Graduate Theological Union
Common Master of Arts Program Application Instructions

Deadlines: February 1 for the following fall; September 30 for the following spring

The Common M.A. program is designed to provide you with a foundational knowledge of both classical and modern methods of understanding theology and the study of religion. Through the resources of the member schools and Centers, the GTU offers a full range of areas of concentration that allow you to develop skills for conducting analytical research at the graduate level. We encourage you to apply online at http://www.gtu.edu/admissions/applications/MA, where you can also download the application form.

Select a School of Affiliation and Area of Concentration

Select a school of affiliation, based primarily upon an intention to focus on an area of study concentration where you can pursue your primary academic interests. Not all Areas of study are available at all member schools. Indicate your first choice of a school of affiliation by writing a “1” in the line next to the school initials, a “2” next to your second choice, and a “3” next to your third choice. If your application is judged favorably and the first-choice school does not have the resources to meet your needs, your application will be sent to the school of your second or third choice.

Member Schools, Centers, and Institutes offering MA concentrations
- ABSW American Baptist Seminary of the West
- CDSP Church Divinity School of the Pacific
- CIS Center for Islamic Studies (Islamic Studies only)
- CJS Center for Jewish Studies (Jewish Studies only)
- DSPT Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
- FST Franciscan School of Theology
- IBS Institute of Buddhist Studies (Buddhist Studies only)
- JST Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University
- PAOI Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute (Orthodox Christian Studies only)
- PLTS Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
- PSR Pacific School of Religion
- SFTS San Francisco Theological Seminary
- SKSM Starr King School for the Ministry

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GTU Admissions: 510-649-2460 or 800-826-4488   Fax: 510-649-1730   email: gtuadm@gtu.edu
Academic and Professional Background

Transcripts: Applicants must submit two (2) official transcripts of all post-secondary school work. Official transcripts are documents issued by the institution that bear the actual signature of the registrar and the seal of the institution. List all post-secondary schools you have attended, with the most recent first. If further space is needed, include an additional sheet. If you have not completed your bachelor’s degree, submit an in-progress transcript showing work to date. If you have previously attended either the GTU or one of its member schools, you must request transcripts from them; we cannot request them for you.

Applicants intending to transfer credit should download the petition form on the web site. The maximum number of units that may be transferred toward the M.A. are: 12 units (four 3-unit courses) from an outside institution; 24 units (eight 3-unit courses) from a degree program at a GTU member school; 12 units (four 3-unit courses) from non-degree student status at the GTU or a member school. Transferring units into the M.A. program does not necessarily lessen the requirement of two years of residence and tuition.

Language Study: During the course of the M.A. program students are required to demonstrate proficiency in one modern foreign language. Please indicate your background in any languages in which you are proficient.

Professional Experience: Provide information about your research and work experience that will be useful in considering your application, and also list honors, fellowships or other commendations of note.

Statement of Academic Purpose

This is your opportunity to explain your academic interests clearly, and to show how they fit with the GTU M.A. program and the school of affiliation you have selected. You are also encouraged to indicate abilities or aspects of your academic background that will contribute to your proposed further study. Part of the challenge of this statement is that it should be succinct (300-500 words). This is a critical part of the application process, and should be typewritten and signed.

Letters of Recommendation

Three letters of recommendation are required. Note that these are academic recommendations, not character references. Letters are requested by the applicant and submitted by the recommender via the online application system. Online applicants provide the email addresses of their recommenders, and once the application is submitted an email is automatically sent to the recommender with instructions for completing the letter online. Recommendation forms are available for downloading at http://www.gtu.edu/admissions/applications/MA If you do not use the online system, we suggest that your recommenders either mail the letter to us directly, or seal the letter in an envelope, sign across the seal and return it to you to send with your application. Make sure to inform recommenders of the application deadline, and provide them with a stamped envelope addressed to the Admissions Office, Graduate Theological Union, 2400 Ridge Road, Berkeley, CA 94709.

Scores from the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or TOEFL

All applicants whose native language is English are required to submit GRE scores from an exam taken within the last five years. Scores should be sent from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to the GTU Admissions Office (institution code 4336). International applicants from countries where English is not the official language and who have not completed a degree in the United States, are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in place of the GRE. Scores must be from an exam taken within the last two years. To schedule to take the exam, go to one of the following web sites: www.gre.org or www.toefl.org
INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

International applicants to the M.A. program must:

• Submit official records from each academic institution attended after secondary school. Official records bear the actual signature of the registrar and the seal of the issuing institution. Photocopies are acceptable only if (1) each copy is signed by an academic official who certifies that it is an exact copy of the original document; and (2) it bears the seal and title of the authorizing official. Photocopies of the official’s signature, stamp, or seal are not acceptable.

• Submit official academic records in the original language, accompanied by English translations. Specially prepared English versions are not acceptable in place of documents issued in the original language. Academic records must show the dates of your enrollment, all subjects or courses, units, credits or hours, and grades in each subject. All records must include a complete description of institutional grading scales or other standards of evaluation with maximum grades and minimum marks indicated. Submit official evidence of the conferral of all degrees, diplomas, or professional titles and the date (month and year) of the formal conferral. These certificates should indicate the exact name of the degree, diploma, or title as it is known in the country of origin and not in North American terms.

• International students will need to demonstrate adequate financial support after admission.

Submitting the Application for Review

Submit transcripts and letters of recommendation to the GTU Admissions Office. If you are submitting a paper application we recommend that you have all transcripts and recommendations sent to you so that you can mail your materials all together, if possible. This will give you the assurance that all materials will arrive on time. We will notify you by email to update you about the items we have received. Completed applications will be evaluated by the Member School and GTU M.A. Admissions Committees.

Application Fee— $40

If you apply online you will pay by credit card. If you submit a paper application the fee should be paid by check. Your name must be imprinted or written legibly on the front of the check. Fees must be in U.S. dollars for all international money orders or checks drawn on a U.S. bank. DO NOT SEND CASH.

Your application will not be processed without the application fee.

The Graduate Theological Union supports equality of educational opportunity. No student shall be denied admission nor discriminated against in any way because of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, national origin, age, or disability. The GTU is proud of its diversity and welcomes applications from all who are qualified academically to pursue graduate studies.

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Application Checklist

- Apply online at http://www.gtu.edu/admissions/applications/MA
- Three academic letters of recommendation, submitted by faculty online, or by mail
- Official GRE or TOEFL scores sent to the GTU (inst. 4336) from Educational Testing Service
- Sealed envelopes containing official Academic Transcripts
  (two from each post-secondary school attended)

If you are using a paper application, also send:

- Two copies of the GTU Application Form (signed)
- Two copies of Statement of Purpose (signed)
- Application Fee

All materials submitted as part of the application are the property of the Graduate Theological Union and are not returnable to the applicant. Materials submitted for admission become the basis for the successful applicant's permanent file at the GTU, with the exception of letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation serve to aid the Admissions Committee in assessing skills and the student’s match with the GTU program, and are destroyed once admission decisions are made.

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