

MASTER OF ARTS (PHILOSOPHY)

Mission

The mission of the Master of Arts is to produce biblically, theologically, and spiritually discerning Christian thinkers who can serve the body of Christ in lay, parachurch or academic ministries. The Master of Arts program provides both a general biblical, theological, and spiritual foundation for reflection and a specialized focus on a discipline crucial to fulfilling Talbot's mission and from which students can serve or go on for advanced study. These disciplines include Bible Exposition, Biblical and Theological Studies in the Eurasian Context (Kyiv extension only), New Testament, Old Testament, Philosophy, Spiritual Formation, and Theology.

The main purpose of this specialization is to help the student develop the skills to do philosophy from a Christian worldview. The attitudes and character traits of a Christian philosopher will be fostered by departmental activities, professional modeling, and teaching techniques. Skills necessary for the craft of philosophy will be developed by equipping the student to think critically, conduct high-level philosophical research, and interact with the broader philosophical community. The specialization is aimed at developing the ability to do philosophy in various ministry programs, such as parachurch and local church apologetics as well as preparing the student for further graduate work in fields such as philosophy, ethics, religious studies, law, political science, and theology.

Collectively, graduates of our program should be providing visionary leadership, articulating a Christian worldview in various cultural contexts — at Christian colleges, in seminaries, and in parachurch ministries, for example — and should be penetrating the secular university and venues of popular culture, such as art, media, and music. Therefore, many graduates will qualify for admission to competitive doctoral programs in philosophy, ethics, religious studies, and other fields.

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Master of Arts, students will be able to:

1. Integrate a sound understanding of Scripture with the contents of their respective emphasized disciplines (ULO 3).
2. Explain the major doctrines of Christianity, including their biblical basis and contemporary relevance (ULO 1).
3. Students will be able to demonstrate abilities relevant to personal spiritual formation, including an understanding of spiritual theology, knowledge of God & self, relational skills, and an understanding of their vocation (ULO 1, 2, 3).
4. Perform and report research in their respective disciplines at a level sufficient to begin a doctoral program (ULO 3).

Each Program Learning Outcome (PLO) listed above references at least one of the University Learning Outcomes (ULO 1, 2, 3), which may be found in the General Information section (<https://catalog.biola.edu/general-information/#UniversityLearningOutcomes>) of this catalog.

Philosophy (<https://www.biola.edu/degrees/g/philosophy-ma/>) Specialization Learning Outcomes

As a result of this program, the student will achieve the following learning outcomes (in addition to the core M.A. learning outcomes):

1. Graduates will be able to explain the importance of sustaining a vibrant intellectual life as part of an ongoing commitment to following Christ.
2. Graduates will be able to summarize and critique, in written form, professional philosophical literature published in specialized philosophical journals and with academic presses, and will be able to relate the material in professional philosophical literature to various aspects of a Christian worldview, for use either in a professional academic setting, in the local church, or through engagement with popular culture.

These learning outcomes will be measured through the evaluation of a portfolio submitted by each student during the semester after which he or she will graduate from the M.A. Philosophy specialization. Details of the portfolio and how it will be evaluated can be found in the Talbot Philosophy Department office and will be sent to students during their first semester enrolled in the program.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must possess a Bachelor of Arts degree or its academic equivalent from an accredited college with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale). Applicants who do not possess a Bachelor of Arts degree or its academic equivalent from an accredited institution may still apply and may be provisionally admitted at the discretion of Talbot School of Theology. Additionally, applicants should have completed an accredited course in Old Testament survey and in New Testament survey prior to matriculation. To meet the prerequisite, students must have received a C or higher in approved undergraduate or graduate survey courses from a regionally accredited institution. If the prerequisite courses are not completed prior to matriculation, the student is required to take TTBE 519 and TTBE 520 during their program.

All applicants must submit a written statement outlining their vocational objectives and how the degree might relate to those objectives.

Graduation Requirements

1. Satisfactorily complete 49 credits as outlined in the curriculum requirements below. The rate of progress for many students is 13–14 credits per semester, allowing the program to be completed in two years.
2. Students without previous undergraduate courses in Old Testament Survey and New Testament Survey must take TTBE 519 and TTBE 520 in addition to the standard curriculum.
3. Complete the online introduction to theological research and writing by the end of the second semester.

- Submit an acceptable capstone project, as determined by the department of specialization. Students will receive specific directions about their capstone project from their respective departments.
- At least 24 of the total credits required for the degree program must be completed at Biola. Advanced Standing, Reduction and transfer credit are not considered residency credits.
- Obtain a 3.0 average with no grade below a C- in all courses to be credited toward graduation.
- Complete the entire program in no more than five years.
- Meet with a graduate academic records and degree specialist in the Office of the Registrar one year prior to graduation to declare intent to graduate. (See the Graduate Graduation Application section (<https://catalog.biola.edu/academic-policies/graduation-and-degree-conferral/graduate/#GraduateGraduationApplication>).

Program Requirements

Specialization Requirements

Program Structure

The academic programs leading to the degree Master of Arts with a specialization in Philosophy is comprised of 49 credits, including:

- Biblical and theological foundations.
- Spiritual Formation Focus (SFF).
- Academic specialization in one of four disciplines requiring biblical language studies, or general studies in which biblical languages are not required.
- Additional elective courses determined by the student in consultation with the advisor.

Students may complete this specialization online, on-campus, or by a combination of those two modalities.

Advanced Standing

Applicants who have taken undergraduate courses in biblical or theological studies may request advanced standing based on collegiate work. See Talbot Admissions Requirements for details. Note: if master's level courses are given advanced standing based on undergraduate coursework, some Ph.D. programs may require additional graduate courses in order to meet doctoral program requirements.

Advanced Standing and Transfer Guidelines for Philosophy Specialization

Students with satisfactory undergraduate parallel content in philosophy will be considered for advanced standing. All requests for advanced standing are subject to departmental approval on a case by case basis. Students seeking course reduction must have earned at least a B grade.

Students may only transfer courses that are parallel in content and taken from accredited graduate schools and seminaries. Request for transfer of courses should be submitted to the Office of the Registrar with prior approval from the department. Students must complete in residence a minimum of 24 credits in the Philosophy specialization.

Curriculum Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Prerequisite Courses		
TTBE 519	Old Testament Survey	
TTBE 520	New Testament Survey	
Program Courses		
TTBE 517	Hermeneutics and Bible Study Methods	3
TTSF 501	Introduction to Spiritual Theology and Formation	3
TTSF 503	Personal Foundations for Spiritual Formation	3
TTSF 504	Spiritual Formation, Vocation, and the Disciplines	1
TTSF 505	Talbot Spiritual Direction I	0
TTSF 506	Talbot Spiritual Direction II	0
TTTH 521	Theology I: God, Scripture, Creation	3
TTTH 522	Theology II: Christ, Humanity, Sin, Salvation	3
TTTH 623	Theology III: Spirit, Church, Last Things	3
Philosophy Specialization Courses		
TTPH 523	Metaphysics I	3
TTPH 544	Epistemology I	3
TTPH 566	History and Normative Systems of Ethics	3
TTPH 667	Philosophy of the Mind	3
TTPH 684	Philosophy of Religion	3
TTPH 685	Philosophical Theology	3
Elective Courses		
Philosophy elective courses		12
Total Credits		49