



American Lutheran
Theological Seminary

ALTS Student Guide

2022/2023 Edition

American Lutheran Theological Seminary | 921 East Dupont Road, #920 | Fort Wayne, IN 46825-1551



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Purpose

Our purpose is to provide quality Christian education for working adults who are seeking a spiritually formative theological education that reflects the beliefs and mission of the AALC. Our programs support men seeking ordination in Word and Sacrament ministry, along with both men and women of the laity, who desire focused academic opportunities in Biblical Studies and desire to be equipped to faithfully serve in their vocations. (Matt. 28:18–20, Col. 1:9, 2 Tim. 2:15)

Vision

Our vision is to provide the highest level of spiritually formative theological education, grounded in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions by using an interactive classroom format. Directed toward men who are called to the office of the holy ministry, and lay men and women seeking a theological education, we thereby aim to provide our students with all the tools needed to better serve the Lord in their respective vocations. (1 Pet. 4:10–11, Heb. 12:1–2)

Mission

Our mission is to bring Christ and His Gospel to the world and to equip future leaders in the church to do so as well. We dedicate ourselves as witnesses to the eternal Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in its fullness and purity, preserving and extending the unity of the faith as revealed in God's Holy Word. (Mark 16:15, Acts 13:47)

- Our educated and experienced staff provide high-quality Lutheran theological education to a global Christian community. Our long history of remote education provides a unique interactive classroom experience for both students and professors.
- Our spiritually formative instruction through our Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree program prepares, educates, examines, and certifies men, who have been called to the holy vocation of the office of Word and Sacrament ministry, and leads to ordination,
- We also provide multiple academic opportunities with various areas of focus for both laity and non-Lutheran pastors with our Master of Arts in Religion (MAR) and Master of Arts in Theology (MAT) degree programs.

Goals

- Prepare men who are called to parish ministry and are on a path to ordination within the American Association of Lutheran Churches.
- Prepare men and women for service in Christ's church as Commissioned Church Workers, or helpers in ministries of local congregations in such roles as: Deacon or Deaconess, Director of Youth Ministries, Bible Study Leader, or Missionary.
- Educate men and women with the foundations of the Christian Faith.



The Governance of ALTS

As ALTS is an educational organization of the AALC, the seminary is subject to the Constitution and Bylaws of the AALC. The highest authority in the AALC is the biennial General Convention at which the budget of ALTS is approved, and every four years the Seminary President is elected or reelected. The highest authority between conventions is the Joint Council, which comprises the Association Council and the Board of Trustees. Significant changes in the seminary must be approved by the Joint Council.

The Commission for Higher Education

The Commission for Higher Education (CHE) has authority over ALTS as delegated by the Joint Council. This includes the general management of the seminary, the authority to grant degrees to students who have met the necessary qualifications, and oversight of the policies and procedures of ALTS. The CHE has seven voting members: three clergy members of the AALC, three lay people in the AALC, and the Assistant Presiding Pastor of the AALC. The Seminary President, along with other Seminary staff, as appointed by the President, are advisory members of the CHE and are not eligible to vote.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Stover, Chairman
Rev. Roger Twito
Rev. Dean Stoner
Rev. John Morley
Karen Holst
Paul Larson
Rev. Dr. Jordan Cooper

The Seminary President

The Seminary President must be a pastor on the roster of the AALC, affirm the doctrinal standards of the AALC, and commit to living a faithful Christian life. He is elected for a four-year term at the biennial convention and can be reelected without limit. He can be suspended for moral failure, ineptitude, or doctrinal defection by the Joint Council. He can be deposed only by the General Convention. The President serves as the spiritual leader for the seminary. He oversees ALTS and ensures that the vision and goals of the organization are put into action. The Seminary President delegates administrative, academic, and spiritual tasks to the seminary staff as is necessary. The President supervises all other staff and faculty and is responsible for reporting the activities of the seminary to the leadership of the AALC.

Further details regarding the institutional structure of ALTS and the AALC can be found in the [Constitution and Bylaws](#) of the AALC.



The National Staff of The American Lutheran Theological Seminary



Rev. Dr. Jordan Cooper
Seminary President
altpresidentcooper@taalc.org



Rev. Jon Holst
Administrator
altsadminjon@taalc.org



Mrs. Bonnie Ohlrich
ALTS Registrar
Registrar@alts.edu

We are happy to answer your questions and work with you through the application and registration process. For more information, please complete the contact form found on our website:

<https://www.alts.edu/contact-us>



Core Faculty

Rev. Dr. Jordan B. Cooper, ALTS President (Professor of Dogmatic Theology)

- **Ph.D.** South African Theological Seminary, 2018. Dissertation: *A Defense of the Lutheran Scholastic Theological Method and Critique of Radical Lutheranism.*
- **M.A.** South African Theological Seminary, 2017. Thesis: *A Defense of the Orthodox Lutheran Doctrine of God's Law and Critique of Gerhard Forde.*
- **M.Div.** American Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2016.
- **M.Th.** Wittenberg Institute, 2012. Thesis: *An Evaluation of Early Patristic Soteriology in Light of the New Perspective on Paul.*
- **B.A.** Geneva College, 2010. Major: Biblical Studies.

Rev. Dr. Cary G. Larson, Presiding Pastor of the AALC (Professor of Practical Theology)

- **D.D.** American Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2022 (honorary).
- **D.M.** Institute of Lutheran Theology, 2020.
- **M.Div.** Luther Seminary, 2006.
- **B.S.** University of Minnesota, 1985.

Rev. Dr. Curtis E. Liens (Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation)

- **Ph.D.** Temple University, 1991. Church History (with distinction).
- **M.A.** Temple University, 1988. Religious Studies.
- **Th.M.** Duke University, 1984. Church History.
- **M.Div.** Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, 1978.
- **B.A.** Lenoir-Rhyne College, 1974. Double Major: Philosophy and Sociology. *Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities.*

Rev. Dr. Chris Caughey (Professor of Church History)

- **Ph.D.** Trinity College Dublin, 2013. Dissertation: *Puritan Responses to Antinomianism in the Context of Reformed Covenant Theology 1630-1696.*
- **M.Div.** Westminster Theological Seminary, California, 2001.
- **B.A.** Biola University, 1996. Major: Christian Education.

Adjunct Faculty

Dr. Nathan Greeley (Apologetics)

- **Ph.D.** Philosophy of Religion and Theology, Claremont Graduate University.
- **M.A.** Philosophy of Religion and Theology, Claremont Graduate University.
- **B.A.** Worcester State University. Major: History.

Rev. Dave Spotts (Greek, New Testament)

- **Ph.D.** candidate, studies in Religion, University of South Africa.
- **MTS.** American Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2016.
- **M.A.** Ancient Greek Philology, distinguished by a "high pass," University of Missouri, Columbia 1995.
- **B.A.** University of Missouri, Columbia, 1987. Major: General Studies in Fine Arts, Communication, and Behavioral Sciences.



Learning & Educational Resources

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary provides electronic resources to its students. These are accessed by students online at: <http://www.alts.edu/subscription-resources>.

As an institution that primarily trains its students online, resources are offered in electronic formats. This includes free resources such as:

- The Christian Classics Ethereal Library
- Post Reformation Digital Library
- A curated Google Books library
- The Concordia Theological Quarterly archive
- Selections of Luther's Works
- *Patrologia Graeca* and *Patrologia Latina*
- The Perseus Digital Library

ALTS also provides subscription resources, which include:

- The JSTOR collection of religion and philosophy journals
- Approximately 10,000 books from EBSCOHost on the subject of religion.

Along with the thousands of articles and books that are accessible by these means, ALTS continues to seek new ways to serve its students with the best available theological resources that serve to accomplish its mission.

Standards for Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources

In using these resources as a student of ALTS, there is implied consent to abide by the rules and regulations determined by the Seminary. These standards are as follows:

Any unauthorized copying or sharing of resources is prohibited both by copyright laws and by the eighth commandment. In submitting an assignment, the student implies that, where not explicitly noted, the work is original to him or her. Violations of our plagiarism policy may lead to academic discipline or expulsion at the discretion of the Seminary President and professor of the course in which the violation occurred. No electronic resources should be used to access obscene or pornographic material of any kind. Further, any activity that violates United States law is strictly prohibited. The student is able to quote copyright resources insofar as it falls within the definition of "fair use" as recorded and defined in U. S. Code Title 17, Chapter 1, § 106-§ 108.

Works Created by Students of the American Lutheran Theological Seminary

The copyrights of those papers, articles, theses, or other materials created by students in fulfillment of course requirements belong to their authors. The student does, however, grant permission to the seminary to archive, copy, and otherwise use student assignments. This agreement with the seminary is not exclusive, however, and the student is given permission to publish such material in other mediums.



ALTS Programs and Areas of Study

Master of Divinity [M.DIV.]

The Master of Divinity program offered by ALTS is intended to train men for ministry within the American Association of Lutheran Churches. Some exceptions are made for students outside of the AALC, based upon the determination of seminary leadership.

With advanced technology, enabling seminary classes to be conducted using live video effectively, we provide a quality seminary education. High-speed internet connection is used to create a virtual classroom in which everyone sees and hears everyone else. The rising cost of on-campus study, combined with the expenses incurred from moving families is mitigated by this online approach. In total, the M.Div. student is required to take 30 separate 3 credit courses.

Men who enroll in the M.Div. program will, after completing a determined number of courses, apply to serve as a Vicar (pastor-in-training). The Vicar who is approved for service in a congregation must complete the M.Div. program within seven years of beginning his coursework. That means he must complete a minimum of four seminary courses each year.

The Vicar has an obligation in this partnership both to the seminary and to the congregation. He serves the congregation, but he cannot neglect his seminary courses. This arrangement provides a tremendous opportunity for the Vicar to receive the best theological offerings, while also serving in the real world of the congregation. This partnership is critical for the seminary student.

The congregation which agrees to have a Vicar assigned to serve in the congregation is in partnership with both the Vicar and ALTS. The congregation carries the responsibility to see that the Vicar has the time and money to finish his studies. Thus, as he grows through his M.Div. studies, the congregation grows through receiving additional training. The Vicar and congregation are yoked in partnership in the Gospel until he finishes the M.Div. program.

When he finishes the M.Div. program, if he desires ordination in the AALC, the student will make an application to the AALC's Clergy Commission.

Master of Divinity Curriculum

The M.Div. curriculum includes four major areas of theological education: Exegetical, Doctrinal, Historical, and Pastoral theology.

The program consists of 30 courses, which normally require a time commitment of two and a half hours per week for ten weeks.

Exegetical

- E102 Hermeneutics
- EO101 Old Testament Introduction
- EO105 Pentateuch
- EO107 Prophets
- EN101 New Testament Introduction



- EN105 Synoptic Gospel
- EN107 Pauline Letter

Doctrinal

- S100 Theological Prolegomena
- S115 Doctrine I
- S116 Doctrine II
- S124 Lutheran Confessions I
- S125 Lutheran Confessions II
- S132 Apologetics
- S415 Law and Gospel

Historical

- H101 Church History Overview
- H130 Reformation History
- H131 Early Church History
- H132 Modern and Postmodern Church History
- H185 History and Polity of the AALC

Pastoral

- P102 Pastoral Theology and Life
- P103 Pastoral Care and Counseling
- P104 Pastoral Care in Conflict
- P120 Catechesis
- P130 Preaching I
- P131 Preaching II
- P140 History of Christian Worship
- P151 Pastoral Leadership
- P160 Missions

Languages

- LG101 Greek I
- LG102 Greek II

Most courses during the year are conducted by video conference, the only exceptions being two in-person intensive summer courses. Thus, all students are expected to have access to high-speed internet and a video camera.

The requirements for entering the M.Div. degree program will ordinarily include having earned a bachelor's degree, receiving recommendations from three separate sources, and a commitment to abide by the rules of conduct of ALTS.

When applying, include all official college transcripts, additional training, and work history, as well three letters of recommendation (ordinarily two of those include an AALC pastor and congregation member).

To begin the process, please contact the ALTS Registrar: Registrar@alts.edu



Please note:

- All courses are taught in an interactive online classroom; the student is required to be familiar with and supply their own technology to connect with our classrooms.
- All students must demonstrate proof of an undergraduate degree by submitting their transcripts; other requirements are outlined in our application.
- Students whose primary language is not English must successfully complete and submit their TOEFL scores—Educational Testing Service TOEFL (<https://www.ets.org/toefl>) to ALTS.
- Please indicate which program area you are interested in your correspondence.

Master of Arts in Religion [MAR]

The Master of Arts in Religion (MAR) is a practical degree that prepares men and women for service in Christ's church as Commissioned Church Workers, or helpers in the ministries of local congregation, in such roles as: Deacon or Deaconess, Director of Youth Ministries, Bible Study Leader, or Missionary.

The Master of Arts in Religion degree program builds critical foundations in biblical exegesis, church history, and systematic theology, with emphasis on practical service within the church. The student is equipped to serve in the local parish or in parachurch organizations.

The MAR has 24 required general credit courses, along with nine elective credits. The student will choose one of three areas of concentration for the remaining six credits: administration, outreach, or pedagogy, for a total of 39 credit hours. The final capstone for the Master of Art in Religion is a six-credit master's thesis in a chosen concentration.

Foundation (33 Credits)

- The Bible in Context
- S100 Theological Prolegomena
- EO101 Old Testament Introduction
- EN101 New Testament Introduction
- S124 Lutheran Confessions I (prerequisite: S100 Theological Prolegomena)
- S125 Lutheran Confessions II (prerequisite: S124 Lutheran Confessions I)
- H101 Church History Overview
- H185 History and Polity of the AALC
- Three electives

Focused Areas of Study

Outreach (12 Credits)

- S132 Apologetics
- P160 Missions
- Outreach Thesis

Pedagogy (12 Credits)

- S131 Catechesis
- P120 Teaching the Faith



- Pedagogy Thesis

Administration (12 Credits)

- P151 Pastoral Leadership
- P170 Church Administration
- Administration Thesis

Master of Arts in Theology [MAT]

The Master of Arts in Theology is an academic graduate degree which prepares individuals in ministry with comprehensive theological instruction in their chosen area of study. This program is not limited to students who adhere to the Lutheran Confessions. The degree consists of 39 classroom credit hours, along with a six-credit master's thesis.

The Master of Arts in Theology offers 4 areas of study: general studies, exegesis, doctrine, and history. Each path ends with a master's thesis within the course of study the student has chosen.

General Studies

1. E100 The Bible in Context
2. E102 Hermeneutics (Prerequisite: Bible in Context)
3. EO101 Old Testament Introduction
4. EN101 New Testament Introduction
5. S100 Theological Prolegomena
6. S415 Law and Gospel
7. P140 History of Christian Worship
8. H101 Church History Overview
9. S115 Doctrine I (Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena)
10. S116 Doctrine II (Prerequisite: Doctrine I)
11. Elective (Prerequisites must be met)
12. Elective (Prerequisites must be met)
13. Elective (Prerequisites must be met)
14. General Thesis

Exegetical Studies

1. E100 The Bible in Context
2. E102 Hermeneutics (Prerequisite: Bible in Context)
3. S100 Theological Prolegomena
4. P140 History of Christian Worship
5. EO101 Old Testament Introduction
6. EO105 Pentateuch (Prerequisite: E102 Hermeneutics)
7. EO107 Prophets (Prerequisite: E102 Hermeneutics)
8. EN101 New Testament Introduction
9. EN105 Synoptic Gospel (Prerequisite: E102 Hermeneutics)



10. EN107 Pauline Letter (Prerequisite: E102 Hermeneutics)
11. S115 Doctrine I (Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena)
12. S116 Doctrine II (Prerequisite: Doctrine I)
13. Elective (Prerequisites must be met)
14. Exegetical Thesis

Doctrinal Studies

1. E100 The Bible in Context
2. E102 Hermeneutics (Prerequisite: Bible in Context)
3. S100 Theological Prolegomena
4. P140 History of Christian Worship
5. H101 Church History Overview
6. H130 Reformation History
7. S115 Doctrine I (Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena)
8. S116 Doctrine II (Prerequisite: Doctrine I)
9. S124 Lutheran Confessions I (Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena)
10. S125 Lutheran Confessions II (Prerequisite: Lutheran Confessions I)
11. S415 Law and Gospel
12. S132 Apologetics
13. Elective (Prerequisites must be met)
14. Lutheran Doctrine Thesis

Historical Studies

1. E100 The Bible in Context
2. E102 Hermeneutics (Prerequisite: Bible in Context)
3. S100 Theological Prolegomena
4. P140 History of Christian Worship
5. H101 Church History Overview
6. H130 Reformation History
7. H131 Early Church History
8. H132 Modern and Postmodern Church History
9. S115 Doctrine I (Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena)
10. S116 Doctrine II (Prerequisite: Doctrine I)
11. S124 Lutheran Confessions I (Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena)
12. S125 Lutheran Confessions II (Prerequisite: Lutheran Confessions I)
13. Elective (Prerequisites must be met)
14. Church History Thesis



Master's Thesis Guide

Master's Thesis Guide



Writing Your Master's Thesis

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to aid the student as they write their master's thesis in order to complete the Master of Arts in Religion or the Master of Arts in Theology program. The master's thesis is the capstone requirement in each of these two programs.

2. Thesis Process

The master's student may at any time during their last quarter of regular classes request via email [Registrar@alts.edu] the assignment of a thesis advisor. The timeline begins at the first meeting between advisor and student, ideally at the beginning of a quarter. The student and advisor should complete the Timeline and Milestones form at the end of this document.

The initial meeting between the advisor and student will be a review of the thesis guidelines and to set milestones for the submission of the final thesis for Panel Presentation. The advisor will aid the student in topic selection, set expectations for the process, and answer questions. The student should be prepared for this initial meeting with a topic in mind and ready to begin.

The student will have two weeks to submit a written thesis proposal to the advisor. The advisor has two weeks to review the proposal and 1) Accept it as is, 2) Recommend revisions or edits, or 3) Reject the proposal. The student may appeal to the Registrar for an internal review if the proposal is rejected.

The student has ten weeks from the acceptance of the proposal by the advisor to write their thesis. Extensions beyond this timeframe are possible with extreme documented circumstances and the permission of the advisor. However, extensions are not to exceed an additional five weeks, and the timeline must be continuous without a gap.

2.1 Thesis Submission and Review

The advisor will submit the student thesis for a peer review and commentary when the advisor and student deem the thesis ready.

Peer review and commentary requires the following:

- One internal professor from ALTS or an ALTS adjunct instructor
- One external professor from another university or seminary
- May also include third reviewer such as Seminary President for example, if not otherwise involved in the process

The peer review and commentary period should not exceed two weeks and is not limited to only the above participants.

The student and the advisor will have two weeks to review the findings and determine if any improvements are required. The advisor has the following options: 1) Accept it as is, 2) Recommend revisions or edits, or 3) Reject the thesis. The student may appeal to the Registrar for an internal review if the thesis is rejected.



3. Panel Presentation and Discussion

When the thesis is “Accepted as is,” the advisor will submit the completed thesis to the Registrar and coordinate with the Registrar to set time and audience for a panel presentation and discussion. The panel will consist of a minimum of three persons. Panel members may consist of the following but not limited to:

- Three panel members, preferably internal to ALTS or the American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC)
- The Advisor — voice but no vote¹
- ALTS Seminary President — voice but no vote¹

¹Those members with a “voice but no vote” status are not included in “minimum of three or five persons” panel requirement.

The panel has two options at the conclusion of the panel presentation and discussion; 1) Accept it as presented or 2) Reject it. There is no appeal process if the thesis is rejected.

4. Structure

4.1 The Proposal

The research proposal should include the following elements:

- A primary research question to be addressed throughout the thesis.
- Three subsidiary research questions to be addressed under the primary research question.
- An explanation of why you think your research topic is relevant to the contemporary church.
- An annotated bibliography with at least fifteen sources cited.

The expected length of the proposal is around 1,000 words.

4.2 The Thesis

The student has the freedom to work within the confines of their own research subject. All thesis papers should contain the following components:

- The author should restate the thesis proposal as an introduction to the thesis topic which outlines the primary questions and structure of the thesis.
- A literature review, in which the author demonstrates a knowledge of the writings most relevant to the topic.
- An explanation of the author’s research methodology.
- The central section of the thesis answers at least three subsidiary research questions.
- A conclusion, in which findings are summarized and how those findings answer the primary research question is explained.
- A bibliography (this final bibliography does not need to be annotated).

4.3 Style Guidelines

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* is the standard guide for ALTS theological research papers. This is to be used for the thesis, along with the ALTS style guide. All works should include a cover page with your name, the title of the thesis, your advisor’s name, and the date of completion.

- Use 12-point font.
- Times New Roman is the standard font.



- Use double spacing.
- Make sure margins are 1 inch.
- Include page numbers and a header with your name.
- The total length should be at around 35-45 pages, or approximately 10,000 words. This does not include the cover page or Bibliography. The length can be extended if agreed upon by the advisor.

Any additional questions should be addressed directly with the thesis advisor.



5. Appendix

5.1 Timeline and Milestones

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Student and advisor complete this form at the first meeting.

	Milestone	Start Date	Due Date
Quarter of Final Class in Program	Student sends a request for a thesis advisor to the Registrar		
Not to exceed two weeks	Student meets with their advisor and submits their thesis proposal		
Not to exceed two weeks	The advisor reviews and accepts the student's thesis proposal		
Not to exceed ten weeks	Student completes their research and authors their thesis		
Not to exceed two weeks	The advisor reviews the thesis for initial approval		
Not to exceed two weeks	The advisor submits the student thesis for peer review and commentary		
Not to exceed two weeks	The advisor informs the student of findings		
	The advisor coordinates with Registrar to establish a panel and set a date for panel presentation and discussion.		



Tuition

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary operates on the generosity of our donors within the AALC and friends of the AALC for the purpose of keeping the cost paid by our students low. Our goal is to provide quality education and training for service in Christ's Church without financial stress.

All our courses are online, which means you participate from the comfort of your home. Classes are normally held from 8pm (EST) to 10:30pm (EST). The student is responsible for their own technological equipment.

The actual cost to ALTS to provide a single course to a single student is \$1,750. However, ALTS subsidizes each student per 3-unit course in the amount of \$1,250. Therefore, the cost to each student per course is:

General Tuition

- \$500.00 USD per 3-credit-hour class

Auditing Courses at ALTS

The term "audit" refers to a course that is taken for no credit, meaning that it is not calculated into a student's cumulative grade point average. A student may enroll in a course as an auditor prior to the end of the first week of the quarter, as space allows.

Whether or not a student is allowed to audit any course is at the discretion of the instructor of that course. If spots are filling up in any class, priority is given to students taking the course for credit, rather than to those who are auditing.

In general, it is expected that only introductory courses will be audited by the general public, though pastors, church workers, and others with a background in theological education may take upper-level courses at the discretion of the professor of that course. Some exceptions may be allowed; decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Auditing is for the benefit of the individual enrolled in the course and will not result in any credit given toward a degree at ALTS. If a student chooses to audit a course and later enrolls in a degree program, the audit does not excuse them from taking the full course again with all credit requirements as given by the instructor.

The student who audits a course is expected to attend as many class sessions as for credit students, though there is no expectation that one will participate in tests or writing assignments.

Audit – General Public

- \$100.00 USD per class

Audit – American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC)

Pastors, church workers, and congregants within the AALC are able to enroll and audit courses at ALTS at a discounted rate of \$50.00 USD per class.



Grants and Scholarships

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary offers grants and scholarships when specific funds are available. As our courses are designed to be economical, the need for grants and scholarships are normally not a consideration.

Grants and scholarships are available for international students specifically where standards of living are not on par with the United States. International students can inquire about such grants and scholarships after registration.

As stated above, ALTS subsidizes each student in the amount of \$1,250 per 3-unit course. For M.Div. students only, funds from the California Community Scholarship are available for those who can demonstrate significant financial need. Students requesting assistance must contact the Registrar and will be sent an application form. All decisions regarding scholarships are made by the scholarship committee.

Admissions

Requirements

Prospective students are assessed according to their personal faith in Jesus Christ, their academic background, and, with regard to the M.Div. program, their call to the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament within the AALC.

ALTS prepares its students for pastoral ministry and other service to the church, which requires that certain personal and spiritual qualifications be met:

1. Demonstrated faith in Jesus Christ, daily repentance, and a clear sense of call to service in the church.
2. A signed application form to provide personal information and to indicate that the applicant submits himself or herself to be educated according to the standards of the doctrinal positions of the Seminary and the AALC.
3. Three recommendations that testify to the applicant's Christian and moral character. These should be from the pastor of the applicant's home congregation, an employer, and a personal acquaintance or college academic advisor. Exceptions to these can be made and will be determined based on the student's circumstances.

ALTS is a school of graduate study and therefore applicants must have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Prospective students are responsible for having official transcripts of all post-high-school work sent directly to the Registrar of ALTS.

A small number of applicants without a bachelor's degree may qualify for our M.Div. program. This program is available to students 30 years old or older who can demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing at a level that is necessary for our courses. This is determined on a case-by-case basis by the leadership of ALTS, and there may be additional requirements to prepare the student for the writing of research papers before acceptance into the program. The number of students in this category will not exceed 10% of the total number of students in the ALTS M.Div. program.



Application Procedure

All students and auditors are required to apply as a student with ALTS. The application process begins with completing the form found on our website: <https://www.alts.edu/contact-us>

1. Submit the completed application form.
2. Arrange for official transcripts from each school attended to be sent directly to ALTS.
3. Distribute the seminary recommendation forms, providing a stamped envelope addressed to ALTS with each form. References must be returned directly to ALTS from the person filling out the form.
4. Students whose primary language is not English must successfully complete and submit their TOEFL scores – [Educational Testing Service TOEFL](#) to ALTS.
5. Wait for contact from the Seminary President or other representative from the seminary to schedule a conversation via Zoom or a phone call regarding the student's life of faith and educational/ministry aspirations.

Acceptance into our Programs

Determination of a student's acceptance is made by the Admissions Committee based upon academic ability, spiritual maturity, and general fitness for the program they are applying to. Notification of acceptance to or rejection from the program will be sent to the student by the Registrar.

Note: Acceptance into the M.Div. program does not automatically qualify one for pastoral ministry in the AALC. The determination of an individual's position on the clergy roster of the AALC is made by the Clergy Commission, rather than the seminary.

Registration Procedures

Students participating in online courses through the American Lutheran Theology Seminary will receive online notification of the courses offered each quarter. Students are responsible for registering for courses through the online method provided within the notification.

New students will be able to register for courses upon full acceptance into a degree program. Special students, students not desiring participation in a specific degree program, may register for classes upon the Registrar receiving the completed application, application fee, and official transcripts.

All students must ensure that there are no administrative holds on their accounts prior to registering for new courses.

Payment for courses must be made in full at the time of registration or follow the payment schedule outlined below.

- 40%- Payment with registration
- 30%- Payment by the end of week two
- 30%- Payment by the end of week five



Adding a Class

With the permission of the instructor, a student may add a course(s) through the Friday of the first week of the term for the fall, winter, and spring terms.

Attendance

While enrolled at the American Lutheran Theological Seminary, students are expected to understand that full participation and attendance is expected in classes, class related activities, and field experience assignments. At their discretion, instructors may treat an absence as excused, but are not obligated to do so. In the event of an excused absence, students are expected to complete and submit all assignments within a timely manner. Excessive absences may result in the lowering of a student's grade, disciplinary action, or dismissal.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating of any kind, including but not limited to plagiarism, is considered unethical conduct and is inconsistent with Christian life. Be it faculty or student, cheating may be grounds for original dismissal. Disciplinary action, as a result of academic dishonesty will be handled by the Seminary President, in consultation with the professor of the course in which the plagiarism occurred.

Academic Grievances

Concerns related to course instruction should initially be discussed with the course instructor. If an issue is unable to be resolved, the President of the American Lutheran Theological Seminary should be consulted. In the event that the grievance is related to the President's role as an instructor, the Presiding Pastor of the American Association of Lutheran Churches should be consulted. Responding to concerns and grievances about academic policies and procedures is the responsibility of the Seminary President or Presiding Pastor, in consultation with the Commission for Higher Education, faculty, and Registrar.

Classroom Recording Policy

Zoom classes are recorded by the professor and are available to students to view for a limited period of time following the class. These recordings are the property of the seminary and may not be used beyond their intended use for active seminary students enrolled in the course being recorded. Unless special permission is granted, these videos shall not be shown to others.

Grade Changes

Grade changes should only be implemented in situations when an instructor becomes aware or believes that previously submitted student work should have received a different evaluation. Instructors may consent to reviewing work after the end of the term in which it was completed, but they are not obligated to do so. In all cases, grade changes must be finalized by the end of the term after the term in which the course was conducted.



Incompletes

When the instructor determines that events beyond a student's control have prevented them from fulfilling the course requirements within the given quarter, an initial grade of "Incomplete" (I) may be given. Incompletes must be requested and approved no later than the last regularly scheduled day of the quarter. When an incomplete has been given, all assignments and grades must be submitted by the last day of the term after the term in which the course was conducted. If an incomplete is given during a spring term all assignments and grades must be submitted by August 1. If the work has not been fulfilled by the established due date, the grade of "I" will permanently become an "F."

A student or instructor may request an incomplete by contacting the Registrar. Approval of the incomplete must be documented, as indicated by signatures of the student and the instructor.

A student who has an incomplete in a course that is a prerequisite for another course may not register for the subsequent course until the term after the term in which a satisfactory grade has been awarded. For example, if a student takes Confessions I in the winter term but uses the spring term to fulfill an incomplete for that course, they would only be eligible to take Confessions II beginning in the subsequent fall term.

Retaking a Course

If failed, courses required for the completion of a program must be repeated; however, electives may not. The original grade of "F" will remain on a student's transcript. The grade earned while retaking the course will appear on the transcript separately. Students may not retake courses for which a passing grade was received. They can, however, audit a course that has already been taken.

Transfer Credits

The Seminary President is responsible for determining the eligibility of credits for transfer credit. Students may request a transcript review at the time of admission.

- Credits more than 8 years old will not be eligible for transfer. After the approval and application to the student's program of study, the credits will be valid for the duration of the student's program.
- Credits for courses with a grade below "C" are not transferable.
- Undergraduate courses are not transferable.
- It is recommended that students desiring to take courses at another institution with the intention of transferring the credits consult with the Seminary President in advance.

Withdrawing from a Class

A student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty during the first three weeks of a quarter. Withdrawing during this time will appear as a "W" on the student's transcript.

A student who drops a course or officially withdraws from a course of the Seminary prior to the end of the seventh week of a quarter shall receive a refund based on the following terms:

- If an official withdraw request is received by the end of the first day of the quarter, students are eligible for a full refund.
- If an official withdrawal request is received after the first day of the term, the following refund schedule will be followed:



- Official withdrawal prior to the end of the first week of the term will result in a refund of 90%.
- Official withdrawal prior to the end of the second week of the term will result in a refund of 75%.
- Official withdrawal prior to the end of the third week of the term will result in a refund of 50%.
- Official withdrawal prior to the end of the fifth week of the term will result in a refund of 25%.
- There is no refund after the end of the fifth week of the quarter.

Students may not withdraw after the seventh week of the quarter. Withdrawals between the third and seventh weeks will result in a withdrawal fail, which will appear as “WF” on the student’s transcript.

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate a withdrawal request. The official date of withdrawal will be based on the date in which the withdrawal request was received by the Registrar’s office.

Students who have received scholarship monies to pay for the class that is being withdrawn from will receive a refund based on the following:

- If an official withdrawal request is received by the end of the first week of the term, scholarship monies will be credited to the student’s account and can only be utilized for subsequent classes.
- If an official withdrawal request is received after the first week of the term, scholarship monies will be forfeited.

Leave of Absence/Withdrawal from Degree Program

A student may request a leave of absence for a period of up to one year. All requests should be initiated with the Registrar’s office. If a leave of absence is granted, the student can resume studies at any time during the leave period without reapplication. Graduation requirements remain under the catalog in effect at the time of the student’s enrollment at ALTS. If a student has not resumed classes by the end of the leave of absence, they will be withdrawn from the seminary.

Students desiring to withdraw from the American Lutheran Theological Seminary must notify the Registrar’s office in writing. Financial obligations must be resolved before a withdrawal becomes official.

A student who has withdrawn may be readmitted; however, the student will be required to meet the graduation requirements outlined in the academic catalog at the time of readmission.

Dismissal

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary reserves the right to dismiss students, but only exercises this practice with careful consideration.



Academic Transcripts

If the student desires official transcripts from ALTS, he or she is to request transcripts from the Registrar's office. These transcripts are sent directly to the institution or agency that requires them. The student is able to otherwise request unofficial transcripts for himself or herself.

The student must provide a payment of \$5 to cover the costs of mailing the transcript. The document will not be sent prior to payment.

Grades

Upon the completion of each course, the student will receive the grade for each course directly from the professor.

Academic Record

If the student desires official records of academic performance and progress, he or she should contact the Registrar.

Graduation

Upon completion of the requirements of the student's chosen degree program, the degree is conferred. A diploma will be sent to each student in the mail. Though not required, there is an in-person graduation ceremony at each AALC National Convention for those who have finished their courses since the prior convention.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other status prohibited by applicable law. Decisions of admission are made in accord with academic ability, spiritual maturity, and lifestyle qualifications. Any concerns regarding discrimination should be addressed to the Registrar.

This nondiscrimination policy does not, however, limit ALTS in its giving preference to applicants who are members of the AALC and its sister church bodies.

As an institution of the American Association of Lutheran Churches, ALTS holds to the doctrinal standards of its parent organization, which includes the belief that the pastoral office is only to be held by qualified men. Therefore, women are not permitted into the M.Div. program, though they are encouraged to sign up for our MAR and MAT degree programs.

ALTS has the right to refuse admission, refuse readmission, or discipline students for proper cause.



Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

According to United States federal law, educational institutions are required to give an annual reminder to their students of their student rights as defined by FERPA. They are as follows:

1. Every student has the right to review their own educational records. In order to do so, the student must contact the Registrar. Upon receipt of this request, the student will receive access to these records within a period of 40 days or less.
2. The student has the right to challenge educational records which he or she believes to be either inaccurate or misleading. This challenge is to be sent to the Seminary Administrator, who reviews the information, and then brings the relevant information to the CHE. If there is a possibility of the Seminary's records being mistaken, this challenge will lead to a hearing, wherein the CHE will determine whether the student is correct in this complaint.
3. The student has the right to consent to any disclosure of personally identifiable information within his or her records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure apart from the student's explicit consent.
4. The student has the right to bring a complaint to the US Department of Education against the seminary for failure to comply with FERPA requirements.

ALTS Anti-Harassment Policy

The American Lutheran Theological Seminary is committed to providing a safe school environment for staff, faculty, and students. ALTS has a no-tolerance policy for any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, racial slurs, or any other insult to one on the basis of sex, race, national origin, or disability. These standards of conduct are required not only within the classroom setting, but at all other times as long as the student is enrolled or the individual employed by the institution. This includes conduct on social media and in online forums. Those who violate this policy will be subject to discipline and/or dismissal.

The definition of harassment used by ALTS includes:

- Lewd or sexual gestures, sexual language, or unwanted physical touch
- Actions that create a hostile environment toward individuals because of their race, national origin, sex, or disability
- Making any kind of sexual action a standard for employment or of achieving academic success
- Display of sexually explicit material
- Use of racial slurs
- Any initiation of a romantic or sexual relationship from a professor to a student (the only exception to this is if the relationship exists prior to, and apart from, the student's enrollment in seminary)

Faculty at ALTS are expected to create and foster an environment in their classrooms in which such harassment is not tolerated.



Initiating a Harassment Complaint

A complaint of harassment is to be reported to the Administrator of the Seminary. The steps are then as follows:

- The Administrator then brings this complaint to the Commission for Higher Education, who may then ask the affected individual to share the nature of their complaint.
- An investigation is initiated, which is led by a three-person investigatory committee. This group of individuals is chosen by the CHE.
- The investigatory committee is to review the complaint, speak with all parties involved, and report back their findings to the CHE.
- At that point, disciplinary action can then be initiated by the CHE in whatever manner they deem appropriate to the situation.
- If there is any suspicion of illegal conduct involved, the proper authorities are to be contacted immediately.

Standards of Conduct

As both an institution of higher learning and as a place for spiritual maturation, students at the American Lutheran Theological Seminary are expected to abide by a code of conduct which reflects the Christian values of our institution. These standards include:

- Regular attendance in a local congregation
- A pattern of daily prayer
- Abstention from illegal drugs and excessive alcohol use
- Commitment to sexual purity, including limiting sexual contact to a heterosexual monogamous marriage relationship and abstention from the use of pornographic material.
- Conducting oneself with honor in conversation on social media. Insults, racial slurs, and harassment are not tolerated.
- Respect for ordained clergy, both within and outside of the AALC
- The student is required to submit to the Seminary all social media accounts, public websites, podcasts, and other outward-facing platforms. This includes anonymous accounts. Failure to report an account is considered a breach of the code of conduct of the seminary and is treated as such.

Conduct in the Classroom

Along with general conduct, the student is expected to abide by the following rules regarding conduct within the classroom:

- Do not interrupt the professor or other students.
- If hand raising is required by the professor, do not speak without doing so.
- Show up to class at least five minutes before the start of class in case there is a computer issue.
- Have your camera on at all times unless otherwise specified.
- Do not drink alcohol during class.
- Appropriate attire should be worn at all times.



- Hand in all assignments on time. If this is not possible for whatever reason, speak with the professor as soon as you can.
- You cannot use the same paper or other assignment in multiple courses.
- Though it is not expected that all students affirm the doctrinal positions of the AALC, recognize that in choosing to take courses at ALTS, you consent to receive an education that holds to Lutheran perspectives.

Discipline

In an instance wherein a student is seen to commit a breach of the code of conduct required by the Seminary, the individual making the complaint brings the suspected problem to the attention of the Seminary Administrator. The following steps are then to be taken:

- The Administrator brings this complaint to the Core Faculty, who may then interview the individual who has committed the violation, along with any others affected by or involved in the action.
- If the infraction is minor, the student is to be referred to the Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation for counsel. A struggle with sin in the life of a student, such as a problem of pornography or excessive drinking, is to be treated through the proper application of both Law and Gospel. These are not grounds for immediate expulsion.
- If the infraction is deemed serious, an investigation is initiated, which is led by a three-person investigatory committee. This group of individuals is chosen by the Core Faculty.
- The investigatory committee is to review the issue, speak with all parties involved, and report back their findings to the Core Faculty.
- At that point, disciplinary action can then be initiated by the Core Faculty in whatever manner they deem appropriate to the situation.
- If there is any suspicion of illegal conduct involved, the proper authorities are to be contacted immediately.

Appeal Process

The student may appeal the decision of the Core Faculty and investigatory committee by presenting the grounds by which he or she deems the decision to be in error in writing. This is to be submitted to the Seminary Administrator and must be presented within 30 days of the disciplinary action. The CHE will then look into the matter, and if there seems to be sufficient grounds to challenge the decision, they will schedule a hearing. After this hearing, a final decision is rendered by a vote of the CHE.



Course Descriptions

LG101 & LG102 Greek I & II

All M.DIV. students must take and pass two quarters of Greek.

Greek I & II are technical courses that prepare the student to read and write in the Koine Greek text of the New Testament. The goal of these courses is to create proficiency in the ancient language, so that one is prepared for in-depth textual study of the New Testament books. Greek is required for E102

Hermeneutics. Greek and Hermeneutics are foundational for EO105 Pentateuch, EO107 Prophets: Isaiah, EN105 Synoptic Gospel: Matthew, and EN107 Pauline Letter: Ephesians courses.

Prerequisite: Required (M.DIV.)

Credit Hours: 6

E100 The Bible in Context

All MAR and MAT students must take and pass The Bible in Context.

The Bible in Context course introduces the student to the linguistic and interpretive tools which will prove most useful in the discipline of biblical interpretation. It is not a course in hermeneutics but provides or reinforces the background information necessary to move into such a study. The Bible in Context is required for E102 Hermeneutics. The Bible in Context and Hermeneutics are foundational for EO105 Pentateuch, EO107 Prophets: Isaiah, EN105 Synoptic Gospel: Matthew, and EN107 Pauline Letter: Ephesians courses.

Prerequisite: Required (MAR & MAT)

Credit Hours: 3

Exegetical Courses

E102 Hermeneutics

This course provides a student with a thorough understanding of the theological and historical aspects of interpreting the Scriptures. The course assumes the student has completed an introductory level of Greek or The Bible in Context. Topics covered include: presuppositions of textual interpretation; grammatical systems; literary theory; the historical setting of texts; the nature of revelation; the connection between text and worldview; and the centrality of Christ in understanding the Sacred Scriptures.

Prerequisite: Greek (M.DIV.)

or The Bible in Context (MAR & MAT)

Credit Hours: 3

EO101 Old Testament Introduction

This course examines the writings of the Old Testament, with attention to the author, style, intended audience, date, and theological themes of each writing. It also provides the student with the background of the key points of the redemptive narrative of Scripture such as creation, salvation, and Christ's person and work as presented in the Hebrew Bible. The student is expected to read significant portions of the Old Testament throughout the course.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3



EO105 Pentateuch

The Pentateuch is the foundational section of the Old Testament and has a profound impact both within the Christian church and the broader world today. In this course, the student is equipped to understand the historical world of the Pentateuch, along with the most important theological and literary themes in these five books. The student is equipped not only to understand this section in its original context, but with the tools to apply God's revelation within the Torah to the Lutheran congregation in a twenty-first century context.

Prerequisite: Hermeneutics

Credit Hours: 3

EO107 Prophets: Isaiah

In this course, the student gains a thorough understanding of the theological, textual, and historical contents of the book written by the Hebrew prophet Isaiah. An emphasis is placed in Isaiah's place within redemptive history—particularly his Messianic prophecies that are fulfilled in Christ. Isaiah is also placed within the broader context of Israelite prophetism which encapsulates both the major and minor prophets in the Old Testament.

Prerequisite: Hermeneutics

Credit Hours: 3

EN101 New Testament Introduction

This course examines all writings of the New Testament while considering the topics of author, style, intended audience, date, and theological themes. An emphasis is placed on Christological themes, and the fulfillment of the Old Testament narrative through establishment of the New Covenant. In this course, the student is expected to read the entirety of the New Testament.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

EN105 Synoptic Gospel: Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew has often been considered the most foundational account of the life of Jesus. In this course, the student learns the background and context of Matthew's writing. Attention is paid to the author's consistent use of patterns and narratives of the Old Testament which structure his narrative around Jesus as the fulfillment of all Old Covenant promises. The student is also equipped to apply the lessons of Matthew's Gospel to the church in the present age.

Prerequisite: Hermeneutics

Credit Hours: 3

EN107 Pauline Letter: Ephesians

This course explores Paul's theology through his Epistle to the Ephesians. The short book is explored in relation to its key themes, along with its connection to the rest of the New Testament. The student is expected to examine the Greek text in some depth, especially as one unpacks Paul's key theme of being "in Christ," within this theologically rich book.

Prerequisite: Hermeneutics

Credit Hours: 3



Systematics Courses

S100 Theological Prolegomena

This course answers the question: What does it mean to be Lutheran? Students explore the underlying thinking of Martin Luther's doctrinal outlook, along with that of later Lutheranism. Emphasis is placed on the unique perspectives taken by adherents of the Lutheran Reformation which differentiate this tradition from broader Christendom.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

S115 Doctrine I

Through an in-depth study of Francis Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* (along with supplemental texts), this course explores the foundational elements of Christian doctrine. This course covers the topics of: the nature and authority of Scripture; the essence and attributes of God; divine providence; man and woman as both created and fallen; the nature and impact of sin; and Christ's person and work. Scriptural and philosophical foundations of these teachings are presented alongside a study of alternate perspectives on each topic. By the end of the course, the student is expected to have a clear understanding of each doctrine, along with the ability to communicate it to others.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena

Credit Hours: 3

S116 Doctrine II

Through an in-depth study of Francis Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* (along with supplemental texts), this course explores the foundational elements of Christian doctrine. This course covers the topics of: justification by faith; good works in the Christian life; the church and ministry; the sacraments; predestination; and eschatology. Scriptural and philosophical foundations of these teachings are presented alongside a study of alternate perspectives on each topic. By the end of the course, the student is expected to have a clear understanding of each doctrine, along with the ability to communicate it to others.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena and Doctrine I

Credit Hours: 3

S124 Lutheran Confessions I

This course is a study of the documents included within the 1580 Book of Concord as accepted as authoritative by Confessional Lutheran churches. This first course on the Confessions covers the following documents: the Ecumenical Creeds, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, the Augsburg Confession, and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. There are two essential elements of this course: a presentation of the history of the controversies and political situations leading to these documents, and the doctrinal content of the Confessions. The teachings are applied to practical life and ministry in the twenty-first century.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena

Credit Hours: 3

S125 Lutheran Confessions II

This course is a study of the documents included within the 1580 Book of Concord as accepted as authoritative by Confessional Lutheran churches. This second course on the Confessions covers the following documents: the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, and the Epitome of the Formula



of Concord. There are two essential elements of this course: a presentation of the history of the controversies and political situations leading to these documents, and the doctrinal content of the Confessions. The teachings are applied to practical life and ministry in the twenty-first century.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena and Confessions 1

Credit Hours: 3

S132 Apologetics

This course is an introduction to the discipline of apologetics, wherein the student learns to defend the Christian faith in view of both intellectual and moral challenges that arise in the modern world. The apologetic model used though this course is the classical one as explained in the medieval scholastics and the later Lutheran orthodox. This class covers the philosophical challenges of materialism, the historicity of the Gospel accounts, and the prevalence of relativism in the postmodern age. At the end of this class, the student should be equipped to both defend the faith and to use these tools in a practical ministry context.

Prerequisite: Theological Prolegomena

Credit Hours: 3

S415 Law and Gospel

The distinction between the law and the gospel is at the heart of Lutheran doctrine and pastoral practice. In this class, the student will explore this theological framework for the proper distinction between these two words of God with an orientation toward the application of this teaching in practical ministry contexts. This class studies C.F.W. Walther's theses in *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* as its foundational text, and also overviews theological challenges that have been brought against the classical distinction, such as those of Karl Barth and Gerhard Forde.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

History Courses

H101 Church History Overview

This course explores the history of the Christian church from its inception to today, by reviewing prominent movements, persons, doctrines, and institutions using both secondary and primary source materials. The course discusses the impact of society, culture, politics, and philosophy upon the church. Special emphasis is placed upon adherence to the Holy Scriptures in the faith and life of the church, in spite of facing various crises and conflicts, hierarchs and heresies.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

H130 Reformation History

The purpose of this course is to acquaint the student with the philosophical and religious history of late Medieval and Reformation Europe. As foundation, students will become conversant with soteriological and epistemological views of the time as well as societal and political concerns and events. The contributions of Martin Luther receive prominent attention. Other outstanding Reformers are also studied, viz. Zwingli, Grebel, and Calvin.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3



H131 Early Church History

This course presents the major theological events, movements, and personalities influencing the life of the Church during the first six centuries. Special attention is given to persons, institutions, cultures, and doctrine. The goal is for the student to understand the development of the early Christian Church, including orthodox and heretical doctrines, canonization of Holy Scripture, ecumenical councils, liturgical worship, and ecclesiastical polity.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

H132 Modern and Postmodern Church History

This course covers church history from the publication of Rene Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy* in 1641 to today. The focus is on theological, philosophical, and historical developments in this time period, and the church's response to such developments. Throughout this course, the student will gain an understanding of how the many changes in science, culture, and technology in the modern era relate to theological debates and movements. Key topics include: the rise of Lutheran Pietism; the challenges of modernity and the Enlightenment; the growth of missions; ecumenical dialogues; and Protestant Liberalism, along with its detractors.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

H185 History and Polity of TAALC

This course provides a history of American Lutheranism, specifically focusing on the predecessor church bodies as the background for the formation of The AALC. It focuses on interactions between church bodies and theological issues during this period. Then, the polity of The AALC is examined within Lutheranism and the Church Catholic. Contemporary Lutheran issues and their influence on The AALC are also addressed.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

Practical Courses

P102 Pastoral Theology and Life

This course examines what it means to stand, "[I]n the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ." The pastor is called by Christ and the church to represent the Lord Jesus in many and various ways: in the pulpit, at the altar, in the classroom, by the bedside, at the graveside, and more. Jesus is the example of how to function in the pastoral office. The pastor must be willing to show strength through weakness, and power through suffering. This course explores the practical applications of the theology of the Cross, the life of the *Seelsorger* (soul caregiver), the heart of Christ, and the difficulties of putting them into practice as an ordained servant of God.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

P103 Pastoral Care and Counseling

This course serves as an introduction to the pastor's duties and responsibilities as counselor of souls. This course overviews different methodologies of pastoral counseling and teaches the student how to discern the difference between pastoral counseling and clinical counseling. The student is equipped in skills of



listening, note taking, and discernment within a counseling context, and the proper application of Law and Gospel to address the spiritual needs of the congregant.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

P104 Pastoral Care in Conflict

Building upon the foundations of P103, Pastoral Care and Counseling, this course teaches the student how to offer pastoral care and counsel in the midst of conflict. There are several different types of common conflict within congregations addressed in this course. This includes interpersonal conflict between individuals in the congregation and within families, as well as handling conflict between the pastor and congregation. Throughout the course, a variety of guest teachers are brought in to share insights into situations of conflict in various areas of life and ministry.

Prerequisite: P103 Pastoral Care and Counseling

Credit Hours: 3

P130 Preaching I

This course serves as an introduction to preaching from a Lutheran perspective. In this course, the student learns about best practices in sermon preparation and presentation. Special attention is paid to the law and gospel dynamic as it relates to preaching, the importance of catechesis in the pulpit, and how to apply the Word of God in a practical manner to each church's unique situation. Through listening to sermons of pastors in class, and the reading of C.F.W. Walther's sermons on the Gospels, the principles of preaching are explained as they relate to the preaching of the four Gospels. Along with this, the reading and discussion of Grime and Nadasdy's *Preaching is Worship* helps the student to see how preaching relates to the rest of the divine service.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

P131 Preaching II

Following the basics of sermon preparation and delivery in Preaching I, this course deepens the student's understanding of the sermon and of engaging delivery. There are three components to this course. First, the student prepares sermons on the Old Testament and Epistle lessons and learns how to apply the already-learned preaching principles from the prior course uniquely to these types of texts. Second, the student reads examples of sermons from special occasions and feasts within the church year and learns how to bring the Word of God uniquely to different pastoral situations. Third, the student learns creative methods to bring an engaging delivery of the sermon to his congregation. By the end of this course, the student should have the ability to prepare and deliver sermons for a variety of occasions.

Prerequisite: Preaching I

Credit Hours: 3

P140 History of Christian Worship

This course provides a historical survey of Christian worship, beginning with the Jewish antecedents to the divine liturgy, including synagogal worship, temple worship, and Jewish prayer forms. Patristic developments of the eucharist rite are traced in the eastern and western traditions. The concept of eucharistic sacrifice is examined, giving special attention to the Medieval development of the Roman sacrifice of the Mass. The course explores Luther's reformation of the Mass, and the distinctive characteristics of Lutheran sacramentology. The course concludes with an examination of various Lutheran resources and practices today.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3



P151 Pastoral Leadership

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with a theology of pastoral leadership. The course includes the practical implications of biblical leadership in a post-Christian world. Students will examine pastoral leadership in diverse situations: meetings, visitation, counseling, funerals and weddings, the divine service, etc. Special attention is given to building trust, collegial leadership, pastoral decision-making, lay leadership development, conflict prevention and resolution, and congregational healing after conflict. Methodologies of pastoral administration and the importance of pastoral record-keeping are also discussed.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

P160 Missions

As Jesus delivers his Great Commission to the disciples (Matt. 28:18-20), it is the calling of the church to reach out to one's community and the larger world with the Gospel of Christ. This course develops a theology of mission as described in the book of Acts, with a view to its practical application in a congregational context. The student is equipped in methods of mission and evangelism for both a foreign and domestic context.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

P170 Church Administration

This course is designed to help the pastoral student focus on church administration within the context of the two kingdoms. The kingdom of the left includes the administrative side or church leadership, while the kingdom of the right includes the development of an environment of spiritual growth and mission through Word and Sacrament.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3



Course Relationships at a Glance

G103 Greek Intensive [M.Div.]		E102 Hermeneutics	EO105 Pentateuch
G101 Greek 1 [M.Div.]	G102 Greek 2 [M.Div.]		EO107 Prophets: Isaiah
			EN105 Synoptic Gospel: Matthew
			EN107 Pauline Letter: Ephesians
	E101 The Bible in Context [MAR] & [MAT]		

S100 Theological Prolegomena	S115 Doctrine I	S116 Doctrine II
	S124 Lutheran Confessions I	S125 Lutheran Confessions II
	S131 Catechesis	
	S132 Apologetics	
S415 Law and Gospel		

P130 Preaching I	P131 Preaching II
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EN101 New Testament Introduction
EO101 Old Testament Introduction

H101 Church History Overview
H130 Reformation History
H131 Early Church History
H132 Modern and Postmodern Church History
H185 History and Polity of TAALC

P102 Pastoral Theology and Life
P103 Pastoral Counseling (elective)
P120 Teaching the Faith
P140 History of Christian Worship
P151 Pastoral Leadership
P160 Missions
P170 Church Administration



American Lutheran
Theological Seminary

Field Work and Pastoral Internship Manual

The Vicar



Preach the Word

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

—2 Timothy 4:1–4 (ESV)

Augsburg Confession: Chief Articles of Faith

Article V: Of the Ministry.

That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake.

Field Work Principles

Field Work is the initial, yet key component of seminary training for students. Field Work provides the seminarian with congregational opportunities to learn about and participate in many areas of pastoral ministry while under the guidance of a pastor. In a minimum of six required quarters of field work, they will primarily focus on exposure to these areas:

- Worship
- Preaching
- Visitation Ministry
- Education/Teaching
- Church Record Keeping

As the student progresses through the seminary curriculum, he will begin to participate and lead in these areas, to match his coursework for a minimum of six quarters. Thus, Field Work is not immersion training, but a gradual exposure to the different facets of pastoral ministry.

Worship

Scripture Readings

Introduction to worship will start with reading one or more Scripture texts. The student will begin reading either the Old Testament reading or the Epistle reading. The goal is for the seminarian to develop public reading skills with the help of the pastor. This should be an ongoing (weekly) activity for the seminarian. As the pastor senses growth in public reading, he may have the seminarian begin reading two lessons and perhaps eventually all three readings.



Liturgical Portions

There are three areas which the seminarian normally should not lead:

- Confession/Absolution
- The Sacrament of Holy Baptism
- The Words of Institution (Lord's Supper)

The seminarian can lead the service in several places, gradually being introduced to each section:

- Introit
- Kyrie
- Gloria in Excelsis
- Collect of the Day
- Readings
- Creed
- Prayer of the Church
- Post Communion Canticle
- Lord's Prayer
- Benediction (appropriate for lay person)

Preaching

The seminarian should have completed course P130 (Preaching 1) before preaching within the congregation. After completion of course P130, preaching could be on a regular basis, but not to exceed once a month. More realistically, the seminarian should preach approximately every 6-8 weeks (except in emergency). It is required that the Field Work Supervisor review every sermon the seminarian preaches before it is preached.

After completing course P131 (Preaching 2), the seminarian may preach regularly, i.e., once a month.

Visitation Ministry

The seminarian can accompany the pastor on any visits (hospital, shut-in, prospective member, etc.) that the Supervisor deems appropriate. The first few times, the seminarian is to be a silent guest as he observes the pastor. Post-visit observations, questions, and discussion are important for Field Work. Upon follow-up visits, the pastor may delegate a portion to the seminarian (reading Scripture, prayer). As the seminarian gains experience and confidence, more of the visit can become his responsibility.

Emergency visitation (accident, trauma, etc.) is entirely the Supervisor's decision and his discretion. Follow-up visits in emergency cases may provide helpful training within the context of pastoral ministry and congregational life.

Education/Teaching

The seminarian will observe the pastor teaching as often as possible. At every opportunity, the seminarian will observe other teachers of various age groups. After the seminarian completes and passes course P120 (Teaching the Faith), then the pastor may give the seminarian opportunities to teach in the congregation. Continuity and longevity of teaching are beneficial in the process. That is, if the seminarian begins to teach a class, it is recommended that he be given responsibility for a minimum of four consecutive weeks. As opportunities occur, the seminarian may be asked to teach various courses to various age groups (Catechism, Youth, New Members, Adults, etc.).



Church Record Keeping

Part of the seminarian's learning experience includes knowing what record keeping is required for the governmental authorities, for the AALC, and for other groups. This includes recording baptisms, numbers of people communed, marriages, etc.

Note: The pastor may not be the one who actually records these acts of the church. However, the seminarian needs to be aware of how to do it, so that he is prepared to face any situation when he serves on his own.

Evaluation

Supervisor: At the end of each quarter, the Field Work supervisor should provide a brief report of the seminarian activities in the congregation. The report should be sent to the Regional Pastor and the Seminary Provost. Also, any pertinent observations are expected to be discussed with the seminarian to help as he progresses in his studies.

Seminarian: At the end of each quarter, the seminarian will write a summary report of his activities. He will include appraisals of his personal and professional growth, as well as his observations regarding areas he needs additional education or experience in. The report should be sent to the Field Work Supervisor, the Regional Pastor, the Seminary President, and to the Seminary Administrator.

Pastoral Internship Principles

The Pastoral Internship is an opportunity for the seminarian to gain extensive experience in all aspects of pastoral ministry with the exception of the conduct of marriage vows, the consecration of Holy Communion, and the Absolution. A Vicar is expected to participate in the various dimensions of ministry under the supervision of an ordained pastor. The Supervising Pastor guides the Vicar into many areas of ministry to gain experience in the many aspects of congregational life. In all other areas, the Supervising Pastor is to provide the Vicar with guidance, grace, and the opportunity within the congregation to grow in experience and ability.

Before the Pastoral Internship, the Vicar is required to complete 18 courses in the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program. Within the 18 courses, the Vicar must complete and pass these seven courses (including prerequisites):

- P130 – Preaching I
- S124 – Confessions I
- S115 – Doctrine I
- P140 – Worship
- S415 – Law and Gospel
- S131 – Catechesis
- P102 – Pastoral Theology and Life
- The Vicar is also required to quote the entire Small Catechism.



Pastoral Internship Purpose:

- To provide prospective pastors a one-year full-time opportunity, or its equivalent part-time, to practically learn about the extensive calling of the Office of Holy Ministry.
- To grow in Christ, and in confidence of being a shepherd of His Church.
- To respect the congregation and Supervising Pastor he is serving under.
- And to prepare himself and his family for the ebb and flows of the Office of Holy Ministry.

Pastoral Internship Goal: To gain extensive experience in all aspects of pastoral ministry, with the exception of officiating marriages, and consecration of the Sacrament of the Altar. These aspects are as follows:

Community

The Vicar enters into a more immersive role in the congregation. This may be in the congregation in which they performed Field Work, or it may be a different congregation, with varying culture and expectations. Even though the Pastoral Internship is a minimum of one year, the visibility of the Vicar and his family within the congregation is necessary. It is also imperative that the Supervising Pastor and congregation take the Vicar under their wings and provide for them in order to cultivate a healthy environment for the Gospel to be proclaimed and the Vicar and his family to grow. The pastoral intern shall be designated as ‘Vicar.’ Both Vicar and congregation are to see the mutual relationship of training a man for future pastoral ministry, while benefiting the whole church.

The congregation shall use the following recommendations in determining payments to Vicar:

- **A Vicar is not expected to subsidize his own Internship.** He is, however, to manage his finances wisely, especially in the realm of his family.
- **Travel/Moving:** Each case must be considered individually. If no allowance is offered, sufficiently furnished housing should be provided, unless the Vicar chooses to pay his own moving costs.
- **Housing/Utilities:** Adequate housing and reasonable utilities should be provided without cost to the Vicar. He may be housed in a home or specific apartment provided, or paid for, by the congregation. Otherwise, he should receive a monthly allowance which is the average rental value of a home or apartment in the area of the congregation.
- **Transportation:** On-the-job expenses for a car should be provided at no cost to the Vicar. This can either be a fixed allowance or reimbursement based on IRS per business mileage rate.
- **Health Insurance:** Insurance should be paid in order to provide the Vicar and family with adequate health insurance.
- **Cash Payments** (in addition to travel/moving, housing/utilities, transportation, and health insurance): The congregation should be aware that the Vicar and family must have enough on which to live on. The congregation shall provide payment that is consistent with the area where the church is located and living space the Vicar and family will live.
- **The congregation** should be aware that the Vicar must cover many costs with his service during Internship. For tax purposes, the Vicar is an employee of the congregation, so the congregation must withhold and remit both federal and state income taxes, as well for Social Security. If the Vicar finds that the congregation does not provide for some of these items adequately, he may respectfully discuss such things with the Supervising Pastor. From there, the Supervising Pastor will take potential concerns under advisement.



Worship Leadership

During Field Work, the Vicar should have been exposed to participating in the regular worship services. In the Internship, the Vicar should become more apt to plan, lead, and teach about worship services from a Lutheran perspective, while also acknowledging the practices of the local congregation. This includes occasional rites and services, hymn selection, readings, prayers of the church, seasonal additions and omissions, etc. The Vicar should also begin to understand practically that the preaching within the worship service is of the utmost importance, as it is both essential to Word and Sacrament ministry and to the teaching of the congregation.

The Vicar is not to preside over the solemnization of marriage vows, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the consecration of the Sacrament of the Altar, or the Absolution. Such rites require an ordained pastor on the clergy roster of the AALC to preside over such (as per Augsburg Confession – Article XIV). It is at the discretion of the Supervisor to allow the Vicar to distribute the elements of the Sacrament of the Altar.

Preaching

Preaching the Word of God in its truth and purity is both a joy and a privilege. During Field Work, the Vicar may have preached enough to become confident in his preaching style, while being the voice of God through Law and Gospel. In the Internship, the frequency of the Vicar preaching should increase to a minimum of once a month. While a Vicar may have different responsibilities during his Internship, the maximum he should preach in a given month is 3 times. This maximum does not include midweek services or occasional services (nursing homes, shut-ins, etc.).

The Vicar is to learn and implement healthy practices in studying the text, preferably in the original languages, while rightly distinguishing Law and Gospel, and applying the Word of God to the lives of the congregation.

To achieve such, the Supervising Pastor must be involved in this process because he is the shepherd of the congregation the Vicar is serving in. Thus, the Supervising Pastor will review each of the Vicar's sermons for both Scriptural content (Law/Gospel) and practical application (Christ in today's world). The Supervising Pastor is to also have continual dialogue regarding presentation, different styles of preaching, and the planning of a sermon series.

Religious Education/Teaching

The Internship experience is to be one of growth for the Vicar. As the Vicar gains knowledge and experience, he is to continually grow in his ability to teach and to bring Christ into every situation of pastoral ministry. He is to be diligent in the correct study of God's Word, as explained by Luther: *oratio, meditatio, tentatio*. The Vicar must be given every opportunity to hone his teaching style among all age levels. It would be of great benefit for him to be involved in planning, implementing, and observing the evaluation of various ministries.

The Vicar should be expected to plan, observe, and teach in many different facets, such as but not limited to:

- Sunday school
- Bible classes
- Men's and Women's Bible Studies
- Confirmation classes



- Devotions for meetings
- New Member classes
- Chapel or other services, if a school is joined to the church.
- Vacation Bible School
- Youth Groups
- Newsletters
- Newspapers

The Supervising Pastor should occasionally observe and evaluate the Vicar's classes. Throughout the duration of the Internship, periodic evaluation meetings with the Supervising Pastor will allow the Vicar to ask questions, seek guidance, and be supported as he grows.

Administration

Most men entering into pastoral ministry find the amount of administrative work daunting. Though seminary prepares the prospective pastor to be aware of the administration realm, the Internship can practically prepare the Vicar for the rigor of parish administration.

The Vicar is in a unique position where he can watch and learn an immense amount about administration from the Supervising Pastor, without the burden of being fully responsible for decisions that are made. The Supervising Pastor is the primary administrator of the congregation. The Vicar can observe how to delegate responsibilities and constructively oversee ministry groups and programs.

While administration is not always visibly seen in a congregation, the Vicar should be willing to observe and attend various meetings without being required to. This display of discernment will show the difference between simply being present and being able to shepherd a congregation toward specific goals. The Vicar's experience in church administration is to expose him to the administrative realm, and to better prepare him for serving as overseer in congregational life.

As a result of church administration being subjective to each individual congregation, the Vicar will be evaluated by the Supervising Pastor in relation to the specific congregational ministry. The Supervising Pastor needs to teach the Vicar how to oversee the general direction of ministry, while tending to specific needs of the congregation as a shepherd. This includes organizations, programs, office work, and potentially working alongside other administrative staff (pastor, secretary, director, council members, etc.).

Pastoral Counseling and Care

A pastor is called to be a *seelsorger*, a man of God who cares about and cares for Christ's redeemed souls. As a shepherd, he is to show love and concern as he cares for the flock God gives to him. In the Internship, the Vicar begins to experience this firsthand, as he observes and cares for the congregation himself.

Through visitations, shut-in visits, and those in need of counseling, the Vicar will see the constant need to bring Christ into peoples' lives. This is an area that is done in conjunction with the Supervising Pastor to give the Vicar a sense of comfort. Due to the various nature of pastoral care, the Vicar should accompany the Supervising Pastor on a series of visitations before he is able to tend to visits alone.

Due to the confidential nature of counseling cases, the Vicar is not to be involved directly in this process. However, he may be allowed, at the discretion of the Supervising Pastor, to handle opportunities in youth work or other organizations. The Supervising Pastor is to have frequent discussions about proper pastoral



care with the Vicar, giving resources, applications, and ways to equip and prepare the Vicar. The Vicar should write case histories to benefit counselees, himself, and the Supervising Pastor.

Every Supervising Pastor will differ in how to best care for a congregation, but over the course of the internship, the Vicar will gain experience, knowledge, and ability to better care for the people of God given to him in the Office of Holy Ministry.

Youth

In many situations, youth ministry is where the Vicar is given the most freedom and responsibility. The Vicar is to understand the joy of having young ones in the congregation, to teach the youth that they are part of (and the future of) the church, and to uplift them in the midst of greater congregational life. It is imperative for the Supervising Pastor to instruct the Vicar about the importance of boundaries with youth and youth work, and the dangers pastors may face in the midst of conflict—especially between youth and their families.

Evaluation

Over the course of the internship, there are to be numerous opportunities to be evaluated both by the Supervising Pastor, and by the Vicar himself. Written evaluations are to be done the 4th, 8th, and 12th month of a one-year Internship (Every 4 months for its equivalent). The purposes of written evaluations are as follows:

- To help and guide the Vicar in better comprehension of pastoral ministry.
- To evaluate the Vicar's service, work, and effort.
- and to provide ALTS-accurate and helpful guidance for the Vicar and future prospective pastors of the AALC.

Each evaluation will be from both the Vicar and the Supervising Pastor and are to be discussed by them together. This is an opportunity for the Vicar to assess his strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas to improve and learn more about. Both the Supervising Pastor and Vicar are to answer truthfully in their evaluations, while also using the fruits of the Spirit to guide their conversations.

While specific written evaluations are required at certain points, it is always beneficial to meet on a consistent basis. Supervising Pastors and Vicars are brothers in ministry for the next year, thus frequent meetings help in discussing the blessings and perils of parish ministry. Communication, humbleness, and a willingness to grow are vital for the Vicar to exhibit. Communication, gentleness and love in Christ, and an open door from the Supervising Pastor promote a healthy environment for the Vicar to grow.



Benchmarks for Internship

(At the discretion of the Supervising Pastor)

- Preach a minimum of 12 times through the course of a one-year Internship (or equivalent), or more if possible.
- Preach a minimum of one seasonal service (Advent/Lent).
- Six visitations (two or three being to the same person/family).
- Plan a minimum of 12 services through the course of a one-year Internship, and more if possible.
- Plan one four-week sermon series on a given topic.
- Plan and execute one ministry group event (Men's, Women's, Youth, etc).
- Teach a minimum of 10 confirmation classes.
- Plan and teach one four-week Bible Study.
- Prepare and execute 3 devotions for use in ministry groups.
- Write four newsletter articles through the course of a one-year Internship.
- Read two books and write book reports through the course of the one-year Internship. (Books that apply to congregational ministry and life).



Notes