

Seminary Releases Revised M Div Program

Program starts fall 2018

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(Photo by Martin Lee)

By: Samantha Angeles, Seminary student writer

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University has revised the Master of Divinity (M Div) program, providing a sharper focus to the degree with fewer credit hours required. The 78-credit program starts in fall 2018 and is designed to be completed in as little as two years by students with an undergraduate degree in theology. Students with degrees in other disciplines will follow a three-year plan to complete their M Div.

The previous 92-credit program took three years for the average student with a theology undergraduate degree to complete. The revised M Div allows the same students to finish the program in less time if they have fulfilled all prerequisite courses and can demonstrate intermediate-level proficiency in biblical languages.

"I'm thrilled about our newly revised M Div," said Jiří Moskala, Seminary dean. "It brings together the best in scholarship and praxis to provide a stellar biblical, theological, historical and missiological framework for our students' future ministry. Evangelism combined with a profound knowledge of the Bible and pastoral care is the first priority in our coursework."

The revisions to the M Div were shaped by extensive consultation with North American Division (NAD) advisory groups, faculty committees, administrators, students and accreditation standards with the purpose of providing an enhanced degree.

“The revised M Div is shorter, deeper and stronger,” said Fernando Ortiz, M Div program director. “Students can now fulfill their educational goals more quickly without compromising the quality of the program.”

One key aspect of the credit reductions has involved working with undergraduate schools in a Curriculum Collaboration set up by the NAD. This collaboration reviewed the learning needed by a pastor to determine which should be studied at the M Div level and which should be prerequisites or part of students’ post-seminary internship training. Students who have degrees in disciplines other than theology and sense a call from God to deepen their preparation for ministry will take prerequisite courses at the beginning of their M Div program. These essential courses will establish a solid theological and practical foundation on which their M Div studies can be built to prepare them for excellence in ministry.

Revisions to the M Div program included dividing selected classes such as Issues in Daniel and Revelation into two courses in order to provide students with greater depth of study and strengthen their Adventist identity. Other courses that shared similar subject matter were combined. Theological and preaching courses were diversified to equip students to meet the needs of an increasingly complex world.

“Congregational pastors, chaplains and youth pastors will be equipped to closely collaborate with our church schools, making the schools a center for their evangelistic and community activities,” said Moskala.

Attention to the Adventist health message was also a significant factor that shaped the M Div revisions.

“We are particularly excited about our new health and wellness course that will be taken by all M Div students,” said Teresa Reeve, associate dean. “Students will receive training in personal fitness and learn to bring the health message to their churches and communities.”

To allow time for exercise, spiritual life and work, along with the demands of classwork and ministry practice, the maximum number of credits allowed per semester for M Div students has been reduced from 16 to 14 credits. This adjustment will not only prevent academic burnout but also sets a pattern for healthy, balanced living to maximize students’ effectiveness in their future ministry.

Concentrations in Chaplaincy and in Youth and Young Adult Ministry are offered in the revised M Div program. In addition, a new dual degree, the M Div/Master of Science in Community and International Development, has been added to the already-established M Div dual degrees (M Div/Public Health, M Div/Communication and M Div/Social Work). These concentrations and dual-degree programs allow students to gain advanced understanding and competency in areas of interest in order to more skillfully address the needs of today’s world.

To learn more about the M Div or to enroll in the program, email mdiv@andrews.edu or visit andrews.edu/mdiv.

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