

St. Meinrad School of Theology
Curriculum - Permanent Deacon Formation

The Gospel of John

This course considers the theology and spirituality of the Church as expressed in the Fourth Gospel. Attention is given to the theological and cultural setting of John's Gospel as well as the principal images and themes concerning Jesus and the Church found in the Gospel. The special vocabulary and spiritual program of John will be considered. Literary, structural and theological topics will also be examined as will the position of the Johannine Church in the early Christian community.

Old Testament

This course introduces an approach to reading and interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures in their own context and in the context of Christian faith. The course includes an introduction to the history of Israel and the Old Testament Canon considered in light of its historical, prophetic and literary significance. The course also considers briefly some interpretative tools for Old Testament preaching.

The Letters of Paul

This course introduces the study of Paul and his theology. Students examine the theological and cultural setting for Paul's writings in the early Church to gain insight into the reasons for his tremendous impact in the formation of Christian doctrine.

Systematics I

This course introduces students to the principles, systems and language of theology based on a Christian anthropology. Emphasis is given to the foundational elements of Christian belief: faith and the response to faith, the existence of God, and the teaching office of the Church. Attention is also given to developing skills for theological research and the sources of Church teaching: magisterial documents and theological writings.

Systematics II – ½ *unit*

This course continues to address the fundamentals of theology begun in Systematics I, but with particular emphasis on theological topics such as the Trinity, the theology of the Spirit, the end times and salvation, and the Mother of God.

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Vatican II & Ecclesiology

The purpose of this course is to familiarize the student with the basic teachings of the Second Vatican Council as contained in its documents. The course provides a basic introduction to the history and development of council teachings and the personalities that helped to shape the work of Vatican II, with particular emphasis on a theology of Church and ministry. The course addresses the biblical, magisterial and historical foundations of Church identity and leadership. Emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of the mission of the Church as evidenced at a universal and local level of Church life. The course also addresses the role of the deacon in the hierarchical structure of the Church.

Christology

This course introduces the fundamentals of the Church's teaching about the person of Jesus Christ. The course focuses on the development of Christological doctrine through the writings of the Church Fathers and the early Councils of the Church. It also considers the person of Jesus in light of spirituality and liturgical life.

Moral Theology I

This course introduces the basic principles of Catholic moral teachings. The moral life of the Church is considered in light of fundamental call of individual Christians to conversion. The moral life is also linked to the spirituality of individual Christian experience and the place of Scripture in moral reflection, character and virtue. This course also explores the meaning of human sexuality in order to help the ministry candidate develop conscientious responses to moral questions. The magisterial documents which form the basis for understanding a theology of the human person and the body, as well as answers to specific moral issues such as non-marital sexual acts, homosexuality, and other sexual questions, are introduced.

Moral Theology II

This course surveys Catholic thought on social and medical ethics, particularly as they related to ministerial situation in a parish or community setting. Magisterial documents that address such topics as abortion, euthanasia, reproductive technologies, racism, social justice, and capital punishment are presented for analysis. The course introduces resources to help students understand and communicate Church teaching in a ministerial environment.

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Introduction to Liturgy

This course introduces students to the communal prayer of the Church and the historical development of liturgical practices. Topics addressed include: the concept of communal prayer, sign and symbol, the liturgical year, and liturgical roles, vesture and furnishings.

Sacramental Theology I

This course traces the theological, historical, pastoral and practical development of adult and infant initiation in the Church, along with the sacraments of healing. Topics to be considered include Baptism for infants, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Confirmation, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick. Special attention is given to the ministry of the permanent deacon in the sacramental life of the Church.

Sacramental Theology II - Eucharist

This course examines the functions of the various elements of the Mass. Special attention is given to the structure of the Eucharistic Prayer, the historical development of the Eucharist and its books, along with an appreciation for and understanding of the Church's teaching on the real presence of Christ in the sacrament.

Liturgical Practica I and II

These *practica* are designed to acquaint the permanent deacon candidates with the basic skills and level of comfort needed to perform liturgical ministry in different circumstances. This formation includes use of liturgical books, planning and executing liturgies, liturgical norms and guidelines for the diocese and use of vessels and vesture. Specific ritual actions addressed include: liturgical proclamation, assisting at Eucharist, baptism, R.C.I.A., marriage, wakes, and funeral services.

Homiletics

This course covers theoretical aspects of liturgical preaching including the definition of the homily, the place of the homily in liturgical celebration, methods of preparation and sources for material. Candidates also participate in an eight-day workshop at Saint Meinrad, during which homilies will be developed, delivered and critiqued in class settings using videotape feedback and analysis.

Introduction to the Ministry of the Permanent Deacon

This course intends to be an overview for deacon candidates and families to the ministry of the permanent deacon. The course includes the development of the role of the deacon in Church life, an introduction to the principles of the reinstitution of the diaconate in the Second Vatican

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Council and a presentation on the spiritual, theological and ministerial life of permanent deacons in the Church today. Emphasis is placed on the role of the families of deacons in ministry and the distinctive vocation of deacons, particularly as expressed in the writings of the United States bishops.

Spirituality and Prayer

This course focuses on the spiritual tradition of the life of the Church in an historical and synthetic way. Beginning with the psalms and Jewish forms of prayer the course considers the emergence of prayer traditions, the Liturgy of the Hours and spiritual programs in the Church. Attention is focused on place of the Liturgy of the Hours as a significant prayer of the Church. Also considered are spiritual traditions in Church history: Benedictines, Mendicant, Carmelite, Salesian, and Jesuit. A guided reading of selections from spiritual classics is part of this course; certain aspects of modern spirituality are also considered.

Introduction to Pastoral Care

This course examines the theological foundations of pastoral theology, care and counseling. Pastoral care and counseling are viewed as theological tasks rooted in the Christian tradition and an important activity of the Church and its ministries. The course uses the perspective of the human sciences to provide insight into the task of pastoral care.

Religious Education – ½ unit

This course on the catechetical ministry of the Church introduces students to the *General Directory for Catechesis*. The class briefly considers the historical teaching office of the Church. Attention is also given to the theories that inform the practice of teaching in the Church today including: R.C.I.A., sacramental preparation, catechesis for children and youth and adult faith formation. In the final part of the course practical solutions to several problems encountered by catechists in the parish settings today are offered for discussion.

Canon Law for Ministry

This course provides an introduction to the Code of Canon Law in preparation for ministry in the Church. Areas of consideration include the structure and history of canon law, general norms, sacramental law, diocesan and parish structures, marriage law, and the rights and obligations of the Christian faithful, with special emphasis on those related to the ministry of the permanent deacon.

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Church History

The first part of this course covers the development of Church history from the time of Christ until the Council of Constance. Particular themes include the relationship of the early Church to its roots in Judaism and the relationship of the Church to the Hellenistic culture of the Roman Empire. The course also considers the works of the Church Fathers and the life of the Church in its cultural and social setting, with special emphasis on the emergence of ministries within the structures of the Church. The second half of the Church history course covers the period leading up to the protestant reformation, the personalities and in the events of the reformation and its aftermath. Church life in the age of the Enlightenment, the period of revolution and the reevaluation of Church life leading up to the Second Vatican Council will also be covered. Attention is also given to the changing face of Church ministry in this period.

The American Church – ½ *unit*

The focus of this course is the historical development of the Church in the United States, the inter-relationship between religious pluralism and the attitudes toward Church, and the particular challenges faced by the American Church in modern times.