

FINAL MA PORTFOLIO & DEFENSE

(From Canvas, September 2, 2022)

MA students are to submit a final portfolio that consists of (1) a chronological list of all courses taken in the program; (2) a signature assignment illustrating achievement of TRS SLO #1; (3) a signature assignment illustrating achievement of TRS SLO #2; and (4) a reflective essay of approximately 1500 words.

Following submission of the portfolio, students will complete an oral defense, one hour in length, with a committee of three full-time TRS faculty members.

1. RECORD OF COURSEWORK

Please submit a *chronological* list of all the courses you have taken in your graduate program (CEM, CTE, or MA). Download the appropriate program document from the bullet list below. Edit the document to reflect the details of your specific course of studies. Save your file as a PDF and upload it to this form by clicking on the blue button above. If you need to add any explanatory comments about your list (e.g., to justify substitutions for program requirements), please use footnotes in the course-list document itself. If you have other general comments, you can enter them directly into this text box.

2. SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT #1

The TRS graduate programs are designed to address two overarching Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

1. Critically analyze the religious dimensions of human experiences as expressed in sacred texts, art, ritual practice, ethical commitments, philosophy/theology, and social structures.
2. Appreciate how religious or ethical traditions provide resources for responding to injustice and living ethically.

The first SLO is measured against the following performance standard: ***“Student uses pertinent, appropriately documented, primary and/or secondary sources to demonstrate sophisticated critical engagement with a religious expression in its context and from an explicit, well-defined, disciplinary perspective; takes into account diverse contexts, alternative explanations, assumptions, and implications, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of those interpretations.”***

From your coursework in the program, select one significant assignment that you think best illustrates your success in achieving *each and every element* of this performance standard. Turn on the line number feature for the document. Insert a page break at the end and add a postscript with any explanatory notes about the assignment. Insert another page break and add the original assignment prompt. Save this expanded document as a PDF and submit it to Canvas by clicking on the blue button above. Please use the text box to add a bullet list about precisely where in your essay (i.e., page and line numbers) each of the SLO components demonstrated.

3. SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT #2

The TRS graduate programs are designed to address two overarching Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

1. Critically analyze the religious dimensions of human experiences as expressed in sacred texts, art, ritual practice, ethical commitments, philosophy/theology, and social structures.
2. Appreciate how religious or ethical traditions provide resources for responding to injustice and living ethically.

The second SLO is measured against the following performance standard: ***“Student uses pertinent, appropriately documented, primary and/or secondary sources adeptly and insightfully to analyze an ethical question or injustice in light of diverse religious resources or ethical theories; identifies strengths and possible critiques of the various resources or theories; and articulates own response, including an explanation of the assumptions behind, objections to, and implications of this position.”***

From your coursework in the program, select one significant assignment that you think best illustrates your success in achieving *each and every element* of this performance standard. Turn on the line number feature for the document. Insert a page break at the end and add a postscript with any explanatory notes about the assignment. Insert another page break and add the original assignment prompt. Save this expanded document as a PDF and submit it to Canvas by clicking on the blue button above. Please use the text box to add a bullet list about precisely where in your essay (i.e., page and line numbers) each of the SLO components demonstrated.

4. FINAL REFLECTIVE ESSAY

This final reflection provides the opportunity for you to reflect on how you have (or have not) demonstrated mastery of the standards for each of the two TRS Student Learning Outcomes at the graduate level of achievement.

In an essay of approximately 1500 words, highlight how and where you have met each of the TRS SLOs at the graduate level of achievement and where you still have room to grow. Use specific examples from your graduate coursework to demonstrate each aspect of the graduate standards. Make sure to detail precisely where you see this achievement (e.g., citing page and line numbers from your signature assignments). You may want to refer to the bullet lists you created for each of those earlier assignments to help you get started on this reflective analysis.

Once you have illustrated your achievements, if you wish, feel free to add general comments about your learning experience in the TRS graduate program.

PORTFOLIO DEFENSE

Each of the TRS graduate programs (certificates and MA) conclude with a required "comprehensive examination." This involves an oral defense of the student's final portfolio, especially the final reflective essay, and a discussion of the personal growth experienced by the student in the process of the graduate program.

In addition to reviewing your Final Reflective Essay, you may want to consider the following questions in advance of that oral defense and exit interview.

- What have been your most important insights, into the theological subject matter and into yourself, as you have pursued the program?
- How have you grown in your understanding and ability to analyze critically the religious dimensions of human experience?
- How have you grown in your appreciation of the relationship between religion and responding to injustice or living ethically?
- Where is there still room for growth?

The MA comprehensive examinations and Certificate exit interviews are arranged on an individual basis. Individual students should consult their respective academic advisors for assistance in creating a committee of three TRS faculty to conduct a one-hour oral examination/exit interview (in person or *via* video-conference).