Joseph is a Catholic college with a mission to prepare students as global citizens with a liberal arts and professional education that emphasizes values, integrity and social responsibility. Smaller class sizes, career preparation and service learning experiences support the development and success of students. The Mount offers more than 35 undergraduate degree programs and nine associate degrees. In addition to religious studies, graduate programs are offered in education, nursing and organizational leadership as well as a doctor of physical therapy.



For More Information

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www.msj.edu/religious_studies