

ACADEMIC PROSPECTUS: 2020-2021 ADMISSIONS

**ASIA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, NORTH EAST INDIA (AGST-NEI)
(under the aegis of Asia Theological Association)**

**A Joint Academic Program of Shalom Bible Seminary
&
Oriental Theological Seminary**

AGST-NEI Master of Theology Program

Christian History (OTS campus)
Christian Theology (OTS campus)
Christian Ethics (OTS campus)
Applied Theology (SBS campus)

Asia Graduate School of Theology-North East India

The AGST-NEI MTh program is a joint initiative of Shalom Bible Seminary (SBS) and Oriental Theological Seminary (OTS) under the aegis of ATA. The program was inaugurated on 10th March, 2019, by Dr. Theresa Lua, General Secretary of the ATA and Dr. Paul Cornelius, Regional Secretary of ATA (India).

AGST-NEI Master of Theology: Two-year Program

The Master of Theology (MTh) is a two to four-year study-research program for students who have earned a Bachelor of Divinity (BD) or Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree from a recognized institution and wish to broaden and deepen their theological knowledge and to sharpen their critical-analytical skills through advanced research. This goal is achieved by providing the students the opportunity to take advanced courses in areas previously undertaken and courses that would help them in their preferred field of ministry. The program allows students to become conversant and competent in developing their methodological framework and specialize in their area of interest.

MTh Programs for 2020-2021

- Applied Theology (SBS campus)
- Christian History (OTS campus)
- Christian Theology (OTS campus)
- Christian Ethics (OTS campus)

Applied Theology

The MTh in Applied Theology is a 2-year research oriented program designed for students who have earned an MDiv degree from a recognized theological institution/seminary. Upon admission, the student is introduced into an environment where a high level of integration of spiritual formation and academic learning is facilitated. The course encourages each student to take initiative and explore personal interaction with dedicated tutors.

This program allows students to concentrate their coursework in the field of Applied Theology to develop a high level of competency in ministry with focus on integrating various practical disciplines. In the end, the course enables students to become conversant with diverse ministerial subjects such as Biblical Theology and Interpretation, Christian Education, Counseling, Missions, Religion, Leadership and Conflict Management, Apologetics, and Ethics.

History of Christianity

The MTh degree program in the field of History of Christianity provides continuing education through the discipline of academic excellence to broaden and deepen theological knowledge beyond MDiv level. The program aims to develop in the students an informed, critical approach to pursue advance training to enhance their knowledge and competence for future ministry, as well as, prepare students for research degree programs. It focuses at the

Christian past from both theological and historical perspectives. It provides options for special study of themes from the Early Church period to the present World/Global Christianity. The program will enable the students to understand and reflect critically upon the historical contexts in which Christian thought has developed. It is particularly advantageous to the students of Northeast India, as instructors are well informed of the regional cultures and contexts within which Christianity evolved. Students will be given the opportunity to experience interdisciplinary approach to learning through elective courses offered by historians, theologians and ethicists.

Students will be taught mainly in small seminar environment, and one-to-one directed readings. They will be given training in research methodology which offers a practical approach to postgraduate level skills of critical research and writing. Representative courses in the discipline: Historiography (core), Global Christianity (core), History of Christian Doctrines (core), Asian Church History (Core), Global Missions, Theology of the Reformers, Pentecostal History, Women in Church History and Ministry (core), History of Missions in Modern Christianity. Other elective interdisciplinary courses can be selected at the students' discretion and in consultation with the assigned academic adviser.

Christian Theology

The MTh program in Christian Theology is designed in order to train scholars who can serve the church both locally and globally as teachers, researchers, pastors, and leaders of the church and society. The program aims at nurturing faithful men and women to the teaching of Scripture coupled with a strong Christological emphasis towards strengthening and equipping the church in its mission. Representative courses include: Theological Systems I (God, Christology, and Pneumatology), Theological Systems II (Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology), Studies in Christology, and Advanced Readings on Contemporary Theologians.

Theology is a critical reflection on the belief and praxis of faith communities. It requires a critical-ethical analysis, historical awareness, and contextual understanding. Deep theological reflection and burning contemporary issues related to the church and society are brought up and analyzed in the classroom through classes like Christian Ethical Methodologies (integrated course), Theological Readings of Religion and Society, Themes and Issues in Christian Ethics (integrated course), and Contextual Theologies and Contemporary Ideologies. The program is committed to teaching students to recognize the connection between Christian theology and responsible Christian action. Both the Christian faith and practice serve as a basis of the curriculum.

Christian Ethics

The MTh program in Christian Ethics is designed for offering a disciplined understanding of the moral identity and ethical responsibility of individuals, Christians, Churches and institutions in the twenty first century. It helps students in developing a Biblically grounded, a theologically coherent, a pastorally sensitive and an ethically prophetic framework of

Christian life and a visionary mission of socio-political witness for engaging the multiple facets of contemporary public life.

Grounded in both historical and contemporary traditions of Christian ethical methodologies, it draws on the various disciplines of theology in presenting constructive proposals on the personal, spiritual, social and political matters that have a direct bearing on the well-being of Christian communities and the wider society. It employs and critically engages the empirical and qualitative data from human and social sciences for deepening its understanding of the dynamic forces and institutions that shape today's complex human and planetary situations. These objectives are achieved through a dialogical engagement with analytical tools, such as: foundational texts and figures, methodological and hermeneutical mediation, contextual case studies, social analysis and pastoral reflection on Christian ministry.

Representative courses include the following: Christian Ethical Methodologies, Themes and Issues in Christian Ethics; Contextual Theologies and Contemporary Ideologies; Culture and Social Theory; Community Transformation and Christian Public Witness; Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding; Implications of Key Social and Pastoral Documents; Text Seminar; Theo-ethical Engagement of Contemporary Voices; Spirituality/Stories of Prophetic-pastoral Leadership; and, Integration Seminar.

Duration and Degree Requirements for the Master of Theology Program

The Master of Theology is a two-year full-time research degree program and can be extended up to four years part-time to complete the prescribed requirements for graduation. It should be clearly understood that completion of the two years in residency or whatsoever without fulfilling the requirements does not constitute the completion of the program. A minimum grade of B should be secured to graduate with the MTh degree in all course works and thesis. This time limit may only be extended in special circumstances by petition to the AGST-NEI Academic Council.

Credit Break Down of MTh Program

Core:	18 units
	Electives: 12 units
	Thesis:6 units
	Practical Ministry: 3 units
Total units:	39 units

Admission Requirements for the MTh Program

Applicants should possess an MDiv/BD degree with a GPA of 3.0 in a scale of 4 (B grade). Applications for admission including all transcripts from high school onward to MDiv/BD must be submitted. Decision for admission to the program will be made by the respective departments, based on the evaluation of academic transcripts, performance in the entrance examination and other pertinent factors. Admissions will be given only to graduates of institutions (Serampore and ATA accredited schools) currently recognized by AGST-NEI.

During the application process, applicants are encouraged to contact faculty members with whom they would like to work to discuss their area of interests. Admission to the program is done with good faith but if the faculty find any student lacking the academic capacity and the aptitude for the degree to which he/she is admitted he/she will not claim the right for continuation. This policy is based on the fact that MTh degree, like any other academic degree in the academic pursuit, must be pursued only by those who are capable. Therefore, when such case arises, the decision of the department and AGST-NEI Academic Council shall be final.

The Aim and Structure of AGST-NEI

“We are two seminaries in North East India entrusted with the charge to impart sound, wholistic theological education to impact the church and society in our region. Recognizing that there is an urgent need to train skilled, competent personnel at the post-M. Div level to meet the varied challenges of church ministry in a variety of settings, we sincerely embark on this challenging task. Through rigorous training and equipping of God’s people, we desire to impact our region and beyond with transformational leadership.”

The Dean of AGST-NEI serves as the coordinator of the program. He/she works directly in consultation with the AGST-NEI Academic Council, Deans of the Post Graduate Studies and Academic Deans.

Asia Theological Association

“Asia Theological Association was formed in 1970 as a direct outcome of the Pan-Asia Congress of Evangelism held in Singapore in 1968. The initial intention was to serve as a coordinating agency for evangelical theological education in Asia. In 1977, it began offering accreditation services to evangelical institutions in Asia. The Asia Graduate School of Theology was established as the research and education arm of the association in 1983” (Source: “Article II: History” of the ATA constitution)

The Purpose of Asia Graduate School of Theology

“The AGST seeks to promote coordination and sharing of resources across regions through federated and joint programs at the post-M.Div. degree levels, joint research projects, and the interchange of postgraduate students and faculty. At the regional level, the aim of the AGST is to promote federated and joint programs and the interchange of post-graduate students and

faculty between member institutions. (Source: “Article XIII: Asia Graduate School of Theology” of the ATA Constitution).

Plan of the MTh Program

Academics

- Courses: core, electives, thesis
- Disciplined theology and research methods (workshop)
- Thesis writing workshop
- Research and library exposure
- Extra credits: extra units would be awarded for attendance in courses offered by visiting lecturers
- Certificates: Recognition for attendance in specialized seminars/workshops falling under the students’ area of specialization
- Academic responsibilities: Post graduate students are asked to serve as co-organisers in college academic programs. They are given the opportunity to serve as respondents, moderators and facilitators in seminars, and in faculty and post-graduate colloquium.

Supervision and Mentoring

- Dean of AGST-NEI, AGST-NEI Academic Council, Dean of Post Graduate Studies, Academic Dean
- SBS and OTS faculty, departmental faculty
- Thesis supervisors: The Dean of PG studies, in consultation with the department, will assign a faculty supervisor and second reader for MTh thesis writing. Along with the department, the thesis supervisor in the area of the student’s concentration is responsible for advising the student about courses and for supervision and examination of the thesis.

Spiritual Formation and Practical Ministry

- Serve as leaders and facilitators in growth group, chapel, worship services, retreat
- Ministry orientation, weekend practical ministry, church outreach
- Opportunities in different committees formed by the college
- Community service

Designing and Selection of Core and Elective Courses

Core Courses: Core courses are mandatory as they introduce students to the historical and contemporary concerns of a specific discipline by attending to its foundational sources, assumptions (perspectives), concepts, figures, issues and areas of pastoral, ecclesial and social implications.

Elective Courses: Electives are essential for promoting interdisciplinary approach in theological study. Elective courses allow the student and supervisor to design the study plan of a candidate with more academic creativity and foresight. Electives can be chosen within or

outside the discipline of a candidate. Selection and designing of electives have two primary functions:

- To promote deeper and specialized understanding of a subject matter or acquire advanced reading in the area of one's thesis writing or academic interest
- To allow other disciplines to learn and familiarize with specific subjects/topics that they will find helpful.
- Students who wish to have specialized input (not available in his/her discipline) from other disciplines for strengthening his/her developing area of research interest can design the elective courses in consultation with the supervisor.
- Students may be given the freedom to elect courses from the same or other departments/areas or even elect to take courses from the MDiv program if there is sufficient justification.

Nature of Core and Elective Courses

The offering of the both core and elective courses would be determined by a number of factors: student enrolment, nature of the study, learning needs, specialization of the student in a particular discipline, workload of the teachers, etc. Depending on these factors, courses can take any of the relevant forms:

- Seminar
- Reading Seminar
- Research seminar
- Directed Study
- Independent study
- Colloquium
- Reading Courses: Reading course or directed study will be offered and the requirements will be set by the instructor. In any case, students will read no less than 1500 pages and will include book summary, review, interaction and a term paper of no less than 25 pages.

Assigning of Course Credit

Credit is given only to the approved courses which a student successfully completes. No course which receives a grade lower than a B may count toward the degree. In this case, the Instructor will determine if extra work needs to be done to improve the grade or to retake the course.

Crediting of MDiv Courses

Students may be required to seat for courses offered in the MDiv program, but in that case the Instructor will personally design the course outline and set the requirements for MTh students. The requirements will be over and above the course syllabus requirements for the MDiv students.

Thesis

Requirement for thesis writing and submission:

- Students must write and present a thesis proposal for approval by the supervisor and second reader, to be granted the status of candidacy by the end of the first year. This status will entitle the student to begin to write the thesis. No student will be permitted to proceed with thesis research until candidacy is granted.
- Thesis proposal must be drafted, presented and approved in Year 1 on or before the deadline indicated in the AGST-NEI Academic Calendar.
- The writing of thesis is designed to demonstrate the student's competence in his/her area of concentration. It should deal with a specific topic in a way comparable with a paper published in professional journal.
- The thesis is for 6 credit Units.
- The normal length of the Thesis 100 - 120 pages exclusive of Bibliography and annexures.
- A thesis is considered complete and passed when the following expectations are fulfilled:
 - The thesis is graded B or above
 - Three standard bound copies printed in Executive Bond paper are submitted to the Dean of PG studies, at the institution in which the degree program is offered.

Residency and Non-residency

Students will be required to be in residence until all the course works are complete. However, exceptions can be made when a student is left with only writing of the thesis. In this case, he/she can do the research off campus. For this status to be granted, he/she will petition to the mentor and the Academic Council of the respective schools. This decision should be notified to the AGST-NEI Academic Council. This status will be granted if the student can provide evidence that he/she can be off campus and finish the research without any hindrance to the progress of the research.

Deficiency and Incomplete Status

In some cases if the Academic Council feels that a student is incompetent for the degree, but nonetheless sees the potential and the prospect of developing the student, he/she will be required to take some remedial courses in the MDiv level to make up the deficiencies. Courses taken under this category will be entered as elective and will not count toward the total unit required for the MTh degree.

At any point in time the academic performance of a student will be reviewed by the Academic Council of the respective schools. If the Council feels that the student will not be able to do an advance study and research he/she will be asked to withdraw and will be awarded a Post-graduate Diploma in Theological Studies (PGDTS). In any case, students whose GPA falls under B will not be permitted for continuation unless the student agrees to make up the deficiencies by taking extra courses. Alternative arrangements must be made in consultation with the subject instructor, Dean of PG studies, and the Academic Dean. This may eventually lead to the extension of study duration.

Fees and Payment

Since MTh is the highest academic degree offered by the institutions, there is no reduction of fees based on the units taken. The students will have to pay the stipulated fees as stated in the catalogue. The total cost of the MTh studies annually is Rs. 1,05,000/- (which does not include the monthly mess fee). Apart from this fees, MTh students will have to pay thesis registration fee and the cost for hood applicable at that particular time of registration. A thesis registration fee of Rs. 10000 (Rupees ten thousand only) will be realized separately once the Thesis Proposal is approved by the Academic Council. The hood will be given to the candidates upon graduation. After a completion of two academic years if, however, the student has not completed the work, he/she will have to pay a continuation fee of Rs. 7, 000 (seven thousand) as continuation fee, and Rs. 10, 000 (ten thousand) as thesis reading fee) and all other applicable fees. This is required in order to activate the student to a full time status. Other fees (dorm fee, library fee, etc) will be determined according to the need and utilization of the seminary facilities.

Graduation

Graduation is the final stage of the student's work. Upon fulfilment of the requirements, the Academic Council will recommend the candidate for graduation. A minimum GPA of B must be secured for graduation. No student will be allowed to march in the graduation with any hang over. Students may be cleared for graduation during any quarter of the academic year, but conferring of degree will only take place during the Graduation/Commencement Exercises. All academic requirements and dues in the accounts office must be cleared for graduation.

List of Core Faculty Team

Christian History (OTS campus)

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Christian Theology (OTS campus)

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Christian Ethics (OTS campus)

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Note: Prospective students are advised to correspond with the faculty members listed above for clarification and to seek preliminary direction in the particular program of study that they intend to pursue. Depending on the focus and interest of students, he/she can do elective and specialised courses with instructors from other disciplines. While the MTh program in a particular discipline would be offered by the core faculty team and other teachers available in the institution, instructors from both institutions are made available for giving specialised input and to serve as second readers.

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