

# MASTER OF ARTS (SPIRITUAL FORMATION)

## 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.

This specialization is designed as a personal growth and academic degree. It is an intensive, integrative program within the Institute for Spiritual Formation at Talbot School of Theology, designed to equip men and women for the ministry of discipleship and spiritual formation in general, in the local church, and for further academic training in spiritual formation. The program is designed entirely around promoting growth in the believer's inner life of faith and prayer with God in the context of a shared community and developed knowledge-base in the Word.

Because the program is experiential and theoretical in nature with respect to spiritual growth and the dynamic processes involved, the M.A. specialization in Spiritual Formation draws upon an interdisciplinary faculty from both Talbot and Rosemead School of Psychology.

It includes both in-depth theoretical and integrative coursework, employing the creation disciplines such as theology, philosophy, psychology and education as well as experiential-relational soul work in classes and co-curricular requirements to aid in understanding the spiritual life mentoring.

Note also that this more academic M.A. with a specialization in Spiritual Formation is to be distinguished from the more professional M.A. in Spiritual Formation and Soul Care, the latter being fashioned more along the lines of an Apprentice Training Model which includes training, supervision and service components in spiritual direction and mentoring.

## 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.

## Spiritual Formation (<https://www.biola.edu/degrees/g/spiritual-formation-ma/>) Specialization Learning Outcomes

As a result of this program, students will:

1. Develop the PLOs having to do with biblical integration (#1) and spiritual formation (#3) to a higher level of mastery.

## Admission Requirements

### 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.

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

For special admissions deadlines and requirements involved in the Spiritual Formation specialization, contact Graduate Admissions. Due to the limited enrollment in this specialization, all applicants will be personally interviewed.

## Graduation Requirements

### Graduation Requirements

1. Satisfactorily complete 49 credits as outlined in the curriculum requirements below. The rate of progress for many students is 12–13 credits per semester, allowing the program to be completed in two years.
2. Complete the online introduction to theological research and writing by the end of the second semester.
3. Submit an acceptable capstone project, as determined by the department of specialization.
4. At least 24 of the total credits required for the degree program must be completed in residency at Biola. Advanced Standing, Reduction and transfer credit are not considered residency credits.
5. Obtain a 3.0 average with no grade below a C- in all courses to be credited toward graduation.
6. Complete the entire program in no more than five years.
7. 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 Spiritual Formation is comprised of 49 credits, including:

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

### 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.

### Curriculum Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Program Courses</b>		
TTBE 519	Old Testament Survey	3
TTBE 520	New Testament Survey	3
TTSF 517	Hermeneutics and the Word in Spiritual Formation	3
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
<b>Spiritual Formation Specialization Courses</b>		
TTSF 521	Introduction to Christian Spirituality and Prayer	3
TTSF 524	History and Theory of Christian Soul Care and Direction	3
TTSF 531	History and Traditions of Christian Spirituality	3
TTSF 532	Developmental Spirituality and Contemplative Prayer	3
TTSF 543	Personal Foundations of Spirituality and Retreat	3
TTSF 544	Personality Development and Psychopathology	3
TTSF 642	Spiritual Disciplines Seminar	2
TTSF 645	Christian Virtue and the Spiritual Disciplines	3
TTSF 672	Personal Retreat and Formation <sup>1</sup>	3
TTSF 701	Spiritual Formation Seminar	2
TTSF 740	Spiritual Formation Project/Thesis	3

#### Co-Curricular Requirements

Contact the Institute for Spiritual Formation (ISF) for a full description of these requirements.<sup>2</sup>

Didactic Therapy	
Faculty-Student Retreats	
TTSF 585	Personal Spiritual Direction (must be taken every term of enrollment)
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>49</b>

<sup>1</sup> TTSF 672 should be taken twice, once for 2 credits and again for 1 credit, for a total of 3 credits.

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Spiritual Formation (ISF) (<https://www.biola.edu/talbot/academics/isf/>)