

# Master's degree in Theology and Religious Studies

## Objective and structure

Formulated in attainment targets, the master's programme aims for the student(s) to:

- deepen and broaden the knowledge and insight gained in the Bachelor's degree and learn to apply them in an interdisciplinary way in a research field new to him/her;
- acquires the ability to reach reasonable and independent judgements in complex topical questions;
- learns to communicate clearly and coherently about their own research and the conclusions that may follow;
- learn to self-critically adjust their own scientific approach and thus learn to work largely independently in science;
- sharpen its own practical skills and estimate practicality on a realistic basis;
- capable of dialogue and cooperation on meaning and service.

In terms of content, the general part of the master's programme pays particular attention to the working through and interpretation of biblical texts and the Christian tradition. This always involves current, diverse and globalised culture in the interpretation process.

Also in the field of religious studies, the master's degree deals with content in comparative, text-critical and interdisciplinary dialogue with humanities and world religions.

To this end, the programme is offered in the framework of three majors or specialisms, in one of which the student(s) chooses a main subject according to interest, motivation and talents. They are:

### Theology, pastoral care and church

This thesis module focuses on the connection between ancient faith and contemporary forms of belief, as well as doubt and resistance. Knowledge of history, (self)criticism and creativity are deepened within the study. A beginning independence is cultivated in assessing and designing research in the field. Insight is developed into the significance of such research for ecclesial and social practice and, more generally, into the critical and heuristically relevant interaction between research and practice. In this thesis, ample attention is paid to the professional field and the student concerned€ develops an internship programme.

### Religious studies and research

Graduation focuses on comparative textual research, scholarly communication and pedagogy. The student(s) acquire greater skills in the literary, historical and intertextual study of religious writings and traditional texts. The working-through in the contemporary context has heuristic significance on the one hand and is an independent topic of research on the other.

### Religious education

As part of the pedagogical master's programme, arrangements have been made with KULeuven to follow a teaching path after the first master's year. This includes a number of general and professional didactic subjects and internships. Initiation in Protestant religion is also provided. Furthermore, the emphasis is on pedagogical language skills and social tolerance.

## **Master's programme in Theology and Religious Studies - Content and structure**

The Master's programme at FPTR lasts 2 years and amounts to 120 credits. Based on the three academic areas covered by the bachelor, the master focuses on three graduation options, namely pastoral care, teaching and research. This mainly focuses on deepening the bachelor's degree and does so in the context of interdisciplinarity. In this day and age, perhaps more than ever, the theologian needs to underline the relevance of his knowledge and practice. The churches are called to account in this regard, not only with regard to the past, but also in function of contemporary philosophical diversity. Gone are the days when Christian tradition was the only foothold in harsh times. That is why the Master of Theology and Religious Studies at FPTR teaches to engage in dialogue with and, in the process, positively position oneself towards dissenters.

### General MASTER (Ma1)

#### Bible Science and Theology

Interdisciplinary exegesis

Current Bible-theological themes

#### Religious Studies

- Intercultural text analysis
- World religions / Contemporary

#### spirituality Master's thesis

- Main subject
- Electives

The master's programme has two major parts: a theoretical groundwork and a practical. The first theoretical master's year deepens biblical-theological knowledge and strengthens the ability to complete religious studies. This so-called 'General Master' results in a master's thesis at the end of the first year. In the second master's year, the student chooses a thesis, in which he/she acquires further practical competence in the application and

elaboration of the knowledge. To this end, the student finally completes a practical master's thesis.

Bible and theology, the foundations of which were laid in the Bachelor's programme and which include ancient language knowledge on the one hand and historical-critical and hermeneutical principles on the other, now come together in the interdisciplinary exegesis exercises. A number of texts are selected by mutual agreement, after which the student sets to work. From the ground text, the first linguistic analysis is made. Around this, theology builds a number of systematic theses, from which the text can be examined. Next, the participants of interdisciplinary exegesis enter into dialogue with other cultural and human sciences. In the same seminary setting, a current topic is simultaneously examined in a biblical-theological perspective.

Religion studies broadens the spectrum even further, focusing on diversity and multicultural consideration as well as world religions and spirituality. Here too, the focus is on interdisciplinarity, highlighting both the religious psychological and anthropological backgrounds of modern rituals and spiritual practices. At the same time, students explore modern applications of spiritual life, mysticism and/or liturgy.

The Master's thesis is written while the student chooses a main subject and completes it simultaneously with one or more electives.

The Master's programme exudes interdisciplinarity and dialogue in all parts. Current affairs are never far away. All study components are taken in seminar format, except for the Master's thesis. The latter is an aptitude test in theology and religious studies.

### **Master's thesis objectives**

The master's thesis is an important part of the programme. It forms the capstone. Therefore, the master's thesis requires the student(s) to demonstrate that he or she can independently explore a subject in depth and systematically analyse it. The master's thesis is a proof of basic scientific research. Of this, bibliographic research, planning of the work, execution and analysis, as well as reporting are essential. The student must demonstrate a critical mind and cooperative attitude during the various stages of the research. The degree of independence with which the research is conducted is part of the assessment. Originality or 'earth-shattering' findings are not assessed. However, it is expected that the text should be easy to read and free of language errors. Submission of the final text must be accompanied by a clear summary of the research conducted and the results.

With the general master, the theoretical ground has been levelled, the instruments prepared and the building drawn. Now concrete construction can begin. In the second year of the Master's programme, the student chooses to focus on the practical application of knowledge in a specific field of work. The choice concerns pastoral care, teaching or research.

### **Pastoral MASTER (Ma2)**

#### Practical theology

Sermon preparation: methodology, analysis, evaluation

Municipal internship  
Internship special pastoral services

Church law and symbolism

Pastoral thesis

#### Bible Science and Religious Studies

- Interdisciplinary Bible exegesis
- World religions / Contemporary spirituality

### **Educational MASTER (Ma2-Educ)**

#### Pedagogy and theology

General didactics

Subject didactics

Initiation Protestant Religious

Education Internships

Didactic master's thesis

#### Bible Science and Religious Studies

Interdisciplinary Bible exegesis

World religions / Contemporary spirituality

## Research master's degree (Ma2-Res.)

### Scientific skills

Research methodology

Didactic exercise

Science analysis and skills Digital

instrument knowledge

Structure of doctoral research

Main subject

### Bible Science and Religious Studies

- Interdisciplinary Bible exegesis
- World religions / Contemporary spirituality

The graduation opportunities provide the necessary practical skills to take up an active and leadership role in church, education and research. The Protestant religion teacher training (Ma2-Educ) is organised in collaboration with KULeuven and the Committee for Protestant Religious Education (PEGO). The pastoral graduation option (Ma2-Res) is in the hands of the Chair of Practical Theology at FPTR and is organised in close cooperation with the relevant ministerial bodies of the United Protestant Church in Belgium (VPKB). The research master's degree amounts to 90 credits, which are awarded upon submission of two publishable scholarly articles and a worked out design for doctoral research. The deanery of the FPTR looks after this graduation opportunity.

## Master of Theology & Religious Studies

<b>General Master (Ma1)</b>		<b>Pastoral Master (Ma2)</b>	
Interdisciplinary Bible Exegesis	10	Interdisciplinary Bible Exegesis	10
Current Bible-theological themes	5	Current Bible-theological themes / Contemporary spirituality	5
Contemporary spirituality	5	World religions / Intercultural text analysis	5
World religions	5	Sermon preparation: methodology, analysis, evaluation	5
Intercultural text analysis	5	Municipal internship	15
Main subject	5	Internship special services	5
Elective	5	Church law and symbolism	5
Master puff	20	Pastoral thesis	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>		<b>60</b>
<b>Educational master's degree (Ma2-Educ)</b>		<b>Research Master (Ma2-Res)</b>	
Interdisciplinary Bible Exegesis	10	Interdisciplinary Bible Exegesis	10
Topical Bible-theological themes / Contemporary spirituality	5	Current Bible-theological themes / Contemporary spirituality	5
World religions / Intercultural text analysis	5	World religions / Intercultural text analysis	5
General didactics	12	Research methodology	5
Subject didactics	8	Didactic exercises	10
Initiation Protestant religion	5	Science skills	5
Teaching internships	5	Digital instrument knowledge	5
Didactic master puff	10	Main subject	5
		Seminary	5
		Structure of doctoral research	20
		Publishable articles	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>		<b>90</b>