

MASTER IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Concentration Theologica

Main Language of Instruction:

French English Arabic

Campus Where the Program Is Offered: CSH

OBJECTIVES

This program aims to:

- Train theologians capable of reliably approaching biblical and/or theological sources in their original languages.
- Develop the ability to understand faith by identifying the philosophical systems that have influenced its terminology and thought forms.
- Determine the specificities of major ecclesial traditions and contemporary theological trends.
- Determine the epistemological foundation necessary for any rational and theological approach to truth.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (COMPETENCIES)

- Deepen and integrate the theological and anthropological foundations of Christian faith in a soteriological and eschatological dynamic.
- Articulate faith within a prophetic dynamic of proclamation and dialogue.
- Construct systematic arguments based on theological and philosophical sources.
- Produce scholarly work using speculative and operational tools.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The candidate must hold a:

- Lebanese baccalaureate or its equivalent.
- Bachelor in Theology (canonical Baccalaureate) or Religious Studies.

COURSES/CREDITS GRANTED BY EQUIVALENCE

Up to 12 credits from the Bachelor in Theology (canonical Baccalaureate).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

120 credits: Required Courses (108 credits), Institution's elective courses (12 credits).**Required Courses (108 Cr.)**

Research Methodology Seminar (5 Cr.). Problem Analysis and Research Project (5 Cr.). Theological Text Reading Seminar 1 (5 Cr.). Theological Text Reading Seminar 2 (5 Cr.). Philosophical and Theological Hermeneutics (4 Cr.). Ecumenical Theology (4 Cr.). Theology, Liturgy, and Popular Piety (4 Cr.). Theology of Ministries (4 Cr.). Eastern Theology and Mysticism According to the Thought of Jean Corbon (4 Cr.). Protestant Theology Through the Thought of Jürgen Moltmann (4 Cr.). The Question of Evil, Theological Approach (4 Cr.). Biblical Anthropology (4 Cr.). Theological Anthropology (4 Cr.). Theology and Bioethics (4 Cr.). Christian Theology of Religions (4 Cr.). Contextual Theology (4 Cr.). Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament (4 Cr.). Jewish Apocalyptic Literature at the Dawn of the Christian Era (4 Cr.). The Epistle to the Philippians (4 Cr.). Hellenophone Antiochian Tradition (4 Cr.). John Chrysostom (4 Cr.). Thesis (20 credits).

Institution's Elective Courses (12 Cr.) among courses from Master programs of the Faculty of Religious Studies, to be chosen from the list below:

Practical Theology (4 Cr.). The Mimetic Anthropology of René Girard (4 Cr.). Contemporary Hermeneutics in Islam – MRIC (4 Cr.). Communitarianism in Lebanon Girard (4 Cr.). Philosophical Anthropology (4 Cr.). Philosophy and Theology Through the Centuries: Authors, Schools, Themes (4 Cr.). Biblical Theology Seminar (4 Cr.) The Theology of Jacob of Sarug, Pastor and Poet (4 Cr.). Political Philosophy and Theology (4 Cr.). Geopolitics of Geopolitics of Eastern Christians (4 Cr.). Theology of Liberation (4 Cr.).

SUGGESTED STUDY PLAN

Semester 1

Code	Course Name	Credits
018SEMKM1	Research Methodology Seminar	5
018EPPHM1	Epistle to the Philippians	4
018TMJCM1	Eastern Theology and Mysticism According to the Thought of Jean Corbon	4
018JURGM2	Protestant Theology Through the Thought of Jürgen Moltmann	4
018TLPPM2	Theology, Liturgy, and Popular Piety	4
	Institution's Elective Courses	4
	Total	25

Semester 2

Code	Course Name	Credits
018SLTTHM1	Theological Text Reading Seminar 1	5
017STHCM2	Contextual Theology	4
018LTNTM2	Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament	4
018THELM1	Hellenophone Antiochian Tradition	4
018JECHM2	John Chrysostom	4
	Institution's Elective Courses	4
	Total	25

Semester 3

Code	Course Name	Credits
018SLTTHM2	Theological Text Reading Seminar 2	5
018AMRGM2	Philosophical and Theological Hermeneutics	4
017THCRM2	Christian Theology of Religions	4
018AJECHM1	Jewish Apocalyptic Literature at the Dawn of the Christian Era	4
018QMATM1	The Question of Evil, Theological Approach	4
	Institution's Elective Courses	4
	Total	25

Semester 4

Code	Course Name	Credits
018ANALM4	Problem Analysis and Research Project	5
018THOEM1	Ecumenical Theology	4

018ANTBM1	Biblical Anthropology	4
018ANTHM2	Theological Anthropology	4
018TMINM2	Theology of Ministries	4
018THBIM2	Theology and Bioethics	4
	Total	25

Semesters 5 and 6

Code	Course Name	Credits
018MEMOM5	Thesis	20

COURSE DESCRIPTION

018SEMKM1 Research Methodology Seminar 5 Cr.

This seminar provides the basic elements for researching and writing a Master's thesis. By the end of this seminar, students will be able to:

1. Identify the main categories and objectives of intellectual and documentary research.
2. Navigate through various research approaches and tools.
3. Develop a research question, create a reading plan, and progress to a writing plan and final production.
4. Define, locate, and utilize the required data banks for their research.
5. Dissect, analyze, and critique a text.

018ANALM4 Analysis of Research Problems and Projects 5 Cr.

The Master's thesis consists of personal research that demonstrates analytical skills, critical thinking, discernment as well as an ability to conceptualize and/or design projects. The thesis represents the culmination of a firsthand research, followed by a defense before an academic jury. However, to embark on writing a thesis, the student must first develop a research proposal. This proposal aims to define the research topic, establish the theoretical framework, specify the different research axes, and choose the techniques and approaches to be adopted.

This seminar focuses on the practical application of the methodology acquired by students. They are guided, starting from a conceptual framework and operational tools, to successfully complete their own research project.

018SLECM1 Seminar on Reading Theological Texts 1 5 Cr.

This seminar is part of the training process that enables MSR/Theologica students to explore specific aspects of research. It follows the two seminars on research methodology and problem analysis. Along with the 4th seminar (Phase II) the following year, it aims to initiate students into the complex and multidimensional work of research, drawing from selected texts by theologians and the libraries of FSR and CERPOC.

018SLECM2 Seminar on Reading Theological Texts 2 5 Cr.

This seminar is part of the training process that enables students to explore specific aspects of research. It extends the two seminars on research methodology and problem analysis. Along with the 3rd seminar ("Elements of Theological Work" - Phase I) from the previous year, it aims to introduce students to the complex and multidimensional work of research, drawing from selected texts by theologians and the libraries of FSR and CEDRAC. This seminar introduces students to the work of the theologian/researcher, its specificities, various approaches, and research methods.

Philosophy Seminars

018HPETM1 Philosophical and Theological Hermeneutics 4 Cr.

This seminar examines how modern hermeneutics has gradually redefined itself as a general discipline dealing with the principles governing all forms of interpretation. It has been proposed as a discipline applied to every encounter with texts, or text analogues, where the meaning is not immediately evident and requires an active

effort by the interpreter to make it intelligible. This interpretive art constantly relies on the re-reading of several texts—texts from our experiences and practices, classics of philosophy, and other branches of knowledge. This seminar will explore key questions such as: What does it mean to read? What are we looking for in a text? What is the correct way to interpret it? Should a text be updated? Should we seek “the” meaning of the text? The one from yesterday or today? Why is the plurality of interpretations? In short, what is “hermeneutics?” What is a valid interpretation? Does reading texts involve archaeology, memory, or aesthetic experience?

018PHRPM2	Political Philosophy and Theology	4 Cr.
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This seminar explores the relationship between theology and politics, addressing significant issues in our society today, such as sectarianism, citizenship, and secularism. By examining philosophical and theological texts, this course aims to define concepts such as State, democracy, secularism, neutrality, and their relationship with political theology. Key questions include: What is the role of religion and the Church in democracy? How can neutrality be a positive “action” in political life? What is the eschatological hope?

018TBIBM1	Biblical Theology	4 Cr.
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This seminar examines the richness of the Bible’s discourse about God, revealing many aspects of Yahweh. At the center of divine attributes are mercy and justice (Exodus 34:6-7). Additionally, the various biblical scrolls present special profiles. This requires taking each book seriously in its context and according to its content. Consequently, this leads to discovering these specific theologies. This seminar examines specific books, seeking to understand their differences and their contributions to our lives and spirituality.

018ANTBM1	Biblical Anthropology	4 Cr.
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The meaning of the human condition is a major question for our world, which is confronted by various current challenges and crises (ecological, health, psycho-social, wars, progress, the question of the “augmented human,” robotization, etc.). Starting from the foundational texts of the Bible, the aim is to define what a human being is. What is the status of a creature made in the image and likeness of its Creator? What new perspective does Jesus Christ bring regarding the image of humanity?

018ANTHM2	Theological Anthropology	4 Cr.
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The objective of this theological anthropology course is to deepen theology by starting from the question of the excess represented by the question of evil; God is not the absolute origin of evil. But who is God? We will seek a hermeneutic proof in order to better believe far from any form of idolatry. What becomes of humanity? Is there another way of looking at the human as created and creator? Theology urges us to believe that the human is a being destined for the happiness that lies beyond death, which gives meaning to life, illuminated by the Resurrection.

018EPPHM1	Epistle to the Philippians	4 Cr.
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The affectionate tone of Philippians reveals Paul’s constant concern to help the community grow in the knowledge of Christ and true Christian life. Drawing on Greco-Roman rhetoric and ancient Jewish traditions, the seminar will focus on showing the interplay of Christological and ecclesiological themes in the letter, as well as its poignant relevance for a life worthy of the Gospel.

018LTNTM2	Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament	4 Cr.
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This course explores how the early Christians understood the Scriptures, utilizing the fruits of a long tradition of interpretation, represented by Jewish traditions in the broadest sense. This course explores these re-readings by presenting an approach to the Jewish world at the threshold of the Christian era, through two complementary aspects: the Palestinian and Hellenistic milieus.

018APJUM1	Jewish Apocalyptic Literature at the Dawn of the Christian Era	4 Cr.
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This course examines Jewish apocalyptic literature, which appears to be the “matrix” of early Christianity (Charles Perrot). It offers a brief overview of works considered to be apocalyptic, before reviewing the characteristics of this literature. Students will work on specific texts from ancient apocalypses, especially those from the Enochian literature.

018QMATM1 The Question of Evil: Theological Approach 4 Cr.

Key questions of this course include: How can we think about evil? How can we assign meaning to something that absolutely refuses it? Evil poses a challenge to philosophy and theology, as asserting the existence of an all-powerful and good God alongside the existence of evil presents a contradiction. Traditional theodicies have attempted to resolve this. Yet, thinking about evil is not enough; we must act to alleviate suffering and curb violence. This seminar aims to examine some of the attempts by philosophy and theology to address this challenge.

017THCRM2 Christian Theology of Religions 4 Cr.

This seminar highlights how the theology of religions today presents itself as a new horizon in theology, engaging with all foundations of Christian faith: from the revelation in Christ, the fullness of God's Word, to the assertion of the uniqueness of the salvation He offers. By combining historical and reflective approaches, this course revisits different conceptions of religious pluralism and analyzes the theological positions of authors involved in this debate. It will progress through Christological, soteriological, and ecclesiological questions, highlighting the position of the Catholic Church's *Magisterium*. The issue of interreligious dialogue, intimately linked to the approach to religions, will be addressed from theological and methodological angles, emphasizing the relevance, conditions, and challenges of the encounter between Christianity and other religions.

017STHCM2 Contextual Theology 4 Cr.

For several decades, various theological currents around the world have emphasized that theology can no longer be practiced as before: rather than being considered a timeless or immutable discipline, it is now seen as contextual. Indeed, alongside the Bible and Tradition, the context provides fundamental structural elements for the development of theological discourse.

Since the 1970s, several Lebanese theologians from different churches have taken up the challenge of thinking about theology in this way, addressing major issues of Christian presence in the Arab world, such as Muslim-Christian dialogue, ecumenism, and Church reform, as well as political theology (Israeli-Palestinian conflict and confessionalism in Lebanon).

This seminar highlights contextual theology in a general sense, and Arab contextual theology in its Lebanese dimension.

018TMINM2 Theology of Ministries 4 Cr.

This course in dogmatic theology addresses the complex issue of the evolution of the theology of ordained and non-ordained ministries in the Church through five key areas: biblical, historical, dogmatic, sacramental, and ecumenical. Different approaches to the subject are explored through the reading and analysis of major texts from early Christianity to post-Vatican II multilateral and bilateral dialogues. The pastoral dimension is present throughout the seminar and calls upon the personal dimension, which is significant for the life and structures of the Church, the People of God on the move.

018TLPPM2 Theology, Liturgy, and Popular Piety 4 Cr.

This course addresses the link between Theology, Liturgy, and popular piety in two aspects: a transmitter and a modifier of faith. How is theology celebrated in the Liturgy? How does the Liturgy express theological truth in worship, and what are the risks of drifting into parochial and paraliturgical ritualism? How can personal devotion be understood and practiced in harmony with the Church's liturgical worship? What is the role of exorcism, and what are the risks of perversions? All of this leads to questions about the origin of suffering and evil, stemming from the tendency to personify the "devil" and attribute to him the responsibility for our woes and the world's sin. Finally, the course proposes a case study based on facts and analysis within the framework of the theological and biblical commission of APECL.

018THOEM2 Ecumenical Theology 4 Cr.

This research seminar focuses on the contribution of theology to the ecumenical movement and the unity of Christians, aiming to understand its concepts, components, and specific responses to the current challenges and issues of ecumenism.

018THBIM2 Theology and Bioethics 4 Cr.

Bioethics presents itself as a privileged meeting point of the secular and the religious, the natural and the artificial, hope and danger, liberation and servitude. Meetings that risk not conforming to one-dimensional readings. This course on the evolution of life sciences and health sciences sheds new light on the ethical approach.

017GCHOM2 Geopolitics of Eastern Christians 4 Cr.

Today, many questions arise about the future of Christians in the Middle East, sometimes assuming that they form a single and uniform reality throughout the region. However, the diversity of these communities does not only stem from ecclesiastical, cultural, liturgical, or theological plurality. Christians in the Middle East experience very different and varied conditions in the countries where they reside. Hence, there is a need for a geopolitical analysis of their presence. Such an analysis will take into account political, religious, historical, demographic, cultural, and economic realities. It will focus on the countries of the Arab Middle East: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Egypt, and Iraq.

018TPRAM1 Practical Theology 4 Cr.

This course offers pastoral agents a reflective and critical approach to pastoral practice. It involves handling methodological and conceptual tools to develop pastoral projects appropriate to the context.

018JURGM2 Protestant Theology Through the Thought of Jürgen Moltmann 4 Cr.

Jürgen Moltmann has gained a broad audience in German, French, and English-speaking circles through translations of his theological works into several languages. This course aims to understand Protestant theology through one of its great 20th-century thinkers, following K. Barth, R. Bultmann, J. Ebeling, W. Pannenberg, and others. Over the sessions, students will examine the progression of his thought through five of his major works: Man, The Crucified God, Theology of Hope, God in Creation, and The Coming of God.

018THELM1 Hellenophone Antiochian Tradition 4 Cr.

This course presents the doctrines of the great figures of the Church of Antioch until the advent of Islam. It touches on various aspects of the Church's life, thus providing a comprehensive vision of the theology and ethos of Hellenophone Antiochian Christians in the early centuries.

018THJSM2 The Theology of Jacob of Sarug, Pastor and Poet 4 Cr.

This course familiarizes students with the theology of the 5th-6th centuries in Northern Syria-Mesopotamia through an examination of the works of Jacob of Sarug (d. 521). This Miaphysite Church Father is an emblematic figure of a devoted pastor in service to the faithful, particularly through his poetic talent and extensive didactic work. The seminar aims to explore the characteristics of his thought and the challenges of his pastoral activity, situating them within their ecclesial and cultural context.

Throughout the sessions, readings of excerpts from Jacob's works will be provided. Their analysis will help uncover the features of his symbolic style, inspired by Ephrem, as well as the richness of his work dealing with all theological themes, and consequently, the peculiarities of miaphysite Syriac theology of his time.

From the early sessions, students are invited to choose a theme and then examine relevant texts, aiming to deliver an introductory presentation on the subject. This presentation will be complemented with necessary comments to achieve a better understanding of the proposed theme. This approach will require all students to read specific excerpts before each session.

064ANPHM1 Philosophical Anthropology 4 Cr.

This course revolves around Man. It aims to introduce different philosophical conceptions of the human being and to study various characteristics of self, particularly from contemporary phenomenological approaches, given that the central object of phenomenology is human experience as it is lived.

018AMRGM2 Mimetic Anthropology of René Girard**4 Cr.**

The value of René Girard's work lies in reversing the usual perspective, which tends to evaluate Scripture through the lens of modern theories (psychoanalysis, structuralism, etc.), and doing so in a highly original way. His major anthropological insights—which have profoundly impacted the field of human sciences, namely mimetic desire and the scapegoat phenomenon—provide a rational foundation for Revelation without falling into scientism or rationalism. The major ideologies of our era are thus subjected to a critique in which the biblical text, and in particular the Gospel, emerges as a remarkable key to anthropological interpretation.

The course aims to present René Girard's theory with regular reference to biblical texts. Along the way, this includes addressing general anthropology, human psychology, and Judeo-Christian Revelation. The objective is to become more deeply rooted in the Word of God in order to acquire a deeper understanding of humanity, the world, and their destiny.

The study of Islam itself, whether in its historical or current relationships with Christianity in particular, cannot be successfully conducted without considering the role assigned to the second foundation of Islam, and without a diachronic and synchronic study of the Hadith texts, in order to clarify the theological and anthropological foundations of Islam.

Students who receive adequate training in this field will be able to analyze the texts of the tradition, distinguish between what is fundamental and what is not, understand their functioning, and specify their religious significance, as well as their impact on the societies concerned.

017HERMM2 Contemporary Hermeneutics in Islam**4 Cr.**

We witness daily on our screens acts of terrorism and crimes committed in the name of the Quran, or rather in the name of a certain interpretation of the Quran. This is why Islam presents itself to a wide audience as a conservative, aggressive, paralyzed, and regressive religion. It “worries and inspires” (Malek Chebel). However, the face of Islam in the future will primarily depend on the interpretation of the Quranic text. The foundation of a possible reform of the Muslim religion is the interpretation of its founding book. Moreover, interest in the theme of interpreting the Quran is reflected, for example, in the success among Western readers of novels such as that of Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt entitled “The Man Who Saw Through Faces.” Since it is defined as “the religion of the book,” Islam is the religion of interpretation. As Ali ibn Abi Talib affirmed: “The Quran is mute, it is men who speak in its name.”

Muslim voices have therefore risen calling for readings of the Quran that are both new and faithful to the values of Islam and that meet the demands of humanities (sociology, anthropology, linguistics, history, etc.). These “new thinkers of Islam” (Rachid Benzine) challenge a literal and legalistic reading imposed by Sharia Quranic schools, which they argue has led to a rigid, violent, and intolerant Islam. They advocate for opening the doors of ijtihad and call for a “return to the sources” and for a direct knowledge of the Quran so that it can meet the expectations of today's Muslim faithful, once again become a source of inspiration for them, and offer them a new way of being and acting.

These calls are condemned by official Muslim authorities, and their authors are generally labeled as “traitors” and “apostates” because any hermeneutical innovation is considered blasphemy (Mouchir Aoun). Yet, these thinkers unanimously profess their Muslim faith and belonging to the Muslim community, and affirm that a new reading of the Quran in no way questions the conviction of its sanctity.

This course aims to offer students the opportunity to delve into controversial issues currently troubling Islam, and to discover some Muslim figures who have proposed new hermeneutics. Among them, Mohammed Arkoun, Abdelmajid Charfi, Nasr Abou Zeid, and Farid Esack. Indeed, although isolated and without coordination among them, the voices of these thinkers are a sign of discomfort felt by a large number of Muslim intellectuals faced with a heritage that, according to them, no longer meets modern requirements.

017COMLM1 Sectarianism in Lebanon**4 Cr.**

Sectarianism has entered the stage of political thought in recent decades. However, its roots go deep into the history of political philosophy, dating back to Plato and Aristotle, and specifically Hegel in the early period of his philosophy of recognition. It is a school of thought that presents itself as a critique of both liberalism and republicanism. This critique does not target the central theories of these two political ideologies, but rather their

implications and applications in light of postmodernism and the societal and geopolitical changes following what Habermas calls “the fall of the nation-state.”

With communitarianism, we enter a new era of political thought concerning the individual and the citizen as both independent and belonging to a community of values, participating in political life based on their dual belonging. This includes the possibility for the community of values to be recognized beyond the internal forum, that is, in the public space.

This movement has resonated in Lebanon through the political theory of consociation and consensual democracy. This course selects a few classic representatives of this movement, then focuses on two typical examples of the relative reception of this movement in the Lebanese context.

018JRJCM1	Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations	4 Cr.
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This course will present Judaism in its diversity and unity. It will then examine the links of Jesus and the New Testament with Judaism, as well as the relations between Jews and Christians: the challenges and issues at stake. The course will provide keys to understanding today's situation, placing it in a broader perspective.

018JOCHM2	John Chrysostom	4 Cr.
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John Chrysostom, Father and Doctor of the Church, is one of the main theologians of Christian thought. He is an ascetic master, prolific preacher, and zealous pastor. These three qualities marked the life of John “Golden Mouth.” This course aims to examine the interrelationship between the different aspects of his life and work. The research will be based mainly on the texts of John Chrysostom and, secondarily, on contemporary studies, through presentations, pre-reading activities, and practice exercises.

018THLIM1	Theology of Liberation	4 Cr.
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Theology of Liberation is “a hermeneutic of the Christian faith in a situation of oppression and from the experience of the poor.” It therefore does not represent the integration of a new theme into theology, but rather a new way of conceiving it: a hermeneutic of the Christian faith from the perspective of the poor. It is a new phenomenon, as for the first time, a Catholic theology was born outside the European and North Atlantic centers.

018TMJCM1	Eastern Theology and Mysticism According to the Thought of Jean Corbon	4 Cr.
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In Eastern theology, liturgy and mysticism constitute the heart of mystagogy—the royal life of deification. Christian life finds its ultimate fulfillment in participation in this deification through worship, the sacraments, and holiness of life.

God alone is holy. And God’s holiness is synonymous with God’s chastity. From this Source springs eternal life. Every baptized person, destined to live in holiness, is called to receive the chastity of God and thus attain deification. This course proposes an in-depth reading of the book by Jean Corbon, *Chasteté de Dieu, Déification de l’homme* (Librairie Saint Paul Editions, Lebanon, 2022). In this book, the mystagogical approach unfolds, culminating in the theology of Christian liturgy and mysticism.

018MEMTM5	Thesis	20 Cr.
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The Master’s thesis consists of an individual research project that demonstrates analytical skills, critical thinking, sound judgment, and the ability to conceptualize and/or design projects. The thesis represents the culmination of original research work, followed by a defense before an academic jury.