

DSRE 541-031

Foundations of Biblical Spirituality

Summer 2026

S. Joseph Kidder

SYNOPSIS OF THE COURSE

CLASS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Class location:	Andrews University
Class meeting times:	May 17-21, 2026
The class will meet:	
Sunday May 17:	4-8pm.
Monday to Thursday:	8am to noon; 2pm to 5:30pm
Course Website:	learninghub.andrews.edu
Instructor Email:	kiddersj@andrews.edu
Office location:	Seminary Hall, Room N221
Office hours:	By Appointment

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

Study and practice of spiritual growth designed to lead students to growth in their personal spiritual lives.

PROGRAM & COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Your degree program seeks to help you achieve the **Program Learning Outcomes** basic to your chosen profession. Your Program Learning Outcome primarily addressed in this course is:

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): The student should be able to

1. Develop greater personal biblical and spiritual growth.
2. Practice the characteristics of basic Christian spiritual disciplines such as devotion and worship and Bible study.
3. Create a narrative that reflects the character of Christ and exemplifies personal integrity and professional ethics.
4. Define the theological, psychological, and sociological foundations for growth in the Christian life.
5. Identifies the unique contributions of Seventh-day Adventist theology to the practice and theology of the spiritual life: e.g., Sabbath, intercession of Christ, healthful living.
6. Understanding that the depth of their relationship with God will be expressed in their relationships with others: their family, friends, work associates, retail clerks, people in need, etc.
7. Participate effectively in spiritual retreats and small groups for spiritual growth and accountability.

(The full set of programs learning outcomes for your degree program is listed in **Appendix 4**.)

The following **Course Learning Outcomes** contribute to the overall Program Learning Outcomes by identifying the key learnings to be achieved by diligent work in this course:

MA in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM) English & Spanish Program Outcomes

1. Delivers effective biblically based sermons.
2. Demonstrates proper biblical interpretation skills.
3. Understands the historical–theological and missional development of the Adventist Church.
4. Trains church members for evangelism.
5. Empowers church members for leadership.
6. Capable of reaching specific social groups

Master of Divinity (MDIV) Program Outcomes

1. Demonstrate spiritual growth through the use of spiritual disciplines.
2. Explain Scripture in an exegetically and theologically sound manner from an Adventist perspective.
3. Engage in biblical and theological reflection as the basis for spiritual growth.
4. Experience enrichment of personal and family life.

MA in Youth and Young Adult Ministry (MAYYAM) Program Outcomes

1. Engages consistently in biblical devotional habits to be open to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in his or her life.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course topics and assignments have been selected to contribute to learning and evaluating these Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) as follows:

Week	Date	Topics to be Covered	CLOs Addressed
One Week	May 17-21, 2026	Introduction/Definition/Overall View of Spiritual Growth	
		Worldview, Core Values, & Rule of Life	
		Sin, Repentance, Confession, Forgiveness	
		Worship	
		Scripture & Journaling	
		Our Spiritual Journey/Guidance	
		Prayer	
		Retreat	
		Jesus' Method of Spiritual Growth	
		Fellowship & Service	
		Simplicity & fasting	
		How to Keep Growing	

The portfolio is due on July 27, 2026.

The portfolio will include everything you did for the class.

All submission must be on the Learning Hub. Any other means will not be accepted.

All written reports must be in Micro Soft Word. Nothing else will be accepted.

Nothing will be accepted after the Deadline.

Please note, depending on needs, some of the above topics might not be covered. Also note that other topics might be covered that are not on the list.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Course Materials

1. Kidder, S. Joseph. *Journey to the Heart of God: Spiritual Practices That Will Transform Your Life*. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019. (192 pp)
2. Kidder, S. Joseph. *The Big Four, Secrets of a Thriving Church Family*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub., 2012. (159 pp)
3. Kidder, S. Joseph. *Living With the Mind of Jesus*. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2012. (188 pp)
4. White, Ellen. *The Desire of Ages*. (Only chapters 54 to the end) ISBN: 0816321833 (53 pp)
5. White, Ellen. *Steps to Christ*. ISBN: 1477469788 (96 pp)
6. **Optional:** The student may purchase access to a website with hundreds of materials pertinent to the class such as Power Points, lectures, videos, exercises etc. in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and French from the instructor. You may use the materials in your ministry, but you cannot share them with others. The cost will be \$35.00.

REQUIREMENTS DURING THE INTENSIVE

1. **Attendance:** Spiritual growth involves the mastery of basic concepts such as prayer, Bible study, worship, etc., participation with fellow believers in corporate fellowship, and the practice of personal spiritual disciplines.

The class time provides opportunity for concept mastery and corporate fellowship. Therefore, regular attendance of your presence at the Learning hub to watch videos and to attend our Zoom meetings are required.

2. Watch Online Videos and Attend the Zoom Meeting. Work on project which may be assigned. The assignments will be either thought the videos or the Zoom meeting
3. **Spiritual Retreat:** In order to introduce students to the value of spiritual retreat, discipleship, small groups, and bonding to like-minded spiritual pilgrims, all students are required to take part in a one-day spiritual retreat. This class cannot be passed unless there is full participation in the retreat. Details of the retreat are in the video about the retreat.

There will be no excuse for not doing the retreat. If you fail to do so, you will have to drop the class.

Please write a one-page reflection on the retreat, what you like, how you were blessed, how you would do it differently next time.

It is due July 27, 2026

4. **Small Groups:** As part of spiritual growth, we need community. Every student is required to form a small group that they meet with every week. The small group will start meeting the week of May 17 and end July 27, 2026

During the time of small group, you will be engaged in prayer, study of the Word, accountability, and other exercises that the professor might assign. Please use the class materials as the basis of your teaching.

The student is to submit a short report indicating that s/he has done so, and the spiritual benefits gained from it.

Due July 27, 2026.

5. The students must take full notes and submit them to the instructor in the portfolio. One way to take notes is to answer these questions:
 - a. What is the big idea?
 - b. What is the application of the big idea to my life?
 - c. What is the big idea application to my ministry?
 - d. What are some of the unresolved issues?
 - e. What touched my heart?

All reflections are Due July 27, 2026.

POST-INTENSIVE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **ALL assignments must be turned in on the Learning Hub in the appropriate drop box.**
2. **Practice of the Devotional Life:** The student will spend 3 hours each week (1/2 hour each day) in the practice of spiritual disciplines spread over 6 days. Factors that should be kept in mind are:

You are free to complete the 3 hours doing whatever devotional things you like, such as Bible reading, prayer, etc., which you find valuable. Your class reading will give you some new ideas, but it does not count as devotional time. This is a wonderful opportunity to experiment with new ways of meeting God. Since prayer and Bible reading is so crucial for the Christian, we urge that students try to spend at least 3 to 4 hours weekly in prayer and Bible study.

Unless there is some special reason for change, the 3-hour time period should be spread out over at least six days during the week.

At the beginning of each week, you should decide what your specific daily plan is for each time you have devotions that week and write it down.

You should keep a careful log of your time with God. A sheet is provided for you at the end of this syllabus. Make sure for each devotional time you have, you record:

- a) Date, i.e., month and day
- b) Time (duration), i.e., 7:00 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.
- c) A brief 1-2 sentence summary of how things went. Did you follow your plan?

d) At the end of the week the total time spent must be calculated and recorded.

Include all these reports in the portfolio to be turned in by **July 27, 2026.**

NOTE: While for some it may seem a bit artificial to keep track of devotional time, it helps us stay honest with ourselves and God and, in the end, and most students thank us for the experience. Keeping such records is a time-honored practice devoted Christians have often followed.

3. **Reading Reports:** Please read the required books listed and write weekly reports. Please include a summary of what you read, a positive reaction, a negative reaction, and an application to your personal life. Include all the book reports in the portfolio to be turned in by **July 27, 2026.**
4. **Fasting:** every student is to fast for one day from food or TV or Facebook and write a one-page report on it evaluating the experience. **The due date is July 27, 2026.**
5. **Reflection Paper:** Each student is to write an 8–9-page reflection paper covering three subjects:
 - a) The first part is to synthesize your spiritual experience from **May 17, 2026, to July 27, 2026.** In what ways have you grown spiritually? What have you learned about yourself during this time? What have you learned about God? This section is to be 2-3 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced.
 - b) The second part is to give full treatment of your Core Values and Worldview. This section is to be 2-3 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced. See class materials.
 - c) The third section is to give an in-depth treatment of your vision for the future. What is your plan to grow spiritually? This section is to be 2-3 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced. The paper needs to be included in the portfolio, due **July 27, 2026.**
6. **Assignments due dates: the reading reports and the spiritual discipline reports must be handed in at the end of the semester in the portfolio which is no later than July 27, 2026.**
7. **The Portfolio:** There will be no final exam. A portfolio containing all class notes, reading reports, small group reports, weekly reading reports, the fasting report, the devotional reports, retreat reports, and reflection paper will be in place of a final.
8. Also include the Assignment Breakdown. This should be submitted to the instructor by **July 27, 2026.** Grades will be given based on neatness, order, and completeness. The portfolio should contain all material passed out in class, and all the student's notes and completed assignments. Be sure to include material from the retreat.
9. **Please upload your devotional and reading report every week to the LH.**

MORE ABOUT THE COURSE

TIME EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COURSE

US Credit-Hour Regulations

For every semester credit, the Andrews University credit hour definition requires that:

- **Courses for professional masters’ degrees (e.g., MDiv)** include 15 instructor contact hours and 30 hours of independent learning activities.
- **Courses for academic masters’ (e.g., MA [Religion]) and all doctoral degrees** include 15 instructor contact hours, and 45 hours of independent learning activities.

The calculation of hours is based on the study skills of the average well-prepared graduate student. Students weak in these skills: 1) may require more time and should consider taking fewer classes each semester; and 2) can find skill development assistance through the Seminary Study and Research Skills Colloquia, the AU Writing Center, and AU Student Success office.

In order to achieve the outcomes of this course, learning time will be distributed as follows:

Professional Masters’ Programs		
3 Credits		
Instructor Contact Hours	Face to Face Instructional Time	39 hrs.
	Other Instructor-Directed Activities	6 hrs.
Independent Learning Activities	Reading (748 pages 25 p/h)	30 hrs.
	Devotional Report	30 hrs.
	Written Assignments	15 hrs.
	Reflection Paper	12 hrs.
	Portfolio	5 hrs.
Total Hours:		137 hrs.

SDATS GUIDELINES FOR CALCULATING ASSIGNMENT LOADS

Average reading speed: 15-20 pages/hour for light reading not to be tested on
 10-15 pages/hour for heavy reading for exams

Writing time: 2.5 – 3 hours/double spaced page, from start to finish product

Reflective Writing Assignment: 0.5 hours per page

An Online Assignment Load Calculator is available at: www.cte.rice.edu/workload/

GUIDELINES FOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Grades are based on the independent learning activities below which provide practice toward, and assessment of, the learning outcomes of this course. The grade weighting for each assignment is provided in the right-hand column. Specific due dates are given in the Course Overview above.

Assignment Description	Weighting
1. Reading Reports	35%
2. Devotional Reports	35%
3. Reflection Paper	20%
4. Portfolio	10%
Total	100%

- The following assignments require a B letter grade in order to pass the course:

- Reading Reports
- Devotional Reports
- Retreat Notes
- Fasting Report (1 page)
- Reflection Paper
- Portfolio

* For grading rubrics that specify grading criteria in more detail, see Appendices.

In order to make grading fair for everyone, grades will be assigned on the basis of the above requirements alone. No individual arrangements will be made for those requesting last-minute grade adjustment or extra credit.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments to the LH. All assignments are due **July 27, 2026**.

Late Submission

Penalties for late submission:

- Assignments will be submitted weekly on the LH and by **July 27, 2026**, the portfolio will be submitted. The portfolio will include everything.
- Late assignments incur a 10% daily penalty.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Kidder is a well-recognized authority in the area of Leadership and Church Growth, Discipleship, and spiritual growth. He has invested his life in the equipping and training of pastors and the laity. He has written many articles and books on the subject of discipleship, worship, spiritual growth, leadership, and church growth.



Dr. S. Joseph Kidder has been teaching at the Seventh day Adventist Theological Seminary for the last ten years. Prior to that, he had over 20 years of successful pastoral work. He has helped many people come to the Lord and grow in their spiritual walk.

Dr. Kidder was born in Nineveh, Iraq, and immigrated to the U.S. when he was kicked out of home and beaten almost to death by his family when he converted to the Adventist faith.

Below is a selected sample of my books

Majesty: Experiencing Authentic Worship. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 2009.

The Big Four, Secrets of a Thriving Church Life. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 2012.

The Youth Speak: The Church Listen. Lincoln, Nebraska: Advent Source, 2014.

Moving Your Church: Becoming a Spirit-filled Community. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, January 5, 2016 (144pp).

Out Of Babylon: How God Found Me on The Streets of Bagdad. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, March 2018 (128pp).

Hope for the Orphan: Re-Imagining the Youth Sabbath School. Lincoln, Nebraska: Advent Source, 2018.

Reach Out Relevant Youth Evangelism: Lincoln, Nebraska: Advent Source, 2019.

Journey to the Heart of God: Spiritual Disciplines that Will Transform Your Life. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2019.

Living With the Mind of Jesus. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2023.

OTHER COURSE-RELATED POLICIES

Attendance

Regular attendance is required at all classes and other academic appointments. When the total number of absences exceeds 10% of the total course appointments, the teacher may assign a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence.

Academic Integrity

The Seminary expects its students to exhibit rigorous moral integrity appropriate to ministry leaders representing Jesus Christ. Complete honesty in academic matters is a vital component of such integrity. Any breach of academic integrity in this class is subject to discipline. Consequences may include receipt of a reduced or failing grade, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university. A record of academic integrity violations is maintained by the University Student Academic Integrity Council. Repeated and/or flagrant offenses will be referred to an Academic Integrity Panel for recommendations on further penalties.

Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Plagiarism in which one fails to give credit every time use is made of another person's ideas or exact words, whether in a formal paper or in submitted notes or assignments. Credit is to be given by use of:
 - Correctly designed and inserted footnotes each time one makes use of another individual's research and/or ideas; and
 - Quotation marks placed around any exact phrases or sentences (3 or more words) taken from the text or speech of another individual.
- Presenting another's work as one's own (e.g., placement exams, homework assignments).
- Using materials during a quiz or examination other than those explicitly allowed by the teacher or program.
- Stealing, accepting, or studying from stolen quizzes or examination materials.
- Copying from another student during a regular or take-home test or quiz.
- Assisting another in acts of academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof, without permission from the instructors, to satisfy the requirements of more than one course.

For additional details see: https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html

Academic Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please see contact Student Success in Nethery Hall 100 (disabilities@andrews.edu or 269-471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

Use of Electronics

(The seminary-voted statement regarding recording of course lectures are below. Exceptions are at the discretion of the instructor.)

No recording or streaming is permitted in seminary courses.

Courtesy, respect, and professionalism dictate that laptops and cell phones are to be used only for class-related activities during class time.

Communications and Updates

Email is the official form of communication at Andrews University. Students are responsible for checking their Andrews University e-mail, Moodle, and iVue alerts regularly.

Learning Hub Access

Andrews University Learning Hub hosts this course online. Your Learning Hub username and password are the same as your Andrews username and password. Use the following contact information if you need technical assistance at any time during the course, or to report a problem with Learning Hub.

Username and password assistance	helpdesk@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6016
Technical assistance with Learning Hub	dlit@andrews.edu	(269) 471-3960
Technical assistance with your Andrews account	http://andrews.edu/hdchat/chat.php	

Emergency Protocol

Andrews University takes the safety of its students seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary--Incomplete Policy

Students who experience extenuating circumstances such as a death in the family, a major car accident, or hospitalization may apply for an Incomplete.

General stipulations

An Incomplete can be assigned only if the following stipulations are met:

- When the major portion of the work for the course has been completed and must be equal to 75% of the grade and must be a passing grade.
- The request comes due to illness or unavoidable circumstances during the last two weeks of the class.

- Incompletes cannot be assigned because of negligence or inferior performance.
- If a student does not finish an Incomplete and fails the class, they must attend and repeat the course and submit all the required course work.
- Students will be billed \$35 for each incomplete.

Faculty must meet with the student and submit an incomplete contract which clearly states

- A list of work to be completed.
- The date by which each assignment will be submitted.
- The requested completion date, which must be prior to the end of the next semester.
- The grade the student will receive if the work is not completed by the agreed-upon time.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement for Syllabus

In this learning space, we affirm that all humanity has been created in God’s image; and as such, we firmly and passionately commit to honor the dignity that God has placed in each one of us. As we engage in the learning enterprise, we will respect one another’s identities and celebrate the diversity that each person brings into the classroom.

As a learning community, we will work intentionally to ensure that everyone feels a sense of inclusion, love, respect, and value. We will purposely work to fight against racism, misogyny, xenophobia, and all other forms of discrimination, not settling to merely acknowledge its existence. We commit to advocating for one another and protecting one another by speaking against injustice and prejudice, regardless of how uncomfortable the conversation might prove to be.

As your instructor, I commit to including diverse voices and authorship in the course materials, to facilitate respectful interactions, to provide the appropriate support when we discuss difficult topics, to speak up when discrimination or bullying occurs, to listen to your feedback, and to be a co-learner with you on this journey. We may not cover all the content of the course, but we will learn through love and respect for one another.

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus, with the consensus of the class, at any time during the semester for the benefit of the learning process. The up-to-date Course Description for this course may be found at www.learninghub.andrews.edu .

APPENDIX 1: ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR THR REFLECTION PAPER

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR THR REFLECTION PAPER

Rubric for Reflection Paper

Category	Very Good 20, 19 (95%)	18, 17 (85%)	Average 16, 15 (75%)	14, 13 (65%)	Poor 12 (60%) >	Score
Adventist perspective on spiritual life	Clearly articulates an Adventist perspective of intentional spiritual life		Somewhat articulates an Adventist perspective of . . .		A deficient articulation of an Adventist perspective of . . .	/20
Understanding of devotional habits	Clearly demonstrates understanding of devotional habits		Demonstrates some understanding of devotional habits		It is quite vague about what constitutes devotional habits	/20
Personal spiritual practices	This semester intentionally and consistently practiced devotional habits		This semester inconsistently practiced personal spiritual habits		This semester was inconsistent and had very little intentional devotional time	/20
Commitment to balanced living	Reflect on lifestyle and make commitment to discipline and balance		Reflect on lifestyle and discuss some aspects of future balanced living		Reflects little on personal life or does not make commitment to future lifestyle	/20
Evaluation of specific and overall course experience	Evaluates specific and overall course experience		Discusses course experience but with little or no evaluation		Makes little reference to course experience	Divide the score in half. /10
Paper presentation	Paper is presented neatly, with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation		Paper somewhat displays neatness, correct grammar, spelling and punctuation		Paper poorly displays neatness, correct grammar, spelling and punctuation	Divide the score in half. /10
Total						/100

APPENDIX 2: INTERPRETING LETTER GRADES

Letter Grades and Percentages

95-100%	A	80-84%	B	65-69%	C
90-94%	A-	75-79%	B-	60-64%	C-
85-89%	B+	70-74%	C+	55-59%	D

THE B GRADE

The B grade is a sign that you have competently fulfilled all of the requirements stipulated for an assessment or competency evaluation. It is a very good grade and demonstrates a high level of knowledge, insight, critical competence and professional presentation standards, essential for an individual wishing to pursue a career as a professional leader in ministry.

THE A GRADE

An A grade is given only when a student not only fulfills the criteria for a B grade, but in doing so demonstrates an advanced academic aptitude for content knowledge, critique, synthesis and independent insight, while exhibiting highly developed communication skills and professional publication standards that would allow them to pursue a highly competitive academic career.

THE C GRADE

The C grade differs only from a B grade in that the traits outlined in the B grade above are not consistently applied. However, with diligence and by applying feedback from your lecturer, the academic process can provide an opportunity for a student to improve their consistency, and hence, their grade.

THE D GRADE

The D grade points to a limited level of knowledge, insight, and critique, as well as to inadequate quality of written work. This may be because of a lack of time management on the part of the student, difficulty grasping the concepts being taught, use of English as a second language, or a personal issue that is affecting one's concentration and motivation levels. Again, with diligence, applying feedback from your lecturer, and seeking services offered by the University like the writing lab or the counseling center, the academic process can provide an opportunity for a student to significantly improve their performance.

THE F GRADE

A failing grade is given when very limited or no demonstrable competency has been observed.

DSRE541 Foundations of Biblical Spirituality
Devotional Weekly Record and Evaluation

Name _____ Date _____ Report # _____

Plan for the week: _____

Daily Record

Day _____ Time of day _____ Day's total time _____

Activities: _____

Evaluation or experience with God:

Day _____ Time of day _____ Day's total time _____

Activities: _____

Evaluation: _____

Day _____ Time of day _____ Day's total
time _____

Activities: _____

Evaluation: _____

Day _____ Time of day _____ Day's total time _____

Activities: _____

Evaluation: _____

Day _____ Time of day _____ Day's total
time _____

Activities: _____

Evaluation: _____

Day _____ Time of day _____ Day's total time _____

Activities: _____

Evaluation: _____

TOTAL FOR WEEK _____

Comment or prayer request, prayer answer, praise, or thanksgiving:

DSRE541 Weekly Reading Report

Name _____ Date _____ Week # _____

Book Read:

Time Spent:

Plan:

Summary:

Reflection and Evaluation:

Assignment Breakdown

(Please fill this out & submit it with your last assignment)

Student's Name: _____

1. Attendance

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

2. Weekly devotion report (Only 10 reports required):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

3. Small groups.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

4. Weekly reading report (Till You Are done.):

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

I have finished reading the following books:

The Big Four _____

Steps to Christ _____

Journey to the Heart of God _____

Living With the Mind of Jesus _____

Desire of Ages (Chapters 59 to 87) _____

5. The Retreat

Yes, I have attended the retreat

6. I was able to fast for one day: Yes, _____ No

8. I submitted Dwight Nelson reflection papers: ___Yes _____No.

7. Reflection paper: Yes, I have handed in the reflection paper

8. Portfolio: Yes, I have turned in the portfolio

The portfolio is due on July 27, 2026.

The portfolio will include everything you did for the class.

All submission must be on the Learning Hub. Any other means will not be accepted.

All written reports must be in Micro Soft Word. Nothing else will be accepted.

Nothing will be accepted after the Deadline.

MASTERS PROGRAMS

1. MA in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM)

- 1) Deliver effective biblically based sermons.
- 2) Demonstrate proper biblical interpretation skills.
- 3) Understand the historical-theological development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- 4) Exhibit capability for training church members for evangelism
- 5) Demonstrate an understanding of how to empower church members for leadership.
- 6) Exhibit capability for reaching specific social groups.

2. Master of Divinity (MDiv)

- 1) (Character) Models spiritual humility, maturity and integrity grounded in a living experience with God in joyful assurance of His salvation, nurtured by the sanctifying presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) (Scholarship) Manifests the practices of a Biblical scholar-theologian engaging the Bible, Christian/Adventist heritage and professional resources with theological maturity for personal growth and for facilitating the theological competence of others.
- 3) (Discipleship & Evangelism) Demonstrates personal commitment, passion and essential skills for discipleship and evangelism, while equipping members to carry out ministry within the scope of the local and global mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church.
- 4) (Leadership) Exercises creative and visionary leadership as a minister and servant of Christ, discerning the needs, spiritual gifts and potential of others, in order to equip and engage in their God-given ministries.
- 5) (Worship) Facilitates enriching corporate worship that brings diverse peoples into the transforming presence of God.
- 6) (Administration/Management) Engages the abilities of self and others to strategically steward personal and corporate resources including time, health, finances, property and service in areas of spiritual giftedness.
- 7) (Relationships) Models effective relationships with people of diverse cultures, backgrounds, character, and persuasions, reflecting the wisdom, compassion, and discernment of Jesus through the work of the Spirit.

AI USE

AI Use at The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary: Guidelines, Ethical Considerations, and Risk Awareness

At The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, we acknowledge the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on education and research. AI tools offer a range of capabilities that can enhance accessibility, streamline learning processes, and support academic excellence. From grammar correction and logical flow analysis to brainstorming and idea lookup, AI tools may help students sharpen their thinking and present their ideas more effectively. For instance, AI can support self-quizzing, assist in the pre-reading of materials, and aid in the development of structured thesis statements.

However, the benefits of AI must be balanced with awareness of its limitations and risks, as well as a commitment to ethical use. While AI can serve as a powerful tool, its application must uphold our seminary's values of originality, integrity, and accountability.

Appropriate Uses of AI in Academic Work:

- AI-powered tools may be used to enhance students' understanding of complex ideas, assist in logical flow analysis, and provide support with grammar, syntax, and thesis development.
- AI tools can help students brainstorm, create structured outlines, and analyze data patterns for research projects, offering vital support for academic rigor.
- Students using AI for academic purposes are required to document its use clearly in a footnote, specifying the tool and purpose to ensure transparency. Students need to clearly also state the source, usage, tools as well as the amount/quantity of AI generated text they included in the paper.

Inappropriate Uses and Accountability:

- AI-generated content must not be presented as original work. Any attempt to pass off AI-generated text as one's own or to use AI to fabricate sources will be considered academic dishonesty, with serious consequences. When a case of academic dishonesty is identified, the faculty member formally reports the incident to the academic dean. The Associate Dean reviews the case and may refer it to the seminary's conduct committee for further investigation. The committee evaluates the evidence, hears from the involved parties, and determines the appropriate consequences based on the severity of the violation. Depending on the findings, disciplinary actions may range from formal warnings to suspension or, in the most severe cases, if it's recurring, expulsion from the program. This process underscores the seminary's commitment to academic integrity and the ethical development of its students.
- AI cannot be used for completing exams, take-home tests, or assignments intended to assess students' independent understanding.

- Students are expected to verify any information generated by AI and are responsible for inaccuracies or unsupported claims that may result from AI's occasional "hallucinations" or fabrication of sources.

Risks and Limitations of AI: AI's potential risks in academic settings must be carefully managed. Overdependence on AI can impair students' ability to think critically and independently. Students must also be vigilant against AI's tendency to create false or fabricated references, a risk that could lead to accidental plagiarism. Additionally, without proper oversight, AI's design can sometimes inadvertently spread misinformation, undermining the reliability of academic work.

The faculty needs to review AI-related submissions carefully, with an understanding of AI's strengths and weaknesses. AI can serve as a beneficial supplement to learning but should not replace essential academic skills or undermine the authentic voice and insight students bring to their work.

Commitment to Ethical Standards and Academic Integrity: At the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, our commitment is to foster an environment where AI enhances, rather than diminishes, the academic experience. Both students and faculty share responsibility in using AI thoughtfully and ethically. We continue to reassess AI's role in academic settings, ensuring it aligns with our mission to support both intellectual and moral development.

In conclusion, AI has the potential to enrich academic work when used responsibly. By combining its advantages with a commitment to integrity, accountability, and critical thought, we can create a balanced approach to AI in education that supports, rather than detracts from, true learning.