

What are the Theology GER Requirements?

You must take three courses, one at Level I, one at Level II, and one at Level III, in that order.

Level I:

Thesis –Christian Foundations

At this level, all students are introduced to the study of Roman Catholic Christianity within the broader Christian Tradition via one of four academic disciplines within the contemporary field of Theology: Biblical Studies, Systematic Theology, Historical Theology, and Social Ethics.

Goals:

- 1) Engage students in a critical and constructive analysis of principal themes and questions in Christian traditions, and thus critical engagement of the larger traditions which underlie the *raison d’etre* of the Society of Jesus and SJU.
- 2) Develop in students the skills of historical analysis and an awareness of the evolution of Christian traditions.
- 3) Develop in student skills necessary for the critical reading of primary texts.

Level II:

Antithesis -- Other Ways of Seeing and Knowing

True understanding of one’s own tradition requires a certain critical distance from it. Courses at this level therefore introduce students to the principle themes and questions in a non-Christian Christian religious tradition.

Goals:

- 1) Engage students in a critical and constructive analysis of the diversity of religious and theological expression across time and around the world.
- 2) Assist students to refine historical, analytical and critical reading skills.
- 3) Lead students to greater appreciation of parallels or symmetries in themes and concerns across religious traditions, especially in light of their learning at Level I.

Level III:

Synthesis and Specialization

Courses at this level are designed to help students bring their learning from the First and Second Level classes (i.e., foundational knowledge of doctrine and principles, particular Theological skills, and the habit of critical distance) to bear on a specialized topic. Topically speaking, the majority of Level III courses invite students to return to the Christian Tradition and explore it with the new critical skills developed in their previous work. These courses also encourage personal reflection and appropriation, although this cannot be required in academic coursework.

Goals:

- 1) Provide students with a capstone opportunity to apply the skills of critical study and their expanded awareness of religious diversity to a specialized topic in the study of Theology.
- 2) Encourage continued cultivation of the skills of historical, analytical and critical reading skills.
- 3) Encourage lifelong critical engagement with the central themes and issues of major religious traditions.

Theology FAQs

Why must I take theology?

You have come to a Catholic, Jesuit University. It is only reasonable that you take courses which reflect on the world from the theological perspectives which are in many respects the reason for such an institution to exist. Otherwise, you might as well go to a secular university.

Can I take any three courses?

Yes and No. There are many choices at each level, but you must take one course at Level I, one at Level II, and one at Level III.

Do I have to take the courses at Level I, II and III in order?

Yes. This will lead you through a process of skills acquisition which will allow you to do relatively sophisticated work on a specialized topic of your choice at the third level.

Majors & Minors

What if I want to Major or Minor in theology?

Talk to someone in the department. A minor requires only three additional courses beyond the GER. A major requires only seven additional courses. We also require that you take either Psychology of Religion or Sociology of Religion as one of your Social Science GER's if you major in theology.

What can I do when I graduate with a theology major?

A Theology Major can find work:

- Teaching High School
- In Journalism
- In Non-Profit Agencies
- In the Jesuit Volunteer Corps
Or Peace Corps
- Anywhere the skills of clear communication and reasoning are valued.

Or you might double major:

- With Psychology and work in Religious Counseling
- With Sociology and go into Social Work.
- With English and do TV Religion Reporting
- With International Relations and become a Foreign Ambassador or work for the UN
- With Foreign Languages and work in US Intelligence Gathering



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