

Saint Meinrad Deacon Formation Program • Course Descriptions

March 2011

Church History	2	<p>The course begins with covering the development of Church history from the time of Christ until the Council of Constance (1414-18). Particular themes include the relationship of the early Church to its roots in Judaism and the relationship of the Church to the Hellenistic culture of the Roman Empire. Also considered are the works of the Church Fathers and the life of the Church in its cultural and social setting, with special emphasis on the emergence of ministries within the structures of the Church. The course continues with the period leading up to the protestant reformation, the personalities and in the events of the reformation and its aftermath. Church life in the age of the Enlightenment, the period of revolution and the reevaluation of Church life leading up to the Second Vatican Council will also be covered. Attention is also given to the globalization of the Church and the changing face of Church ministry in our time.</p>
Introduction to Scripture	2	<p>This introductory course acquaints students with the Church’s basic teaching on revelation, Scripture and Tradition, beginning with the Bible as an expression of the Word of God. The course introduces students to the Church’s approach to Scripture, particularly as presented in <i>Dei Verbum</i> and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as well as the tools and methods the Church employs in the interpretation of Biblical texts. A survey of the geography of the Ancient Near East helps to provide a context for future Scripture studies.</p>
Spirituality	1	<p>This course focuses on the spiritual tradition of the life of the Church in an historical and synthetic way. Beginning with the psalms and Jewish forms of prayer, the course considers the emergence of prayer traditions, the Liturgy of the Hours and spiritual programs in the Church. Attention is focused on place of the Liturgy of the Hours as a significant prayer of the Church. Also considered are spiritual traditions in Church history: Benedictines, Mendicant, Carmelite, Salesian, and Jesuit, together with certain aspects of modern spirituality. Readings for the course include selections from spiritual classics.</p>
Foundations	2	<p>This course introduces students to the principles, systems and language of theology based on a Christian anthropology. Emphasis is given to the foundational elements of Christian belief: faith and the response to faith, the existence of God, and the teaching office of the Church. Attention is also given to developing skills for theological research using the sources of Church teaching: magisterial documents and theological writings.</p>
Old Testament	2	<p>This course introduces an approach to reading and interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures in their own context and in the context of Christian faith. The course includes an introduction to the history of Israel and the Old Testament Canon considered in light of its historical, prophetic and literary significance. The course also considers briefly some interpretative tools for Old Testament preaching.</p>

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Ministry of Deacon	1	<p>This course intends to be an overview for deacon candidates and families to the ministry of the permanent deacon. The course includes the development of the role of the deacon in the early Church, an introduction to the principles of the reinstatement of the diaconate in the Second Vatican Council and a presentation on the spiritual, theological and ministerial life of permanent deacons in the Church today. Emphasis is placed on the role of the families of deacons in ministry and the distinctive vocation of deacons, particularly as expressed in the writings of the United States bishops.</p>
Synoptic Gospels and Acts	2	<p>This course assists the student in reading and understanding the Synoptic Gospels and their place in the development of the Church's faith tradition. The course will consider each of the synoptic gospels in light of its particular theological and cultural setting as well as the relationship among them. Three basic themes are explored using the synoptic gospels as touchstones: faith in Jesus Christ, the identity of the Church and ministry and service. Because of its close connection to Luke's Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles is also treated in this course.</p>
Sacraments	2	<p>This course serves as an introduction to the basics of Sacramental Theology, tracing the theological, historical, pastoral and practical development of the Sacraments of Initiation, Marriage, and Orders. The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick are touched upon as they relate to the deacon's pastoral care of the sick. Special attention is given to the ministry of the permanent deacon in the sacramental life of the Church.</p>
Johannine Literature	1	<p>This course considers the theology and spirituality of the Church as expressed in the Fourth Gospel, the Letters of John and the Book of Revelation. Attention is given to the theological and cultural setting of John's Gospel as well as the principal images and themes concerning Jesus and the Church found in the Gospel. The special vocabulary and spiritual program of John will be considered. Literary, structural and theological topics will also be examined as will the position of the Johannine Church in the early Christian community.</p>
Ecclesiology	2	<p>The purpose of this course is to familiarize the student with the basic teachings of the Second Vatican Council as contained in its documents. The course addresses the biblical, magisterial and historical foundations of Church identity and leadership. Emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of the mission of the Church as evidenced at a universal and local level of Church life. The course also addresses the role of the deacon in the hierarchical structure of the Church.</p>
Epistles	2	<p>This course introduces the study of Paul and his theology, along with the remaining Letters found in the New Testament (other than John). Students examine the theological and cultural setting for Paul's writings in the early Church to gain insight into the reasons for his tremendous impact in the formation of Christian doctrine.</p>

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Introduction to Liturgy	1	This course is designed to provide a general understanding of the principles of liturgical theology and liturgical history in the Roman Catholic tradition. Topics addressed include: the concept of communal prayer, sign and symbol, the liturgical year, and liturgical roles, vesture and furnishings.
Pastoral Care & Counseling	2	This course examines the theological foundations of pastoral theology, care and counseling. Pastoral care and counseling are viewed as theological tasks rooted in the Christian tradition and an important activity of the Church and its ministries. The course uses the perspective of the human sciences to provide insight into the task of pastoral care. Particular attention is given to the distinction between spiritual direction and pastoral counseling.
Christology and Mariology	2	This course introduces the fundamentals of the Church's teaching about the person of Jesus Christ. The course focuses on the development of Christological doctrine through the writings of the Church Fathers and the early Councils of the Church. It also considers the person of Jesus in light of spirituality and liturgical life and the Church's understanding of Mary's cooperation in the work of Christ.
Homiletics	1	The weekend course covers theoretical aspects of liturgical preaching including the definition of the homily, the place of the homily in liturgical celebration, methods of preparation and sources for material. This course is followed-up with a seven-day workshop at Saint Meinrad, during which homilies are developed, delivered and critiqued in class settings using videotape feedback and analysis.
American Church	1	The primary focus of this course is the historical development of the Church in the United States. Other topics may include the inter-relationship between religious pluralism and the attitudes toward Church, Ecumenism, and the particular challenges faced by the American Church in modern times.
Catechetics	1	This course on the catechetical ministry of the Church introduces students to the National Directory for Catechesis. The class briefly considers the historical teaching office of the Church. Attention is also given to the theories that inform the practice of teaching in the Church today including: R.C.I.A., sacramental preparation, catechesis for children and youth and adult faith formation. In the final part of the course practical solutions to several problems encountered by catechists in the parish settings today are offered for discussion.
Eucharist	2	This course examines the theological, historical, pastoral and practical development of the Eucharist, with particular focus on appreciating and understanding the Church's teaching on the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament. The functions of the various elements of the Mass are examined with special attention given to the structure of the Eucharistic Prayer and the historical development of the liturgical books related to the celebration of the Eucharist.

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Liturgical Practicum	2	<p>The practicum is designed to introduce permanent deacon candidates to the basic knowledge and skills needed to effectively carry out liturgical ministry – including but not limited to assisting at Mass, presiding at Eucharistic Adoration/Benediction, Baptism, Marriage, Pastoral Care of the Sick and the Rites of Death and Burial. This is accomplished through an explanation of ritual books, vestments, vessels, posture and gesture, discussion of their meaning and significance and instruction on how to use them purposefully, carefully and wisely.</p>
Fundamental Moral Theology & Social Ethics	2	<p>This course introduces the basic principles of Catholic moral teachings. The moral life of the Church is considered in light of fundamental call of individual Christians to conversion. The moral life is also linked to the spirituality of individual Christian experience and the place of Scripture in moral reflection, character and virtue. Racism, social justice, and capital punishment are presented for analysis in the context of Catholic Social Teaching.</p>
Canon Law	2	<p>This course provides an introduction to the Code of Canon Law in preparation for ministry in the Church. Areas of consideration include the structure and history of canon law, general norms, sacramental law, diocesan and parish structures, marriage law, and the rights and obligations of the Christian faithful. There will be special emphasis on those areas related to the ministry of the permanent deacon.</p>
Trinity and Salvation	2	<p>This course continues to address the fundamentals of theology begun in Foundations, but with particular emphasis on theological topics such as the Trinity, the theology of the Spirit, the end times and salvation. Some practical/pastoral issues related to the Trinity will be considered, including problems of preaching and teaching Trinitarian doctrine.</p>
Moral Theology: Sexual & Medical Ethics	2	<p>This course surveys Catholic thought on sexual and medical ethics, particularly as they relate to ministerial situations in a parish or community setting. The magisterial documents which form the basis for understanding a theology of the human person and the body, as well as answers to specific moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia, reproductive technologies, non-marital sexual acts, homosexuality, and other sexual questions, are examined. The course introduces other resources to help deacon candidates develop conscientious responses to moral questions, aiding them in properly communicating Church teaching.</p>