



Seven Foundational Courses

Course Descriptions

Archdiocese of Seattle

There are seven required foundational courses of the fifteen total completed courses for the MA in Pastoral Ministries. These seven courses form the foundation upon which various concentrations and emphases can be made during the students' program of study. Each course is four units delivered in a 10-week quarter.

PMIN 201: Theological Foundations for Ministry

The discipline of practical theology reflects critically on the Christian faith as it takes shape in the sociocultural contexts Christians inhabit. In keeping with these disciplinary aims, this course explores diverse ways in which the Catholic, Christian faith is articulated and lived in the global Church and, in particular, in the practice of ministry. Our work is, then, **theological** insofar as it seeks to understand more fully the tenets of our faith through the practice of theological reflection on God, Christ, Spirit, Church, Creation, Eschatology, and so on. It is **practical** insofar as it focuses on the **lived experience** of that faith: not simply what it means to say that "Jesus is Lord," but what it means to say "Jesus is Lord" in a specific time and place, taking stock of the cares and concerns of local Christian communities.

In keeping with the GPPM's twofold emphasis on cultivating **theological reflection** and **pastoral-ministerial skills**, this course aims to equip students with the conceptual tools necessary to engage in critical reflection on the Christian faith—to engage in theology as "faith seeking understanding"—and to apply the fruits of that reflection to the life of faith and the task of ministry in a diverse global church. To achieve this end, we will engage in reading, writing, and thinking in an atmosphere of mutual, constructive engagement to discuss the challenges and opportunities practical theology offers the contemporary church and those who minister in its name.

Two courses fulfill the required course in the Hebrew Bible –

EITHER

PMIN 208: The Hebrew Bible and Social Justice

This class invites students into conversations about the Hebrew Bible's concern for social justice in relation to the world today and each student's ministry. Saturday Retreat Sessions: The Saturday sessions are structured as "retreats" devoted to three major themes:

- (1) The biblical quest for justice as a ministry issue.
- (2) The linkage between the biblical vision for justice and Catholic social teaching.
- (3) The on-going struggle to bring hope to a suffering world.

OR

PMIN 205: Studying the Hebrew Bible: Issues and Methods

Scope: What did the Hebrew Bible mean for its own day and what is its enduring message? And how can critical, scholarly engagement with the sacred text enlighten and enrich our ministries for the life of the Church? In addressing these questions, this course considers the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in its historical and literary aspects and as a theological text.

Methods: We explore a variety of scholarly methods currently used to interpret and understand the Hebrew Bible. Literary, socio-historical, cultural and theological studies are employed to examine the original context of the scriptures and to relate them to human suffering and social injustice today.

Two courses fulfill the required course in the New Testament –

EITHER

PMIN 210: The New Testament

An introduction to the socio-historical contexts, literary characteristics, and theological messages of the New Testament texts, with special attention to the methodology of biblical exegesis. Exploration of the pastoral issues facing the original authors will serve as a resource for theological reflection on how the minister might translate the good news in Christian communities today, in service of justice and peace.

OR

PMIN 209: The Gospels

The New Testament texts that figure most prominently in the life of the Church are the Gospels, that tell the story of Jesus in largely the same way. These are the gospels that shape the three-year lectionary cycle of the Church, and thus the texts from which we receive most of our traditions about the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and the gospel message. This course introduces you to these central texts, to the figure of Jesus in them, and to the early Christian authors and audiences who wrote them. As the foundational New Testament course, it also introduces you to the spiritual and intellectual discipline of biblical studies through its focus on methods of inquiry and tools of study. The course privileges Catholic perspectives on the interpretation of scripture in the life of the Church, perspectives that amplify the voice of the poor and marginalized as we reflect on what the “good news” might mean today.

PMIN 203: Christology

This course introduces students to the historical development of Christian faith in Jesus Christ and contemporary Christological reflections on that faith from Christian communities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States. Special attention will be given to the relevance of all course materials to intercultural ministry in the Catholic Church today. The course begins with an examination of the figure of Jesus and the movement that formed around him before and after Easter. Students will examine the historical Jesus and views of him in the New Testament, situating both in the first century Judaism and the Roman occupation of Palestine. The course then studies the emergence of Christian creeds and doctrines about Jesus Christ. These doctrines are first considered as historical developments of early Christian witnesses to faith in Jesus Christ and historicizations of ancient traditions in a different cultural context (e.g., the Church’s encounter with Greek and North African cultures), and second, as global norms for Christian beliefs about Jesus Christ. The course concludes with an examination of ancient Christological reflections on sin, salvation history, God’s reign and their interpretation by Christian communities in Africa, Asia, and the U.S. today.

Two courses fulfill the required course on the study of the Church -

EITHER

PMIN 205: Ecclesiology

This course provides theological foundations in ecclesiology (the study of the church) for graduate students in pastoral ministry. Grounded in the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council and postconciliar and contemporary developments, this course explores the nature and mission of the church as the pilgrim people of God in communion, theologies of ministry, and teaching and governance in the church. These topics are considered in theological, historical, and global perspectives.

OR

PMIN 206: Church History

This course is an historical survey of Catholic Christianity from its origins to the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). As surveys go, it's meant to lend an impression that lingers—one that informs broadly but also relies on occasionally closer scrutiny of select topics. The course is studiously multi-disciplinary, approaching major developments in Catholicism from a variety of perspectives and historical sources.

Either one of two courses fulfills the requirement for Sacraments and Liturgy –

EITHER

PMIN 213: Sacraments and Liturgy

This course will look first at how all people use symbol and ritual to define and create their world and themselves. It will then investigate and experience specific Christian rituals and symbols to learn how they create and recreate a specifically Christian world.

OR

PMIN 214: Sacramental Theology

An exploration of the history and development of sacramental theology with emphasis on contemporary pastoral issues. We will primarily explore the role that symbols and rituals play in Christianity; how they shape Christian lives and renew our faith. On a second level, we will explore the ways that Christians have described the role of symbols and rituals in their lives and how those symbols and rituals aid in their salvation. Put another way, we will look at how human beings are symbolically- constructed creatures, and the way in which God communicates Godself to us through the symbolic order, and especially through the Church's seven sacraments.

Either one of two courses fulfills the requirement for Theological Ethics –

EITHER PMIN 211: Issues in Moral Theology

Participants will be invited into an examination of the vibrant and living tradition of Catholic moral theology. A foundational consideration of Catholic moral principles is considered, and the principles are then applied to contemporary moral issues. The course will use official documents and other sources for these considerations.

OR

PMIN 212: Catholic Social Teaching

This course examines the vibrant and living tradition of Catholic social thought. It explores key features of Christian social responsibility through analysis of the official encyclicals and pastorals that comprise Catholic social teaching. In addition to surveying the encyclical tradition as it has developed over the past 125 years, its theological foundations, and its function, it explores the pastoral implications of its key themes and core commitments.