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Overview

Meadville Lombard Theological School is an independent, accredited, graduate theological seminary, offering the degrees of Master of Divinity, Master of Arts (Religion), and Doctor of Ministry.

We are affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association and are in cooperative relationship with the members of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools.

History



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History In 1882, at the age of thirty-two, Marion Murdock entered Meadville Theological Seminary in western Pennsylvania. She had been preparing for ministry since she was eight years old. She attended school followed by several years teaching and participating in Unitarian summer institutes until she felt ready to pursue ministry. Marion was not the first woman to take classes at the small Unitarian seminary in Pennsylvania. But Marion would be the first woman to graduate from the school, earning a Bachelor of Divinity in 1885. A wave of women followed her, including Florence Buck, who would become Marion’s co-minister and life partner. Florence was the first woman to receive an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Meadville. When Marion arrived at Meadville, the school had moved far beyond its humble origins in the basement of a house with one professor to a multi-building campus. As early as 1827, American Unitarians dreamed of establishing a seminary in the West to serve the needs of newly minted congregations. Early attempts to start a school in burgeoning western cities had failed. The idea to plant a seminary in the small town of Meadville, Pennsylvania, emerged out of a network of relationships among Unitarian lay leaders and ministers and the support of a vice president of the American Unitarian Association, Harm Jan Huidekoper. An immigrant from Holland, Harm Jan Huidekoper arrived in Meadville in 1805 as an agent of the Holland Land Company. The company had acquired millions of acres through a series of treaties that had defrauded Native American tribes of their land, which was then sold for a profit and colonialized by settlers. Harm moved from managing the land to purchasing remaining parcels from the Holland Land Company—his real estate speculation and investments made him a wealthy man. After converting to Unitarianism, Harm gathered a Unitarian church in Meadville in 1829 and hired Unitarian tutors from Harvard to tutor his five children and minister to the congregation. Leaders of the Christian Connection, a type of Unitarian Baptists, were also interested in starting a seminary and committed to joining the Unitarians in their endeavor. While the Christian Connection offered little financial support, several elders of the movement served on the board, and—more importantly—they sent students. Faculty member David Millard was the sole Christian Connection professor. For the first decade of Meadville’s history, nearly half of every entering class was comprised of Christian Connection students. From the beginning, Meadville Seminary offered an education without doctrinal tests that welcomed a variety of liberal Christians, Universalists, and a large number of international students from the Christian Connection. Starting in 1871, Meadville welcomed African American students from the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and AME Zion; however, it was not until 1906 that the school granted a degree to its first African American graduate and Unitarian, Don Speed Smith Goodloe. Other African American students followed but frequently encountered a lukewarm reception. The large enrollment of international students contributed to the school’s success. Over time, students from Japan and the Brahmō Samaj in India also began attending the school. The Cruft Fellowship allowed Meadville students to study in Europe for a year. The founding of Meadville was a family affair. While Harm donated money, he also doggedly raised an endowment, and served as the school’s first board president until his death in 1854. Four of his children made significant contributions to the success of the school. Siblings Alfred and Elizabeth Huidekoper made regular donations to the school and served on the Board of Trustees for decades. Edgar Huidekoper served as school treasurer for eighteen years and also as superintendent of Divinity Hall. Frederic Huidekoper, a graduate of Harvard and ordained as a minister-at-large, at the urging of friends agreed to serve as the first professor for the new school. In addition, Frederic gifted his impressive collection of theological texts as the school’s first library. Rufus Stebbins. The arrival of Rufus Stebbins provided the school with a president and its second professor. Stebbins felt called to make Meadville the “new school of the prophets.” An abolitionist, Rufus brought additional support to the small part that Harm and the seminary played in Meadville’s Underground Railroad, led by the local leader, Richard Henderson. In 1851, seven years after Meadville’s founding and 609 miles to the west in the small village of Galesburg, Illinois, a group of Universalists felt a need to open a secondary school for their children. Universalists had experienced a “spirit of intolerance” for their beliefs and discovered their children were being taught “creeds they deemed untrue.” By the fall of 1852, Universalist leaders welcomed their first students at the coeducational Illinois Liberal Institute. The Institute shifted to collegiate instruction a few months later. The school’s early momentum was thwarted when the main building burned to the ground in the spring of 1855. A significant donation by Benjamin Lombard Sr. saved the school from closing and the school was renamed Lombard University. The school rebuilt and developed a beautiful campus graced with hundreds of trees. The graduating class of 1868 planted an elm to commemorate their classmates who served and died during the Civil War. Over the years, the elm grew into a towering tree that became known as the “Lombard Elm,” or “Big Ben.”
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M327INT Preaching
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M405INT Topics in
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M411INT Healthy
Boundaries for
Leaders

Under this magnificent tree, generations of students gathered for school rituals and ceremonies.

Lombard University became Lombard College in 1900. Despite a beautiful, tree-lined campus and a variety of programs, the school floundered. By 1915, the student body shrank to thirty students, and school administrators began merger talks with nearby Knox College, but the plan fell apart. By the 1920s, the pattern of scarcity was taking a toll, and the Universalists reached out to the Unitarians for assistance. A large infusion of cash and Unitarian leadership was not enough to keep the doors open; in 1930, Lombard College held its last graduation exercises.

Lombard had opened a divinity department in 1881 to train ministers, explaining that “the pressing need of the West is Missionaries, who will go into our growing cities and towns.” The department expanded and became Ryder Divinity School in 1890 when a prominent minister left a bequest for the school. The divinity school, which welcomed women as students, was moved to Chicago in 1912 to offer more opportunities to students as part of the University of Chicago campus. In partnership with the Hyde Park Universalist congregation, a new building was constructed. Ultimately, the changes did not increase enrollment, and eventually Ryder merged with Meadville.

Meadville Theological Seminary was not immune to the University of Chicago’s pull either. A joint effort between the school’s president, Franklin Southworth; the newly hired Hackley Professor of Sociology and Ethics, Dr. Anna Garlin Spencer; and the Unitarian Layman’s League of Chicago sponsored summer programs for Meadville students that gave them access to the University of Chicago and allowed faculty to create an Institute of Social Service and Social Reform. Later, Meadville’s board shuttered its undergraduate program, sending its students to complete their work at the University of Chicago instead. Over time, the ongoing connections to Chicago grew too strong to ignore, and Meadville’s board voted to move the seminary. The school constructed a new building at 57th and Woodlawn, kitty-corner from the First Unitarian Church of Hyde Park; it was completed in 1930. Other school owned adjacent properties formed the new campus. By 1943, Meadville joined the Federated Faculty of the University of Chicago—an arrangement that lasted until the 1960s. Other dynamic programs followed, including the Modified Residency Program, the development of the Sankofa and Angus MacLean Religious Education archives, and more recently the establishment of special collections for women, humanists, Latinx, and global UU and U/U.

The innovation and creativity that marked much of Meadville Lombard’s history continued in 2011 when the school recreated itself. Leaving behind the residential seminary model, the school sold its buildings in Hyde Park and moved to the LEED-certified Spertus building in Chicago’s South Loop. In conjunction with the move, the faculty developed a new low-residency model rooted in contextual learning for the formation of resilient religious leaders capable of leading change in multiracial, multiethnic, and multifaith settings. The school also revitalized The Fahs Center by creating The Fahs Collaborative as an experiential laboratory for faith formation leadership, programming, and the creation of groundbreaking curricula such as the powerful Beloved Conversations: Meditations on Race and Ethnicity. The school’s changes drew the largest entering classes to Meadville Lombard in its history.

Over the last ten years, Meadville Lombard has continued its pace of innovation by introducing new degree programs, expanding its global education initiatives, committing to dismantling white supremacy, and widening our reach to students in diverse communities. Meadville Lombard also moved to a new location in the heart of Chicago’s Loop and expanded accessibility with online course offerings. These shifts have enabled the school to prepare agile leaders capable of responding deliberatively and creatively to theological, generational, cultural, environmental, and political trends that impact religious life, and in particular, challenges to racial and gender inclusion and equity, immigration, sexual orientation, and global consciousness. The good work continues.

M500 Advanced
Methods in
Leadership and
Ministry

M505 Spirituality for
Social Change

M520 Social Justice
Leadership

M461 Performance,
Ritual, and Religious
Leadership

Ethics and Theology

TE420 Introduction to
Ethics: Themes and
Topics

TS442INT
Constructive
Theology

T/E432 Global
Religions

T510 Political
Theology and Social
Ethics

T515 Theories of
Liberation

M361 Introduction to
Buddhist Traditions

TE 454 Structural
Grief and Political
Theology

TE 455 Apertures of
Loss: Grief as a
Spiritual and Political
Emotion

TS564 Queer
Theology

Capstone/Research Courses

M491A MAR
Capstone A

M491B MAR
Capstone B

R525 Research
Methods and Ethics

Why Meadville Lombard?

Our Mission

Carrying the Living Tradition of Unitarian Universalism, Meadville Lombard Theological School nurtures learners from diverse faith traditions to embody the collaborative work of liberation through congregational and community leadership.

Our Responsibility

Meadville Lombard Theological School takes seriously our responsibility to ground our students in the knowledge, experience, and tools they will need to promote change in a world in need of the hard work and determination of progressive religious leaders.

Our Students

Our students seek to enter the ministry through our Master of Divinity degree program, deepen their understanding of liberal religion through our Master of Arts (Religion) degree program, or to build professional expertise through our Doctor of Ministry program. Our students are active in congregational life before and during their course of study at Meadville Lombard and are entrepreneurial regarding their own educational needs for the work they will do during and after their course of study is complete. Our students come from around the country and around the globe and bring their understanding of local and global religious life to their work in the classroom and in their ministries.

Our Faculty

Key to our progressive education is having the faculty that will best challenge students academically while mentoring them in the theory and practice of liberal religion. Our faculty includes Unitarian Universalist ministers with years of practical experience as well as world-class scholars in liberal theology and contextual education.

Our Curriculum

The Meadville Lombard Contextual Learning Model was developed by our faculty to provide students with the grounding they will need to embrace the multicultural present while preparing them to lead vibrant congregations and other organizations in a multicultural, multiracial world.

We created a curriculum that requires our students to interact in multicultural and interreligious settings to gain experience, context and ideas for creating congregational life that celebrates the joy and beauty of diverse expressions of thought and belief of Unitarian Universalism in the 21st century.

The Meadville Lombard Contextual Learning Model is a low-residency learning format that provides students with the connection of community and collegiality even while they spend most of their time in seminary at distant locations. Meadville Lombard students travel to Chicago for week-long intensive periods of study at the beginning of each Fall and Spring term. Following the on-campus intensives, students engage in reading and discussion via asynchronous discussion boards and synchronous video meetings.

When not in Chicago, students stay connected to each other and to the faculty through our electronic classroom, by phone and by email. Our students create community across the continent and globe through social networking sites and an electronic chat list.

Students in our Master of Divinity program are also enrolled in our Signature Courses—year-long courses dependent on site work in community and congregational settings. While enrolled in these courses, students are involved in weekly work that requires reflection and contact with other students in the class, with the faculty, and with their Supervising Pastors.

Our Consortium

Meadville Lombard is part of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS) which includes twelve other schools, most of which offer online courses as well as courses meeting in person in Chicago. Students can avail themselves of the course offerings of these schools by cross-registering through Meadville Lombard.

Affiliations

R540 Leadership and Ministry Research Colloquy
R600 Supervised Thesis Research I
R601 Supervised Thesis Research II

History

H374INT History of Global Christianity
H394INT Unitarian Universalist History and Polity
H415 Call of the Wild: Nature and American Religion
H422 Race & Religion in America
H410 Pilgrimage: Place, Power, and Meaning Making

Pastoral Ministry

M483INT Introduction to Pastoral Ministry
M330 Ministry in Times of Crisis
M487 Introduction to Chaplaincy
M350 Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)
M435 Chaplains at Work: Navigating Organizations

Faith Formation (Religious Education)

M416 Ministry and Leadership with Young Adults
M465INT Faith Formation in a Changing World
M468 "They Not Like Us": Stories of

Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS) Meadville Lombard joined with other theological schools in Chicago to create the Association of Chicago Theological Schools and its offshoot, the Hyde Park Cluster of Theological Schools, in 1984. The cluster includes Catholic Theological Union, Chicago Theological Seminary (United Church of Christ), McCormick Theological Seminary (Presbyterian), and Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. ACTS membership allows Meadville Lombard students access to more than 300 faculty members, 1,000 courses, and excellent libraries in the Chicagoland area and suburbs.
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National and International Affiliations Meadville Lombard is one of two Unitarian Universalist theological schools in North America with strong affiliations with the Unitarian Universalist Association, its Department of Ministries and Faith Development, and the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee. Meadville Lombard also has been an institutional member of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) for many decades. Historically, many students, alumni/ae, and faculty have served on the IARF/US chapter board. A pre-World War II tradition is continued by a scholarship fund that enables theological students or ministers chosen by the Unitarian churches in Hungary and Romania to study at the school. Meadville Lombard now has a "partner school" relationship with the Protestant Theological Institute in Koloszvar, Transylvania (Romania). In recent years, students belonging to the Brahmo Samaj (India), Rissho Kosei-Kai (Japanese Buddhist), Konko-kyo (Japanese Shinto), and the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines have come to study at the school.

NC-SARA and IBHE National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) Meadville Lombard Theological School has been approved to participate in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. For more information, visit https://nc-sara.org/. Student complaints Meadville Lombard Theological School takes student complaints seriously. Policies related to specific kinds of complaints can be found in the Student Handbook sections relating to Harassment, Student Records and FERPA, Non-Academic Student Discipline, Grievance against Faculty or Staff, and the Whistleblower Policy. Types of complaints not addressed in the Student Handbook may be made by contacting the President of the School, the Vice President of Finance and Administration, or the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, or via the Complaint Form on Populi. Students should bring complaints to Meadville Lombard Theological School directly and only address concerns via a formal complaint to IBHE after following the MLTS procedure. Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Meadville Lombard is authorized to operate in Illinois by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Any complaints can be registered with IBHE at their complaint link below. Students should bring complaints to Meadville Lombard Theological School directly first (see above) and only address concerns via a formal complaint to IBHE after following the MLTS procedure. Register complaints	
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Library and Archives

Resistance and
Re(Formation) in
Religious Education

Sacred Texts

BS425INT New
Testament

BS426INT Hebrew
Scriptures

Signature Courses

M340A: Ministry in
Context 1

M340B - Ministry in
Context 2

M346 Grounding:
Theology and Social
Praxis

M347 Vocational
Studies 1: Formation

M348 Vocational
Studies 2:
Communities

M354A Internship 1

M354B Internship 2

M354C Internship 3

M354D Internship 4

M428 Leadership
Studies 1: Formation

M429 Leadership
Studies 2:
Administration

Faculty

Elías Ortega | President
and Professor of
Religion, Ethics, and
Leadership

Pamela Lightsey | Vice
President for Academic
and Student Affairs and
Associate Professor of
Constructive Theology

Michael Hogue |
Professor of Theology

Library and Archives

For over 175 years, the mission of the Library and Archives at Meadville Lombard Theological School has been to acquire and provide access to information resources that document the history, theology, culture, and people of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism specifically and religion more broadly. We continue this work by serving not only our students and faculty, but all the communities with which we are in relationship. Understanding that the task of information services is fundamentally a work for justice, we strive to create resources and services that provide our patrons the information and tools for self-reflection and exploration of the world and how they relate to it, that inspire and promote individual and societal change.

The Library and Archives at Meadville Lombard Theological School specifically serves the mission of the school by supporting students and faculty in their teaching, learning, and research through providing both physical and digital access to current, useful, and relevant information resources and services.

LIGHT: Lifelong Learning

LIGHT in Service to the World

The Leadership Institute for Growth, Healing, and Transformation (LIGHT) at Meadville Lombard Theological School equips values-driven individuals as well as ordained and lay progressive religious leaders with the skills for personal and social transformation.

Rooted in our heritage as Unitarian Universalists, the Institute:

- Centers personal and communal growth and healing, supports the dismantling of oppressive systems, and the transformation of society, and enriches theological imagination through non-degree bearing lifelong learning, including certificates, short courses, trainings, and workshops on a broad range of topics.
- Equips lay and ordained religious leaders with the practical know-how and know-what for life-giving ministry.
- Designs transformative educational experiences for vocational and spiritual growth using a lens of justice, inclusion, and belonging.
- Builds a strong community of lifelong learners who share the same commitments

LIGHT continuing education programming is available to Meadville Lombard current students and alums, and will be listed on a separate LIGHT transcript. LIGHT programming is not credit-bearing coursework.

Degree Programs

Overview

Meadville Lombard offers three degree programs:

The Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree program prepares students for professional ministry and adheres to the standards set forth by the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

The Master of Arts (Religion) (MAR) degree program is appropriate for students preparing for doctoral studies in religion, those seeking a grounding in religious studies to support vocational work in education, community organizing, social justice activism, or interreligious engagement, and those interested in religious studies for personal enrichment.

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) is an advanced professional degree that deepens students’ religious leadership in traditional and non-traditional ministry settings, including congregational ministry, social justice and entrepreneurial ministries, and teaching roles.

Master of Divinity

The Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree curriculum is designed to challenge and support students in an on-going process of developing their individual and unique gifts for service in the liberal religious community. It provides a foundation of basic preparation for ministry centered in the following learning outcomes:

Kathryn House |
Assistant Professor of
Leadership Studies and
Practical Theology,
Chair of the Rev. Dr. Lee
Barker Professorship of
Leadership Studies

Nicole Kirk | Associate
Professor, Rev. Dr. J.
Frank and Alice
Schulman Chair in
Unitarian Universalist
History

Karen Mosby | Angus
MacLean Assistant
Professor of Religious
Education

Kate Lassiter | Affiliate
Faculty, Senior Director
of Lifelong Learning

J. Taylor | Affiliate
Faculty, Senior Director
of Contextual Ministry

Professor Emeriti

Lee Barker |
Professor Emeritus

J. Ronald Engel |
Professor Emeritus

Staff

Staff

MDiv Outcomes

- Liberal Religious Tradition:** Critical and deep understanding of the histories of liberal religion, including Christian history and theology, as part of the larger human religious story.
- Excellence in ministerial practices:** The ability to demonstrate a significant understanding of, and progress in, the basic arts and skills of ministry. This includes leadership and administrative skills, worship leadership, religious education, preaching, pastoral care, and prophetic ministry in the larger community.
- Critical Thinking:** The ability and inclination to engage ideas, situations, texts, and contexts and to develop arguments with the lens of critical thinking, interpretation, and reflection.
- Moral Grounding:** A deep, moral engagement with persons and the world, celebrating its rich diversity, and confronting its problems of oppression, injustice, poverty, and environmental degradation.
- Spiritual and Personal readiness:** Personal self-awareness, resilience, humor, good judgment, spiritual depth, ethical and moral integrity, a well-tested seriousness of intent, and the ability to balance personal needs with the needs of ministry.
- Interfaith and Intercultural Orientation:** Ability to connect across religious and cultural difference and a broad understanding of global religions and faith traditions.

Curriculum

- The MDiv degree program consists of 90 units anchored by and organized around our Signature Courses: Grounding and Ministry in Context (Year 1), Vocational Studies (Year 2), and Leadership Studies (Year 3). The Signature Courses are multi-unit, interdisciplinary courses that integrate practical field work and seminar learning. In addition to the Signature Courses, students meet their total unit requirements by taking 1 unit of CPE, for which they are awarded 6 academic credits, and a combination of additional required courses and electives.
- Full-time students can plan on completing the MDiv degree in three years.
- As many as twenty-seven (27) credits may be transferred in from prior graduate work. Students must petition the faculty for transfer credit. Once students matriculate, they may take up to 9 credits outside of Meadville Lombard—at the University of Chicago or another accredited graduate institution. Online or residential classes taken at any of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools member schools are not considered transfer courses.

MDiv Program - Rooted and Flexible Options

- During the Ministry in Context course taken in an MDiv student's first academic year, the student will discern what path they will take for their Internship. Students can select the **Rooted** path or the **Flexible** path.
- The **Rooted Path** follows our traditional MDiv curriculum, which is designed to meet Unitarian Universalist ministerial credentialing requirements and is in line with the best practices for ministerial preparation as determined by the MLTS faculty. Students on the rooted path complete a 2-year 1000 hour Internship alongside Vocational Studies and Leadership Studies.
- The **Flexible Path** is designed to provide greater flexibility for students who do not need to meet Unitarian Universalist credentialing requirements and/or for whom a 2-year Internship would be a hardship. This path lets students elect to complete a 1000-hour internship in one year alongside Vocational Studies or to complete a 500-hour Internship in one year alongside Vocational Studies, supplementing the remaining credits from the 1000-hour Internship with electives or with a second Internship, or a combination of both. Students on the Flexible Path still complete Leadership Studies following Vocational Studies.

MDiv Degree Requirements - Rooted Path

Required Courses	Credits	Signature Courses	Credits
Introduction to Pastoral Ministry	3	Ministry in Context 1 & 2 (Fall and Spring)	3
Constructive Theology	3	Grounding: Theology and Social Praxis	3
Topics in Worship and Liturgy	3	Vocational Studies 1: Formation	3
Preaching as if You Mean It	3	Vocational Studies 2: Communities	3
Faith Formation in a Changing World	3	Year 2 Internship (year-long)	6
Global Religions	3	Leadership Studies 1: Formation	3
Hebrew Scriptures	3	Leadership Studies 2: Administration	3
New Testament	3	Year 3 Internship (year-long)	6
Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Ministry	3	Total	30
Introduction to Ethics: Themes & Topics	3	Clinical Pastoral Education	6
History of Global Christianity	3	Electives (7 courses)*	21
Total Credits	33		
Total Credits			90

*Students seeking UUA fellowship must also take UU History and Polity and Tools for Parish and Nonprofit Administration.



MDiv Degree Requirements - Flexible Path			
Required Courses	Credits	Signature Courses	Credits
Introduction to Pastoral Ministry	3	Ministry in Context 1 & 2 (Fall & Spring)	3
Constructive Theology	3	Grounding: Theology and Social Praxis	3
Topics in Worship and Liturgy	3	Vocational Studies 1: Formation	3
Preaching as if You Mean It	3	Vocational Studies 2: Communities	3
Faith Formation in a Changing World	3	Internship (Fall & Spring)	6 or 12
Global Religions	3	Leadership Studies 1: Formation	3
Hebrew Scriptures	3	Leadership Studies 2: Administration	3
New Testament	3	Year 3 Internship (year-long)	6
Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Ministry	3	Total	24 or 30
Introduction to Ethics: Themes & Topics	3	Additional Flexible Internship OR Two Elective courses OR Combination	6 or 0
History of Global Christianity	3	Clinical Pastoral Education	6
Total Credits	33	Electives (7 courses)*	21
Total Credits			90



Signature Courses

At the center of the Meadville Lombard Contextual Learning Model are the experiential Signature Courses, designed to give students an opportunity to integrate their learning as they process the work that they are required to do in site placements in community and congregational settings.

Each week students meet in assigned small groups (usually by telephone or video conference) to address a question posed by the faculty and work together to create a reflection paper. The whole class also meets by conference call four times per semester and gathers during the Ingathering. As one of our students noted, the course is designed so that no piece of the learning can be done without the other—the site work informs the group reflections which then further inform how the students respond in their site work. Students throughout the country are able to maintain a learning cohort through the weekly small group meetings, as well as through the large group virtual meetings.

Students take the courses in the following sequence, building on their learning from year to year:

Year 1, Fall and Spring - Ministry in Context (Total 3 credits, 1.5 credits in Fall and 1.5 credits in Spring)

This course sets the trajectory for each MDiv student as they navigate their journey of academic, spiritual, and ministerial formation. In Ministry In Context 1, students will research and demonstrate understanding of Meadville's degree requirements and their denominational credentialing requirements. They will learn the process of applying for Clinical Pastoral Education units and internships, and begin drafting their MLTS Personalized Learning Plan. In Ministry in Context 2, students will complete their Personalized Learning Plans and be ready to move on to complete Clinical Pastoral Education and an Internship.

Year 1, Fall – Grounding: Theology and Social Praxis

This course launches students into the lifelong formational work of integrating intercultural and theological learning. The course will introduce students to basic theological literacy and a program of intercultural learning in order to help them to examine the relationship between their cultural and religious identities. MDiv students will be required to complete an average of four hours per week of volunteer work at an approved community site, while MALS students will be expected to reflect on their internship experience.

Year 2, Fall and Spring – Vocational Studies

This course is linked with an approved congregational or community internship. The focus of this course is on the formation of ministerial identity in the Fall, and on the work of ministry in diverse communal and congregational settings in the Spring. The internship site serves as a place for structured engagement and reflection on a range of topics and moves students more deeply into praxis. Students explore the roles and responsibilities of ministry including the intersections of personal, cultural, and professional identities, emotional literacy, professional boundaries, the influence of shifting trends and demographics on religious leadership, the impact of context on leadership, and public speaking, among others.

Year 3, Fall and Spring – Leadership Studies

This course is linked with an approved congregational or community internship for students on the Rooted Program and some students on the Flexible Path. The course builds on forms of awareness of congregational/organizational systems gained during the first year of the internship and provides space for making meaning of the skills and dispositions needed for a career of leading people and organizations. Through the use of case studies and engagement with visionary religious leaders, students will explore personal leadership capacities, challenges and rewards of leadership styles, including exploration of the intersection of personal and professional act of leadership. In the tradition of appreciative inquiry, the student will also try on leadership skills and dispositions that serve organizational needs and self-identified areas for growth. Topics covered include but will not be limited to the following: leadership in times of crisis, effective communication, team management, financial sustainability, strategic planning for social change, leadership through times of organizational change, and the spirituality of leadership among others.



Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

In addition to the signature courses, MDiv students are required to complete one basic unit of

clinical pastoral education in a program certified by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) or the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP). CPE programs are usually held in hospitals, but they also take place in mental health facilities, correctional institutions, nursing homes, and more. Full-time students should plan to complete CPE during the summer between their first and second years in the MDiv degree program. This requires the ability for the student to devote full-time work to the placement setting for approximately twelve weeks during the summer.

Part-time students may complete the requirement over the course of a year but should plan to do so in a year when they are not also enrolled in a Signature Course.

Additional fees will be levied by the CPE site associated with this requirement. The Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will assist the students in finding such placements.

Concentration - Faith Formation Pedagogy

Faith Formation Pedagogy

The MDiv with a Concentration in Faith Formation Pedagogy prepares students to hold faith formation leadership roles in a congregational and/or community setting, to direct a faith formation curriculum as part of a congregational or community leadership team, or to provide faith formation leadership at a denominational level. Building upon the learning experience and content of the Signature Courses, this concentration develops principles of engaged/transformative pedagogy. In addition, this concentration builds on religious literacy and intercultural competency and in the formational growth and community leaderships skill, in preparing students to lead faith-based organizations into commitments of being socially inclusive, adaptive, and strategic change communities.

To receive a Concentration in Faith Formation Pedagogy, a student must complete three elective courses in the area of faith formation and religious education.



Master of Arts (Religion)

The Master of Arts (Religion) (MAR) degree provides a general foundation in theology, ethics, and religious history, and in-depth study in one or more of those areas. This degree is appropriate for students preparing for doctoral studies in religion, those seeking a grounding in religious studies to support vocational work in education, community organizing, social justice activism, or interreligious engagement, and those interested in religious studies for personal enrichment. The course of study can be completed in 18 months.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop general knowledge and understanding in the areas of liberal religious theology and ethics.
- Develop general knowledge and understanding of Christian religious history and of global religions.
- Develop deeper knowledge and understanding in a specific area or areas of theology, ethics, or religious history.
- Apply knowledge and understanding in theology, ethics, and/or religious history through academic research, critical reflection, and scholarly writing.

MAR Curriculum

The MAR degree program requires 36 completed credits. The program can be completed in 18 months by full-time students but is flexible to accommodate students who plan to study part-time.

Six credits are granted for a thesis or project completed in consultation with a faculty advisor. Students gain a foundation in religious studies by completing four additional required courses in the areas of theology, ethics, leadership, and global religion. All students must elect a concentration in either Religious Education or Theology and Ethics. Students will complete 9 credits in their concentration of choice and another 9 credits of elective coursework. Students may transfer up to 6 credits from another institution. Such transfer credit is subject to approval in compliance with the transfer credit policy.

MAR Degree Requirements	
Core MAR Requirements	12
Healthy Boundaries for Leaders	3
Constructive Theology	3
Global Religions	3
Introduction to Ethics	3
Electives	18
Concentration Electives	9
Free Electives	9
Thesis or Project	6
Total Credits	36



MAR Concentrations

Students must complete one of two concentrations as part of their degree. Students select a concentration at the time of application.

- Religious Education
- Theology and Ethics

Students must complete three elective courses (nine credits) in their selected concentration, and will generally focus their capstone thesis or project in the area of their concentration.

Capstone: Thesis or Project

The Thesis or Project consists of 6 credits. These credits are normally completed in sequence across two semesters. The sequencing of work on the Thesis or Project includes the drafting of a proposal, research, writing, and submission of final documents.

- **The Proposal** consists of a thesis statement, a summary and outline of the thesis or project, a description of research methods, a bibliography, and a work calendar. This document should be no more than 10 pages in length and should be approved by the student's Thesis/Project Advisor *no later than December 1* before the student's anticipated semester of graduation.
- **The Thesis** should be submitted to the Thesis Advisor in a condition ready for approval (final draft) by mid-April of the spring semester of the student's anticipated graduation. The thesis should be approximately 30-40 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt.), with footnotes and a bibliography. The students should refer to the Chicago Manual of Style for proper methods of scholarly documentation. [Penultimate Draft of Thesis Submitted by mid-March.]
- **The Project** is an option for students whose needs and purposes are not best served by a thesis. Students choosing this option might, for example, create Religious Education curricula; write, produce, or direct a theatrical production; or develop and implement a significant community service project. A brief scholarly Commentary (10-20 pp) must also be submitted by students choosing the Project. The Commentary is a brief interpretive paper that situates the Project culturally, pedagogically, and theologically. This paper should be footnoted and include a bibliography. The Project documentation and Commentary must be submitted to the Project Advisor *no later than mid-April* of the spring semester of the student's anticipated graduation. The project should not include research that requires IRB approval (ie, research with human subjects). [Penultimate Draft of Project submitted by mid-March.]

Doctor of Ministry

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) is an advanced professional degree for religious professionals that deepens students' faith leadership in traditional and innovative ministry settings, including congregational ministry, community ministry, social justice and advocacy ministries, entrepreneurial ministries, chaplaincy, and teaching roles. Coursework and reflection on lived leadership experience provide grounding points for the development of doctoral research and a thesis attentive to lived questions of theology and praxis informed by interdisciplinary resources.



DMin Outcomes

- Generate original research to identify challenges in the practice of ministry, develop a coherent and faithful response, and critically reflect on social justice faith leadership.
- Utilize a variety of theological methods and leadership praxes in engagement with diverse faith settings.
- Grow the practice of ministry through contextual analysis of diverse faith settings and community-engaged research and reflection.
- Develop the skills to support continued personal, vocational, and spiritual growth.

DMin Curriculum

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) is a 30-credit hour advanced professional degree that can be completed in three (3) years. It is designed to support and renew the leadership and ministry of religious professionals. Small, tightly woven student cohorts are led by faculty mentors who engage as a community of learners. Students meet once per week for the duration of their program, including their 3rd year of research and writing. The one exception is the elective course in which students choose from a variety of courses offered through Meadville Lombard or the ACTS Consortium in Spring or Summer of their second year. Students take two classes per semester during their first and second years; classes meet synchronously on alternating weeks. Students are required to attend an annual intercohort retreat. Students must hold a Master of Divinity degree or equivalent and have three years of ministerial experience (ordained or lay) prior to application and matriculation.

Students may transfer up to 6 doctoral credits from another institution. Such transfer credit is subject to approval in compliance with the transfer credit policy as published in the Student Handbook.

DMin Degree Requirements

	Credits
Core Requirements	21
Advanced Methods in Leadership & Ministry	3
Spirituality for Social Change	3
Political Theology & Social Ethics	3
Social Justice Leadership	3
Theories of Liberation	3
Research Methods & Ethics	3
Leadership & Ministry Research Colloquy	3
Elective	3
Thesis	6
Supervised Thesis Research I	3
Supervised Thesis Research II	3
Total Credits	30

Research with Human Subjects

Meadville Lombard Doctor of Ministry students may often engage in research with human subjects, particularly as they conduct research for their DMin Thesis Project. DMin students are required to submit an exemption or full proposal to the Institutional Review Board before beginning any research with human subjects. In addition, DMin students applying for IRB approval are required to have completed CITI training regarding history, ethics, and best practices in research with human subjects. Please see DMin Project Proposal and Guidelines for detailed information regarding IRB applications and procedures.

Doctor of Ministry Project Proposal and Project Guidelines

DMin Committee and Director

The DMin Committee provides oversight for the operation of the Doctor of Ministry degree. It serves as the admission committee, reviews and approves project proposals, makes recommendations regarding program policies, monitors student academic progress, and collects program assessment artifacts. The Director of the Doctor of Ministry program convenes the committee. Decisions of the DMin Committee may be appealed to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (VPASA). The DMin Committee meets on 2nd Tuesdays during the Fall and Spring semesters. Students must petition the committee regarding curricular and co-curricular exceptions. Petitions must be received by the Director by 1st Tuesday of the month for consideration.

The Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program collaborates with the VPASA, DMin Committee, and core faculty to design details of the program, initiate and administer all aspects of the program, and serve as the primary academic advisor for DMin students. As detailed in the section "DMin Thesis Project Proposal," each student will identify a first reader in their second year who guides the development of their research. The first reader works alongside the DMin Director to facilitate the development of an achievable DMin project and to supervise the writing of the thesis.

DMin Thesis Project Proposal

The DMin Thesis Project Proposal is supported through the required course, Leadership and Ministry Research Colloquy in the 2nd year of a student's program. While some courses help students to identify the best method to support their research, other courses help students to deepen their understanding of their research question, and still others to be sustained and replenished in the wholistic practice of ministry, Leadership and Ministry Research Colloquy primarily serves as the location where students will synthesize past learning in order to develop a passable and actionable research proposal. Students are required to enroll in Leadership and Ministry Research Colloquy during Spring term of their 2nd year.

By the end of Fall of the second year and prior to Spring of the second year, students will identify a first reader for their project. During Fall, students should draft a project proposal for review by their first reader. By the end of the Spring term, students should submit their project proposal to the DMin Committee for review.



Project Proposal Elements

A writing style accessible to both experts in the field as well as non-specialists in theology, religious studies, and professional religious leadership and ministry is expected. Please avoid jargon and overly technical language. It is expected that submitted proposals will be cogent, effective, and use standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Students should follow the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)* in format and reference. Some students will also find Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Turabian)* helpful. Students should also refer to the formatting guidelines available at <https://library.meadville.edu/thesis> or <https://library.meadville.edu/project>.

Students are required to write a proposal using the "Project Proposal Form." The form is distributed to second year students and guides students through the following questions.

1. **TITLE** – Students should choose a title that accurately reflects the content and scope of their project.
2. **PROBLEM STATEMENT** – Students should (a) identify and contextualize the problem in relationship to their professional religious leadership; (b) use secondary literature to explain the problem and impact; (c) provide any larger relevant histories, theories, and theologies related to the context of the problem. Be sure to speak to the following: What is the importance of this problem? What happens if there is no intervention or leadership on this matter? How does this problem impact you—why does it matter to you—as a faith leader?
3. **LITERATURE AND PRACTICE REVIEW** – Drawing from program studies, students should identify the norm, hope, or theo-ethical mandate that undergirds their proposed project. What is the vision for social justice in your context that guides your project? Use theology, sacred scripture, social scientific, and other relevant literature to support your claim. Who else has wrestled with this problem and how did they go about solving it? What other actors and authors must be in conversation with each other, and how will you do that in the writing of the project?
4. **SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP METHOD, PRAXIS, & ASSESSMENT** – What method will you deploy to answer the question you've posed? What is your hypothesis about what specific social justice leadership praxis—interventions through your call and ministry—will bring about social justice and impact the community that you serve or to whom you commit yourself? What is your scope? What are the intended outcomes? How will you know when the project is successful?
5. **OUTLINE** – Provide a chapter outline of the project.
6. **TIMELINE** – Provide a timeline to project completion, including submission of the final draft of the project to your first reader.
7. **WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY** – Make a list of your resources using Chicago style.
8. **APPENDIX** – Attachments might include an IRB proposal if your project necessitates review of work with human subjects.

Students should be in touch with their first reader as they prepare their project proposal. Students should expect for their project proposal to go through several drafts upon receiving feedback from their first reader.

Your project proposal will be assessed by the DMin committee using the following criteria:

- Does the project proposal articulate a clear statement of the issue in the practice of ministry that is at the center of the project and proposed research?
- Does the project suggest a coherent and responsive theology and praxis to study this issue?
- Does the project have the capacity to critically reflect on the field of faith leadership?
- Does the proposal use and cite significant scholarly and other resources that will support the execution of the project and its analysis?
- Does the proposal articulate a relevant method and hypothesize a leadership praxis that will support the project and faith setting?
- Does the proposal consider social, cultural, institutional, geographic, theological, and socio-economic dimensions of the problem?
- Does the proposal outline how the student will engage the faith setting in research and reflection?
- Does the project proposal demonstrate the student's capacity and disposition for growth for social justice leadership as a personal, vocational, and spiritual endeavor?

Types of Projects and Methodologies

Students are encouraged to consider carefully what type of project they have the capacity to support given context and timeline, faculty expertise, and define their method accordingly. Students might offer a specific intervention, rooted in theoretical analysis, to address a root cause of injustice, hypothesize a theory of change, and implement an intervention and assess its effectiveness; prototype a ministry resource for congregational education and field test it; conduct a mini-ethnographic project, community, or congregational study; or conduct a correlational study and draw out applications and implications related to doing justice as a faith leader. A good DMin project is focused, narrow, and specific to a student's ministry context.

Submission of the Project Proposal

When the student's first reader is satisfied with the proposal, the student should submit their project proposal to the DMin Director by email and copy their first reader. The first reader may send additional written comments to the DMin Committee in support of the project proposal. Submissions and comments must be received no less than ten (10) working days or two weeks before a scheduled DMin Committee meeting.

Project proposals are reviewed by the DMin Committee at committee meetings. The Committee may accept the proposal, accept the proposal with required revisions, or reject the proposal. Students may submit up to two times. Failure to gain proposal acceptance by the second submission or by the end of Fall of a student's 3rd year will result in academic review. All decisions will be communicated to both the student and their faculty project advisor promptly by email.



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is an oversight committee that ensures that any researcher affiliated with the institution treats human subjects in an ethical manner. The IRB at MLTS conducts its business as needed but is heavily weighted to meet in the Spring to support 2nd year DMin students. The IRB consists of five members: the IRB Director, the DMin Director, a core faculty member, at least one other Meadville Lombard faculty or staff member, and one non-MLTS-affiliated scholar. The IRB Chair works closely with the DMin Director to schedule meetings that support the timely progress of students through their studies.

All DMin students will learn about IRBs, but only those students who choose to research human subjects for their DMin Project (as defined by federal regulation 45 C.F.R. 46) will be required to apply for and obtain prior IRB approval for their research. To obtain IRB approval, the student must complete the following before beginning their research:

1. The student must notify their first reader and the DMin Director of their intention to engage in human subjects research before the spring semester of their second year.
2. Such students will then receive information on how to complete the CITI Program's Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) Comprehensive certification course. This is an online course that can take up to five hours to complete. Students must complete this course and submit their completion certificate to the IRB chair (irb@meadville.edu) before or with their IRB proposal.
3. The student must plan out in detail every aspect of their research project as it pertains to their human subjects.
4. The student must complete the IRB research proposal form (available at <https://library.meadville.edu/irb/>) and submit it, along with any other required documents noted in the proposal form (such as subject recruitment scripts, survey questions, interview scripts, etc.) to the IRB chair at irb@meadville.edu. As the IRB Chair may directly contact the student should the proposal be incomplete, students are encouraged to make their submissions as soon as possible but no later than March 1.
5. MLTS's IRB will review all proposals during scheduled committee meetings. Students will then be notified whether their proposals were:
6. Approved: the IRB found the research to be ethical and the student may begin their research at once, although the IRB might include revisions to the research project that the student must agree to follow.
7. Approval pending: the student will be sent detailed instructions of how to provide additional information to the IRB to demonstrate that the research is ethical. The student may not begin their research until they submit this information and get full approval from the IRB.
8. Rejected: the IRB found the research could not be revised to meet ethical standards. The student must not engage in this research.

If a DMin student believes that their human subjects research is exempt from IRB approval (as defined by federal regulation 45 C.F.R. 46), that student must nonetheless submit an IRB exemption form (available at the IRB website) to the IRB Chair at irb@meadville.edu. Students seeking exemptions may not begin their research until they receive written approval from the IRB.

For questions, forms, or further information about the IRB and ethical research of human subjects, please see <https://library.meadville.edu/irb/> or contact the IRB Chair at irb@meadville.edu.



DMin Thesis Project

Overview and Program Structure to Support Project Completion

The writing and successful completion of a DMin project is supported programmatically through Supervised Thesis Research I and II. 3rd year students must register for Supervised Thesis Research I and II. The courses are offered Pass/Fail. These courses are semi-structured with brief check-ins to ensure project progress. Students should plan on writing regularly and working closely with their first reader as they draft their project, submit their project to their first and second reader, and schedule a public oral review. After a successful oral review, students submit their approved project following library guidelines.

Writing the Project and Timelines

The student and first reader will determine the best method for project oversight. Some students and faculty prefer to submit chapter by chapter for accountability, direction, and insight. Others prefer to write the entirety or a significant portion of the project before a preliminary review with their first reader. It is critical that a student make steady writing progress.

Students preparing their projects should consult submission requirements at www.library.meadville.edu/project for formatting matters germane to digital publication. Students are also required to follow the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Generally, projects are 60-75 pages long, double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times New Roman or Calibri. Inclusive footnotes, endnotes, bibliography, and appendices, projects ought not exceed 100 pages.

In a normal year, the complete first final draft of a student's project is due to their first reader by February 1 to qualify for graduation in Spring. The first reader will offer timely feedback for revisions. Students will circulate their completed draft to the second reader by March 10, pending approval by the first reader. First readers will schedule an online public oral review that consists of the DMin student, first, and second reader. First readers will also invite interested MLTS community members (faculty, staff, and students). Public oral reviews must conclude by April 10.

The oral review is open to the public and is typically scheduled for an hour. During the oral review, the student is invited to give a ten-minute opening statement that (a) describes their problem in ministry, (b) offers a brief explanation of how they responded, and (c) its impact on their leadership and ministry. Reviewers will conduct a review of the project and its impact on social justice leadership with the student. Fifteen minutes before the end of the hour, the oral review will formally conclude, and the Review Committee will deliberate upon the project using the DMin Project Assessment Rubric. The student will be asked to remain in a waiting area and will be invited to meet the Review Committee regarding any remaining changes or corrections to the project thesis or abstract. Following deliberations, the first reader will complete the Thesis Approval Sheet, obtain the required signatures, and return to the student for inclusion with the project. First readers will also complete the DMin Project Assessment Rubric and return to the Registrar and DMin Director.

Successfully reviewed projects must be submitted to the Director of the Library, John Dechant (jdechant@meadville.edu) for formatting review by April 15, after which the student and/or the Library will upload the final submission onto Melodic, the Meadville Lombard Digital Commons by May 1. See submission requirements at [Thesis and Project Guide](#).



DMin Continuation Fee

Students who do not meet thesis deadlines (full draft due Feb 1, final draft to second reader by March 10, public presentation by April 10, project to Librarian by April 15, upload final approved thesis by May 1) will need to take one or more terms of DMin Continuation to complete the thesis.

DMin Continuation carries a fee of \$450 per Fall and Spring term. Students will be in Continuation status and will be charged the Continuation fee each Fall and Spring term until they have successfully presented and submitted their thesis. Students who will not be working on their thesis in a given semester may request a Leave of Absence using the Leave of Absence form (<https://www.meadville.edu/current-students/student-forms/>). The Leave of Absence carries a \$75 fee per Fall and Spring term.

Students in Continuation status who cannot register for a subsequent term due to an outstanding balance will be placed in Inactive status and will lose library access. Students who have been inactive for over one year will be considered by the faculty to have withdrawn from their academic program.

Degree Admission Requirements

The Master of Divinity and Master of Arts (Religion) programs require a bachelor’s degree or equivalent. A limited number of students may be accepted without a bachelor’s degree upon review of the faculty for academic preparedness.

Students who are admitted without an undergraduate degree are done so provisionally and are subject to review following their first semester of study.

The Doctor of Ministry program requires a Master’s degree or equivalent and three years of ministerial experience (ordained or lay) prior to application and matriculation.

Background Check

All applicants are subject to a criminal background check.

Non-Degree Programs

Introduction

Meadville Lombard offers multiple ways to pursue theological education without matriculating to a degree program:

The **Certificate** program allows students with a prior bachelor's degree to pursue graduate level coursework for personal or professional development without seeking an academic degree, with the recognition of this work culminate in a graduate certificate.

Student at Large status allows students to apply to take a single course for graduate credit or as an auditor.

Continuing Education is available through the Leadership Institute for Growth, Healing, and Transformation (LIGHT). LIGHT programming is not reflected or included in this Academic Catalog. See LIGHT materials for more information.



Certificate Program

Overview

The Certificate in Theological Studies offers students the opportunity to complete graduate theological coursework in a seminary setting but outside the context of a degree program. In the certificate program, students can select their own coursework based on their interests and vocational or avocational goals. This program is appropriate for laypeople or others seeking theological education, or those who want to build on prior theological study.

To receive a Certificate in Theological Studies, students must complete 12 credits and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5. This program can be completed in a single semester or spread across multiple terms, and is appropriate for those students who plan to take a single course each term. Students are expected to meet standards of academic and non-academic conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook.

To complete the Certificate, a student can choose to do a concentration, or they can select any four courses (12 credits) for a general Certificate without a concentration.

Concentrations are available in the following areas:

- Theology
 - Required – Constructive Theology
 - Two courses in Theology or Ethics
 - One elective
- History
 - Required – History of Global Christianity
 - Two courses in History
 - One elective
- Faith Formation
 - Required – Pedagogy for Social Change: Method is the Message
 - Two courses in Faith Formation
 - One elective
- Pastoral Care
 - Required – Introduction to Pastoral Ministry
 - Required – Healthy Boundaries for Leaders
 - One course in Pastoral Ministry
 - One elective



Student at Large

Overview

Students may apply to take a single course either for credit or as an auditor as a Student at Large. Student at Large admission is for one term only, and students who seek to take courses in an additional term must apply again. Courses taken as a Student at Large for academic credit may be applied to a Meadville Lombard degree program if the student later applies to and matriculates in a degree program.

Non-Degree Admission Requirements

Non-Degree Admission

Certificate Students must complete an admission application and provide one letter of reference.

Students at Large must complete a brief admission application describing why they seek to take a specific course.

Non-degree students must be prepared for graduate theological study, but are not required to have completed a bachelor's degree.

Tuition and Fees (2026-27)

Typically, one course equals three units of credit, unless noted otherwise. A full course of study averages out to ten academic courses or thirty (30) units of credit per year. Students may meet this full-time equivalent through intensive courses, through semester-based courses, or, more likely, through a combination of the two.

Master of Divinity, Master of Arts (Religion), Doctor of Ministry, and Certificate Programs

Tuition

Tuition for students in degree programs or the Certificate program is **\$1026 per credit unit**. We offer generous tuition reduction programs to students matriculated into our masters degree programs.

Fees

Matriculation Fee	\$100.00 (one-time fee for new students)
Comprehensive Fee	\$75.00 per semester
Student Activity Fee	\$35.00 per semester
Registration Fee	\$75.00 per course per semester
Leave of Absence/Continuing Enrollment Fee	\$75.00 per semester
CPE Registration Fee	\$150.00
Graduation Fee	\$185.00

Students are expected to maintain health insurance that meets the requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

Student at Large

Students who have applied to take a single course at Meadville Lombard without matriculating into a degree or certificate program are considered "students at large." These are students considering application to a Meadville program but who would like to try a class at first; people not interested in obtaining a degree at all but who are interested in the content; and students from another seminary who will be seeking credit toward their degrees in another program. These students still need to register as students at large and the tuition they pay depends upon whether they are taking the course for credit or are auditing it. Students at large can expect the following:

Tuition

\$1026.00 per credit unit

Fees

Application Fee	\$50.00
Registration Fee	\$75.00 per course
Technology Fee	\$100.00 per term
Audit Fee	\$275 per course

Please note: Auditors will pay the audit fee, the application fee, the registration fee, and the technology fee for a total cost of \$500 per course.

Net Price Calculator

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with a member of the Student Affairs Office to discuss their academic plans. As part of that conversation, on our website, we provide a Net Price Calculator as a resource for students to estimate their tuition and fees given their specific academic plans. For more information please visit the Net Price Calculator.



Refund Policies

The Registration Periods for the Fall, Spring, and Summer Semesters are designated on [the Academic Calendar](#), as published on our website each academic year. Students will receive a full refund of tuition and fees for courses dropped prior to the Drop/Add deadline. After the Drop/Add deadline, a refund will only be granted in cases of a medical or personal emergency, subject to approval by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

Students must contact the Registrar to withdraw from a course after the Drop/Add deadline. The student will complete a Course Withdrawal Form (see Student Handbook) and submit this to their Academic Advisor. If the course change results in a tuition/fee adjustment, the adjustment will be made at that time. Withdrawal from a course or courses after the drop/add deadline may impact a student's financial aid eligibility. For more information about withdrawal and financial aid, see Section 4 of the Student Handbook.

Financial Aid

Students enrolled in degree programs at Meadville Lombard Theological School may be eligible for financial aid through Federal Student Aid (FSA) and/or institutional aid (including scholarships and tuition reduction awards).

Our full Financial Aid Policies can be found in our Student Handbook, available on our website at <https://meadville.edu/student-alum-resources/handbook-policies/>

All Financial Aid forms can be found on our website at <https://meadville.edu/admission-financial-aid/financial-aid/>.

Veteran Benefits

Meadville Lombard participates the GI Bill® and other education benefits available through the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

VA students can direct all questions regarding veteran benefits to the School Certifying Official (SCO). Elena Jimenez, the Registrar, is the SCO for Meadville Lombard.

VA students can submit applications online at <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/>. If students don't have access to apply online, they can call 1-888-442-4551 and ask that an application be mailed to them.

All VA students must file an application when they first start school before they can receive benefits. Students who have never received VA benefits must file an original application. More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

As of October 16, 2012, "GI Bill" is a federally registered trademark owned by VA.

VA Pending Payment Compliance

In accordance with Title 38 US Code 3679(c), Meadville Lombard Theological School (MLTS) adopts the following additional provisions for any students using U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Post-9/11 G.I. Bill® (Ch.33) or Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (Ch. 31) benefits, while payment to the institution is pending from VA.

MLTS will not:

- Prevent the student's enrollment.
- Assess a late penalty fee to the student.
- Require the student to secure alternative or additional funding.
- Deny the student access to any resource (access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities) available to other students who have satisfied their tuition and fee bills to the institution.

However, to qualify for this provision, students may be required to:

- Produce the VA Certification of Eligibility (COE) by the first day of class.
- Provide a written request to be certified.
- Provide additional information needed to properly certify the enrollment as described in other institutional policies.



Course Descriptions

Course Descriptions
• Arts and Ministry • Ethics and Theology • Capstone/Research Courses • History • Pastoral Ministry • Faith Formation (Religious Education) • Sacred Texts • Signature Courses

Arts & Ministry

M301INT Tools for Parish and Nonprofit Administration
<i>Staff (3 credits)</i> Regardless of the context in which they serve, whether in parish or community settings, religious professionals are expected to "do it all." Along with the call to provide moral, ethical, and pastoral leadership, we are also asked to meet the demand to manage and administer the organizations that we lead. Indeed, an Auburn Center study of new parish ministers found that they felt underprepared to meet the complex management skills of a congregation. Leaders of secular nonprofits are similarly rarely chosen primarily for their administrative skills. And yet, whether one is ordained as a minister or leads as a trained layperson, these are the skills that are necessary for the fulfillment of an organization's mission and vision. Practical skills covered in the course include volunteer recruitment and supervision, personnel hiring and supervision, financial administration and budget preparation, building and property needs, culture changes, conflict negotiation through a pastoral lens and working with lay leaders. Because it is a key factor in determining the success of religious leadership, a significant portion of the course will be devoted to the theories and practices of fundraising in a faith-based context. The course will allow students to consider administrative practices as a means for dismantling white supremacy culture. <i>Required of MDiv students seeking UU ministerial fellowship.</i> Spring Semester Course



M327INT Preaching as if You Mean It
<i>Hergert (3 credits)</i> A great Harvard professor of homiletics once said that all ministers must face the hard question, "How far would you go to hear yourself preach?" If the answer is to be "A long way," then the sermons we preach will need to be both worthy in their content and felicitous in their style. This intensive course will address both elements of preaching. It will help students clarify what fundamental message they want to preach and how to do so most effectively. <i>MDiv required course.</i> Fall Semester Course

M405INT Topics in Worship and Liturgy

Staff (3 credits)

This course will provide a framework for creating worship in a culture that is becoming more diverse and where organized religion is losing adherence. Students will consider how to create worship that is memorable, meaningful, and multi-cultural. This is a hands-on course.

MDiv required course.

Spring Semester Course

M411INT Healthy Boundaries for Leaders

House or Mosby (3 credits)

Healthy boundaries are key to healthy and ethical leadership. They are meant to create a safer and more liberative space within which we can freely lead. This course will prepare you to develop and articulate your professional ethic of ministry and/or leadership. We will cover the importance of boundaries, pastoral authority and power dynamics, sexual health and ethics, harassment and abuse prevention, and self-care.

MDiv and MAR required course.

Fall Semester Course

M500 Advanced Methods in Leadership and Ministry

Lassiter (3 credits)

This course introduces students to advanced methods in leadership and ministry. Students will engage practical theology, practices of ministry, theological and sacred writings, and resources from cognate disciplines to bear on contemporary challenges in leadership and ministry. A particular emphasis is placed on writing and peer-to-peer review, theological reflection, and critical engagement. Course is limited to first-year DMin students.

Fall Semester Course

M505 Spirituality for Social Change

Mosby (3 credits)

What sources of inspiration, grounding, challenge, sparking, mending, and renewing inform our work in this contemporary moment of so many pressing urgencies? What spiritual practices do we need to enliven imagination, hone discernment, strengthen collaborations, orient activism, nourish physical and social bodies, deepen understandings of callings, sustain spirit, and encourage those who come after us? What frameworks of attention, action, and reflection equip leaders to pursue social change with courage, conviction, and curiosity?

This course focuses on the human and spiritual development of faith leaders for social change. Students will develop a practice of personal spirituality and learn how to work through personal and professional challenges to effect social change leadership in faith contexts.

DMin required course.

Fall Semester 2025, 2027



M520 Social Justice Leadership

House (3 credits)

This course focuses on theory and practice of social justice leadership attentive to the history of movement. Students will explore diverse contexts at the intersection of faith and social justice leadership, develop beginning proficiency in methods of social change such as emergent strategy, faith-based organizing, asset-based community development, and network theory, discern the role of media in effecting social change, and develop a richer understanding and personal grounding about the physical and spiritual resources needed to sustain social justice leaders, including themselves.

DMin required course.

Spring Semester 2027, 2029

M461 Performance, Ritual, and Religious Leadership

Robersmith (3 credits)

In this course, you'll explore theory, theology, and practice of public religious leadership, from worship to activism, rites of passage to organizational meetings. Through readings, videos, discussion, and self-tapes, we'll engage performance and ritual skills to prepare you for the variety of leadership roles you may take on in your ministry. At the end of the course, you will have greater understanding of performance skills and ritual practice, as well as deeper knowledge of your own style of public religious leadership.

Summer 2026

Ethics and Theology

TE420 Introduction to Ethics: Themes and Topics

House (3 credits)

This course serves as an introduction to ethics by examining key foundational ethical frameworks, discerning guideposts for ethical leadership, and thinking ethically about contemporary dilemmas in our current collective moment. Our conversations will cover a range of topics, including histories, sources, and norms in ethical traditions; the role of ethics for leaders; ethics in the context of interpersonal and communal relationships; ethical approaches to technology; and intersections of ethics and theology. Special attention will be given to exploring such ethical issues and their implications for ministry contexts.

MDiv and MAR required course.

Spring Semester course

TS442INT Constructive Theology

Hogue (3 credits)

This required course in theology introduces students to an interdisciplinary and engaged way of doing theology that integrates aspects of liberal and liberationist theological traditions, attempts to bridge modern and postmodern philosophical sensibilities, and privileges orthopraxy over orthodoxy.

MDiv and MAR required course.

Fall Semester course



T/E432 Global Religions

Dechant (3 credits)

This course is oriented around the idea that it is a civic responsibility and a professional duty for cultural and religious leaders to a) gain basic knowledge of diverse religious traditions, b) cultivate a theoretic religious imagination, and c) develop interreligious sensibilities and skills. The course assignments, readings, lectures, and discussions allow students to learn basic knowledge of several religious traditions, acquaint them with different theories of religion, and launch them into the lifelong work of developing interreligious leadership skills.

MDiv and MAR required course.

Spring Semester course

T510 Political Theology and Social Ethics

Hogue (3 credits)

This course explores diverse ways that theological, social, and political thought influence one another. Attention will be given in general to the mutual refractions of theopolitical and social ethical discourses in relation to questions of power, justice, and the shaping of common life.

DMin required course.

Fall Semester 2026, 2028

T515 Theories of Liberation

House (3 credits)

This course explores theories and theologies of liberation and practices from a wide diversity of contexts. We will investigate understandings of liberation and freedom as they orient individuals, inform movements, and guide institutional and organizational bodies.

DMin required course. Permission of instructor required for non-doctoral students.

Spring Semester 2026, 2028

M361 Introduction to Buddhist Traditions

Straube (3 credits)

This course will provide students with a broad introduction to the most important traditions within the global religion known as Buddhism. Students will be introduced to Theravada or Classical Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism and the emerging convert Buddhism of the West, through reading and discussion. They will also be introduced to other important Buddhist traditions such as the Pure Land tradition.



TE 454 Structural Grief and Political Theology

Hogue (3 credits)

This graduate seminar explores grief—and develops the concept of “structural grief”—in philosophical, experiential, political, and spiritual registers. Drawing on an eclectic blend of thinkers in political theory, affect studies, mysticism, theology, and ecological philosophy, we will ask: How can we live spiritually, ethically, and democratically in a world saturated with loss?

The course frames grief not only as a personal or clinical experience but also as a collective and structural phenomenon produced by late capitalist modernity, racialized violence, ecological collapse, and the erosion of shared meaning. By engaging diverse traditions of thought and practice, we will examine how loss operates as both a symptom and a spiritual opening in contemporary life.

The course is organized around thematic modules, each spanning two weeks: one asynchronous week of reading and reflection, followed by a synchronous session focused on discussion, collective interpretation, and spiritual/political praxis.

Fall 2025

TE 455 Apertures of Loss: Grief as a Spiritual and Political Emotion

Hogue (3 credits)

How can we live spiritually and democratically in a time of system-death? How does that question open when we consider it through the perspective of structural grief? This course pursues those questions by interpreting loss and grief through political, phenomenological, ontological, and spiritual-ethical apertures. The objectives of the course are to a) become acquainted with diverse philosophical perspectives on emotion and affect, b) explore the feelings and functions of loss in an immanent worldview, c) critically analyze the racial and colonial drivers of loss-production in the capitalist world-system, and d) explore the spiritual and ethical animacies of absence, loss, and grief.

Spring 2026

TS564 Queer Theology

Lightsey (3 credits)

This course examines the emergence of queer theology as it has been derived from queer theory and LGBTQ social justice activists. It will acquaint students with the history of the term “queer”, its challenges, its reappropriation, and the impact queer theology is having on the Christian faith and practices. We will especially investigate how “queering” may contribute to theology as academic discipline, church practice and as an instrument of social justice. This course will privilege an intersectional analysis.

Summer 2026

Capstone/Research Courses

M491A MAR Capstone A

Staff (3 credits)

First semester of MAR Capstone work. By the conclusion of this term, the student will have a complete thesis or project proposal.

MAR Required course. MAR students only.

M491B MAR Capstone B

Staff (3 credits)

Second semester of MAR Capstone work. Students will build on completed thesis or project proposal to research and write thesis or project.

MAR Required course. MAR students only.

R525 Research Methods and Ethics

House (3 credits)

This course focuses on research methods in social justice leadership as well as the ethics of research. A special emphasis is placed on methods in social scientific research (such as ethnography) as well as library and archival research. Additionally, students will learn the history and processes associated with Institutional Review Boards (IRB) in higher education and will practice drafting an IRB proposal.

DMin required course.

Fall Semester course

R540 Leadership and Ministry Research Colloquy

Kirk (3 credits)

This course focuses on the development of a student's research proposal, inclusive of problem statement, literature review, project methodology, content outline, and timeline to completion. Students will also identify thesis committee members. A particular emphasis is placed on writing and peer-to-peer review. Course is limited to second-year DMin students.

Spring Semester course



R600 Supervised Thesis Research I

Lassiter (3 credits)

This course provides a framework for student research on advanced questions of ministry and praxis. Students will conduct research, write a doctoral level thesis project, and defend their thesis project. Students will have the opportunity to workshop their material to internal and external audiences. Course is limited to third-year DMin students.

Fall Semester course

R601 Supervised Thesis Research II

Lassiter (3 credits)

This course provides a framework for student research on advanced questions of ministry and praxis. Students will conduct research, write a doctoral level thesis project, and defend their thesis project. Students will have the opportunity to workshop their material to internal and external audiences. Course is limited to third-year DMin students.

Spring semester course

H374INT History of Global Christianity

Kirk (3 credits)

This course surveys the development and adaptation of Christianity starting with the shocking death of a Jewish religious leader and what his followers did afterward. We consider the next generation of followers and teachers who took Jesus' message and adapted it for their context by studying particular places and times across the globe. We see how location, other religious traditions, politics, and other dynamics shaped Christianity through a variety of primary readings.

MDiv required class

Spring Semester course

H394INT Unitarian Universalist History and Polity

Kirk (3 credits)

The purpose of this course is to provide a general introduction to the history of the Unitarians and Universalists, primarily in North America, with a brief review of the European roots of these religious traditions.

Comprehensive coverage of such a diverse landscape is *not* the goal of the course. Rather, we will focus on individuals and events that highlight different ways Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists practiced their religion, organized themselves, and spoke of belief in a variety of contexts. As we trace the history, we pay attention to race, gender, and class in development of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism.

Required of students seeking UU Ministerial Fellowship.

Fall Semester course

H415 Call of the Wild: Nature and American Religion

Kirk (3 credits)

Call of the Wild examines the history of nature, ecology, and religion primarily in North America through nature writing, autobiographies, fiction, film, and essays. Some of the questions we consider are: What is nature?

What is wilderness? How is our relationship with nature shaped by religion? What makes a place sacred? The course invites students into a deeper exploration of nature, religion, and place while attending to religion, race, gender, and class.

Fall 2026, Fall 2028



H422 Race & Religion in America

Kirk (3 credits)

A reading-intensive seminar, this course examines the complex, contested, and changing relationships of two central themes in American history: race and religion. The goal of the course is to become familiar with the diverse constructions of race in America and how religious understandings of difference have contributed to the production, continuation, and challenging of constructions of race. Students will grapple with a variety of primary and secondary sources focused on key themes and selected periods in American history to explore the shifting and negotiated understandings and identities of race and religion.

H410 Pilgrimage: Place, Power, and Meaning Making

Kirk (3 credits)

This seminar examines pilgrimage as a complex religious and cultural phenomenon. Drawing from religious studies, anthropological, and sociological perspectives, the course analyzes pilgrimage's role in meaning-making processes, the power of place, and the negotiation of religious authority in global contexts. Students will explore theoretical frameworks for religious mobility and analyze the intersection of place, embodiment, and transcendence. Special attention will be given to how the framework of pilgrimage has been adapted to modern contexts. Students will critically engage with a variety of primary sources and ethnographic studies, including Buddhist pilgrimage routes in Japan, Marian devotion in the American Midwest, a contemporary spiritual gathering in the American Southwest, and Christian pilgrimages, in addition to the pilgrimage practices and routes shared in class.

At a later date, students will have an opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to Central Europe with Dr. Kirk.

Fall 2027

Pastoral Ministry

M483INT Introduction to Pastoral Ministry

Taylor (3 credits)

We will explore some practices of pastoral care and the vocation of pastoral ministry, considering the things that challenge us and the things that sustain us - including especially the faith traditions which shape us.

MDiv required course.

Spring semester course

M330 Ministry in Times of Crisis

Taylor (3 credits)

Faith leaders and communities play important roles as acute responders and long-term caregivers in times of communal crisis. When a community has experienced a significant crisis (natural or human-made) they benefit from the immediate and long-term care of informed faith communities. In this course we will explore the work of both congregational and community ministry immediately following a community crisis and as they provide the long-term care of recovery.

Summer 2026, Spring 2028

M487 Introduction to Chaplaincy

Staff (3 credits)

An introduction to the study of chaplaincy in a range of professional contexts.

M350 Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Prerequisite: Introduction to Pastoral Ministry

(6 credits)

CPE brings theological studies into supervised encounters with persons in crisis. Students develop new awareness of themselves as ministers and of the need of those they minister. Provides opportunity for theological reflection on human situations. For further explanation of Clinical Pastoral Education, see this page. MDiv students are required to complete Clinical Pastoral Education before enrolling in their internship and the second year Signature Courses.

MDiv requirement.

M435 Chaplains at Work: Navigating Organizations

Taylor (3 credits)

Hospitals, military, prison, hospice, higher education and corporations; today's chaplains serve in a variety of environments. This advanced course provides the skills for students to analyze and navigate the complex systems integral to any organizational context. Conflict engagement, awareness of power dynamics, leading rituals, care across difference, responding to crisis and advocating for spiritual care are all key in becoming a successful chaplain. Strengthening those skills as well as engaging the emerging field of moral injury are the cornerstones of this course.

Spring 2027, Spring 2029

Faith Formation (Religious Education)

M416 Ministry and Leadership with Young Adults

Mosby (3 credits)

This course is designed for those who are: already engaged in ministry and leadership with youth and young adults; responsible for curating and/or supervising ministries with youth and young adults; or those who are preparing to enter into this arena. Rather than take a spectator/outsider “how-to-do-it” approach, the course will position the participants as “holy listeners” to walk alongside youth and young adults to hear their voices, their stories, and their wisdom via ethnographic methods, qualitative research, popular cultural productions, and scholarship on youth and young adults. Our goal is to learn from youth and young adults (in and beyond religious contexts) how working and leading with them can be most effective. What can they teach us about the generational, cultural, and ministerial competencies that are needed to walk alongside them?

In addition to lectures, small group discussions, readings and written assignments, course participants will conduct interviews with youth and young adults, experience artifacts from popular culture, and develop a final, integrative project that reflects engagement with youth and young adults as well as course materials.

Fall 2026

M465INT Faith Formation in a Changing World

Mosby (3 credits)

This course is designed to be a comprehensive introduction to ideas and practices that give Unitarian Universalist faith formation its meaning and purpose across the lifespan. Learners will explore the rich history of religious education/faith formation, making note of how formative educators shaped its philosophy; developed teaching strategies; explored the landscape of human and faith identity development. Students will also investigate through contextual research in a congregation how these theories and models play out. The course is designed with attention to principles of anti-racism, anti-oppression and global/multicultural teaching and learning in mind.

MDiv required course.

Fall semester course

M468 "They Not Like Us": Stories of Resistance and Re(Formation) in Religious Education

Mosby (3 credits)

Ministry practitioners in the 21st century function in a world framed by diversities, major social crises, local and global demands for justice; and declining confidence in religious and/or faith-based assemblies. This course aims to resource those doing practical ministry and religious education ministry in contemporary contexts by utilizing an expansive understanding of Religious Education that places the discipline at the intersection of education, social activism, and cultural production. We will examine and learn from stories of persons who were (are): 1) Religious Educators & Educators, 2) “Activists-Educators”, and 3) Creatives. They model(ed) resistance against the status quo and re(formation) or the building of more just realities through their written work, spoken word, faith formation journeys, social justice freedom work, and/or their artistic work.

Spring 2026

Sacred Texts

BS425INT New Testament

Beverly (3 credits)

In this class, we will become acquainted with 1) the corpus of narrative, poetry, letters, and gospels that comprise the New Testament and 2) the variety of interpretive strategies that have been used to understand that library. We will discuss the history of the documents as well their subsequent use in the history of biblical interpretation. Students will become familiar with critical methods of reading and conversant with the diversity of perspectives on the text that we find in scholarship, in religion, and in popular culture.

MDiv required course.

Spring Semester course

BS426INT Hebrew Scriptures

(3 credits)

In this class, we will become acquainted with 1) the corpus of laws, narrative, and poetry that comprise the Hebrew Scriptures and 2) the variety of interpretive strategies that have been used to understand that library. We will discuss the pre-history of the documents as well their subsequent use in the history of biblical interpretation. Students will become familiar with critical methods of reading and conversant with the diversity of perspectives on the text that we find in scholarship, in religion, and in popular culture.

MDiv required course

Fall semester course

Signature Courses

M340A: Ministry in Context 1

Taylor (1.5 credits)

“In formation, we are broken open to the ultimate and asked to become something new within ourselves and with one another. An ethic of risk calls us to engage with the formative process—even and especially when we do not know where it will lead—in order to more fully live into our covenants for the sake of all.”—Rev. Dr. Adam Robersmith

Ministry In Context 1 & 2 set the course for each MDiv student as they navigate their journey of academic, spiritual, and ministerial formation. These two 1.5 credit required courses will meet synchronously 4 times during the fall semester and 4 times during spring semester.

In Ministry In Context 1, students will research and demonstrate understanding of Meadville’s degree requirements and their denominational credentialing requirements. They will learn the process of applying for Clinical Pastoral Education units and internships, and begin drafting their MLTS Personalized Learning Plan.

M340B - Ministry in Context 2

Taylor (1.5 credits)

“In formation, we are broken open to the ultimate and asked to become something new within ourselves and with one another. An ethic of risk calls us to engage with the formative process—even and especially when we do not know where it will lead—in order to more fully live into our covenants for the sake of all.”—Rev. Dr. Adam Robersmith

Ministry In Context 1 & 2 sets the course for each MDiv student as they navigate their journey of academic, spiritual, and ministerial formation. These two 1.5 credit required courses will meet synchronously 4 times during the fall semester and 4 times during spring semester.

Ministry In Context 2 builds on the work of the first semester. Students will engage internship site selection options and spiritual reflection tools. Each student will finalize their MLTS Personalized Learning Plan which will give their MDiv journey a discernable shape, direction, and timing.



M346 Grounding: Theology and Social Praxis

Hogue (3 credits)

The work of compassion, justice, and collective liberation is integral to religious leadership in the 21st century, and for many progressive and liberal religious leaders, it is holy work. We live in a world beset by numerous moral, social, political, and spiritual challenges—a world of radical economic inequality, racial inequities, climate and environmental injustices, social acceleration, and post-truth political polarization. What role can progressive religious leaders play in relation to these challenges? What leverage do religious leaders and communities have in relation to these issues? What imaginative, theoretical, and methodological tools can aid religious workers as they seek to lead people and communities through these challenges? How and in what ways does the holy, or the divine, or God, manifest itself in and through religious social engagement? Guided by these orienting questions, this course will introduce students to ways of thinking, being, and leading that will empower them to build upon their unique gifts to creatively engage the peril and promise of the present world.

MDiv required course.

Fall Semester course

M347 Vocational Studies 1: Formation

Prerequisite: Clinical Pastoral Education, Grounding, Completion of at least 18 credits

Kirk (3 credits)

This Fall semester course is linked with an approved congregational or community internship. The focus of this course is on the formation of ministerial identity. The internship site serves as a place for structured engagement and reflection on a range of topics and moves students more deeply into praxis. Students explore the roles and responsibilities of ministry including the intersections of personal, cultural, and professional identities, emotional literacy, professional boundaries, the influence of shifting trends and demographics on religious leadership, the impact of context on leadership, and public speaking, among others. Students must register for the internship separately.

MDiv required course.

Fall Semester course

M348 Vocational Studies 2: Communities

Prerequisite: Vocational Studies: Formation

Robersmith and Avery (3 credits)

This Spring semester course is linked with an approved congregational or community internship. The focus of this Spring semester course is on the work of ministry in diverse communal and congregational settings. The internship site serves as a place for structured engagement and reflection on a range of topics and moves students more deeply into praxis. Students explore the roles and responsibilities of ministry including the intersections of personal, cultural, and professional identities, emotional literacy, professional boundaries, the influence of shifting trends and demographics on religious leadership, the impact of context on leadership, and public speaking, among others. Students must register for the internship separately.

MDiv required course.

Spring Semester course



M354A Internship 1

Prerequisite: Clinical Pastoral Education, Grounding, Completion of at least 18 credits

(3 credits)

2nd Year Fall Internship, to be taken concurrently with Vocational Studies: Formation.

MDiv required course.

Fall Semester course

M354B Internship 2

Prerequisite: Internship 1

(3 credits)

2nd Year Spring Internship, to be taken concurrently with Vocational Studies: Communities.

MDiv required course.

Spring Semester course

M354C Internship 3

Prerequisite: Internship 2

(3 credits)

3rd Year Fall Internship, to be taken concurrently with Leadership Studies: Formation.

MDiv required course.

Fall Semester course

M354D Internship 4

Prerequisite: Internship 3

(3 credits)

3rd Year Spring Internship, to be taken concurrently with Leadership Studies: Administration.

MDiv required course.

Spring Semester course



M428 Leadership Studies 1: Formation

Prerequisite: Vocational Studies: Communities and Internship 1 and 2.

Leach (3 credits)

The Leadership Studies year affords continued learning about ministry and leadership through the prism of guided work within the internship site and on one's Leadership Initiative. Synchronous Zoom meetings and smaller Formation Groups bolster collaborative learning and reflection.

This course explores ministerial leadership in the context of the Unitarian Universalist commitment “to transform the world through liberating Love” (UUA Bylaws). The act of transforming ourselves, our institutions, and our larger communities requires that we tap the human potential that surrounds us to build a world that nurtures our spirits and helps all of us to thrive. That is arguably the defining work of ministry in the decades to come. Beyond informing and inspiring, we are called to instigate and lead change.

The structure of learning and organizational engagement will be the same as that experienced during Vocational Studies. You will engage the day-to-day ministry of your internship site and blend academic learning with structured reflection on multiple dimensions of organizational life. You will also continue to meet monthly with your Internship Committee and weekly with your Internship Supervisor. You will also spend time implementing and reflecting upon your Leadership Initiative.

MDiv required course.

Fall Semester course

M429 Leadership Studies 2: Administration

Prerequisite: Leadership Studies: Formation

House (3 credits)

The Leadership Studies year affords continued learning about ministry and leadership through the prism of guided work within the internship site and on one's Leadership Initiative. Synchronous Zoom meetings and smaller Formation Groups bolster collaborative learning and reflection as well. This semester we'll explore religious leadership with attention to leadership roles and responsibilities, how leadership is embodied and enacted, and characteristics of communities in this contemporary moment. We'll give special attention to:

- Nuanced understandings of calling
- Decolonial frameworks of religious leadership
- Best practices for multiple administrative responsibilities, including discerning compensation and budgeting
- Organizational transformations – from the theological to the physical
- Expanding conceptions of care
- Blessings for liminal times

The structure of learning and organizational engagement will be the same as that experienced during Vocational Studies. You will engage the day-to-day ministry of your internship site and blend academic learning with structured reflection on multiple dimensions of organizational life. You will also continue to meet monthly with your Internship Committee and weekly with their Internship Supervisor. You will also spend time implementing and reflecting upon your Leadership Initiative.

MDiv required course.

Spring Semester course



Faculty

Eliás Ortega | President and Professor of Religion, Ethics, and Leadership

Ph.D. Religion and Society (Magna Cum Laude), Princeton Theological Seminary; M.Div. Religion and Society (Magna Cum Laude), Princeton Theological Seminary

Dr. Ortega received his M.Div. and Ph.D. (Religion and Society, Magna Cum Laude) from Princeton Theological Seminary (2005, 2011). He also holds a BA in Communications Arts & Sciences and Philosophy and Religion from Calvin College. He served as Associate Professor of Social Theory and Religious Ethics at Drew University Theological School, where he also served as the Theological School Deans' Council Chair, was a member of the Digital Humanities Advisory Committee, and the Title IX Committee. His primary teaching and research areas are Sociology of Religion, Religious Ethics, Cultural Sociology, Social Movements, Critical Theory, Africana Studies, Latinx Cultural Studies. In addition to teaching at Drew, he has also taught at Princeton University, Princeton Theological Seminary, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt Divinity School, The College of New Jersey and Mercer County Community College. In the American Academy of Religion, he serves on the Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession, and on the Steering Committees for the Religion and Politics.

In addition to his academic work, Dr. Ortega is committed to Unitarian Universalism. He currently serves as a member of the UUA's Commission on Institutional Change and the Religious Education Credentialing Committee. From 2015 to 2017, he served as mentor in UUA's Growing Racial Justice initiative, and during that same period was Co-Chair of the UU Legislative Ministry of New Jersey's Dismantling Racism Group. He also helped to start and run the Drew Freedom School Initiative, a social justice program that provides training in non-violent resistance and community organizing. He has been a volunteer, provided strategic planning, and program support to various community organizations including the Student Outreach and Academic Reinforcement Program at Bethel AME in Morristown, NJ, New Jersey Parent Caucus, a mental health and juvenile justice advocacy group, and the Sila Maria Calderon Foundation.

Dr. Ortega currently resides in Naperville, IL and serves as the president of Meadville Lombard Theological School and Professor of Religion, Ethics, and Leadership.



Pamela Lightsey | Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Associate Professor of Constructive Theology

B.A., Columbus State University; M.Div., Gammon Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center; Ph.D., Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Dr. Lightsey brings a special mix of life experience and professional proficiency to the position. Following service as an officer in the US Army, she received her academic and theological training at Columbia State University (BS), Gammon Seminary of the Interdenominational Theological Center (M.Div.) and Garrett-Evangelical Theological School (PhD). After ordination, she served first as a United Methodist congregational pastor and then as a theological school educator, scholar and administrator. Throughout her vocational life, she has been a leading social justice activist, working with local, national and international organizations focusing primarily on the causes of peacemaking, racial justice and LGBTQ rights.

Dr. Lightsey's publications include the book, *Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology* (Wipf and Stock), "He Is Black and We are Queer" in *Albert Cleage, Jr. and the Black Madonna and Child* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), "Reconciliation" in *Prophetic Evangelicals: Envisioning a Just and Peaceable Kingdom* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), and "If There Should Come a Word."

Michael Hogue | Professor of Theology

B.A., Hope College; M.A.Div., University of Chicago; Ph.D., University of Chicago

Michael Hogue, who joined the Meadville Lombard faculty in September 2005, teaches and writes at the intersections of theology, religious ethics, and philosophy of religion. He is particularly influenced by the pragmatist, process, and naturalist lineages in American philosophy of religion, which he refers to as the “left wing of American radical theology.” As a scholar and teacher, he uses these traditions to explore issues related to religion and the environment, political theology, religion and science and social ethics.

His courses at Meadville Lombard, among others, include Constructive Theology, Process and Liberation Theologies, Global Religions, Multifaith Theologies, Religious Ethics and Global Dynamics, and Religious Naturalism.

Dr. Hogue has served in leadership capacities in diverse religious, academic, and activist contexts. He has served on program committees at the American Academy of Religion, as co-founder and past convener of Oikos: The Religion and Environment Initiative, as Vice President of the Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought, as past president of the American Theological Society of the Midwest, as Co-director of the Religion, Vulnerability, and Resilience Project, and as a fellow with the Enhancing Life Project. He is on the Advisory Board for the Religious Naturalist Association. He is the past editor of *the American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* and serves on the editorial boards of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, and *Science, Religion, and Culture*.

His published articles have appeared in *Literature and Theology*, *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, *Crosscurrents*, *the Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, and *the American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, among others. He is the author of four books, *The Tangled Bank: Toward an Ecotheological Ethics of Responsible Participation* (Pickwick, 2008), *The Promise of Religious Naturalism* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), *American Immanence: Democracy for an Uncertain World* (Columbia, 2018), and, most recently, he co-authored *Interreligious Resilience: Interreligious Leadership for a Pluralistic World* (Bloomsbury, 2022), with Dr. Dean Bell.

Dr. Hogue grew up in Traverse City, Michigan, and spent his childhood exploring the lakes and landscapes of the north-woods. He is married to Sara and is the proud father of Kincade, Mikaela, and Kamryn. He has always been a “dog person,” but his family recently adopted two kittens, Liv and Maddie—and they are making a convert of him!



MDiv and PhD, Boston University School of Theology

Rev. Kathryn House, Ph.D. joined the Meadville Lombard faculty in 2023. Prior to her appointment, House served as Visiting Assistant Professor of Practical Theology, Louisville Institute Postdoctoral Fellow, and Adjunct Professor at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She also served as the Project Director of the Myrtle Collaboration, an Innovation Hub of the Called to Lives of Meaning and Purpose Initiative, at Louisville Seminary. House completed her Ph.D. in Theological Studies and MDiv. at Boston University School of Theology. While at the School of Theology, she was Asst. Director of the Center for Practical Theology and Instructional Coordinator for Distance Learning Initiatives.

House is the co-editor of the forthcoming special issue of *Theology and Sexuality* entitled "Purity Culture and its Discontents," and is co-editor of the special issue "Essays in Honor of Nancy Tatom Ammerman" in *Perspectives in Religious Studies*. She has contributed chapters to the edited volumes [Trauma and Lived Religion: Transcending the Ordinary](#) (Palgrave Macmillan) and [Faithfully Feminist: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Feminists on Why We Stay](#) (White Cloud Press).

House's research interests include prophetic religious leadership, evangelical purity culture, liberation theologies, religious trauma, theologies of vocation, practical theology, and Baptist theology. Her current project, an expansion of her dissertation *The Afterlife of White Evangelical Purity Culture: Wounds, Legacies, and Impacts*, investigates the theological legacies of white evangelical purity culture (WEPC) and the construction of white womanhood and proposes a Baptist theology of baptism as a practice of solidarity in response. Her project foregrounds the passionate evangelical millennialism of antebellum female moral reformers' efforts to curb prostitution between 1834 and 1838; the faith-based activism of women who fought to end, as well as to foment, racial terror lynchings in the United States; and contemporary criticisms and constructive ethics of the most recent purity movement known as evangelical purity culture. It also considers recent resonant debates over dissonant deployments of bodily and religious freedom during the COVID-19 pandemic.

House is a theological educator who nurtures learners' capacities for critical engagement with diverse traditions and texts so that they might lead with a deep understanding of their contexts and communities and pursue their calls with creativity and courage. Her pedagogy is grounded in transformative learning theory and informed by feminist and antiracist commitments. At MLTS, House teaches courses across the Masters and Doctor of Ministry programs on intersections of social change, spirituality and liberation; ethics; ministerial leadership and administration; and research methods.

An ordained minister in the American Baptist Churches, USA, and the Alliance of Baptists, House is a member of the Board of the Centre for Faith, Art, and Justice and the former Pastor for Christian Formation at the First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain, MA. She is the President of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Region-at-Large and a member of the Steering Committee of the Ecclesial Practices Unit of the American Academy of Religion.



Nicole Kirk | Associate Professor, Rev. Dr. J. Frank and Alice Schulman Chair in Unitarian Universalist History

B.A., Westminster College; M.Div., Vanderbilt University; Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary; D.Min., Princeton Theological Seminary.

Rev. Dr. Nicole Kirk is the first Rev. Dr. J. Frank and Alice Schulman Chair of Unitarian Universalist History.

Nicole Kirk is a historian of American religious history with an emphasis on business, religion, material and visual culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dr. Kirk is the author of *Wanamaker's Temple: Religion and Business in an American Department Store* (forthcoming from NYU Press in fall 2018), and was a part of the editorial board and a contributor to the two-volume set, *Documentary History of Unitarian Universalism* (2017). Her current research focuses on the development of African American humanism and the intersections between technology, religion, and business. Prior to her doctoral studies, Dr. Kirk has been a Unitarian Universalist minister for twenty years and has served congregations in Ohio and New Jersey. She believes ministers and religious leaders for the future need to be good historians.

Karen Mosby | Angus MacLean Assistant Professor of Religious Education

Dr. Mosby joins the MLTS faculty as its new Angus MacLean Assistant Professor of Religious Education.

Prior to coming to MLTS, Dr. Mosby served as the Interim Executive Director of Religious and Spiritual Life and University Chaplain at Northwestern University and Dean of Student Life and Seminary Chaplain at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. Her academic and professional journey is scaffolded by 30+ years in ordained pastoral ministry, a PhD degree in Religious Education & Congregational Studies from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, two other degrees from Garrett (M.Div. and D.Min.), and a BS in Journalism degree from Northwestern University.

Her research interests are located at the intersections of religious education, youth and young adult culture, popular culture, Womanist thought, and Black sacred music. Her published writings include articles in *Religious Education*, a journal of the Religious Education Association (REA) along with her PhD dissertation, "*Futuring a Way Forward for Religious Formation Informed by the Music and Music-Making of Three Generations of Black Youth and Young Adults*" and her DMin dissertation, "*Our Sons and Daughters Shall Prophesy*": *P(re)aching with Millennials*. She is also a member of REA.

Kate Lassiter | Affiliate Faculty, Senior Director of Lifelong Learning

Dr. Lassiter comes to Meadville Lombard with extensive experience in the academy, non-profit development and management, and diverse religious communities. She holds a Ph.D. in Religion, Psychology, and Culture from Vanderbilt University where she was a fellow in the Program for Theology and Practice, and has broad expertise in the role of religious practices in public strategies for healing and justice, theories of recognition, and feminist and queer theology. In her book *Recognizing Other Subjects: Feminist Pastoral Theology and the Challenge of Identity*, Dr. Lassiter identifies interpersonal, structural, and theological barriers to advancing care and justice, and identifies strategies for personal and social transformation.

Prior to joining Meadville Lombard, she served as Visiting Instructor for the M.A. in Social Justice and Community Development at Loyola University Chicago, Associate Professor of Religious and Pastoral Studies at Mount St. Joseph University, and Director of Theological Field Education at Chicago Theological Seminary. She is also a yoga and meditation instructor and an avid outdoorswoman.

J. Taylor | Affiliate Faculty, Senior Director of Contextual Ministry

Rev. Taylor is a Unitarian Universalist community minister specializing in critical incident response, community crisis and pastoral care. Rev. Taylor is an affiliate faculty member at Meadville and has been an adjunct professor at Starr King School for the Ministry and Eden Theological Seminary. In addition, Rev. Taylor serves on the board of the UU Trauma Response Ministry and is a chaplain (Major) with the New York Air National Guard. An ordained minister since 2001, Rev. Taylor has served UU congregations in New York City and St. Louis, volunteered with multiple crisis and disaster response organizations. A sought-after speaker and teacher, Rev. Taylor has contributed chapters to a number of books on the subject of spiritual care and crisis. Agitating, preaching and working towards dismantling systems of White supremacy are key in Rev. Taylor's theology and work. Rev. Taylor lives on the south side of Chicago and has two children.

Rev. Taylor shares these thoughts with us: Unitarian Universalism is in a time of discernment. The world is changing and we, as a faith and as faith leaders have the opportunity to do the work to dismantle systems of oppression that keep us from living fully into our covenants and Principles. I am grateful and excited to be part of Meadville Lombard's commitment to developing ministers and ministries that "take into the world our Unitarian Universalist vision of justice, equity and compassion."

Professor Emeriti

Lee Barker | Professor Emeritus

B.E.S U. of Minnesota, MA U. of Chicago, DMin Meadville Lombard Theological School, D.D. Meadville Lombard Theological School

A life-long Unitarian Universalist, Lee comes to Meadville Lombard after twenty-five years in the parish ministry. He has held pulpits in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Most recently, he served as senior minister of Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasadena, California. Each of his ministries has contributed to a surge in institutional growth, a renewed commitment to social justice and the adoption of a far ranging religious and spiritual vision. Prior to his presidency, he held a variety of leadership roles in Unitarian Universalist theological education.

"I believe Unitarian Universalism offers a route to true transformation both for individuals and the larger world, that our religious perspective has the possibility of bringing all life closer to wholeness. The degree to which we are successful in this venture is directly related to the quality of our ministry. And a ministry of excellence is shaped by a sound education. The mission of Meadville Lombard is sweeping, it is to knit together every part of the fragmented world."



J. Ronald Engel | Professor Emeritus

A.B., Johns Hopkins; B.D. (with highest distinction), Meadville Lombard Theological School;
M.A. and Ph.D. (with distinction), Divinity School of the University of Chicago

Ron Engel is Professor Emeritus at Meadville Lombard and Senior Research Consultant, The Center for Humans and Nature, with offices in New York and Chicago. He taught in the fields of religious ethics, theology and ministry at Meadville Lombard 1964-2000. He also served as Lecturer in Ethics and Society at the Divinity School, University of Chicago 1977-2000 and as a member of the Environmental Studies Faculty, The College, University of Chicago.

Ron helped pioneer the new academic fields of environmental ethics, history, and theology/philosophy. Through his work with the Eco-justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches, and as co-director of the Program on Ecology, Justice, and Faith in the Chicago Association of Theological Schools, he contributed to the movement for eco-justice within the ecumenical religious community. Ron became active in international work on behalf of global ethics in the course of research with UNESCO. He was a core member of the international drafting committee for the Earth Charter and is currently co-chair of the Ethics Specialist Group of the Commission on Environmental Law for the World Conservation Union.

Ron has been a strong advocate for public ministry in the Unitarian Universalist Association and has written and lectured widely on the religious, ethical, and philosophical dimensions of the democratic faith in world history. With Neil Shadle in 1964 he co-founded the Unitarian Universalist Center for Urban Ministry and in 1966 the Neighborhood Commons, the first community-development corporation in Chicago which continues today as the largest black-owned housing cooperative on the northside of Chicago. Ron was one of several co-founders of Collegium: Association for Liberal Religious Studies, and in 1998 was recognized as its Distinguished Scholar.

In addition to numerous essays in books and journals, Ron is the author of *Sacred Sands: The Struggle for Community in the Indiana Dunes*, which won several book awards, including the Meltzer National Book Award; editor of *Voluntary Associations: Socio-cultural Analyses and Theological Interpretation*; co-editor of *Ethics of Environment and Development: Global Challenge, International Response*; and co-author of *Justice, Ecology, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*. He is a member of the editorial boards of *American Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, *Environmental Conservation*, and *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion*.



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