

SKSM Degree Matrices: Rationale and Notes

Updated August 27, 2020

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary, explanation, and key to navigating the Degree Matrices at this stage of development. The matrices are part of a larger and longer process of evolution in our curricular offerings and organizing. These tools will adapt as the school continues to work with them and innovate our offerings to meet the needs and mission of SKSM.

Matrices Rationale

The matrices for the degree programs are aligned across all programs and offer some specific course subjects relevant to each degree. These matrices organize course subjects and topics into Thresholds and Program Goals at SKSM, with special consideration given to the requirements and needs of different degree programs and pathways within a multi-religious seminary. The subject areas were determined by both internal and external factors, including ATS, MFC, and SKSM guidelines, as well as general trends in previous offerings. From this aggregated data, specific subjects were determined to meet the needs of students pursuing each of the possible program paths within Starr King School for the Ministry. Faced with the current context of cutbacks, and the intention of creating clear, consistent curriculum offerings, the Curriculum Committee sought to innovate how we determine and offer courses in the coming years.

We focused on the essence of offerings that are both required and necessary to creating just and sustainable communities that educate to counter oppression (CJSC-ECO), while also leaving room for innovation and specificity. Instead of having a course catalog that is all unique titles, we are beginning a transition towards a consistent schedule of courses that are organized by subject, thresholds, and program goals. Within each subject offering, there can be a sub-title that brings about the unique qualities of the course and faculty contributions, while also explicitly naming the need the course addresses for the student's degree pathway.

With regards to the MFC requirements, we opted to only specify courses that explicitly need to be named in order to meet the requirements. In most cases, the requirements can be fulfilled through a multi-religious approach that is open and accessible to Unitarian Universalist and Non-UU students alike. This design allows for clarity and consistency across programs and the decision-making process as a whole, leading to a more robust course catalog without redundancies of subject matter.

There will still be between 36 and 40 courses offered in the span of an academic year (a reduction of about a half-dozen courses). This course count does not include requisites such as Field Education or Reflection Seminars (nor does it include Chaplaincy Institute offerings). The shift is not likely to occur overnight and is best implemented in stages so as to ensure ease and sustainability in the transition process.

Moving forward with the matrices can facilitate clearer decisions with greater ease for students, advisors, faculty, and administration. The matrices can also inform onboarding and advising of students as they move through the learning portals of the school towards graduation.

Notes on Thresholds and Subjects

In general

Unless otherwise specified, each course is intended to include students in all degree pathways and backgrounds, with a focus on multi-religiosity and diversity of perspectives.

Special Topics courses in each threshold could be seminar style, led by multiple faculty, or these courses could be specific topics within the stated subject that do not meet the needs of other subject areas in the Threshold and are led by faculty who have an area of expertise within the subject.

Required for all MDiv

- *Leadership Intensive*: offer one intensive and/or synchronous full semester seminar each term that includes a variety of perspectives and approaches. Given the pandemic, this requisite has expanded to include intensive and full semester courses.

Threshold: Sacred Text & Interpretation

Each course within this threshold to include chaplains, ministers, activists, and scholars, so that the audience includes students in all degree pathways.

- *Sacred Text Special Topics*: this course place can be a good consideration for research scholars, as well as Hilda Mason Fellows. It may also include multi-religious texts and approaches.
- *Indigenous Course*: can include oral and story traditions; multiple traditions or focused on a specific indigenous tradition.

Threshold: Thea/ology in Culture & Context

- *Theology & Culture*: focus on the intersections of theology and culture. Can include multiple perspectives and faculty.
- *The@logical Education*: diverse enough to welcome MASC and non-UU MDiv students, while still fulfilling MFC requirement.

Threshold: Prophetic Witness & Work

- *Church Administration*: while focused on fulfilling the needs of congregational minister training, it should always include content on radical hospitality, safer spaces, and other CJSC-ECO components.
- *Intro to Preaching and Public Speaking*: instead of focusing just on preaching from the pulpit, this intro course intends to be more inclusive of other ministerial and non-minister degree pathways. Inclusive of public speaking outside of congregational walls.
- *Advanced Preaching*: Special topics and covers both congregational and public speaking. Cross-cultural in approach.
- *Leadership*: We aim to offer a Leadership course every semester, and this will add additional courses to this threshold, as well as meet the requirements for the MDiv degree.

Threshold: History of Dissenting Traditions & The@/logical Quest

- Distinguish this threshold from the Theology & Culture threshold, by focusing on the dissenting traditions.
- *Multi-Religious History*: within the context of dissenting traditions and social movements.
- *Liberation The@logies*: Liberation as a broad category, not explicitly Catholic Liberation Theology, though it can include this.
- *Conflict or Crisis Transformation*: to include restorative justice, reconciliation, and communication approaches, among others.

- *Transformational Movements*: would be a 3rd course for the term in this threshold (along with UU History and Liberation The@logies), ideally include multi-religious, global, national, and local approaches.
 - o This may be offered every other year, alternating with the Multi-Religious History course every other year, so as to keep the overall course count consistent each year/term/threshold.

Threshold: Life in Religious Community & Interfaith Engagement

- *Faith-Rooted Organizing*: an organizing course that is faith-based or faith-rooted, and inclusive of interfaith/multi-faith content and approaches.
- *Fundraising course*: broad enough to include both congregational and community-based fundraising (nonprofits, coalitions, community projects, etc.).

Threshold: Educating for Wholeness & Liberation

- *Religious Education & Curricula*: includes UU and non-UU working together in the same course, thereby fulfilling the MFC requirement while being inclusive of other degree pathways.
- *CJSC-ECO Integration*: a senior seminar for all students ready to graduate in the academic year.
- *1:1 Religious Education*: not UU specific. Skills based. Covers counseling, coaching, spiritual direction, and other 1:1 learning methodologies.
- *Small Group Religious Education*: not UU specific. Skills based. Covers facilitation, dialogue, and other small group learning methodologies.

Threshold: Spiritual Practice & Care of the Soul

- *Pastoral Care*: Not UU specific, but fulfills the MFC requirement. Broader and more challenging. Not just about being in Church.
- *Trauma and Healing*: also fulfills the Embodied Wisdom & Beauty threshold.

Threshold: Embodied Wisdom and Beauty

- *Liturgy*: alternates every other year with UU Liturgy. This version includes UU and non-UU Liturgy so as to be inclusive of other degree pathways and religious perspectives.