

## ***Credit Hour Definitions for Programs***

### **Introduction**

The “credit hour” represents the fundamental unit of measurement of student workload for a given course. The nature of four programs at The Master’s Seminary requires that the definition of a “credit hour” be commensurate with the rigors and requirements of those programs. These standards, which have been developed over the history of the seminary, are given to guide all TMS faculty in the design and requirements for their courses. An annual reiteration of these standards is expected at the divisional and programmatic level to ensure currency and adherence. These standards will also be reviewed as part of the regular four-year program review cycle. While these standards are to be regarded as course minimums they also should not be exceeded by more than 10%.

#### **I. Master of Divinity**

##### *Definitions*

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. In a 15 week semester, a two-credit hour course will have approximately 30 in-class hours (each class period being 50 minutes in length).

Given that the M. Div. program is a graduate level program, a work load ratio of 2:1 is expected. Thus, a two-credit hour class would require at least 60–70 hours of out-of-class work. Spread over a 15 week semester, that would approximate 4 hours of out-of-class work each week.

##### *Calculating the Out-of-Class Load*

- Reading: Reading is calculated at 25 pages per hour. Certain types of reading demand more time to absorb the content, and thus this guideline may need appropriate adjustment.
- Research & Writing. Research and writing is calculated at ½ page (of finished product) per hour. Research and writing for the purpose of seminar presentation and defense necessarily demands more time to produce; thus this guideline may need periodic assessment and adjustment.
- Quizzes (per previous directives, take-home quizzes are discouraged). Preparation for each quiz is calculated at 1 hour.

- Exams. Preparation for each exam is calculated at 5 hours each.
- Independent/Arranged Courses. Such courses should reflect the above guidelines for determining requirements. Thus the amount of time devoted to achieving student learning outcomes should remain approximately the same, but should reflect the addition of hours that would have been spent in class.

### *Cautions/Suggestions*

- Exceeding 2:1 of necessity robs course requirement opportunities from other courses. Thus professors should maintain an awareness of work load.
- Periodic program reviews, including a comparison with workload required by other professors teaching the same class, should be used to assist in determining the level of course demands.
- Student evaluations (CAFES) should be utilized to query students about the amount of time being spent.

## **II. Master of Theology**

### *Definitions*

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. In a 15 week semester, a two-credit hour course will have approximately 30 in-class hours (each class period being 50 minutes in length).

Given the advanced academic nature of Th.M. studies, a work load ratio of 3:1 is expected. Thus, a two-credit hour class would require at least 90–100 hours of out-of-class work. Spread over a 15 week semester, that would approximate 6 hours of out-of-class work each week.

### *Calculating the Out-of-Class Load*

- Reading: Reading is calculated at 25 pages per hour. Certain types of reading demand more time to absorb the content, and thus this guideline may need appropriate adjustment.
- Research & Writing. Research and writing is calculated at ½ page (of finished product) per hour. Research and writing for the purpose of seminar presentation and defense necessarily demands more time to produce; thus this guideline may need periodic assessment and adjustment.

- Quizzes (per previous directives, take-home quizzes are discouraged). Preparation for each quiz is calculated at 1 hour each.
- Exams. Preparation for each exam is calculated at 5 hours.
- Independent/Arranged Courses. Such courses should reflect the above guidelines for determining requirements. Thus the amount of time devoted to achieving student learning outcomes should remain approximately the same, but should reflect the addition of hours that would have been spent in class.

#### *Cautions/Suggestions*

- Exceeding 3:1 of necessity robs course requirement opportunities from other courses. Thus professors should maintain an awareness of work load.
- Periodic program reviews should be used to assist in determining the level of course demands.
- Student evaluations (CAFES) should be utilized to query students about the amount of time being spent.

### **III. Doctor of Ministry**

#### *Definitions*

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. In a fifteen week semester, a two-credit hour course will have approximately 30 in-class hours (each class period being 50 minutes in length).

Given the nature of D. Min. studies, as a professional post-graduate program, a work load ratio of 3:1 is expected. Thus, a two-credit hour class would require at least 90–100 hours of out-of-class work. In the D. Min's modular system, that would approximate 6 hours of out-of-class work each week.

#### *Calculating the Out-of-Class Load*

- Reading: Reading is calculated at 25 pages per hour. Certain types of reading demand more time to absorb the content, and thus this guideline may need appropriate adjustment.
- Research & Writing. Research and writing is calculated at ½ page (of finished product) per hour. Research and writing for the purpose of seminar presentation and defense necessarily demands more time to produce; thus this guideline may need periodic assessment and adjustment.

*Cautions/Suggestions*

- Exceeding 3:1 of necessity robs course requirement opportunities from other courses. Thus professors should maintain an awareness of work load.
- Periodic program reviews should be used to assist in determining the level of course demands.
- Student evaluations (CAFES) should be utilized to query students about the amount of time being spent.

**IV. Doctor of Theology***Definitions*

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. In a doctoral (Th.D.) course of study, each credit hour involved in the individually-designed program of study will equate to approximately 15 in-class hours (each class period being 50 minutes in length).

Given the advanced academic nature of research Th.D. studies, a work load ratio of 4:1 is expected. Thus, a four-credit hour class would require at least 240–250 hours of student work. Spread over a 15 week semester, that would approximate 16 hours of student work each week. The total number of student work hours for the 24 Th.D. credit hours comes to 1440 hours.

*Calculating the Student Work Load*

- Reading: Reading is calculated at 30 pages per hour. Certain types of reading demand more time to absorb the content, and thus this guideline may need appropriate adjustment.
- Research & Writing. Research and writing is calculated at ½–1 page (of finished product) per hour. Research and writing for the purpose of colloquium presentations and dissertation defense necessarily demand more time to produce; thus this guideline may need periodic assessment and adjustment.
- Residency Requirement. Residency would normally involve a total of two years (or, four semesters). During their residency Th.D. students are

required to spend 20 hours per week in library research and dissertation writing and to meet with their mentor at least once per week. Calculating 20 hours per week over 60 weeks (= four semesters) results in 1200 hours of student work. The Dissertation Prospectus Course comprises the first 240 hours of Th.D. residency. Students expecting to complete residency in less than two years must expect to fulfill the 1440 total hours of student work.

*Cautions/Suggestions*

- Exceeding the 4:1 ratio for secondary areas of study (e.g., Akkadian) may detract from the student focus on research and writing for his dissertation.
- Periodic program reviews should be used to assist in determining the level of course demands.