

Student Life

Devotional Life

The most important aspect of life for a student at The Master's Seminary is his personal relationship with God. The seminary seeks to provide an environment which encourages spiritual growth that is commensurate with academic and intellectual growth.

In order to promote an atmosphere conducive to such development, the seminary provides various programs and pursues various approaches designed to emphasize worship, spiritual discernment, and devotion to the Lord. Because of the biblical requirements for a role in Christian leadership (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) and in view of the character qualities which are the goal for all maturing believers (Galatians 5:22–23), it is the conviction of the seminary that every administrator, faculty member, and student must zealously pursue these qualifications. In an effort to assist in achieving these objectives, the seminary desires that all activities be pervaded by an atmosphere of prayer so that not only chapel services and prayer meetings, but also every class, every committee meeting, every task, and every ministry might become, by God's grace, an avenue of spiritual blessing and growth.

Chapel

The seminary community meets together each Tuesday and Thursday morning for a one hour chapel service. The purpose of the chapel is for worship and exposure to current issues and ministries. Speakers include pastors, missionaries, faculty members, and other Christian leaders.



Each fall a series of chapel sessions is dedicated to missions; each spring a faculty series is devoted to the development of a particular theme of current theological interest.

Because chapel services are considered to be an integral part of the pastoral training and educational experience, enveloping both the corporate and individual growth of the student body, attendance is required. Students who are enrolled for nine semester credit hours or more are required to attend both chapels each week and are allowed two unexcused absences per semester. Those taking between 4½ and 8½ credit hours are required to attend one chapel per week and are allowed one unexcused absence per semester. Chapel exemptions are granted to those students who:

- Are enrolled for four semester credit hours or less
- Have no class before 1:00 P.M. on Tuesday and/or Thursday

Growth of Heart and Mind

The seminary faculty is convinced that not only is there no legitimate antagonism between the heart and the mind, between spirituality and scholarship, but that scholarship which is truly biblical will evoke true spirituality. For every significant new step in increasing knowledge there should be a corresponding advance in spiritual maturity.

Any exemption from chapel attendance, except for the reasons listed above, requires a written application to the Vice President for Academic Administration (forms available in the Administration Office). Students should plan their work schedule around their class and chapel requirements.

After the third *unexcused* absence, a student must meet with the Vice President for Academic Administration to explain his absence. After the fourth *unexcused* absence, the student will automatically receive a “Fail” for that semester, resulting in closer scrutiny in the “candidacy” process. A second “Fail” in chapel attendance will result in automatic expulsion.

Absences due to illness or emergency are excused. Please notify the Administration Office the first day back to class.

Faculty Chapel Series (Spring)

1996 Spiritual Warfare

1997 Premillennialism

1998 Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile?

1999 Biblical Covenants

2000 Major Ethical Issues Facing the Church at the end of the Twentieth Century

2001 The “Openness of God” Issue

2002 Rapture Issues

2003 Cessationism

2004 Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture

2005 New Perspective Theology

2006 The Emerging Church

2007 New Covenant Theology

2008 Homosexuality

2009 Atonement: Scripture on Penal Substitution

Field Education

Effective preparation for the ministry of the gospel requires on-the-job training. Therefore the seminary requires significant ministry involvement under faithful church and pastoral supervision. Ministry involvement projects are included in the course work for the required Pastoral Ministry courses, and special projects may be arranged for elective credit. The distinctive nature of the school’s presence on the campus of Grace Community Church and its location in the ethnically-diverse Los Angeles area provide students with opportunities to be involved in a wide variety of ministries. Our location also gives students varied employment opportunities in church-related ministries.

Six semesters of Pastoral Ministry courses are required. While attending these courses, each student is required to be involved in a local church ministry. At the end of each semester, Student Ministry Assessment evaluation forms are submitted by the leadership of their local church. These assessments enable the student, his church leadership, and the seminary faculty to monitor his progress in issues of character, biblical knowledge, and ministry abilities.

Ministry observation and involvement, when coupled with seminary studies, provides opportunity for the student to be involved in specific aspects of ministry that will help prepare him to shepherd God's flock with excellence. Each course requires particular observations or involvements (e.g., attend elders/leadership meetings, preaching/teaching assignments, attend premarital training sessions) that are attested to and evaluated by the student and his ministry leader.

Upon completion of his seminary training, these ministry evaluation forms help confirm the maturation progress of each student and assist the Director of Placement in guiding the graduate into appropriate ministry opportunities.

Special Series

Each year the seminary presents three special series to augment classroom instruction. In the fall semester, the month of October is set aside to focus on missions, with missions leaders presenting ministry opportunities from around the world. A distinguished scholar from another seminary is invited each Winterim to offer a two-unit elective of significant biblical and theological import. In spring, the faculty presents an extended chapel series on a theological topic of contemporary relevance.

Cross-cultural Training

The seminary has a high level of commitment to overseas ministry. When possible, ministry teams travel to one or more countries conducting leadership seminars and visiting missionaries. In most cases the student will be involved with experienced pastors who will guide the student throughout the cross cultural experience. The student may be eligible to receive two units of elective credit for the overseas involvement, providing that the assignments are satisfactorily completed.

Discipleship Labs

Discipleship Labs focus on discussions relating to the development of Christian living skills and character qualities. Students meet in small groups for two hours weekly with a faculty member or a church leader. Individual giftedness, personal and ministry experiences, and goals are discussed and evaluated.

Labs are not primarily academic in nature, but instead are designed to promote self-examination, growth in Christian character qualities, and increased ability in encouraging and motivating others toward deeper devotion to God, greater love for others, and a more effective ministry to others. The rationale for these practicums is based on the fact that most failures in pastoral ministry are not because of a lack of knowledge but because of moral failure and the inability to work well with others. The Discipleship Labs are thus designed as a major part of the seminary's commitment to be involved in the ministry of Building Men of God.

Specifically, Discipleship Labs are designed to:

- Strengthen personal relationships between the students
- Focus on the personal character and giftedness of each student
- Evaluate and hone each student's "people skills"
- Mentor each student
- Entertain questions that classroom time does not allow
- Validate the "candidacy" process by which the faculty can determine a student's suitability for ministry

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- Provide time to pray with students and see how God answers
 - Create a lifetime friendship between students and faculty members

The Master's Seminary Online

The Master's Seminary Online is a doorway to the world via the Internet. The seminary web page provides access to information on all of the programs and activities of the seminary. Since its inception, The Master's Seminary Online has received numerous awards from evaluative services, including the Lycos Top 5% and Best of the Christian Web. Additionally, the Magellan and Excite Services have given the seminary its Four Star Award, one of only four such awards given to college and university web pages in California. In addition to seminary information, the web page provides access to full-text articles and book reviews from *The Master's Seminary Journal*, over 200 links to sites pertaining to biblical and theological studies, biographies and e-mail access to the faculty, alumni news, and online access to the library's Online Public Access Catalogue.

Graduation & Placement

Since its inception, the TMS graduation rate has averaged approximately 70%, with more than 90% of graduates placed within the following three months. Twice each year, the Placement Office hosts a one-day seminar designed to prepare students for finding ministry employment. The Director of Placement also works with denominational leaders and interdenominational ministries, and receives inquiries from churches regarding openings in their pulpits. Students are encouraged to use their internship and ministry involvements as opportunities to build a resume of experiences which will lead naturally toward their ministry goals. Following placement, during the crucial early years of ministry the seminary and the pastoral staff of Grace Community Church will gladly respond to any request for help and pastoral support.

In addition to assisting in placement for graduates, the seminary is often able to find part-time or interim ministries for advanced students. Except in rare instances when there has been extensive ministry experience, the seminary does not make recommendations or seek placement for applicants or first year students.



Student Housing

The seminary does not own housing facilities. There is, however, an ample selection of apartments and homes available for rent nearby. A listing giving an indication of the apartment rental environment in the area is available and, in addition, the seminary is often able to provide information regarding special rental opportunities offered by seminary and church friends.

For students visiting the area, the seminary has instituted a H.O.S.T. (Helping Others Simplify Transition) program. This program is often able to assist students with temporary housing when visiting and also when moving into the area, giving them opportunity to hunt for their own lodging. Requests for information on housing should be addressed to the Seminary Admissions Office.

Employment

Most students find it financially necessary to work part-time while in seminary. After the first year some are able to find paid positions within local churches. The Placement Office can occasionally assist second or third year students in securing such part-time employment in churches or other Christian ministries. It is usually not difficult to find a wide variety of employment opportunities within the business sector. Whenever possible, students should plan to arrive in the area early enough to interview and secure employment prior to the beginning of classes. The local office of the State of California Department of Employment can be very helpful in the location of these job openings.

Medical Insurance Coverage

Adequate health insurance coverage is mandatory for all part-time and full-time students. A health insurance policy may be obtained through an insurance company of the student's own choosing or through participation in a plan where the student or spouse is employed. A group hospitalization plan for seminarians and their families is available through the seminary. Further information regarding the reasonable premiums and the extent of coverage is available from the Administration Office.

Associated Student Body

The students of The Master's Seminary maintain an organization designed to serve the student body. Through example and direction, the Associated Student Body (ASB) officers promote unity and fellowship among the students by leading in humility, "stimulating one another to love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24). They minister to the students *spiritually* through leading student body chapel services; *socially* through organizing times of fellowship, and *physically* through arranging accommodations for new and prospective students when they arrive. The activities of the ASB are supported through a Student Activities Fee. Associated Student Body officers—president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer—are selected annually by the members of the student body. The ASB officers are encouraged to seek wisdom and counsel from the faculty and the administration, and are occasionally asked to represent the students in various institutional functions.

Seminary Wives Discipleship Program

The Seminary Wives' Discipleship Program is an association of the wives of students, faculty, and staff. The purpose of the organization is to:

- Enrich each wife's devotion to God
- Enrich her marriage and family through study of the Word and profitable literature
- Enrich her personal development through small group discipleship, accountability, and support

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- Equip her for future ministry alongside her husband by providing materials, resources, and practical training in women's ministry

Meetings are held weekly for ten weeks each semester. In typical meetings, time is devoted to each of the following:

- Encouragement and motivation through a period of worship and devotion
- Instruction with regard to a particular skill
- Participation in a study of God's Word and in discussion of a book relating to a topic of practical value for wives
- Mutual support in a period of prayer for one another; additional special activities are occasionally sponsored by the group

Grace Books International

For the convenience of faculty and students, Grace Community Church, in cooperation with The Master's Seminary, maintains a bookstore, Grace Books International, where books and supplies may be purchased at a substantial discount. All required textbooks as well as a diverse selection of additional theological and practical volumes are available. Books not in stock may be ordered.

Shepherds' Conference

Each spring Grace Community Church sponsors its annual Shepherds' Conference. Regular classes for this week are dismissed so that students may be involved in workshops and in interaction with pastors and church leaders from all over the world. Students are required to attend at least as many conference hours as class hours they normally attend each week. A nominal fee is charged to each student for the conference.

Missions Emphasis

The atmosphere at The Master's Seminary is charged with enthusiasm and energy directed toward fulfillment of our Lord's Great Commission. All courses, all chapels, and all discipleship labs are intended to enhance our worship and increase our effectiveness in obedience to this Commission. Exposure to missions opportunities is a regular emphasis in chapel programming. A significant aspect is the opportunity to interact with missionaries and mission agency representatives.

Annual Social Activities

Early in each fall semester seminary faculty and students with their spouses and children gather for an afternoon and evening of enjoyable food and fellowship. The event is designed to provide a special opportunity for all members of the seminary family to become better acquainted.

Each spring the Associated Student Body (ASB) sponsors a Seminary Banquet, providing students and their wives an opportunity for fellowship with each other.

Before Christmas, a special chapel is held annually to commemorate the incarnation and birth of our Savior. Following a time of Scripture reading and the singing of Christmas carols, the students together with their wives and children enjoy a time of fellowship and refreshments.

Other social activities include occasional pizza lunches for students and faculty sponsored by the ASB.

Dress

Because the seminary is preparing men for professional occupations as ministers of the gospel, conformity to certain professional standards of dress and appearance is required. These standards are prescribed in order to strengthen the testimony of the seminary and to promote morale by emphasizing the importance and dignity of the ministry. Cleanliness and neatness in appearance are indispensable for effectiveness in Christian testimony and impact in lives. Specifically, during class and chapel hours students are required to wear dress shoes and socks (no tennis shoes), dress slacks (no jeans), dress shirts, and ties. Hair should be worn conservatively and neatly groomed.

Dress requirements for summer school, winterim, and finals week are more relaxed. Students are asked to wear slacks, dress shoes, and a collared shirt. Tennis shoes, blue jeans, and flip-flops are not appropriate attire.

Orientation

At the beginning of each semester orientation is held for new students. Attendance is required for all new students entering the seminary. Requests for permission to be absent from the orientation must be submitted in writing to the Director of Admissions. An unexcused absence usually requires postponement of matriculation until the following semester. Orientation sessions may include devotional messages, introductions, tours, instructions for registration, consultation time with advisers, and an evening for new students and wives to meet the faculty in a social setting.

Grievances

Open communication between students, faculty, and administration is encouraged and solicited. Whenever a student has a concern or grievance he should first discuss it with the person directly involved. If no satisfactory resolution is reached he should then approach either the Vice President for Academic Administration or the Dean. If the concern is still unresolved a formal grievance procedure may be initiated. This procedure is outlined in the Faculty Handbook and copies of the procedure are available from the Administration office.

Code of Conduct

In view of the high calling of the ministry and the great responsibility of example which must be assumed by Christian leaders, and by those aspiring to such leadership, it is expected that students at The Master's Seminary will maintain the highest of standards in personal conduct and biblical conviction. The seminary does not presume to be a monitoring or censoring agency for all activities but does expect personal testimony and outward evidence of maturing Christian convictions, concern for the conscience of others, and a willingness to submit to the authority of mature Christian leaders. Accordingly, as examples of the numerous ways to enhance the testimony of the individual and of the institution, the seminary requires conformity to the following Code of Conduct:

- Each student is expected to be faithful, committed, and involved in the ministry of a local church.
- The seminary standards for appearance and dress are to be fully respected. See the previous pages for seminary standards in these areas.
- Personal discipline in the discerning use of radio, television, and the printed page is expected. This includes total avoidance of pornographic programming, films, and literature.

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- Students are required to abstain from such practices as gambling, the use of beverages for intoxication, the misuse of prescription drugs, the use of illegal drugs, and tobacco.
 - Students must avoid all forms of dishonesty, including lying, plagiarism, cheating on exams or assignments, failure to meet financial obligations, and negligence in the performance of educational, employment, or ministry responsibilities.
 - Family relationships and responsibilities are to be given a place of highest priority. Students are required to maintain a biblical pattern in family relationships, and to abstain from unbiblical sexual activities or relationships.

The Master's Seminary reserves the right to discipline or dismiss any student who does not conform to this code of conduct or any other of the seminary's principles, policies, or required procedures. By virtue of his enrollment, a student agrees to live within the framework of these standards and principles.

Plagiarism

In order to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity and personal ethics, The Master's Seminary has adopted the following policy regarding plagiarism.

General Policy

Plagiarism is defined as the act of "taking and using the thoughts, writings, inventions, etc., of another person as your own." This definition requires what is called "intent." The most serious forms of plagiarism will manifest some level of knowledge of the act and generally display an effort to conceal the plagiarism. This is not to say that the "I didn't know" defense is valid, since at this point in your academic career the assumption is that you do know. Even after graduation, the consequences of plagiarism do not simply evaporate. Should serious plagiarism be discovered in a thesis or dissertation—even years after graduation—the seminary may move to revoke the offender's degree.

Common Types of Plagiarism

Secondary Source Plagiarism—Plagiarism often involves the problem of claiming the results of others—taking a quotation from one's reading and placing it into your paper without using a "cited in" notation. When using a quotation in another work, you are under an ethical obligation to go to the original source, verify the citation and context, only then listing it in a footnote or bibliography. If unable to view the original source, a "cited in" reference must be used for this quotation. This ethical consideration may well save the student from the embarrassment of perpetuating a misquotation or taking a quotation out of context.

Paraphrase Plagiarism—Simply paraphrasing a quotation (without attribution) from a source is still plagiarism. This type of plagiarism is avoided by doing the hard work of taking research, distilling it, and then writing one's own thoughts, interpretations, and conclusions, giving attribution as often as necessary. Facts widely available in reference books, newspapers, magazines, etc., are common knowledge and need no citation.

Penalties

When an act of plagiarism is discovered or suspected (even after graduation), the matter will be reported to the Vice President for Academic Administration who will move to investigate the matter.

Penalties for those found guilty of plagiarism can be as follows:

1. Reduced or failing grade
2. An official letter of reprimand
3. A defined period of probation, with or without the attachment of conditions
4. Withdrawal of seminary scholarship funding
5. A defined period of suspension, with or without the attachment of conditions
6. Expulsion from the seminary
7. Revocation of an awarded degree

To avoid the temptation of the sin of plagiarism, allow for the proper amount of time to research and write your papers. Lack of time is the most common excuse for engaging in plagiarism.