

Program: Ph.D. in Theological Studies

Department: Theological Studies

Degree or Certificate Level: Ph.D.

College/School: CAS

Date (Month/Year): September 2023

Primary Assessment Contact: Elizabeth Block

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2021-2023

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2018

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

The results showed that this learning outcome has been achieved by doctoral students. In the past 3 years (2021-2023), 8 doctoral students have written a prospectus and passed the oral defense of the prospectus, indicating their readiness to move forward with original research culminating in a dissertation. In the past 3 years (2021-2023), 8 students also successfully defended their dissertations and graduated from our Ph.D. program (see list in Appendix B). Additional indicators of success in producing original research include the publications of two graduates of our Ph.D. program, who both have monographs forthcoming with Brill Press.

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

The data tells us that students who are able to write a successful prospectus are also able to write a dissertation, defend the dissertation, and graduate from our program. The data also indicates that our students are doing this well. There are rarely students who are unable to make it to or through the prospectus stage of the program. In 2023, one Ph.D. student opted to earn an MTS degree instead of pursuing the Ph.D. Also in 2023, a Ph.D. student who had received numerous extensions and faced many personal challenges opted to leave the program before completing the prospectus.

When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

This information has been shared with the graduate studies committee in the department of theological studies. Primarily, our concern now is to revise our SLOs in order to better capture the goals of the Ph.D. program and to make assessment more streamlined.

How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- x Course content
- x Teaching techniques
- x Improvements in technology
- x Prerequisites

- x Course sequence
- x New courses
- x Deletion of courses
- x Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- x Student learning outcomes
- x Artifacts of student learning
- x Evaluation process

- x Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- x Data collection methods
- x Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

The graduate studies committee will be meeting this semester to revisit and revise our SLOs. There may not be time this year to revise our evaluation tools (rubrics), but this needs our attention also. Additionally, the

Coordinator of Graduate Studies needs more information from graduates about their publications and careers, as this is a very helpful assessment of the success of our program and the achievement of these outcomes.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

We have adjusted the professional development series in our department to be more appropriate for Ph.D. students in the first two years of the program, focusing on navigating graduate seminars, academic writing, and turning seminar papers into conference papers/publications. The frequency and intensity of this program was becoming too much for graduate students.

How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

It is too soon to assess this change, as we just implemented it in Fall 2023.

What were the findings of the assessment?

N/A

How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

The Coordinator of Graduate Studies will continue to evaluate the Brown Bag professional development series.

## J: Prospectus Oral Defense Rubric

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

First Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

### Learning Goals

- x Students will demonstrate the ability to defend, clarify, and expand upon arguments made in the written prospectus.
- x Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate their understanding of the significance of the proposed dissertation to the broader field.

#### I. Instructions

- x Listen to the oral defense.
- x Using the rubric key, evaluate the defense and provide a total score.

#### II. Rubric Indicator

Defends, clarifies, and expands upon written prospectus with further evidence and argument	
Directly and correctly answers the examiner's questions	

## K: Dissertation Rubric

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

First Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

### Learning Goals

x Students will present an original thesis in response to a question of significance to their fields.

x

x

x

x

x

## Primary Sources

x

L: Dissertation Oral Defense Rubric

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph.D. Program Graduates and Dissertation Titles  
Defended 2021 -2023

2023

David Justice, "King and Kingdom Violence: Thinking with Martin Luther King, Jr. Toward the Beloved Community"

Chelsea Trotter, "The Devil Beyond the Bible"

Stephen "Craig" Sanders, "Wholly Resting in a Holy God: A Theological Interpretation of Eschatological Rest from the Seventh Day to the Lord's Day"

Tracy Russell, "The Betrothed of Christ: A Study of the Nuptial Metaphor in Late Ancient Syriac Virgin Martyr Narratives"

2022

Laura Estes, "Late Antique Christian Portrayals of Muslims and Jews"  
: Property and" Stephen Lawson, "Overcoming the Abyss: Erik Peterson's Eschatological Ecclesiology against  
Historicism and Anti-Historical Theology"

Ph.D. Prospectuses Defended  
2021 -2023

2023

Michael Greve, "The Theory and Practice of Church Councils: A Retrieval of Robert Bellarmine and His Anglican Critics"

Andrew Tucker, "Isaac of Antioch's Memre on Faith"

2022

Clayton Killion, "Tangled Traditions: The Long and Short of Early Christian Heterodoxy"

Ethan Laster, "The Material Body: A Post-Evangelical Process Theology"

Joshua Sturgeon, "After Deconstruction: A Post-Evangelical Process Theology"

2021

Tony Crescio no title given, but topic is St. Augustine, Virtue, and Liturgy

Joseph Gronę“Becoming Bread:The Liturgical Constitution of the Church in the Thought of Augustine of Hippo”

Mitchell Stevens “Reflecting Divinity: A Translation and Commentary of Anastasius of Sinai’s Sermones in constitutionem hominis secundum imaginem”Dei

David Justice “King and Kingdom Violence: Thinking with Martin Luther King, Jr. Toward the Beloved Community”