

Academic Policies

Registration

Registration dates for the beginning of each semester are designated on the seminary calendar. Orientation is held for new students at the beginning of the fall semester.

Classification

A student who registers for at least 9 hours a semester shall be considered a full-time student and is classified according to the number of hours completed and recorded in the Registrar's Office at the beginning of the semester. Anyone taking less than 9 hours is a part-time student. Classification in the MDiv program is as follows:

Junior: 29 semester hours or less of cumulative academic credit

Middler: 30-59 semester hours

Senior: 60 semester hours, or less if the student has an approved plan to complete requirements for a degree the following summer

Credit Outside of EMS

Advance approval should be secured from the dean or associate dean of the seminary before enrolling for work in other institutions with the intention of transferring credit to Eastern Mennonite Seminary for graduation, keeping in mind that the majority of credits toward a degree at EMS must be earned at EMS.

Residency Requirement

The seminary recognizes the value of residential studies to students but also the convenience of distance learning courses and non-campus-based programs, such as conference-based pastoral training programs. In order to insure a quality seminary education, a minimum of one academic year with full-time enrollment (27 credit hours) is required on campus to earn a degree. And when deemed appropriate, residency course requirements can be met by face-to-face class experience with EMS professors in other locations. Transfer credit from non-traditional learning modes (e.g., distance learning courses) is limited to one academic year (27 credit hours).

An important clarification concerns the seminary's extension in Lancaster, Pa. Graduate Certificate and Master of Divinity students at the extension may complete the residency requirement in Pennsylvania. Master of Arts in Religion and Master of Arts in Church Leadership students must fulfill the residency requirement in a manner determined by their main campus advisor and seminary dean.

Advanced Standing Credit for Study

In select cases, the seminary awards credit by examination, credit for noncredit study, or credit for studies that were completed as a professional certificate.

Students who feel they have competency in a seminary level course may, on an exceptional basis, receive advanced standing credit by examination. Determination of a student's competence will be made by appropriate written and/or oral assessment that the student has the knowledge, competence, or skills that would normally be provided by the specific course under consideration. This credit will not be automatically granted on the basis of ministerial or life experience or the content of undergraduate work but on the basis of an examination set by the professor of the course. The Dean's approval is required before an examination is arranged.

On rare occasions, coursework taken at a non-accredited study center will be evaluated by the Associate Dean to determine whether it can be considered as *credit for study*. With the submission of a certificate of completion and a recording fee, a student can request that such nontransferable credit be applied toward advanced standing provided at least 45 hours were invested per credit hour granted, faculty had the required credentials, the reading, writing and research projects were appropriately rigorous for graduate level studies and the content meets degree requirements. No more than one-sixth of the total credits required for a degree will be granted as advanced standing credit.

The seminary awards credit for Clinical Pastoral Education units offered by a CPE Center accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. With the submission of a CPE professional certificate of completion and the payment of a recording fee, a student will receive 6 semester hours of credit for a CPE unit applied toward the relevant degree at EMS.

Grading System and Quality Points

The seminary maintains both qualitative and quantitative requirements. Daily classwork, tests, examinations, attendance and attitude all enter into the determination of standing and credit. Since seminary students are working at the graduate level, it is expected that many will earn *A*'s and *B*'s. Grade *C* is minimally acceptable in that it reflects some deficiency. Therefore, consistent work at *C* level is inadequate for graduation. A grade point average of 2.50 is the minimum requirement for graduation from a degree program. This means that the average student will perform at the level of 2.50 GPA or above.

A- Superior performance; represents excellence in mastery of course objectives. Four quality points per semester hour.

B- Commendable performance; adequate fulfillment of course objectives. Three quality points per semester hour.

C- Marginal performance; represents some areas of deficiency. Two quality points per semester hour.

D- Inferior performance; may be given for course papers or projects but not as a final grade as this level of performance will be considered a failure to pass the course.

F- Failure to pass course. No quality points.

I- Incomplete. Each student is expected to complete all course work on time and to the satisfaction of the instructor. Incompletes will be allowed only in cases of emergency, when circumstances beyond the control of the student prevent completion of course requirements on time. An incomplete shall be requested one week before the end of the term and must be approved by the instructor and the associate dean of the seminary. An incomplete must be removed within six weeks after the close of the term in which it was obtained. A grade will be assigned based on the work completed.

P- Passed. Applies only to approved courses. No quality points.

SP- Satisfactory progress. Given at a terminal point in a unit course when it is impossible to give a graded rating. This is not a final grade.

W- Withdrawal. Indicates student withdrew from the course between the fifth and ninth weeks of the semester. No quality points.

A plus or minus behind the letter grade reflects some deviation from the middle of the grade category. These designations may be used by the instructor to distinguish more precisely the level of achievement.

Grade Appeals

A student who believes that a grade received for a course does not accurately reflect his/her achievement of course requirements and expectations should:

1. Confer with the teacher who assigned the grade, stating the reason(s) she/he believes a grade change is warranted.
2. If the teacher does not agree to change the grade, the student may appeal to the seminary dean. This appeal must state in writing the evidence the student believes indicates that a grade change is warranted. The dean's decision will be final.

All grade changes must be authorized by the person who agreed to the change and use the formal grade change process of the seminary registrar's office.

An appeal to any grade assigned between September 1 and December 31 must be initiated no later than February 15 of the following year; an appeal to any grade assigned between January 1 and May 15 must be initiated by July 1; and an appeal to any grade assigned between May 16 and August 31 must be initiated by October 15.

Graduation

Residence requirements are specified in each program description. Students expecting to graduate must file applications on official forms provided by the Dean's Office of the year in which the degree is to be conferred. Anyone choosing to walk in the commencement ceremony must plan to fulfill all degree requirements by the end of the summer term.

Course Expectation

Instructors will prepare a syllabus for each course describing its purpose, requirements, objectives and other appropriate information, such as bibliography and schedule. In general, 500 level courses are for first year students, 600 for second year students and 700 for third year students, representing increasing levels of difficulty. Students may request to see course syllabi when making course selections. Such requests should be made to the Dean's Office.

The seminary has established the following guidelines for instructors to use in setting course requirements:

Research and Learning Projects

Daily assignments and/or a term project are assumed. However, the ratio of such work to reading and other requirements is arranged at the discretion of the instructor. Where term projects represent 50 percent beyond daily requirements, a guideline is 5-7 pages of double-spaced typed text per credit hour.

Reading

Assigned reading is expected in all courses. Where reading assignments constitute 50 percent of the total course requirements, the guide is 500 pages or 15 hours per credit hour.

Academic Probation

A student whose last 9 credit hours or cumulative GPA falls below 2.5 will be placed on probation for the next term. If sufficient progress is not made to remove the probation, continuation at seminary will be reviewed in Academic Committee where members of the Admissions Committee and an SCC student representative are also present. Three or more F's in an academic year will place a student on academic probation.

Adding and Dropping Courses

It is advantageous to be in attendance from the beginning of a course, but students may add a course through the sixth day of the semester (the Tuesday of the first full week of classes). A student is permitted to drop a course through the fourth week with that course not appearing on the permanent record. Courses dropped the fifth week through the ninth week of the semester are recorded as W (withdrawn). No change is permitted after the ninth week. The official drop/add request must be made in the seminary Registrar's Office. During the summer term comparable dates for changes are in effect (see Student Handbook).

If a student does not receive a passing grade in a course which has not been officially dropped, F will be entered on the grade report and permanent record.

Attendance and Absences

Students are required to attend class meetings of all courses for which they are enrolled unless excused for satisfactory reasons. Work missed by late entrance or absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the instructor.

Excuses may be secured for sickness, funerals in the family and similar circumstances. Each faculty member is responsible for granting excuses. Students should not absent themselves from classes without clearance from their respective professors .

If absences persist, the seminary associate dean and Academic Committee may counsel the instructor on the student's class standing or determine the student's future enrollment status.

Study Time

Course schedules are planned to provide 15 hours of classroom interaction between the instructors and students for each credit hour. Students should expect approximately two and one-half hours of study outside class for each hour in class.

Load Limitation

Students who have a pastorate, job and/or extracurricular activities exceeding on average 20 hours per week shall take at least three years to complete the Master of Arts in Church Leadership degree and at least four years to complete the Master of Divinity degree. The maximum load for such students shall be 12 hours per semester and 24 hours per year (including summer terms). Approval of the associate dean is required to exceed this limit.

Outcome Assessment

The university reserves the right to require students to participate in institutional testing programs as part of ongoing assessment of student outcomes.

Student Advising and Assessment

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor who will assist in course selection and be available for general guidance and consultation. Advisors will seek to discern what areas of significant experience students bring with them that could impact course selection. The general process is for students to take core courses as listed in each degree program; adjustments recommended by the advisor can be made with approval from the associate dean.

The seminary faculty will work with students in a number of ways to evaluate their competency for ministry. The students will have the opportunity to do self-evaluation as well as to receive formative evaluation from faculty advisors. There are a variety of questionnaires and interviews faculty use to gather information which can be helpful to the student and the seminary for assessing both the students' competency in ministry formation and the seminary's role in that process.

Degree Candidacy

Normally when nearing the completion of 20 semester hours of work, the formative process leads to a decision on degree candidacy. For transfer students, degree candidacy isn't automatically granted based on transfer credit but will occur when the student nears completion of 20 semester hours of study at EMS. Any transfer credit will be finalized only after degree candidacy is granted. Degree candidacy represents a significant point of accountability in which the faculty together decide whether or not the student appears qualified to successfully complete a given degree program. The decision will be in the form of approval, approval with qualifications, or denial of degree candidacy. The decision is made in a regular faculty meeting where SCC student representatives are also present.

Summative Evaluation

In the students' final year, the faculty also do a summative ministry competency evaluation or competency in their chosen field of study for students preparing to graduate and make a recommendation indicating readiness for ministry in a faculty meeting where SCC student representatives are also present.

Moving from Certificate to Degree

If a student without a college degree successfully completes a [certificate program](#) and wishes to continue in seminary studies, application may be made for acceptance into a degree program on condition that the person have a GPA of 2.50 or above.

This application process is a letter to the seminary dean formulated by the student and approved by the student's academic advisor who will initiate the degree candidacy process described above.

Auditing

Students and community members may enroll in seminary classes (excluding courses in the Formation sequence) as participant auditors. The level of participation will be negotiated between the auditor and the course instructor. The participation fee is one-half the regular tuition rate. An audit designation will appear on their transcript. If a student chooses to complete all required coursework and get credit for a course previously audited, full tuition will be charged.

Senior citizens (65+) may audit a course with the permission of the instructor, at no charge.

Withdrawal from Seminary

A student considering withdrawal from EMS is asked to counsel with the associate dean or the dean of the seminary. They may be in a position to make suggestions which enable a student to remain in school.

Transcripts of Credit

Students desiring transcripts of credit should make written requests to the university Registrar's Office. There will be a \$7 charge for each copy. Cash settlement of accounts will be required for release of transcripts.

Assistance for Students with Special Learning Needs

Eastern Mennonite Seminary is committed to working out reasonable and acceptable arrangements for satisfactory completion of course requirements for students with learning difficulties. When the student or instructor becomes aware of such difficulties, the instructor may refer the student to the [Academic Success Center](#). In consultation with the student and the Academic Success Center, the instructor will develop reasonable and appropriate alternatives for course requirements which are directly affected by the disabilities. The student's advisor and the associate dean should be informed of these arrangements. In case of failure to reach agreement, the student may appeal to the Seminary Academic Committee.

Inclusive Language

Statement of Commitment

We recognize that all human beings are persons of infinite worth created equally in the image of God. Accordingly, we recognize that the language which we use to speak about each other is no negligible matter but one of crucial importance. The words by which we name and address each other are no less than the means by which we can recognize each other mutually as persons created in God's image, and the means by which we can empower each other mutually to live out the potential God has given each of us.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary is an institution dedicated to the task of "equipping persons for ministries in the service of the kingdom of God." As teaching faculty we recognize the centrality of language to our task. We are equipping persons to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to the church and unchurched alike in our communities and around the world. And because our task is that of equipping communicators, we recognize the crucial importance of language, the words which we use, to proclaim the Good News which we wish to communicate. We therefore commit ourselves:

1. To work together and encourage our students toward greater inclusiveness in our language within the classroom setting:
 - in our syllabi
 - in our lectures
 - in our class discussions and student presentations
 - in the papers which we write and the sermons which we prepare
2. To work together and encourage our students toward greater inclusiveness in our language within the worship setting:
 - in our public address to each other and in our prayers

- in our creation of litanies, worship responses, etc.
 - in our reading of Scripture
 - in our choice and in our use of hymns and other worship materials
3. To work together and encourage our students toward greater inclusiveness in our language within the administrative setting:
 - in our literature introducing and publicizing the seminary
 - in our in-house communications to each other
 - in our personal contacts with potential students
 4. To work together and encourage our students toward greater inclusiveness in our language within the community setting:
 - in our personal contacts with each other in the EMS community
 - in the public context of our social gatherings

Class Privileges of Spouses

The spouses of full-time EMS students may attend classes in the seminary as visitors, with the permission of the teacher. Such attendance is on a non-credit, non-audit basis and is without registration, cost or credit. Registration and payment of tuition are required to receive credit. Spouses are invited and encouraged to participate in other seminary activities such as chapel and colloquiums.

Privileges of Senior Citizens

Eastern Mennonite Seminary welcomes senior citizens, 65 years of age and older, to visit classes, with the permission of the instructor, on a non-credit basis. Individuals who would like access to course materials through the learning management system (Moodle) are asked to register to audit the course.