

Biblical and Theological Studies Major Program Description Changes for the 2026–27 Academic Year and Onward

Program Description from 2026–27 Onward

Biblical and Theological Studies (BTS)

Johnson, Veeneman, Willitts

Core Curriculum

The mission of the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies within the Core Curriculum is to enable students to fashion lives of significance and service by providing them with opportunities to develop intellectually, spiritually, and socially through their experience in a biblical and theological program. Such an experience occurs in the contexts of (1) an international student body and Faculty, (2) a culturally diverse urban setting, (3) a vibrant dialogue about Christianity, faith, and culture, and (4) a school committed to a broad evangelical Christian tradition.

Major

The Biblical and Theological Studies major equips students with a deep and enduring Christian faith, exploring the intersection of faith and work, and of calling and career, in an ever-changing world. Students will gain foundational knowledge in biblical and theological studies, reflecting on the life of Jesus Christ, the redemptive narrative of Christian Scripture, and the broader Christian tradition to develop clarity about their sense of purpose for advancing human flourishing globally.

Through cooperative partnerships and courses in related disciplines, students will be encouraged to experience various career paths, including church and parachurch ministry, civic service, social justice, and works of compassion and mercy. Internships and other potential initiatives provide students with practical application of their theological and ethical learning.

Additionally, the major complements a wide range of academic fields and serves as an excellent second major for students pursuing careers in education, social work, business, healthcare, public policy, and other professions where Christian faith informs vocation. Students seeking to integrate their careers with a robust Christian identity will find this major especially beneficial.

The major's five outcomes are:

1. *Biblical and theological intelligence*: Students will articulate the broad narratives of Christian Scripture, history, and theology.
2. *Biblical and theological fluency*: Students will apply biblical and theological resources to engage critically with their own lives and contemporary culture.
3. *Intercultural engagement*: Students will negotiate the twenty-first-century pluralistic society with Christian hospitality, empathy, forgiveness, and reconciliation.
4. *Ecclesial and community priority*: Students will foster communities of faith in everyday life, animated by a commitment to the Gospel, seeking to become people for others.
5. *Vocation and identity*: Students will discern their unique divine calling and explore various career paths.

BA in Biblical and Theological Studies

Major requirements

Required semester hours: 36 sh

Prerequisite: BTS 1850 Introduction to the Bible

Paired Course Sequences (16 sh)

Students must complete both sets of the following paired courses:

Jesus and the Marginalized (8 sh)

- BTS 2210 Jesus and the Marginalized: Jesus and the Gospels
- BTS 2215 Christ in Global Context: Christology

Faith, Power, and Empire (8 sh)

- BTS 3250 The Apocalypse and Empire: Johannine Literature
- BTS 2640 Faith, Politics, and Power Across Christian History: Historical Theology

Note: Paired courses can be taken in either order. There will be complementary assignments which can be completed in either order.

Additional Required Courses (12 sh)

- BTS 2120 Voices of the Disenfranchised Communities: Old Testament Prophets
- BTS 3410 Women, the Bible, and the Church
- BTS 2600 Saints, Radicals, and Heretics: Church History

Elective Courses (Choose one, 4 sh)

- BTS 2260 Saint Paul and Christian Interculturalism: Life and Letters of Paul

- BTS 2110 Narratives and Ethics for the Nations: Pentateuch
- BTS 2130 Sages and Human Flourishing: Old Testament Poetry
- BTS 2400 Christian Origins in the City
- BTS 3100 Abraham Joshua Heschel
- BTS 2700 World Religions
- BTS 3910 Topics in Biblical and Theological Studies
- BTS 4930 Directed Research

Capstone Course (4 sh)

- BTS 4010 Fourth-Year Seminar

Internship (1 sh)

- BTS 4970 Internship in BTS

Recommended Courses Outside the Major

- POGO 2800 Survey Research Methods
- POGO 3690 Religion and Politics
- PSYC 2100 Research Methods in Psychology
- SOC 3500 Methods in Social Research
- PHIL 3100 Political Philosophy

Note: Students not taking BTS 2400 Christian Origins in the City are encouraged to enroll in CORE 3000 – Christian Origins in the City Center.

Minor requirements

Prerequisite: BTS 1850 Introduction to the Bible

20 semester hours (Five courses)

Note: Up to four hours of coursework in the minor may apply to the Core Curriculum Requirement in Biblical and Theological Studies.

Program Description Pre-2026–27

Biblical and Theological Studies (BTS)

Widman, Johnson, Veeneman, Willitts

The mission of the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies within the General Education curriculum is to enable students to fashion lives of significance and service by providing them with opportunities to develop intellectually, spiritually, and socially through their experience in a biblical and theological program. Such an experience

occurs in the contexts of (1) an international student body and Faculty, (2) a culturally-diverse urban setting, (3) a vibrant dialogue about Christianity, faith, and culture, and (4) a school committed to a broad evangelical Christian tradition.

The Faculty of the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies is committed to providing its majors with the opportunity to develop a life of significance and service by learning about God, the Bible, its interpretive issues, and the various historic Christian and religious traditions. In such an experience, the student is engaged to become responsible enough to integrate their personal faith collegially into the broader scope of a liberal arts education and into the various opportunities afforded by University ministries. Thus, the Department is committed to students developing abilities in (1) Biblical, historical, and theological interpretation, (2) critical thinking, and (3) the responsibility of knowledge and faith for shaping behavior. The Department is committed to a rigorous assessment of its students and the expected outcomes of its program, through regular observation, evaluation, and feedback.

B.A. in Biblical and Theological Studies

Major requirements

Required semester hours: 36 sh Course requirements

- BTS 2500 BTS 2600 BTS 2640
- Introduction to Theology 4 History of the Church 4 The Western Theological Tradition 4
- BTS 2650
- BTS 2700/GS 3620/GS 3620 BTS 4010

Electives:

- The Eastern Orthodox 4 Theological Tradition
World Religions 4
- Fourth-Year Seminar in 4 Biblical and Theological Studies
- 12 sh from BTS 2110, BTS 2120, BTS 2130, BTS 2210, BTS 2260, BTS 2310, BTS 3150, BTS 3240, BTS 3250, BTS 3410, with at least one course from each of the Old Testament and New Testament

Notes and restrictions:

Up to four hours of coursework in the major may apply to the General Education requirement in Biblical and Theological Studies. GE Designates a course that fulfills all or part of a General Education (G.E.) requirement; BTS 1850 is the prerequisite for each course.