

Policy on the Completion of a Comprehensive Examination for the M.A. in Theology

It is the policy of the Department of Theological Studies to offer the Comprehensive Examination as one option for the completion of the M.A. in Theology. [The other option is the completion of a Thesis.]

The purpose of the Comprehensive exam is to help the student to integrate the various areas of theological study that comprise the program, and to encourage the student to pursue one or two of those areas in more depth. Consequently students prepare one or two broad areas (proper to the general curriculum in Theology) and one or two more specialized areas of expertise (highlighting those areas of interest and expertise that the student identifies in concert with the Comprehensive Exam Director).

The comprehensive exam is a take-home examination that the student completes in a period of approximately four days. The process for preparation of the Exam is the following:

Deciding Between Thesis and Comps:

By the time that the student has completed 24 units, he/she should consult their faculty advisor and decide whether to complete the program by writing an MA Thesis (worth 6 units after the completion of 30 units of coursework) OR by preparing for the Comprehensive Examination (0 units, taken after the completion of 36 units of coursework). [The *Application for the Thesis* and the *Application for the Comprehensive Examination* are linked to the LMU Graduate Theology Web Site.]

Elements of the Comprehensive Examination Preparation:

The student identifies three areas for study and writing. These areas should be both general and specific areas, and the student works closely with the Comprehensive Exam director in identifying these areas. Gathering information from one's transcript, reading list of past courses, and identified interests will aid this process.

Cycle of Due Dates for Comprehensive Exams:

- Beginning of the Fourth Week of Classes, student submits the following four items:
 - The student should provide an unofficial transcript to ascertain the completion of coursework
 - A bibliography of ten books minimum, selected generally from the core and related coursework.
 - An additional bibliography of six books may be used for a particular area of interest.
 - A list of three areas (and 5-6 themes or topics within those areas) on which written examination questions could be composed

- End of Fifth Week of Classes, Examining Board approves the four items above (or demands revisions, to be completed within one week).

- At 9:00 AM on the last Thursday of October and March, written examination questions are distributed and the answers are due the following Monday at 3:00 PM. The three answers are typed, double spaced, 12 point font. Each answer is approximately 8-10 pages in length. Students may use all the written materials they have prepared and any texts that they find helpful. They may not consult other persons in preparing answers, though they may contact the exam director for clarification about the meaning or intent of the questions or the process of completion of the examination.

- By Friday of the second week in November or April, the one hour Oral Examination takes place.

No comprehensive examinations are offered in summer.

Policy on Failure and Re-taking of the Comprehensive Exam

If the Exam board determines that the student has not successfully completed the Comprehensive Exam or any portion of the exam, the student may take a second set of comprehensive exams, or any portion that the exam committee deems necessary, in the next semester of study (i.e., failure of one or more areas in fall semester means student may take a second exam in the respective areas in the spring semester. No comprehensive exams are offered in summer.).

Policy on Graduation/ "Walking" at Commencement:

It is the Policy of the Department of Theological Studies that a student who intends to complete, but has not yet completed, the Comprehensive Examination may not "walk" at Graduate Commencement, out of respect for the students who have completed the entire program and out of respect for the integrity of the process.