

SYSTEMATIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Degrees Offered

Ph.D./Th.D.

Objectives

The primary objective of the Area is to educate doctoral students for scholarly research and teaching. They will interpret the Christian tradition, in the context of the ecumenical and interreligious consortium of the Graduate Theological Union, and in response to the challenges posed by contemporary cultures. Students and faculty analyze this tradition by tracing the history of theological ideas and contemporary reconceptualizations. The methodological starting point for this program is taken from twentieth- and twentyfirst century developments in Protestant and Roman Catholic theology. Those developments are understood in light of their historical sources with a view toward contemporary constructive thought.

In consultation with their advisor, students are expected to design a personalized program that provides them with solid grounding in a specific theological discipline, while integrating dimensions of interdisciplinary academic study into their theological curricula. Students will pursue a theologically or philosophically oriented program, engaging with a variety of issues and resources. These resources include those housed in the various GTU Affiliates and Programs, or are available from neighboring institutions such as the University of California in Berkeley.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

The student must show competence in two foreign languages (not a computer or mathematical language) in which a substantial theological literature exists. Proficiency must be shown in both languages before proceeding to the Special Comprehensive Exams. The Area reserves the right to require additional languages if they are crucial to a student's chosen course of study.

COURSEWORK

During their first two years of course work, students are advised to take several advanced seminars for credit each semester. Students are required to take the annually offered classes ST 5020 *Methods and Doctrines I (History of Theology)* and ST 5021 *Methods and Doctrines II (Contemporary Theology)* preferably during their first year.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

The Comprehensive Exam on Theological Methodology

At the conclusion of the second required class, *Methods and Doctrines in Contemporary Theology*, the faculty teaching the class will administer a standardized four hour (6 hours with ESL petition) closed book exam. This comprehensive exam will be taken by all students prior to all other comprehensive exams, and will therefore not be included in the comprehensive exam proposal.

The student proposes a Comprehensive Examination committee after passing the Theological Methodology Examination. This committee has to be approved by the GTU Academic Dean before the student's proposal is presented to the Area for its approval. Comprehensive Examinations allow students to develop academic expertise in their chosen field while keeping breadth of perspective in view.

There are three written Comprehensive Exams plus an oral defense:

1. *The History of Theology*. The first exam tests the student's grasp of a significant doctrine or idea through each of four historical periods (Early Church, Medieval/Reformation, Modern, Contemporary).

2. *Major Figure*. For this exam the student may take a four-hour closed-book single sitting exam, write a 25-40 page paper, or design and teach a course (following the procedures for the latter in the *GTU Doctoral Handbook*).

3. *Contemporary Theological Problem*. For this exam, the student may take a four-hour closed-book single sitting exam, or write a 25-40 page paper (following the procedures for the latter in the *GTU Doctoral Handbook*), or design and teach a course (provided this option was not used for the 'major figure' part of the exam). The exam may take one of two forms: 3a. a *Historical Trajectory* or 3b. a *Constructive Proposal*.

DISSERTATION

Dissertations in the Systematic and Philosophical Theology Area are limited to 100,000 words, including text, documentation, and bibliography (approximately 400 pages). Further details regarding the dissertation and oral defense are found in the Area Protocol and the *GTU Doctoral Handbook*.

ALLIED FIELD REQUIREMENTS

Students applying to Systematic and Philosophical Theology as an allied field are accepted by the Area faculty, and an initial Area advisor is assigned by the Area Convener. Students are required to complete the required courses ST-5020 Methods and Doctrines I (History of Theology) and ST-5021 Methods and Doctrines II (Contemporary Theology) and to successfully complete the associated standardized comprehensive exam.