

Graduate School of Theology

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Faculty

Frederick Aquino, *Professor*

Brady Bryce, *Assistant Professor*

Jeff Childers, *Professor*

Kenneth Cukrowski, *Associate Professor*

Chris Flanders, *Associate Professor*

Douglas Foster, *Professor*

Kelli Bryant Gibson, *Assistant Professor*

Mark Hamilton, *Professor*

Stephen Johnson, *Associate Professor*

Royce Money, *Professor*

Carson E. Reed, *Assistant Professor*

Timothy Sensing, *Professor*

James Thompson, *Scholar in Residence*

Melinda Thompson, *Associate Professor*

Richard Wright, *Associate Professor*

Faculty from other departments who teach in this program:

Jon Camp, *Associate Professor, Communication and Sociology*

Craig Churchill, *Associate Professor of Library Science
and Theological Librarian*

Randy Harris, *Instructor, DBMM*

Houston Heflin, *Associate Professor, DBMM*

Christopher Hutson, *Associate Professor, DBMM*

Curt Niccum, *Professor, DBMM*

Jerry Taylor, *Associate Professor, DBMM*

Wendell Willis, *Professor, DBMM*

David Wray, *Faculty Emeritus, CBS*

Introduction

The Graduate School of Theology at Abilene Christian University offers a variety of degrees and programs designed to meet the complex needs of its students. Its goal is to be both academically rigorous and practical in equipping students for effective ministry.

The faculty view their work as integral to the university's mission: *to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world*. All programs attempt to instill in students the heart and nature of Christ, opportunities for service and spiritual growth, and educational and ministry opportunities in the U.S. and abroad.

Mission

The Graduate School of Theology is located in the College of Biblical Studies and is vitally engaged in its goals and tasks. The stated mission of the college is *to provide leadership preparation and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ*.

The mission of the Graduate School of Theology is *to equip men and women for effective missional leadership for ministry in all its forms and to provide strong academic foundations for theological inquiry*. It is within this framework that the Graduate School of Theology has set its purposes:

- to prepare men and women for effective work in a variety of ministry settings;
- to provide specific ministry skills in the areas of preaching, teaching, worship, missions, pastoral counseling, congregational ministry, youth and family ministry, children's ministry, church leadership, spiritual formation, and program development;
- to provide adequate academic foundations to students in the various theological disciplines including textual studies, biblical languages, church history, and historical theology;
- to provide an academic and interpersonal environment by which the theological disciplines can be integrated one with another as well as with the students' ministry skills and their personal spiritual development;
- to equip adequately those students who desire advanced academic work including doctoral studies in schools of religion, seminaries, or universities.

The Graduate School of Theology is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). This accreditation guarantees that programs and faculty are of the highest quality. Students must complete all master's degree requirements within ten years and doctoral degree requirements within six years. The degree requirements are the same for both residential and online students.

Degrees Offered

The **Master of Arts (MA)** degree, a 48-hour thesis program, includes tracks in New Testament, Old Testament, Theology, Ancient and Oriental Christianity, and Modern and American Christianity.

The **Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM)** a 48-hour degree, for specialized ministry.

In cooperation with the School of Social Work and the Department of Marriage and Family Studies, the Graduate School of Theology has developed plans whereby students can pursue the MACM concurrently with the MSSW or MMFT degrees.

The **Master of Arts in Global Service (MAGS)** is a 48-hour program that provides an innovative, real-world curriculum that will equip Christian leaders for service in global contexts.

The **Master of Divinity (MDiv)** is a 72-hour comprehensive degree, which integrates the various theological disciplines with the practice of ministry and personal spiritual formation. A mission track is also available.

The Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, Master of Arts in Global Service and Master of Divinity degrees integrate writing and research skills with the practice of ministry. Opportunities for contextual education in ministry are integral to these degree programs. Students are required to participate in a junior and senior portfolio review prior to graduation.

The **Doctor of Ministry (DMin)** is a 33-hour post-MDiv advanced professional degree designed to enhance the minister's competency and skill in performing the essential tasks of ministry.

The departmental faculty combines the finest academic preparation from some of the world's outstanding universities with intense interest in the effective practice of ministry.

Admission Requirements

Admission requirements for the Masters of Arts and Master of Divinity are as follows:

1. A completed application for admission with a nonrefundable application fee;
2. An official transcript(s) in English (or translated to English) of all previous colleges attended. The transcript must indicate an earned bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or equivalent;
3. A cumulative undergraduate approximate B average or above in the area of focus or related area and evidence of an overall productive GPA;
4. Two letters of recommendation; and

5. A reflective essay, three to five pages in length (typed, double-spaced) following the guidelines on the GST website, www.acu.edu/gst.

Registration for courses begins in April (for fall) and October (for spring and summer). Students are therefore urged to submit all admission materials before registration begins.

Online Option

The Graduate School of Theology offers online options for the MDiv, MACM, and MAGS degrees. Students may take a combination of online and residential classes, allowing them to remain in their local ministry context while pursuing advanced theological education. Online courses are taught by GST faculty and qualified adjuncts. Residential classes may be offered as week-long intensives, two-weekend courses, or over the full semester for those within driving distance of Abilene. Intensive classes are offered on the ACU campus and at approved course offering sites in Accra, Ghana and Zagreb, Croatia.

The Association of Theological Schools requires all vocational ministry students to earn a certain percentage of their degree in a face-to-face setting. The GST has special permissions (ATS-approved exceptions to Degree Program Standard A, section A.3.1.3. and Standard B, section B.3.1.3.) which only require our students to take four classes (12 credit hours) in residence, regardless of their degree program. Students should consult with their advisor to determine which classes may be taken online and which should be taken in residence.

Candidacy Process

The Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM), Master of Arts in Global Service (MAGS), and the Master of Divinity (MDiv) are formational degrees that require students to make progress in their academic, personal, and professional development. Therefore, students will be required to apply for candidacy during their Junior Portfolio Review. (after completing 21 hours for MACM and MAGS; 27 hours for MDiv).

Scholarships and Assistantships

The Graduate School of Theology awards scholarships that cover part of a student’s tuition. Most Graduate School of Theology students receive scholarships each year. To be eligible, a student must be planning to do full-time ministry after graduation. In addition, the Graduate School of Theology awards many graduate assistantships each year. The deadline for applying for scholarships and assistantships is June 1 for fall and November 1 for spring. Scholarship applications received after these dates will be considered only if funds are available.

Multiple Degrees

Students enrolled simultaneously or sequentially in two master’s programs in the Graduate School of Theology may overlap some courses in both degrees. However, no more than 24 hours can be shared, and all requirements for both degrees must be met.

MASTER OF ARTS IN GLOBAL SERVICE (MAGS)

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The Master of Arts in Global Service is a 48-hour program that provides an innovative, real-world curriculum that will equip Christian leaders for service in global contexts. It aims to serve learners who desire advanced education for ministries that require living, working, and communicating in the intercultural contexts typical of today’s global society. Drawing upon theology, sociology, anthropology, history, and communication theory, MAGS challenges learners to analyze contemporary global concerns, formulate Christian perspectives, and explore solutions to intercultural challenges. Learners will engage the practices of global service through a mix of graduate courses, contextual learning opportunities, and mentoring in the competencies necessary for Christian leadership and service in intercultural contexts. The result is *theologically formed, missiologically adept, interculturally competent* leaders who are prepared for effective and sustainable service in a variety of settings.

Persons admitted with some advanced theological study or with extensive undergraduate studies in Bible, religion, and ministry may receive up to 12 hours of advanced standing. Consult with the advisor.

The degree has a thesis option. Consult with the advisor.

Major Code: MAGS

Master of Arts in Global Service (MAGS)

MAGS: MASTER OF ARTS IN GLOBAL SERVICE	
PRE-REQUISITE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS	
This program requires a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution. Students with extensive undergraduate studies in Bible, religion, and ministry may receive up to 12 hours of advanced standing.	
MAJOR REQUIREMENTS	
Orientation	
BIBM 602 GST Orientation (0 hours)	0
Core Courses	
BIBM 603 Foundations of the Theology of Ministry.....	3
BIBM 651 Supervised Practice of Ministry I.....	1
BIBM 652 Supervised Practice of Ministry II.....	1
BIBM 656 Supervised Practice of Ministry IV	1
BIBM 657 Contexts of Ministry	3
BMIS 619 Church and Mission.....	3
BIBM 678 Senior Portfolio Preparation.....	0
TOTAL	12
Witness	
BIBH 674 Christian Mission in Global Contexts.....	3
BIBL 680 Christian Scripture	3
BIBL 682 Teaching Scripture in Contemporary Contexts	3
BIBD 678 Philosophy of Religion	3
BIBH 651 History of Christianity I: Early & Medieval <i>or</i>	
BIBH 652 History of Christianity II: Reformation to Present.....	3
BIBD 660 Systematic Theology I	3
TOTAL	18
Mission	
BMIS 646 Foundations of Missional Practice.....	3
BMIS 649 Reading & Engaging Contemporary Cultures	3
BMIS 650 Leadership in Intercultural Contexts.....	3
BMIS 671 Supervised Research in Missions	3
BMIS 616 Witness in Global Context.....	3
BMIS/BIBM Elective.....	3

TOTAL	18
TOTAL MAJOR HOURS	48
OPTIONAL THESIS (Consult with advisor)	
BIBL 699 Master's Thesis	6
TOTAL	6
OTHER GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	
English Bible exam, e-portfolio review or oral exam for thesis, and mentoring.	