Master of Arts in Applied Theology

Concentrations in Pastoral Ministry – Religious Education – Spirituality

Contact Person: Kristopher L. Willumsen, Ph.D., Director

The MAAT program, grounded in the Roman Catholic theological tradition, is designed to prepare students for a variety of church-related educational, pastoral and spiritual ministries. Unlike many similar programs, it stresses theological content above all, while not neglecting the practical art of using this content effectively in the area of one’s concentration.

A unique feature of this program is its non-traditional format, which is deliberately tailored to meet the needs of persons holding full-time jobs. In Wheeling, during the regular academic year two courses are offered each semester, meeting weekly on separate evenings. When there is sufficient enrollment in the Charleston area, the same two courses are offered there during intense weekend sessions scheduled once a month during the academic year. All students also take classes during two one-week sessions during the summer months. A person enrolled on a full-time basis can earn the 34-credit degree in two years and three summers of work.

Upon completion of the MAAT program, the student may expect:

- to have acquired an up-to-date general understanding of contemporary Catholic theology.
- to have obtained the skills and competency necessary to undertake educational, pastoral or spiritual tasks in the service of the church.

Admission Requirements

1. 2.75 cumulative undergraduate average
2. GRE scores
3. Three letters of recommendation, at least two of which must be from professors who have taught you in the following order of preference: religious studies/theology, any other humanities discipline or any other academic discipline. If necessary, one letter may be from a current or past pastor.
4. A letter of intent indicating why you wish to study theology at Wheeling Jesuit University, how your past studies have prepared you to do so and how an MAAT fits into your future plans.
5. Satisfactory grades in the following three undergraduate courses in theology or the successful completion of challenge exams. (A reading list is available for these exams.)
   a. Introduction to the Bible
   b. Introduction to Theology
   c. Introduction to Morality

Students fulfilling these requirements will be granted full admission. Others may seek provisional admission according to the conditions stated on p. 50 of this catalog.

Curriculum Requirements

1. The following courses in systematic theology, biblical studies and moral theology are required of all students in the MAAT program. Unless otherwise specified, all are two-credit courses.
   - MRE 501 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Old Testament Interpretation
   - MRE 503 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Principles of Theology
   - MRE 505 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Towards a Christian Morality
   - MRE 601 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Theology of the Sacraments (3 crs)
   - MRE 603 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Christology
   - MRE 605 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . The Church
   - MRE 611 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Synoptics
   - MRE 613 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Paul and His Interpreters
   - MRE 621 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Contemporary Moral Problems (3 crs)

2. Concentration required courses:
   a. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
      - MRE 507 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Foundations of Religious Education
      - MRE 633 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . The Process of Catechesis
      - MRE 635 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Administration and Supervision of Parish Religious Education
      - MRE 680 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Practicum I in Religious Education
      - MRE 681 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Practicum II in Religious Education
      - MRE 690 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Comprehensive Exams in Religious Education
   b. PASTORAL MINISTRY
      - MRE 508 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . A Theology of Ministry
      - MRE 651 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Ministries Through the Life Cycle
      - MRE 653 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Counseling Techniques for the Pastoral Person
      - MRE 682 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Practicum I in Pastoral Ministry
      - MRE 683 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Practicum II in Pastoral Ministry
      - MRE 692 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Comprehensive Exams in Pastoral Ministry
   c. SPIRITUALITY
      - MRE 509 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . A History of Spirituality
      - MRE 661 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Theology and Practice of Prayer
      - MRE 663 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Spiritual Direction and Discernment
      - MRE 664 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Practicum I in Spirituality
      - MRE 665 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Practicum II in Spirituality
      - MRE 694 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Comprehensive Exams in Spirituality

3. Elective Courses (1 Course Required)
   - MRE 615 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Johannine Literature
   - MRE 617 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Old Testament Theology
   - MRE 623 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Catholic Social Teachings
   - MRE 655 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Expanding Ministries in the Church
   - MRE 657 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Ministering to the Family
   - MRE 665 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Worship and Liturgics
   - MRE 667 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Spiritual Masters
   - MRE 668 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Biblical Spirituality
Note: Students entering the program from other church communities may substitute appropriate electives for those few courses which are specifically Catholic in nature. The program director will provide guidance and course approval in such situations.

4. Comprehensive exams in each of the four areas of the program (scripture, systematic theology, morality and the concentration area) are required of all students, and are taken as MRE 690 or MRE 692 or MRE 694. All course work must be completed before these exams may be taken.

Course Descriptions

MRE 501 Old Testament Interpretation
A survey of the Old Testament literature within its historical context, with an emphasis on major methods of contemporary Biblical interpretation.

MRE 503 Principles of Theology
An analysis of the key concepts in theological method; a study of the major periods in the development of Christian theology, and the principal schools of thought.

MRE 505 Towards a Christian Morality
An analysis of the key concepts and problems involved in the methodology of Christian morality; a rapid overview of the principal schools of Christian ethical thinking.

MRE 507 Foundations of Religious Education
An historical survey of religious education in the Christian tradition and an examination of the most significant contemporary theories of religious education. Discussions will include such thematic issues as the relationship between theory and practice, inculturation, the role of the liturgy, socialization, and the relationship between religious education and theology.

MRE 508 A Theology of Ministry
Reflections on the Church’s mission to be Christ to all peoples and to embody the gospel ideals of love, fellowship, justice and peace. Biblical and historical perspectives on the ways the church has carried out this mission, with particular attention given to the emerging role of the laity in fulfilling this mission.

MRE 509 A History of Spirituality
An analytical introduction to the field of spirituality and an historical overview of the body of spiritual writings in Western and Eastern Christendom from the early church to the modern period. Both secondary materials and writings of representative spiritual figures will be employed.

MRE 601 Theology of the Sacraments (3 crs)
A study of the principal theories of sacramentality in the Christian tradition, especially the contemporary theories; the historical development of each of the seven sacraments.

MRE 603 Christology
A study of the Christology of the New Testament; the classical Christology of the patristic and scholastic period; contemporary approaches to the study of the person of Christ; a survey of soteriology.

MRE 605 The Church
An historical survey of ecclesiology and elements of a contemporary theology of the church.

MRE 611 Synoptics

MRE 613 Paul and His Interpreters
A survey of the letters attributed to the Apostle Paul, with attention to Paul’s life, ancient literary genres, major elements in Paul’s thought, the unity and authorship of the letters, their role in the development of the early Christian churches and their relevance for today.

MRE 615 Johannine Literature
A study of the Gospel and Letters of John, the Revelation to John and the communities from which they derive.

MRE 617 Old Testament Theology

MRE 621 Contemporary Moral Problems (3 crs)
A detailed study of representative contemporary moral issues (bioethical, sexual, social) in the light of scripture, tradition, the human sciences, and recent theological reflection. Prerequisite: MRE 505

MRE 623 Catholic Social Teachings
An inquiry into the origins and development of Catholic social teachings as found principally in the encyclicals of Leo XIII to John Paul II.

MRE 633 Process of Catechesis
Basic principles of administration and supervision of religious education programs, sacramental preparation, the R.C.I.A., textbook evaluation, the use of media in catechesis.

MRE 635 Administration and Supervision of Parish Religious Education
A detailed study of managerial strategies and organizational principles used in setting up and administering the religious education programs of the local church.

MRE 651 Ministries Through the Life Cycle
An examination of the necessity to adapt forms of ministry to the varying needs of individuals as they progress through the stages of life cycle development. The course will investigate the nature of each stage, the special problems and tasks associated with each, as well as the role ministry can and should play at those critical times in one’s life.
MRE 653 Counseling Techniques for the Pastoral Person
An exploration of the skills and understandings involved in helping others, with emphasis on the relationship between ministry and counseling. Particular attention will be paid to the development of communication and referral skills.

MRE 655 Expanding Ministries in the Church
A theological and pastoral analysis of the tremendous expansion of ministry in today’s Christian community. As new ministries emerge, especially when the church engages the sociopolitical structures of society, fundamental issues about the shape and purpose of such ministries arise. This course explores some of those issues, especially as they are related to the parish, diocese and other forms of Christian community.

MRE 657 Ministering to the Family
After a brief review of current theological reflections about the nature of Christian marriage and human sexuality, the course will draw out the implications of such a theology for ministry, especially to diverse models of family in our society (e.g., divorced, blended families, single parents).

MRE 661 Theology and Practice of Prayer
After developing a working definition of prayer, and examining classic statements of its nature and practice, students will be expected to experiment with various forms of prayer and meditation as introduced by the instructor.

MRE 663 Spiritual Direction and Discernment
A study of the principles and practice of spiritual direction. Students will examine the role of the spiritual director, theories of spiritual direction, and will read a variety of theological and psychological materials which have been developed on this topic.

MRE 665 Worship and Liturgics
Basic theories of ritual and Christian liturgy; a study of the historical development of Eucharist through the ancient texts; a theology and spirituality of the Eucharist; sacred time and festal celebration.

MRE 667 Spiritual Masters
In-depth examination of the lives and writings of outstanding masters of the spiritual life, both historic and recent. Representative figures might include the Desert Fathers, St. Basil, Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, Ignatius of Loyola, Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and others.

MRE 668 Biblical Spirituality
A study of representative Old and New Testament texts and personalities with a view to uncovering what they tell us about the experience of and human response to God. Emphasis will be placed on biblical methods of prayer and the spirituality of Jesus. Some familiarity with Biblical methodology is assumed.

MRE 680 & 681 Religious Education Practicum I and II
A supervised field experience designed to help the student develop, improve, and feel confident in the skills needed to be a professional leader in religious education or related ministries. Theological reflection on the experience will also be a part of the practicum. Prerequisite: eight hours of graduate-level theology.

MRE 682 & 683 Pastoral Ministry Practicum I and II
A supervised field experience designed to help the student develop, improve, and feel confident in the skills needed to be proficient in the exercise of various forms of pastoral ministry. Theological reflection on the experience will also be a part of the practicum. Prerequisite: eight hours of graduate-level theology.

MRE 684 & 685 Spirituality Practicum I and II
A supervised field experience designed to help the student develop, improve, and feel confident in the skills needed to be proficient in the exercise of ministry in the field of spirituality. Theological reflection on the experience will also be a part of the practicum. Prerequisite: eight hours of graduate-level theology.

MRE 690 Comprehensive Exams in Religious Education
MRE 692 Comprehensive Exams in Pastoral Ministry
MRE 694 Comprehensive Exams in Spirituality
Individual preparation for written and oral exams in the areas of morality, scripture, systematics and the specific area of concentration.

General Policies
A full-time student is one who is taking sufficient courses to complete the program in two years and three summers. (This is usually two courses per semester and two courses each summer.)

A student enrolled in the MAAT will be allowed to substitute one course in the concentration for another course in one of the other concentrations or an elective. Usually only one substitution will be allowed and courses numbered 507, 508, 509, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 690, 692, and 694 are not negotiable.

No more than a total of six credits may be taken outside of Wheeling Jesuit University to be applied toward the degree. Such substitutions must be approved in advance.