

Vanderbilt University Divinity School

Master of Divinity (84 hours)

Mission Statement

The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program is intended primarily for individuals interested in the possibilities of ministry and in the subject matter involved in preparation for such a vocation. The aim of the Master of Divinity program is to begin a process of education focusing on understanding Christian faith and its implications for human life. The vocation of Christian ministry is to interpret and represent Christian faith and to explore ways by which that faith can be embodied in the lives of people, the churches, and society. The faculty believes that all courses in the curriculum should contribute to this aim: the study of backgrounds, origins, and traditions; reflection on problems of faith and on moral, ecclesiastical, and social issues in the contemporary situation; and consideration of occasions of ministry, such as worship, preaching, counseling, administration, education, and social reform. All of these studies and activities presuppose each other and relate to each other in essential ways. The minister is a theologian, and as such draws on the full range of critical studies and reflection in his or her varied activities.

Degree Program Goals

1. Students are expected to demonstrate at least a minimum level of competency in the following areas: Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East, New Testament and Early Christianity, Religious History, Ethics and Society, Constructive Christian Theology, Supervised Ministry, and Ministerial Arts.
2. Students are expected to reflect on issues of faith and on moral, ecclesiastical, and social issues in the contemporary situation.
3. Students will develop the ability to think critically and theologically as well as to synthesize theory and practice.
4. Students will develop ministry skills in conjunction with their vocational goals.
5. Students will develop competencies in each of the following areas: Religions and Inter-religious Encounter; Religion, Gender and Sexuality Studies; and Religion and African-American, Race, and Class Studies.

Master of Theological Studies (51 hours)

Mission Statement

The Master of Theological Studies program provides a well-coordinated course of study in the several theological disciplines necessary for persons interested in subsequently pursuing: teaching vocations in religious studies at secondary and some postsecondary schools, doctoral study in the broad field of religion, diaconal ministries in certain faith traditions, or work in social justice oriented non-profit organizations. This program can also serve persons interested in enhancement of their own religious faith and understanding.

Degree Program Goals

1. Students are expected to demonstrate at least a minimum level of competency in the following areas: Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East, New Testament and Early Christian Origins, Religious History, Ethics and Society, Theological Studies, Religion, Personality and Culture, and Interreligious Encounter/Study of Religion.
2. Students should develop the capacity to analyze texts (broadly conceived) carefully.
3. Students should develop the capacity to analyze carefully historical and contemporary social contexts.
4. Students should develop the capacity for critical thinking.
5. Students should develop the capacity for making constructive arguments.