



ST. BONAVENTURE
UNIVERSITY
Founded 1858

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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
B. A. in Theology

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The academic study of theology aims to investigate and interpret the religious dimension of human experience. Like philosophy, it studies what people believe about the nature of reality and why they hold those beliefs. Like sociology, it examines what people do in social groups and institutions to express their beliefs. Like psychology, it examines what motivates people to adopt a religious outlook on life. And like history, it studies the past as well as the present.

Students who take courses in theology can expect to learn more about the beliefs, values, and practices of religious people around the world, with special attention to the Christian tradition. Some theology courses focus on a particular theological theme or issue that has been debated by scholars over the centuries, while others explore the role of religion in contemporary society or examine the relation between religion and other realms of thought (science, philosophy, art, etc.). Some courses look at religion in a fairly objective manner, while others encourage students to examine their personal beliefs and the beliefs of people around them.

In the midst of this diversity, one concern remains paramount: to encourage students to think for themselves about the ultimate questions of life in the company of others who have explored these questions before them.

Educational Preparation

Since the study of theology crosses so many disciplinary boundaries, the best preparation for a major or minor in theology is a broad high school education. Students who enjoy studying history, literature, psychology, sociology, or the arts will find many opportunities to combine these interests with the study of theology. (Theology majors are actually encouraged to pursue a second major or a minor in another field.) Students who major in theology are typically bright, motivated individuals who regard religion as a vital aspect of human experience. High school religion classes and other forms of religious education can be useful as background resources, but no prior course work in theology or familiarity with the Catholic theological tradition is assumed or required.

Program of Study

The major in theology requires a total of thirty-three hours of course work (eleven courses) in the department. Students are allowed a substantial degree of freedom in selecting the courses that will count toward their major. For a full description of the major requirements, see the undergraduate catalogue or the departmental Web site (<http://www.sbu.edu/artsandsciences.aspx?id=6902>). Students who major in theology have ample room in their schedules to complete a minor or even a second major in another discipline. The minor in theology requires eighteen hours of course work (six courses), including two required courses and four courses chosen by the student.

Theology

FACULTY

The six full-time members and several part-time members of the theology faculty bring a strong international flavor to the classroom. Four are natives of countries other than the U.S. (India, Russia, and Canada), and the other two hold advanced degrees from other countries. All of the full-time faculty hold Ph.D. degrees from leading universities, and all are productive scholars who publish books and articles in their fields and present papers at professional meetings. First and foremost, however, the members of the theology faculty are teachers who care deeply about their students. This concern leads the faculty to challenge students to think, write, and speak with greater clarity about important theological issues, which in turn enables them to gain admission to top graduate schools. For more information about the faculty, see the Faculty link on the theology Web page.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Students who major or minor in theology develop wide-ranging skills in investigating and interpreting the world of human religious experience within a broad variety of historical and contemporary contexts. They also learn how to think theologically about important social and intellectual problems. These kinds of skills are vital for success in graduate programs in many different fields, and they can be valuable for understanding oneself and other people as well. Theology students also have many opportunities to develop their skills in critical thinking and analysis, professional writing, and oral communication.

Most students who major in theology are preparing for careers in theology or religion. Many go directly to graduate school or seminary after graduation. Some are working toward careers as university professors or high school teachers, while others are preparing for careers in ministry. Other students move directly into positions in churches or other religious organizations or spend a year or two doing volunteer service or social justice work. Still others, especially those who have taken a double major, go to graduate school in other fields such as social work, counseling, history, or law. On the whole, theology majors tend to be unique individuals who are willing to explore a variety of career options and create their own opportunities for the future. Faculty advisors work closely with each student to help them plan for life after graduation.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Students who are interested in ministry opportunities and training will find a host of options through the University Ministries center (<http://www.sbu.edu/campus-life.aspx?id=5748>). Students who are considering full-time ministry may participate in a vocation group led by a Franciscan friar who will counsel them concerning their options.

Theology majors and minors are encouraged to pursue study abroad opportunities, including the university's regular summer programs in Oxford (England), Seville (Spain), and Perugia (Italy). Upper-level students may also take courses in the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure's world-renowned center for the study of Franciscan life and traditions (<http://www.sbu.edu/FranciscanInstitute.aspx?id=1752>).

MISCELLANEOUS

The library's collection of books and periodicals in theology and religion is strong in most areas of the Christian tradition and adequate for undergraduate work in non-Christian traditions. The library also has a solid set of electronic research databases and operates an effective interlibrary loan service for books that are not available locally.

The theology department is the publishing home for the internationally recognized theological journal, *Modern Theology*.