DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

FORGE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

EDUCATION IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

Welcome!

The Doctor of Theology degree offered through Forge Theological Seminary prepares students both professionally and personally to serve the church as pastors at the highest level. It results in rigorous research, reflection, critical inquiry, and writing. The faculty and leadership of Forge Theological Seminary welcome you to the journey and trust that the Lord will guide your studies.

Admission and Student Status

Introduction

Forge Theological Seminary offers a Doctor of Theology degree with a concentration in Pastoral Theology. This advanced degree program is designed to equip churchmen and parachurch leaders at the highest level.

Seminary Doctrinal Position

FTS is situated within the Reformed Protestant tradition, and FTS' faculty members affirm one of the historic Reformed confessions. Additionally, all staff and faculty members affirm the following:

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy
The Nashville Statement
The Danvers Statement
The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel
The Confessional Statement of the Biblical Counseling Coalition
The Five *Solas* of the Protestant Reformation
The Apostles', Nicene, Chalcedonian, and Athanasian Creeds

Purpose of the Doctor of Theology Program

The Doctor of Theology program is intended primarily to equip students for greater service to Christ's church through doctoral-level research and writing. Further, this program aims to develop theological formation, biblical reflection, and critical thought through the production of God-honoring and rigorous research.

Program Objectives

- To provide graduate professional training to those who have achieved substantial graduate education in biblical and theological studies and who have shown outstanding ability and potential for ministry.
- To offer effective, qualified supervision to students.
- To broaden the student's understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry.
- To affect the student's personal, spiritual, and professional development.
- To strengthen the student's competence in applying biblical and theological reflection to any ministry context.
- To expand the student's knowledge of the basic principles of Christian leadership with special application to Christian ministry both in the church and the community.
- To enable the student to establish a growth initiative within his respective ministry that is biblically sound, measurable, and effective.
- To engage the student in research and practice, producing practical contributions to the Church and to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

- To equip the student to complete a successful Doctoral Project that includes the development of an expository sermon series.
- To enable the student to move beyond routinely accepted techniques of ministry toward new dimensions, methods, and outreach.

Phases of the Program

Phase 1: Completion of admissions requirements.

Phase 2: Completion of Th.D. coursework.

Phase 3: Development of a research dissertation.

Phase 4: Submission of the dissertation and examination by committee.

Admission

Successful applicants must demonstrate the following:
- An undergraduate degree consisting of at least four years of full-time study.
- A graduate degree in biblical and(or) theological studies, Christian education, pastoral ministry, religion, or a related field.
- Longstanding membership in and service to a local church.
- At least three years of full-time service or six years of part-time service to a local church or parachurch ministry
- Proficiency in biblical Greek. Students who do not have training in biblical Greek may take BS605 and BS606 while completing their other Th.D. coursework.
- General agreement with Forge Theological Seminary's doctrinal position.
- Advanced proficiency in English.
- The Th.D. program is restricted to men.

Application Materials

Th.D. applications are available at https://www.forge.education/admissions. Applicants can expect a 2-3 day turnaround on their application.

Denial of Admission

Applicants who are denied admission and who wish to reapply must wait at least one year before doing so. All requirements not previously met must be satisfied before admission is possible.

Tuition and Fees

All doctoral students pay a flat tuition subscription of $80 monthly established by the seminary administration. This fee covers tuition only and does not cover the cost of books and the graduation fee. FTS guarantees that tuition fees will not increase for the duration of enrollment.

Matriculated students who fail to meet their tuition requirements are placed on academic probation for a period of one calendar week. Students who exceed that week are suspended from their program. Reinstatement involves remitting all past-due tuition fees and the payment of a reinstatement fine of $50.

Refunds

Forge Theological Seminary does not provide refunds for either tuition or graduation fees. Students who contest tuition paid charges following matriculation will be barred from further enrollment, and their transcripts will be permanently withheld.

Withdrawal and Termination of Student Status

For reasons sufficient unto himself, any student is free to withdraw from the program. Similarly, if at any time the faculty, supervisor, or leadership of Forge Theological Seminary determines that the student should not proceed in the program, the student will be withdrawn. Students who wish to reapply must wait a minimum of one year from the time of their prior enrollment.

Doctoral Courses

Th.D. courses involve extensive reading and writing assignments. Each course requires approximately 2500 pages of reading and 30-40 pages of written assignments. All Th.D. courses involve a practical element to benefit the church by applying the material learned. Additionally, students will undergo an Instructor Assessment after submitting all written assignments for each course. Apart from the Instructor Assessment, doctoral courses are completed independently and asynchronously. Each course permits up to twenty weeks for completion.

Orientation Course:

Theological Research, Writing, and Rhetoric (3 Credit Hours)
Theological Research, Writing, and Rhetoric is designed to equip students with the essential skills and knowledge required to engage in rigorous theological research and produce high-quality academic writing. This course aims to cultivate critical thinking, research competence, and effective communication within the realms of theology, biblical studies, and ministry.

Core Seminars (Choose Five):

Pastoral Theology (4 Credit Hours)
Pastoral Theology provides an advanced grasp of the qualifications, responsibilities, and calling of the local church pastor. Significant attention is devoted to pulpit ministry, homiletical theory, and sermon development. Students will develop an exegetically informed view of key elements in pastoral theology.

Marriage and Family (4 Credit Hours)
This course consists of an advanced biblical overview of the unique challenges faced in ministry to families. It is focused on accurately and appropriately instructing families in varied situations. Careful attention will be given to pursuing biblical fidelity, genuine heart change, and apprehension of the basis for marriage and the ethical and theological issues surrounding divorce and remarriage.

Ecclesiology (4 Credit Hours)

This course focuses on major issues concerning the doctrine and practice of the church from a biblical context. This will include topics such as the relationship between the church and Israel, the governance structures of the church, the traditional marks of the church, the ordinances of the church, and the church's mission in the world. In addition, current methodological issues surrounding the doctrine of the church will be addressed.

Biblical Counseling Theory and Method (4 Credit Hours)

Biblical Counseling Theory and Method is designed to equip ministry professionals for leadership in ministering and counseling from a biblical foundation. Specifically, the degree is designed for congregational ministers and others who serve in counseling roles. Students will complete a significant amount of the requirements for IABC certification.

Hermeneutics (4 Credit Hours)

This course will provide an expansive immersion in biblical hermeneutics and exegesis with particular emphasis on New Testament interpretation. Students will consider comparative and historical methods for biblical interpretation and delineate theological implications for faith and practice. Drawing upon the course content, students will develop an in-depth exegesis of a specified pericope.

Trinitarian Theology (4 Credit Hours)

Trinitarian Theology provides students with a biblical, theological, and historical analysis of the doctrine of the Trinity. As the most significant doctrine of the Christian faith, students will learn the exegetical basis of the doctrine, its theological importance, and the history associated with its development.

Theological Pedagogy (4 Credit Hours)

This course provides students with the skills and theological insights necessary for effective theological education and leadership. Students will learn to develop and deliver a biblically-derived curriculum that integrates classical Reformed doctrines with effective educational theories and practices.
*This course is currently under development and is expected to be available in fall 2024.

Doctoral Dissertation

Under the guidance of a supervisor, Th.D. students will choose a research topic, develop a research proposal and dissertation, and defend their research via examination.

Research Proposal

Using the research proposal template, the student will present his research proposal for approval. This proposal will determine the student's final subject area. This proposal should precisely follow the provided template and Patrick Alexander et al. eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1999).

Dissertation

The student will produce a dissertation of no fewer than 150 pages (37,500 words) of primary research, not including a cover page, approval page, table of contents, or bibliography.

Dissertation Production

Having had his research proposal approved, the student then may begin constructing his dissertation. After the completion of the first two chapters, the student will submit his draft to his supervisor for review. Following approval, the student may submit the following chapter and so forth until the first draft of the dissertation is complete. Finally, the student will develop a final edition of his dissertation that will be presented to the examination committee. This final draft will not be reviewed by his supervisor.

Pagination & Citation

Students will precisely paginate their dissertation according to the provided template and Patrick Alexander et al. eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1999).

Examination Procedures

Upon the date of his examination, the student will meet with his doctoral committee and present the following:

- A summary and explanation of the purpose, meaning, and importance of each chapter of the dissertation. Integrated into this presentation should be an explanation of the research, preparation, and study that the student accomplished through the production of the dissertation.
- The student will, following his presentation, field in-depth questions regarding the subject matter of his dissertation.
- Accompanying the aforementioned presentation, the following documents should be presented for examination: A copy of the final dissertation handed in via email in Word document (e.g., .doc, .docx) format to each committee member.
- A period of time, determined by the committee but not exceeding three calendar months, will be afforded for post-examination evaluation.
- At the close of the examination period, the committee will privately issue recommendations and convene a vote to pass or fail the student.
- Successful candidates will receive notification from their supervisor or a Seminary official as to the outcome of their examination. The student may then discontinue his tuition subscription and pay his graduation fee.
- A student who fails to pass his examination will receive either a feedback report that outlines the required changes and(or) corrections, or the student will be removed from the program. In the case of a feedback report, the supervisor may permit one consultation with the student to address the required changes. After a period of no longer than three months, a single re-submission is permitted. Resubmissions may only require a second examination if determined by the committee. If the student does not pass on his second attempt, he will be removed from the Doctor of Theology program. In this situation, it is up to the determination of the committee to offer the student an intermediate award. Students who receive an intermediate reward receive partial credit for their program in the form of a Master of Christian Philosophy (M.C.Phil.) degree.

- In the case of removal without a feedback report, some form of academic malpractice (e.g., plagiarism) and(or) discovery of a significant moral failing evidenced in the examination (e.g., deceit in the submitted documents, presentation) and(or) theological heterodoxy must be involved. In such a case, the student will not be permitted to reapply to any program offered by Forge Theological Seminary.

Examination Preparation

- The student should announce to his supervisor that he has adequately prepared the aforementioned presentation and documentation. This material should be sent to the supervisor in an email. Following this:
- The student's supervisor will convene an examination of the presentation and documents with a minimum of two degreed readers. The student will be notified one month in advance of his examination. Doctoral readers possess an earned doctoral degree in a relevant field, and together with the supervisor, these men comprise the committee.

Award

The degree of Doctor of Theology in the appropriate concentration will be awarded by mail following payment of the graduation fee.

Dissertation Grading Rubric

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Satisfactory	4 Exemplary
1.0 Use of Secondary Sources				
1.1 Scope of Research Bibliography	Research bibliography contains few appropriate sources AND the sources do not represent a wide range of critical perspectives.	Research bibliography contains some appropriate sources AND/OR the sources do not represent a wide range of critical perspectives.	Research bibliography contains a sufficient number of appropriate sources which represent a wide range of critical perspectives. Student incorporates some sources in a research language.	Research bibliography contains an extraordinary number of appropriate sources which represent the fullest range of critical perspectives. Student makes substantial use of sources in one or more research languages.
1.3 Relevance	Research bibliography is unfocused and off-topic. AND the student relies primarily on tertiary, non-academic, outdated, or inexpert secondary sources.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic BUT the student relies too often on tertiary, non- academic, outdated, or inexpert secondary sources.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic. The student relies mostly on primary and secondary sources that are academic, current, and expert.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic, with extensive use of primary and secondary sources that are academic, current, and expert.
2.0 Evaluation of Secondary Sources				
2.1 Analysis of Source Material	Student does not examine his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on secondary summaries of positions taken therein. His summaries of viewpoints are cursory and often inaccurate.	Student often examines his sources in appropriate detail and often relies on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions, but with some instances of inaccuracy and undue reliance on secondary summaries.	Student examines his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.	Student examines his sources in extraordinary detail and relies consistently on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.

2.2 Synthesis of Source Material	Student does not demonstrate the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics.	Student demonstrates some ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, with some erroneous or confusing choices in this area.	Student demonstrates the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics.	Student demonstrates the ability to classify the positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, doing so with special insight.
2.3 Evaluation of Source Material	Student does not treat his sources fairly. Sources are described uncharitably and/or illogically, and they are subjected to excessive criticism, while others receive unduly favorable treatment.	Student treats most sources fairly. Sources are usually described with charity and logical rigor. Most are subjected to appropriate criticism. There are, nevertheless, some instances of failure in these areas.	Student treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with charity and logical rigor, and all sides are subjected to appropriate criticism.	Student treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with extraordinary charity and logical rigor, and all sides are consistently subjected to appropriate and insightful criticism.
3.0 Hypothesis/Thesis				
3.1 Clarity/Resolution	Student does not have a clearly defined thesis.	Student has a thesis that is partially clear.	Student's thesis is clear and well-defined.	
3.2 Viability	The thesis is not provable. It does not lend itself readily to any sort of demonstration.	The thesis is somewhat provable BUT with some aspects that are not available to a priori and/or empirical demonstration.	The thesis lends itself easily to a priori and/or empirical forms of demonstration.	

4.0 Research Design and Implementation				
4.1 Justification of Chosen Method	The student does not effectively defend his methodology, with alternative approaches ignored and/or overlooked.	The student defends his methodology BUT with inadequate attention given to alternative approaches.	The student defends his methodology, giving sufficient attention to alternative approaches.	The student defends his methodology with strong and detailed attention given to likely objections and alternative approaches.
4.2 Consistency of Application	Methods differed substantially from ones adopted in the introductory chapter, and this change invalidated the larger thesis.	Methods differed somewhat from the ones adopted in the introductory chapter, and this change compromised the larger argument.	Methods were the same as the ones adopted in the introductory chapter.	
4.3 Effectiveness of Method	Student's methodology did not produce a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument has obvious deficiencies of structure and logic.	Student's methodology produced a partial argument in support of his thesis. There are some gaps in the argument and deficiencies of logic.	Student's methodology produced a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument is cogent.	Student's methodology produced a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument is uniquely persuasive and creative.

5.0 Logic and Reasoning				
5.1 Precision	The student ignores or overlooks obvious and important distinctions.	The student misses some obvious and important distinctions.	The student makes the obvious and important distinctions.	The student makes both obvious AND subtle distinctions that are important for his essay.
5.2 Moderation	The student overstates the strength of his argument. His claims are extravagant and careless.	The student argues with an overall sense of proportion BUT with some lack of care in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of his argument.	The student expresses the strengths and weaknesses of his argument with appropriate moderation.	
5.3 Cogency	The student does not produce a well-structured argument AND his argument is marred by frequent errors of logic.	The student produces an argument that mostly without errors of structure and/or logic, BUT there remain some difficulties in this area.	The student produces a well-structured argument AND his argument is free of errors in structure and logic.	The student argues his case with extraordinary facility in structure and logic. The argument is always engaging and insightful.
5.4 Eloquence	The student's prose is unclear, wordy, and poorly organized. Reader faces needless difficulty in following the student's argument.	The student's prose is sometimes clear, concise, and well-organized. Student needs to improve on transitional statements, paragraph divisions, and other elements as identified by the Dissertation Committee.	The student's prose is clear, concise, and well- organized. Student uses appropriate transitional statements and paragraph divisions to create a consistently readable document.	The student's prose is extraordinarily clear, concise, and well-organized. Minimal effort is needed to read the work and follow its arguments. Student writes engagingly, yet academically.

6.0 Form/Appearance				
6.1 Grammar	There are numerous errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, more than 4 per page, on average).	There are some errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, less than 4 per page, on average).	There are few errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, one or less per page, on average).	There are very few errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, less than one per page, on average).
6.2 FTS Style Guidelines	Student consistently deviates from the SBL Handbook and from the prescribed pagination standards of FTS.		Student consistently conforms to the SBL Handbook and to the prescribed pagination standards of FTS.	
7.0 Contribution to Field of Study				
7.1 Relevance to Field of Study	The dissertation falls outside the scope of student's chosen field of expertise.		The dissertation falls inside the scope of student's chosen field of expertise.	
7.2 Significance of Results	The dissertation's results do not address an important question in his chosen field of study.		The dissertation's results address an important and unresolved question or deficiency in his chosen field of study.	

7.3 Uniqueness of the Research	The dissertation's methods, arguments, and/or results are not at all unique. The candidate has merely done what others have done.	The dissertation's methods, arguments, and/or results are partially unique. To a certain extent, the candidate has merely done what others have done.	The dissertation's methods, arguments, and/or results are sufficiently unique to be informative within the field.	The dissertation's methods, arguments, and/or results are obviously unique and highly informative within the field.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the use or theft of intellectual property without attribution, both a moral and educational transgression. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the utilization of artificial intelligence in the production of assignments or the completion of exams. Plagiarism, cheating on tests, and other forms of academic fraud will not be tolerated. Students who engage in such activity may receive a failing grade on any fraudulent work and may receive a failing grade for the course. Any instances of such behavior may be recorded on an offending student's transcript. In addition, the President of Forge Theological Seminary reserves the right to take disciplinary action against those guilty of such behavior.

While plagiarism can take many forms, the most common types of plagiarism include:
- Quoting one or more sentences verbatim without proper citation.
- Presenting the thoughts or ideas of another without proper attribution.
- Borrowing without proper citation such things as an outline, an idea, or an approach to dealing with a problem that is unique to an author.
- Using improper methods of citation.

FTS employs sophisticated plagiarism detection software in the promotion of academic integrity.

The Repercussions of Plagiarism

In the event that either the faculty or Seminary administration has determined that a student has engaged in plagiarism, that faculty member is required to report the occurrence to either the academic dean or president for further evaluation. The following describes the most common consequences for academic malpractice:
- The student receives written notification of the detection of his plagiarism and is required to completely rewrite or recreate the relevant assignment.
- The student receives a failing grade for the assignment.
- The student receives a failing grade for the entire course.
- The student is removed from enrollment.
- The student is permanently banned from re-enrollment.
- The student's transcripts are withheld.

Financial Policies

Since its inception, FTS has sought to provide quality theological education available at extraordinarily low cost. In keeping with its goal of affordability, the Seminary charges the following tuition and fees:

Doctoral Tuition: $80 per month
Graduation Fee (All Students): $65
Transcripts: $8
Application for Enrollment: $18

- All students are required to maintain their tuition subscription through the entirety of their enrollment.
- Failure to meet tuition responsibilities will result in either academic probation, dismissal, or a freeze on the student's academic transcript.
- Further, students who do not meet their tuition responsibility will receive an invoice. Failure to remit payment within ten days of this invoice will result in late fees totaling no more than 6% interest billed monthly. Failure to remit payment within sixty calendar days may result in a legal claim, disclosure to credit agencies, and delivery of this debt to a collections agency.
- Cancellation of a tuition subscription during enrollment does not alleviate the student's responsibility to meet the monthly tuition requirement.
- FTS guarantees that tuition will not increase during the entirety of a student's degree program or until the student fails to maintain his tuition subscription.
- Alumni are not required to pay application fees.

Ending Enrollment: Students who desire to end their enrollment must contact the registrar's office. Until the registrar has formally concluded enrollment, students are still required to meet their tuition responsibilities. *Concluding a tuition subscription does not equate to ending one's enrollment.*

What to Do If...

- I want to change my program: Contact the registrar's office to determine availability and program options.
- I want to substitute a course: Course substitutions are limited based on one's major and degree program. Contact the registrar's office before beginning the relevant course.
- I cannot contact my professor: In the event that you have reached out to your professor and he has not gotten back to you within 2-3 business days, please contact the academic dean or the registrar's office.
- I need help with financial matters: Contact the registrar's office.
- I have decided to conclude my enrollment: First, contact the registrar and express your desire to end your enrollment. Upon receiving confirmation from the office, cancel your tuition subscription.