

PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Certificate in Theological Education

Submitted by the Department of Theology and Religious Studies
February 5, 2019

OVERVIEW

TRS proposes revising the focus and requirements of the “Certificate of Advanced Studies,” which currently exists as a post-master’s option in the TRS graduate program offerings (*Graduate Studies Bulletin 2018-2020*, p. 115, see appendix). TRS considers this proposal a revision of an existing program, and thus not necessarily subject to review by CAP, Faculty Council, or the full faculty. However, after consultation with the chair of CAP, TRS decided to submit this proposal in order to solicit the opinion of Faculty Council as to the best path for implementation.

Our argument can be stated succinctly: The proposed “Certificate in Theological Education” would advance the mission of the university and the department, increase graduate enrollment, enhance the experience of current graduate students, involve minimal adjustment to current course offerings, draw on already existing staffing, require little-to-no additional expense, and have no noticeable impact on programs/departments outside of TRS. In effect, the proposal involves repackaging what TRS is already doing in order to address the needs of a particular group of potential students. The proposal has the support of the entire department and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. It was specifically commended by the most recent report of the external Academic Program Review Committee (December 22, 2018).

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Current Program: The *Graduate Studies Bulletin* lists a “Certificate of Advanced Studies” consisting of 18 graduate credits in TRS and designed for students who already have a master’s degree and some training in theology or religious studies. While still “on the books,” this certificate option has fallen into dormancy. No student has completed the certificate in more than ten years. This fact is due largely to the generic, undifferentiated nature of the certificate (failing to address the needs of any particular group), the stringent admissions requirement (requiring at least 18 hours of prior work in theology/religious studies *and* a master’s degree), and absence of any marketing or promotion.

Proposed Changes: TRS seeks to reinvigorate the certificate by making four changes. These include: (1) program focus, (2) admission requirements, (3) program requirements, and (4) course offerings.

1. Program Focus: The proposed Certificate in Theological Education seeks to attract as its primary audience high school theology teachers. Over the past three years, TRS, in conjunction with the Breen Chair in Catholic Theology, has increased its outreach to teachers in Catholic high schools in Cleveland and surrounding dioceses. Since 2016, the Breen Chair (Hahnenberg)

has organized an annual day-long workshop at JCU designed for theology teachers. To date, these workshops have drawn to campus 163 teachers, from 49 schools, in 10 Catholic dioceses. Workshop participants have consistently assessed the experience positively, with 95-97% agreeing that this event should be held at least one a year. The success of the workshops has led to the development of a resource website (www.theologyforteachers.com), podcast series, and greater collaboration with the Diocese of Cleveland, individual schools, and their theology departments. The natural next step is to draw more of these teachers into coursework at JCU. Evaluations from the October 2018 workshop indicated that 69% of these teachers would find a graduate certificate program for theology teachers “helpful” or “extremely helpful.” 58% of those surveyed indicated that their school would help reimburse tuition for coursework.

2. Admission Requirements: Following the first workshop in 2016, an online survey of theology teachers in Cleveland Catholic schools revealed that over half (52%) already hold a master’s degree in theology/ministry/ religious studies. Thus, TRS realized that we needed to promote other programs in addition to our M.A. degree. The difficulty with the current “Certificate of Advanced Studies” is that it is limited to post-master’s students. We intend to attract a broader range of teacher-students. By removing the admissions requirement of a master’s degree, the new “Certificate in Theological Education” hopes to attract teachers falling into at least three categories: (1) those without a master’s degree seeking the certificate only, (2) those without a master’s degree seeking the certificate along the way toward completing a JCU M.A., and (3) those *with* a master’s degree seeking to deepen their skills and knowledge base by taking courses directly relevant to their work. Admission requirements for the new certificate would be the same as those currently in place for our M.A. program (*Graduate Studies Bulletin 2018-2020*, p. 113).

3. Program Requirements: The new “Certificate in Theological Education” would comprise 15 credits derived from five core courses (with the option of substituting other 400- or 500-level JCU TRS courses for up to two core courses, depending on student needs). The change brings the TRS certificate into better alignment with other graduate certificate programs. It also seeks to leverage financial incentives, as a number of Catholic schools in Cleveland offer a pay scale for teachers based on the following milestones: BA; BA + 15 graduate credits; MA; MA + 15 credits.

4. Course Offerings: The revised certificate would not add to the total number of graduate courses currently being offered by TRS each semester. Instead, the department would revise and rename courses already in the bulletin so that the course objectives, assignments, and other materials better align with the standard content areas in the high school theology curriculum. More detailed information can be found under “Program Curriculum” below.

Current Certificate of Advanced Studies	Proposed Certificate in Theological Education
<p>Admission Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of master’s degree • Evidence of 18 hours of undergraduate or graduate work in religious studies, theology, or equivalent • Official transcripts • Two letters of recommendation • Personal statement 	<p>Admission Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official transcript(s) of baccalaureate degree • Two letters of recommendation • Personal statement
<p>Program Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 graduate credits in TRS beyond M.A. • Specific course requirements determined according to individual student’s needs. Ordinarily at least one course in search of the following: scripture, historical theology, systematic theology, religious ethics, and world religions) 	<p>Program Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 graduate credits in TRS • 5 core courses (TRS 400, 532, 534, 560, 581) • Up to 2 core courses may be replaced by other 400- or 500-level TRS courses depending on student needs. TRS 581 is required for certificate.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Program Learning Goals: The “Certificate in Theological Education” shares the learning goals for the TRS M.A. degree. Successful certificate completion equips students to:

TRS SLO 1. Critically analyze the religious dimensions of human experience as expressed in sacred texts, art, ritual practice, ethical commitments, philosophy theology, and social structures.

TRS SLO 2. Appreciate how religious or ethical traditions provide resources for responding to injustice and living ethically.

Rationale for Requirements: In 2007, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops published *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*. This framework lays out a schedule of six required semester-long courses, and five elective courses, designed to structure the theology curriculum for all Catholic high schools in the U.S. The 15-credit course sequence for the certificate is designed to align with the main content areas covered by the bishops’ curriculum:

High School Curriculum	JCU Certificate Courses
I. The Revelation of Christ in Scripture	TRS 400: Scripture & Revelation
II. Who is Jesus Christ?	TRS 532: Jesus & the Pascal Mystery
III. The Mission of Jesus Christ (Paschal Mystery)	
IV. Jesus Christ's Mission Continues in the Church	TRS 534: Church & Sacrament
V. Sacraments as Privileged Encounters with Christ	
VI. Life in Jesus Christ	TRS 560: Catholic Moral Theology
	TRS 581: Teaching Theology and Religious Studies

Course Descriptions: The five core courses either already exist or involve revising courses that already exist in the in the *Graduate Studies Bulletin 2018-2020*. Below are the course descriptions.

TRS 400: SCRIPTURE & REVELATION 3 cr.
(replaces current TRS 400: Engaging Scriptures)

Problems of and approaches to understanding the Jewish and Christian scriptures as “revelatory texts.” Special focus on the methods essential to exegesis, biblical interpretation, and contemporary uses of the scriptures.

TRS 532: JESUS & THE PASCAL MYSTERY 3 cr.
(replaces current TRS 532: Christology)

Study of the principal developments in theological reflection on the meaning and significance of Jesus Christ in the New Testament and in later church tradition; consideration of how contemporary Christology is both affected by and responds to crucial concerns of today’s culture.

TRS 534: CHURCH & SACRAMENT 3 cr.
(replaces current TRS 534: Sacraments)

Introduction to the concept and nature of “sacrament” and to the historical, liturgical, and theological development of the seven sacraments. Emphasis on sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation/Chrismation, Eucharist) with consideration of sacraments of healing (Penance, Healing of the Sick) and of Church service/government (Matrimony, Holy Orders). Also examines the “sacramental imagination” and its role in the Catholic spiritual tradition.

TRS 560: CATHOLIC MORAL THEOLOGY 3 cr.
(new course, replaces recent offerings of TRS 569: Special Topics in Religious Ethics)

Introduction to Catholic moral theology attentive to implications for both the individual and society. Topics include moral decision making, conscience, virtues, sin, social sin, the common good, and major themes of Catholic Social Teaching.

TRS 581: TEACHING THEOLOGY & RELIGIOUS STUDIES 3 cr.
(replaces TRS 589: Teaching Theology & Religious Studies)

Introduction to pedagogy for theological educators. Topics include the nature and goals of theological education, the vocation of the theology teacher, the sociological research relevant to religious education, the developmental needs of adolescents and young adults, diversity in the classroom, and concrete pedagogical strategies. Special attention given to practical implementation of the learning goals of the U.S. Catholic Bishops High School Curriculum Framework.

Course Implementation: Below is a semester-by-semester schedule of graduate offerings for the past two years, followed by the proposed schedule for the next two years (which covers the first complete cycle of offerings for the new certificate). As evident from the chart, the new program does not add additional sections of graduate offerings; it simply adjusts what graduate courses are offered and when. Since the new certificate courses overlap significantly with the current offerings they replace, and since they will remain open to all graduate students, the change will not negatively impact graduate students who do not intend to pursue the certificate.

Schedule of Graduate Course Offerings (Certificate Courses in BOLD)	
Fall 2017 TRS 400: Engaging Scriptures (McGinn) TRS 529: SPTP: Minority Religions (Tobey) TRS 544: Islamic Spirituality (Sartoprak)	Spring 2018 TRS 529: SPTP: Religion & Social World (Tobey) TRS 534: Sacraments (Hahnenberg) TRS 562: Religion, Ethics & Public Policy (Lauritzen)
Summer 2018 TRS 406: New Testament Ethics (McGinn) TRS 589: Teaching Theology & Religious Studies (Hahnenberg)	
Fall 2018 430: Intro to Systematic Theology (Hahnenberg) 502: Bible through the Eyes of the Hungry (McGinn) 552: Pilgrimage (Nietupski)	Spring 2019 461: Catholic Social Teaching (Stevens) 516: Rabbis on Sex & Gender (Bickart) 538: Catholicism in Digital Age (Hahnenberg)
Summer 2019 TRS 509: SPTP: Engaging Romans (McGinn)	
Fall 2019 400: Scripture & Revelation (McGinn) 512: Jewish Messianism (Bickart) 559: Religions of Tibet (Nietupski)	Spring 2020 532: Jesus & the Paschal Mystery (Hahnenberg) 522: Constructing Religious Identity (Tobey) 569: SPTP: Racism & Social Justice (Stevens)
Summer 2020 TRS 5xx: Scripture/Ethics/Religious Studies Elective	
Fall 2020 560: Catholic Moral Theology (Stevens) 430: Intro to Systematic Theology (Hahnenberg) 5xx: Scripture (McGinn or Bickart)	Spring 2021 534: Church & Sacrament (Hahnenberg) 5xx: Islam (Sartoprak) 5xx: Judaism/Sociology of Religion (Bickart/Tobey)
Summer 2021 TRS 581: Teaching Theology & Religious Studies (Hahnenberg or McGinn)	

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Certificate in Theological Education would be coordinated and administered by the TRS Graduate Program Coordinator, who reports to the department chair.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

Fall 2018 TRS Department approval

Spring 2019 Faculty Council approval; develop marketing materials; begin promotion

Fall 2019 Certificate program launched with TRS 400: Scripture & Revelation
One core course offered per semester on a two-year cycle

ASSESSMENT

Courses in the new certificate program will be assessed as part of the existing assessment cycle for TRS graduate courses, using existing SLOs and standards. Program assessment will focus on the final project in TRS 581: Teaching Theology & Religious Studies.

BUDGET

Expenses: Since the proposal simply reconfigures existing staffing and graduate course offerings, there will be no additional expenses for implementation, beyond developing new promotional materials and advertising.

Revenue: The goal for the first year (2019-2020) is to attract 5 new students to the new certificate program. This would generate \$14,940 in new tuition revenue. (Graduate tuition rate per credit hour = \$755 — 1/3 tuition discount for teachers = \$498 per credit. Five students taking one course each for two semesters = 30 credits. $\$498 \times 30 = \$14,940$)