

Credit Hour Policy

Starr King follows the federal guidelines of “credit hour” as a minimum of one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and an additional minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester of credit, a total of approximately 135 hours of work for each 3-credit course. We share the expected time commitment with prospective students, with incoming students during their orientation, and in academic advising.

All of our courses are planned to follow the federal guidelines and required time commitment is stated on many of our student forms. With our school’s core commitment to educating students to counter oppression and build just communities, it is helpful that it is becoming more common to use the term “time on task” instead of “classroom and out of classroom” work. “Time on task” fits our seminary’s social justice and spiritual formation paradigm that includes classroom work, on-line and experiential activities, as well as a broad range of “...other academic work leading to the award of credit hours” (34 CFR 600.2) including:

- Lectures
- Reading
- Writing
- Film and other multimedia
- Class discussion
- Skills-building and practice
- Individual or group projects
- Student presentations
- Applied learning in the community, congregation, etc.
- Immersion experiences
- Creative work
- Reflection
- Spiritual formation
- Quizzes or exams
- Meetings with the instructor
- Participating in an event (e.g., conference, workshop, etc.)

During our Fall and Spring 15-week semesters, we offer a wide range of credit-earning opportunities. In addition to on-campus classes, Starr King offers on-line synchronous and/or asynchronous classes, hybrid classes (by which we mean that some students are physically in a smart classroom while some students are participating from off-campus using zoom and a large flat in-classroom monitor). During these semesters, we also offer contextual/experiential courses such as internships, field education, clinical pastoral education (CPE), and course-embedded immersion courses. In addition, Starr King Individualized Learning courses (SKILS) allow for individual or small group learning experiences.

During our Winter and Summer terms, we offer our school's required core courses as well as elective courses in an intensified format. Outside of the pandemic crisis, the one-week intensives consist of 40 hours of classroom time with extensive pre-course reading/writing/reflection and post-course writing/project assignments. During the pandemic these courses have been converted to on-line classes with several hours of daily zoom lecture/discussion sessions, as well as on-line small group sessions. Because of the reality of zoom-fatigue as well as students' family and work responsibilities, we are experimenting with two 20-hour weeks, and other scheduling configurations.

In courses that have variable credits decided on by students and instructor (e.g. SKILs and field education) there are specific prompts on the students' course proposal forms that include the 45 hours of "time on task" per credit hour and the credit hours are decided by instructor and student.