



McMaster Divinity  
College

## MDiv/MTS Specializations and Outcomes

Specializations are made up of a minimum of six approved one-term core courses (18 units) for the MDiv or MTS, and do not have to fall within a single division. Students are encouraged to tailor their specializations to their own needs, in consultation with their advisors. There is a default specialization for the MDiv and for the MTS, as well as the opportunity (in consultation with the Academic Dean) to create one's own specialization suited to unique ministry needs.

### **1. Pastoral Studies** (this is the default specialization for the MDiv)

This specialization includes an unspecified mix of courses in any area or areas of the curriculum that the student believes are required for ministry, including at least one course in preaching (beyond pastoral languages). This specialization is designed for senior/associate pastors, lead pastors, and other full-time vocational ministers with primarily leadership responsibilities. This option allows the greatest flexibility in terms of required focus courses, development of personalized studies that suit the vocational aims of the student, and an optimized use of available courses in regular format, weekend format, hybrid courses, and summer module courses.

At the end of their program, students in this specialization will be able to:

- Formulate and implement appropriate leadership strategies for pastoral ministry.
- Make practical and ethical decisions on the basis of a coherent Christian worldview.
- Foster spiritual skills and competencies on the part of others.
- Identify and nurture a range of spiritual temperaments.
- Communicate Christian principles, values, and worldview.

### **2. Christian Worldview** (this is the default specialization for the MTS)

This specialization includes an unspecified mix of courses in any area or areas of the curriculum that the student believes are required for ministry. This specialization is designed for para-church ministries, lay ministry leadership, and general theological studies for anyone interested in developing advanced theological competence.

At the end of their program, students in this specialization will be able to:

- Develop a cognitive framework for reflectively engaging with all aspects of creation and culture.

- Engage and dialogue with other worldviews (hermeneutical, global, religious, creedal, ethnic).
- Have an increased sensitivity to the globalized character of life and ministry in North America and strategies for dialogue.
- Have an increased awareness of how church history and tradition are formative in the development of one's worldview.

### **3. Church and Culture**

This specialization addresses the interface of the Church and the contemporary world, and includes courses in Christianity and culture, missions, development, evangelism, the emerging church, cultural context, preaching, worship, and related approved courses. This specialization is designed for youth pastors, worship pastors, denominational leaders, church planters, cross-cultural ministry, NGO work, and other developmental and culturally sensitive ministries.

At the end of their program, students in this specialization will be able to:

- Integrate biblical and theological knowledge in a contextualized way.
- Assess and articulate what is happening in contemporary culture.
- Address cultural issues from a distinctively Christian point of view.
- Be familiar with tools and methods that identify and analyze cultural distinctives.
- Be equipped to interface with a variety of cultures and within a multi-cultural context.

### **4. Counselling and Spiritual Care**

This specialization includes courses in spiritual counselling, spiritual care, chaplaincy, and related approved courses. Many of these specialization courses are offered during the summer term. This specialization is designed for military, hospital, and community chaplaincy, associate pastors with family ministry responsibilities, NGO work, and various types of social ministries.

At the end of their program, students in this specialization will be able to:

- Oversee spiritual care in a church or parachurch context.
- Identify and develop core skills in spiritual care – foundational skills in listening, intervention, crisis care, etc.
- Have foundational training for chaplaincy ministry.
- Develop the necessary framework for effective pastoral intervention in crisis.
- Have a working understanding of ethical issues in spiritual care.

## **5. Biblical Studies: General, Old Testament, or New Testament (one to be selected)**

This specialization includes courses in biblical studies, either language-based or not, in either a mix of the testaments (General) or one or other of the testaments (minimum of four of six courses). Language requirement courses do not count for the specialization in the MDiv, but may be counted in the MTS. This specialization is designed for all forms of ministry emphasizing strong biblical content, including preaching and teaching pastors.

At the end of their program, students in this specialization will be able to:

- Have comprehensive general knowledge of the content of the Bible and its relevant contexts, including familiarity with historical, literary, and canonical issues.
- Understand and use the tools of biblical scholarship and critically engage significant publications.
- Be familiar with various critical methods of contemporary biblical scholarship.
- Prepare exegetically responsible material for teaching or preaching, drawing on original languages as able.
- Have knowledge of the history of biblical studies and awareness of current issues in the field.

## **6. Christian Thought and History**

This specialization includes courses in theology, Christian history, historical theology, Christian worldview, and related approved courses. This specialization is designed for all forms of ministry emphasizing Christian theology and history, including preaching and teaching pastors.

At the end of their program, students in this specialization will be able to:

- Develop a comprehensive knowledge of key figures and movements in Christian history.
- Develop a comprehensive knowledge of key figures and movements in Christian theology.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to issues in evangelical thought, history, and practice.
- Apply the lessons of Christian history to contemporary life and ministry.
- Apply an evangelical theological perspective to vital matters of Christian life, thought, and ministry.

## **7. Specialized Studies**

This specialization allows the student, in consultation with the Dean, to design a unique specialization geared toward particular ministry needs. This specialization is designed to be tailor-made by the student to address particular and specialized ministry needs not

addressed in any of the other specializations, or to enhance a particular area of study not adequately addressed above.

At the end of their program, students in this specialization will be able to:

- Demonstrate competence in a specialized area or areas of study.
- Cultivate critical, graduate-level knowledge of disciplines or interdisciplinary studies.
- Strengthen knowledge, skills, and personal insight for a specialized ministry focus (e.g., Leadership and Christian Spirituality)
- Develop a sound academic base for advanced study in a specialized topic.