

BIRMINGHAM THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2010 EDITION

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# Welcome from the President

Dear Student:

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ. We are excited that the Lord has prompted you to enroll at Birmingham Theological Seminary and look forward to growing together in the grace and knowledge of Christ. I encourage you to take the time to read the Student Handbook and particularly the information on the history and educational distinctives of BTS. It is these distinctives, as fleshed out in our curriculum and the classroom, which guide our approach to seminary education and which make BTS a truly unique institution.

You will quickly discover that our professors are not only excellent teachers, but also bring years of practical ministry experience into the classroom. Your instructors will be an encouragement to you and a great resource for you during your time at BTS and for many years after you graduate. I encourage you to look for ways to benefit from their experience and wisdom.

We are confident you will be challenged academically in your courses and will also gain practical knowledge for life and ministry. As you dig deeper into the truths of Scripture, I encourage you to diligently and deliberately apply what you learn. Remember, “Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.” (James 2:23-25).

Our staff at BTS is ready to serve you, and I encourage you to contact our office with questions, suggestions, prayer requests and requests for assistance. We pray that your time at BTS will better equip you to lead God’s Church.

May the Lord use you greatly to advance the Kingdom!

In the Service of the King,

Glenn G. Waddell  
President

# Welcome from the Vice President of Academic Affairs

Dear Birmingham Theological Seminary student,

Warmest greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! As Vice President for Academic Affairs at Birmingham Theological Seminary, I personally welcome you! Today you are beginning a significant and unique Christian theological journey that will be academically challenging yet practically applicable; that will not only enrich your personal life but will also equip you to teach and minister God's Word clearly, effectively and boldly.

Your decision to seek an advanced degree is to be admired and respected. BTS in its design presents the opportunity to achieve advanced degrees, while still maintaining family life, ministerial responsibilities, and/or secular employment.

One of the chief strengths of BTS is its faculty. These highly qualified instructors are "pastor-professors," with significant years of ministerial experience. This presents opportunities in the classroom, not only of an academic and theological nature, but for actual, practical, real-life, everyday applications that will come before you.

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." II Timothy 2:2

There are particular and vital components essential to your future success as seminary students: family, personal prayer life, self-study habits, self-discipline and self-motivation. You must develop consistency in your reading, writing, studying, and class participation to think through, critique, synthesize and apply the information given. The Apostle Paul tells us what our study habits and motivation are to be in II Timothy 2:15 and about our personal disciplines in Galatians 5:22-23.

The Administrative staff of Birmingham Theological Seminary is here to help. The Seminary office is open Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. You can contact me personally at 205-776-5386 or [tjames@briarwood.org](mailto:tjames@briarwood.org).

May God bless you and may His perfect peace be with you as you work toward completion of your degree. Do not be discouraged or dismayed; keep your focus on Christ.

In His Service

Rev. Thad James, Jr.  
Vice President of Academic Affairs

# **DIRECTORY**

## **HOW TO FIND ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions, please review the following:

- Student Handbook – Most questions can be answered by using this guide.
- BTS Catalog – Available online at [www.birminghamseminary.org](http://www.birminghamseminary.org) or [www.btsweb.com](http://www.btsweb.com)
- BTS Website – [www.birminghamseminary.org](http://www.birminghamseminary.org)

### **The BTS Website**

BTS's website provides information to students concerning proper writing and citation methods, and information on how to use BTS's online library facilities, research links, seminar opportunities, and much more. Research help and information is right at their fingertips through the BTS website. In addition, the website allows students to plan their seminary opportunities up to a year in advance through the online course rotation schedule. Booklists, syllabi, and course rotations are also posted on the website. New students should go to the website and sign up on our e-mail distribution list.

## **HOW TO CONTACT BTS**

### **Mailing Address**

Birmingham Theological Seminary  
2200 Briarwood Way  
Suite A-203  
Birmingham, AL 35243  
205-776-5650  
205-824-8407 Fax

### **Email Address**

[bts@briarwood.org](mailto:bts@briarwood.org)  
[www.birminghamseminary.org](http://www.birminghamseminary.org) or [www.btsweb.com](http://www.btsweb.com)

## Contact Telephone Numbers and Email Address

Mr. Glenn G. Waddell  
President

205-776-5280  
gwaddell@briarwood.org

Rev. Thad James, Jr.  
Vice President of Academic Affairs

205-776-5386  
tjames@briarwood.org

Dr. Howard Eyrich  
Director, Doctor of Ministry Program

205-776-5344  
heyrich@briarwood.org

Dr. Meg Hawley  
Registrar

205-776-5354  
mhawley@briarwood.org

Mrs. Jackie Hamamatsu  
Assistant to the President and V.P. of Academic Affairs

205-776-5356  
jhamamatsu@briarwood.org

Rev. Larry Cockrell  
Clinical Advisor, Master of Arts in Ministry Program

205-836-5758  
ldcockrell@aol.com

## **DEGREE PROGRAM HEADS**

Master of Divinity Dr. Dave Matthews	205-776-5211
Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling Dr. Howard Eyrich	205-776-5344
Master of Arts in Ministry Rev. Thad James	205-776-5386
Master of Arts in Apologetics Dr. Steve Cowan	205-403-0102
Master of Arts in Biblical Studies Rev. Larry Cockrell	205-836-5758
Master of Arts in Biblical Conflict Resolution Mr. Glenn Waddell	205-776-5280
Doctor of Ministry Dr. Howard Eyrich	205-776-5344

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **Class of 2008**

Frank M. Barker, Jr.  
Elbert N. Mullis, Jr.  
Aaron Fleming  
W. Doug Haskew  
William Hay  
Larry Childs  
Mark Wesson

### **Class of 2009**

Vernon Betsch  
Jeff Lowman  
John Robertson  
William Thetford  
Larry Cockrell  
William Ratliff

### **Class of 2010**

Howard Eyrich  
Marshall Worthington  
O. C. Oden, Jr.  
Jack B. Hinton, Jr.  
Michael Reese

### **Ex Officio**

Harry L. Reeder III

If there is someone you are trying to contact not listed here, please contact the seminary office for more information (776-5650).

# **GENERAL**

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Monday – Thursday  
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Closed on Friday

## **HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

**BIRMINGHAM THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2010 - 2012**

**SPRING TERM 2010**

Registration: January 2010  
Classes Begin: January 25, 2010  
Drop/Add: February 6, 2010  
**\*\*SPRING BREAK March 15 – March 19, 2010 NO SEMINARY CLASSES**  
++Board Meeting: Thursday, April 15, 2010  
Classes End: April 30, 2010  
Final Grades Due: May 14, 2010\*for graduates, May 7<sup>th</sup>  
**Faculty/spouse Dinner Friday, May 14, 2010 - 5:30 PM**  
**Graduation: Friday, May 14, 2010 - 7:00 PM**  
Incomplete Grades Due: June 11, 2010

**SUMMER TERM 2010**

Registration: May 2010  
Classes Begin: June 7, 2010  
Drop/Add: June 18, 2010  
Classes End: September 3, 2010  
Final Grades Due: September 17, 2010  
Incomplete Grades Due: October 15, 2010

**FALL TERM 2010**

Registration: August 2010  
Classes Begin: September 13, 2010  
Drop/Add: September 24, 2010  
**\*\*FALL BREAK October 18-22, 2009 NO SEMINARY CLASSES**  
Faculty Meeting: Thursday, October 7, 2010 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
++Board Meeting: Thursday, October 28, 2010  
Classes End: December 17, 2009  
Final Grades Due: December 31, 2009  
Incomplete Grades Due: January 28, 2011

**SPRING TERM 2011**

Registration: January 2011  
Classes Begin: January 24, 2011  
Drop/Add: February 4, 2011  
**\*\*SPRING BREAK March 14 – March 18, 2011 NO SEMINARY CLASSES**  
++Board Meeting: Thursday, April 21, 2011  
Classes End: April 29, 2011  
Final Grades Due: May 13, 2011\*for graduates, May 6<sup>th</sup>  
**Faculty/spouse Dinner Friday, May 13, 2011 - 5:30 PM**  
**Graduation: Friday, May 13, 2011 - 7:00 PM**  
Incomplete Grades Due: June 10, 2011

### SUMMER TERM 2011

Registration: May 2011  
Classes Begin: June 6, 2011  
Drop/Add: June 17, 2011  
Classes End: September 2, 2011  
Final Grades Due: September 16, 2011  
Incomplete Grades Due: October 14, 2011

### FALL TERM 2011

Registration: August 2011  
Classes Begin: September 12, 2011  
Drop/Add: September 23, 2011  
**\*\*FALL BREAK October 17-21, 2011 NO SEMINARY CLASSES**  
Faculty Meeting: Thursday, OCTOBER 6, 2011 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
++Board Meeting: Thursday, October 20, 2011  
Classes End: December 16, 2011  
Final Grades Due: December 30, 2011  
Incomplete Grades Due: January 27, 2012

### SPRING TERM 2012

Registration: January 2012  
Classes: January 23, 2012  
Drop/Add: February 3, 2012  
**\*\*SPRING BREAK March 12 - March 16, 2012 NO SEMINARY CLASSES**  
++ Board Meeting: Thursday April 12, 2012  
Classes End: April 27, 2012  
Final Grades Due: May 11, 2012\*for graduates May 4th  
**Faculty/spouse Dinner Friday, May 11, 2012 – 5:30 PM**  
**Graduation: Friday, May 11, 2012 – 7:00 PM**  
Incomplete Grades Due: June 8, 2012

### SUMMER TERM 2012

Registration: May 2012  
Classes Begin: June 4, 2012  
Drop/Add: June 15, 2012  
Classes End: August 31, 2012  
Final Grades Due: September 14, 2012  
Incomplete Grades Due: October 12, 2012

### FALL TERM 2012

Registration: August 2012  
Classes Begin: September 10, 2012  
Drop/Add: September 21, 2012  
**\*\*FALL BREAK October 15-19, 2012 NO SEMINARY CLASSES**  
Faculty Meeting: Thursday, October 4, 2012 11:00 AM -1:00 PM  
++Board Meeting: Thursday October 18, 2012  
Classes End: December 14, 2012  
Final Grades Due: December 28, 2012  
Incomplete Grades Due: January 25, 2013

# INTRODUCTION

## OUR RICH HISTORY

Birmingham Theological Seminary (BTS) was founded in 1972. Two men, Dr. Frank Barker, Pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, and Dr. Bill Hay, Pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, saw the need for men and women to be trained for full-time Christian service to enrich their personal lives, increase their knowledge of the things of the Lord, and to be better equipped to teach, preach, and witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. These men also saw the need to enable those who felt God's call to study for Christian work to do so on a part-time basis, if obligations would not allow them to study full-time. Students could have the option to work full-time and also to attend classes in the evening.

BTS was initially known as the "Birmingham Extension Seminary for Theological Education," often referred to as "BES." BES began offering classes in the fall of 1972 at the Edgewood Presbyterian Church located in Homewood. The seminary began with two degrees, Master of Divinity and Master of Religious Education. Six classes were offered, with 52 students enrolled: 17 M.Div., 14 M.R.E., and 21 audits. Green and white became the official school colors in a 1978 action. It was the expectation that eventually BES would become the extension of a major seminary. In 1980, BES nearly became an extension of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. For a variety of reasons, that merger never occurred. Also in 1980, the name of the seminary was changed to "Birmingham Theological Seminary." During its 35+ year history, more than 3500 students have taken one or more courses and over 350 students have been awarded Master's level degrees. BTS offers courses in various locations around the state of Alabama and in foreign countries such as The Ukraine, New Zealand, Uganda and Australia, by distance education and through relationships with other seminaries.

We are privileged to enjoy a wonderfully diverse group of students and professors.

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

BTS adheres to the following Statement of Faith:

God is one Being existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is Sovereign; the Creator and the Sustainer of all things. God is the Source of and end of all truth.

The Scriptures are the written Word of God; inerrant in their original writings, and the infallible authority by which He directs and governs all our activities.

Jesus Christ is the eternal begotten Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary - truly God - truly Man. Through Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension, He accomplished a decisive victory over sin for His people and established His kingdom among men.

Man was created in the image of God as a rational, moral and spiritual being. Man sinned in Adam and fell with him in his first transgression. Man's fall affected him spiritually, intellectually and physically. He is restored only by the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit and the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord will return in glory and triumph for the final judgment and the consummation of His Kingdom.

All faculty must also agree and adhere to one or more of the following historic creeds:

- Westminster Confession of Faith
- Philadelphia Confession
- London Confession of 1689
- Heidelberg Catechism

## **OUR MISSION**

Providing sound Biblical and practical theological training to equip leaders for Christ's Church.

BTS is theologically Reformed, evangelistic in focus and committed to the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture. The seminary strives for academic excellence, through a program of instruction which is practical and useful for effective ministry. BTS maintains relationships with several seminaries overseas and is intentionally engaged in global missions.

The BTS faculty is composed of pastors and others in full-time ministry who serve the seminary on an adjunct basis. Classes are held in existing church facilities in the Birmingham area and at extensions around Alabama. These two unique features combine to produce practical theological training at a cost of less than 20% of the national average for seminary tuition. The faculty and student body represent a remarkable ethnic and denominational diversity.

The BTS student body is composed of lay leaders interested in learning more about theology and individuals called to full-time ministry. Classes are offered in the evenings, early mornings and by distance education. Most BTS students take classes on a part-time basis, and many students are already serving churches as full-time or bi-vocational pastoral staff members.

## **OUR VISION**

Producing leaders for Christ's Church who are becoming spiritually mature as evidenced by effective ministry.

## **OUR HYMN**

*"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"* (Martin Luther)

## **MORE ABOUT BTS**

The BTS programs are primarily designed to accommodate those who wish to pursue their studies on a part-time basis. The student may elect to take all their course work at BTS and be granted a degree from BTS. Other students may choose to attend BTS for only a few semesters before transferring to a full time residence program at another seminary. An increasingly popular option is for the student to combine regular campus classes with the BTS Distance Education Component to facilitate a more rapid completion of their program while remaining in the work force and active in their home church.

## **AFFILIATE STATUS**

In January 2006, Birmingham Theological Seminary became an “*affiliate institution*” of the Association of Biblical Higher Education. ABHE, formerly known as The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges of Orlando, Florida, is recognized by the U. S. Department of Education as an accrediting governing body. The “*affiliate status*” allows BTS to take advantage of the many programs and services that the Association provides. This presents BTS with the opportunity of inclusion on the Association website and a listing in the ABHE Directory, along with the opportunity to network with like institutions, to gain additional assistance working toward the accreditation process and access to the consultative services of ABHE.

## **ACCREDITATION**

BTS is accredited by the *Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries* (ARTS). ARTS is an accrediting association comprised of graduate institutions holding to the doctrines of the Reformed faith.

The Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries was created to help meet a growing need in theological education for an accrediting agency that understands and is dedicated to the mission of reformed theological education. Over the years, institutions for pastoral and theological training which have had their roots in the Christian community, even in the reformed tradition, have struggled to maintain the vision, mission, and distinctives with which their founders endowed them. While this is in part due to the general secular and liberal drift in America over the past two-and-a-half centuries, it is at least conceivable that the existence of an organization involving a group of like-minded institutions and committed to the reformed faith as expressed in historic creeds, might have been able to arrest that drift,

or, at least, impede that drift, thus allowing the reformed faith to flourish more than is currently the case.

The Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries, taking its stand on the historic reformed creeds of the Church, is committed to the preservation and promotion of the reformed faith and the progress of the Kingdom of God throughout the world. ARTS welcome institutions throughout the world who share this vision and invite them to unite with us in this important calling.

ARTS is not currently recognized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation or the U. S. Department of Education as an approved accrediting agency.

### **CREDIT TRANSFERS**

Credits from BTS have been accepted at several evangelical institutions, subject to the policies and degree requirements of each school. The student who expects to receive a degree from an institution other than BTS should write for specific information concerning applicability of work taken through BTS. Several major seminaries have been willing to either accept transfer credit from BTS or recognize a BTS degree as the prerequisite for pursuing advanced degrees.

### **Significant Relationships**

The *Association of Christian Schools International* (ACSI) has granted BTS full academic credit for Bible coursework. This extends to continuing education units as well. The appropriate credit for continuing education units will be granted by ACSI based upon transcripts provided by the applicant seeking certification.

BTS has a special relationship with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The PCA adopted an internship program which must be completed prior to ordination in addition to the Master of Divinity degree. BTS is structured to accommodate this additional requirement.

The curriculum has been designed to fulfill the requirements of the uniform curriculum of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and has been approved by the Theological Education Committee of the PCA General Assembly. Thus, graduates of BTS are eligible for ordination in any presbytery of the PCA.

Birmingham Theological Seminary is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation, authorized to grant degrees in the State of Alabama pursuant to Chapter 46 of Title 16 of the Alabama Code.

## **DEGREES OFFERED**

In addition to the Master of Divinity degree, BTS offers the following Master's degree programs: Apologetics, Biblical Studies, Ministry, Biblical Counseling, Biblical Conflict Resolution and Missions/Inter-Cultural Studies. The Master of Arts in Ministry degree program has two areas of focus to choose from: Christian Education and Pastoral Leadership. BTS also has a Certificate track that includes Apologetics, Biblical Counseling, Biblical Studies, Ministry, and Biblical Conflict Resolution. BTS has a Doctor of Ministry program in Pastoral Leadership and another one in Biblical Counseling. BTS also has a Certificate of Missions/Inter-Cultural Studies for the student entering a mission field which requires advanced training but not as arduous as the Masters of Missions/Inter-Cultural Studies. The Certificate of Biblical Counseling is for those desiring the counseling training without the full complement of courses. The Certificate of Ministry offers students a basic theological and practical ministry foundation that will be helpful as they seek to serve in the Kingdom community. The Certificate programs are primarily designed for those students that have not obtained an undergraduate degree. Details of these programs are supplied in the catalog.

## **PRIVACY ISSUES**

Due to current privacy concerns, students have the right to review educational records relating to them and the right to request, by informal amendment or by formal hearing, changes in those records if it is believed that the records are inaccurate, misleading or violate the students rights. **Information about students' records will not be released to third parties without the express written consent of the student (including transcripts and financial records).** However, BTS reserves the right to release such records to its contractors and government agencies as necessary to conduct the ordinary operations of BTS, including tax reporting and financial compilations or audits.

## **STUDENT LIFESTYLES**

BTS is a religious, non-profit Seminary representing Jesus Christ to Birmingham and the world. BTS expects its students to conduct themselves in a manner that will not raise questions regarding their Christian testimonies (I Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17). A Christian lifestyle should reflect the Biblical perspective of integrity and appropriate personal and family relationships, business conduct and moral behavior. BTS students are expected to demonstrate a teachable spirit, an ability to share love for others, a willingness to live contentedly under authority and a commitment to follow Matthew 18 principle when an issue arises with fellow students. The BTS Statement of Faith expects all students to maintain a lifestyle based on Biblical standards of moral conduct in which Christ has pre-eminence (Colossians 1:18)

## **PUBLICATION NOTICE**

Every effort is made to provide accurate and up to date information. Birmingham Theological Seminary reserves the right to change statements in the Student Handbook concerning, but not limited to, policies, academic offerings, tuition and fees. BTS will make a reasonable effort to alert current students of any changes. However, it is the student's obligation to review this handbook periodically and be aware of its content. The information in this handbook supersedes and replaces the information in all previous publications. Where there is a conflict between the versions of the handbook, the most current version takes precedence.

## **STUDENT CONTACT INFORMATION**

Current student contact information is necessary for the staff and faculty at BTS to communicate with the students. It is the responsibility of every student to ensure that BTS has accurate postal address information as well as a telephone number and a current email address. Each time their contact information changes students should notify the Seminary Office via email at [bts@briarwood.org](mailto:bts@briarwood.org), or fax at 205-824-8407, or telephone at 205-776-5650.

## **BTS POLICY ON TAPING CLASSES**

If a student has to miss a class, it is his/her responsibility to seek the permission of the professor to tape the class and to arrange with another student to do the taping. No taping equipment may interfere with the professional taping of a class (e.g. no radio or wireless devices). If a student is going to miss a class that has already been produced on DVD or CD-ROM, the student may purchase the appropriate DVD or CD-ROM. The Department of Distance Education will be unable to provide tapes, DVDs or CDs for a class that is being taped for Distance Education. Only classes that have already been completed for Distance Education are available. At this time, no media are available on a checkout basis, but only for purchase. It is the *responsibility of the student* to make the above outlined arrangements in the case of a missed class.

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

Students are encouraged to discuss any personal matters and seek desired guidance from any faculty or staff member.

The seminary staff will make every effort to assist students needs (physical, personal, psychological, emotional, spiritual, practical, or relational), but does not offer counseling services.

## **POSITION ON ORDINATION**

BTS holds itself responsible for providing Christ- honoring studies in accordance with our mission purpose statement. BTS does not ordain clergy or attempt to evaluate an individual's personal calling or position in the body of Christ.

## **CLAIMS AND DISPUTES**

Any claim or dispute arising from or related to the student's relationship to BTS shall be settled by mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker® Ministries (complete text of the Rules is available at [www.Peacemaker.net](http://www.Peacemaker.net)). Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. The parties understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim

arising out of this agreement and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Birmingham Theological Seminary admits students of any race, color, sex, handicap, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, and activities generally afforded or made available to all its students. Birmingham Theological Seminary does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, handicap, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational and admission policies. BTS does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities including admission or employment, except in the matter of ordination, and certain courses restricted to men, related to the question of ordination. While not being an official agency of the Presbyterian Church in America, BTS is associated with the PCA and adheres to the position of the denomination which biblically restricts the ordained office to men.

BTS will make every reasonable effort to accommodate disabilities, and disabled students are welcome.

### **ENROLLMENT POLICY**

BTS does not utilize the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Graduate Record Examination, or any other standardized test as a measure for admission. BTS has an open enrollment policy. Any qualified applicant may enroll in courses and/or degree programs however; the applicant must meet the academic, admissions and financial requirements.

### **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE**

In order to be considered for acceptance, a student applying for enrollment in the seminary must supply the following:

- A. Completed application (application form obtained from the seminary office or the seminary web site.) Applications for admission must ordinarily be in the seminary office one month prior to the start of a semester or the beginning of a directed study or distance learning course.

- B. Official transcripts from previous undergraduate schools should be mailed to the BTS office directly from the school. The official transcript is due in the seminary office within 30 days of application for admission.
- C. Receipt of \$30.00 application fee (one-time, non-refundable fee). The application fee for doctoral students is \$175.00. The application fee is required when application is submitted and is non-refundable. Payment of the application fee does not guarantee admission to the seminary. A letter of acceptance will be mailed upon the approval of the application for admission.
- D. Applicants must provide three completed reference forms (supplied) from:
- Your Pastor
  - Business or other reference
  - A close friend
  - College professor or other instructor
  - An officer of your church

For those students registering as a degree candidate, an interview with the Seminary President or Vice President may be required prior to admission.

### **DEGREE- SEEKING STUDENTS**

Prerequisite requirements for degree seeking students vary according to degree level. Certificate applicants are required to have a high school diploma or have completed the General Educational Development (GED) test. Applicants for a master's level program must have an earned bachelor's degree from an approved school. However, certificates may be earned without an undergraduate degree. Applicants to the doctoral programs must have a master's degree from an approved school. Additionally, more specific prerequisites may apply to individual programs. Applicants should refer to the degree listings in the catalog for further information. All applications are reviewed by the Vice President of

Academic Affairs. The Academic Affairs VP evaluates schools to determine acceptability of prerequisite degrees and transfer credits.

As many as 10 percent (10%) of the students in master's level degree programs may be admitted without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its equivalent, provided the applicant can demonstrate by some objective means that he or she possess the knowledge, academic skill, and ability generally associated with persons who hold the baccalaureate degree. Admission of such students is restricted to persons with life experience that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level. The decisions will be made by the President or Vice President of Academic Affairs.

A limited number of students may be admitted to courses as audit students.

Individuals who apply and are accepted to BTS, but who do not take any courses in a year, must re-apply to BTS. Applications will be kept on file for two year.

Students sometimes find the need to take a break in completing courses due to personal or professional matters. If a student returns to complete a degree with BTS, and has not taken classes in a two year period, the student may return to the seminary but must submit an updated application, new references are not required. In addition, the student must comply with the degree requirements under the current catalog at the time of returning to seminary.

Students who have been awarded the BTS Master of Arts in Biblical Studies degree may continue their studies in pursuit of a "higher" Masters degree, such as a Master of Divinity degree. Because academic credit may not be applied toward two different degrees, the student, upon earning the "higher" degree, forfeits the Master of Arts in Biblical Studies degree and all rights associated with that degree.

### **NON-DEGREE SEEKING STUDENTS**

An individual in the process of completing a degree at another approved institution may apply as a non-degree seeking student at BTS, pending completion of the degree from the other institution. Those not pursuing a degree at the time of enrollment are admitted as non-degree seeking students and must show the Admissions Committee that they have the background and course prerequisites necessary for the courses in which they are interested. This category of enrollment does not constitute admission to the school as a degree seeking student in any BTS program.

## **TRANSFER STUDENTS**

Students who wish to transfer from other graduate institutions should apply for admission in the usual way, submitting with their application and required admission documents a completed transcript of their graduate work. A request for transfer credit should be accompanied by a catalog containing the course descriptions from the previous institution. The credits must be of a comparable graduate level and the courses must apply to the BTS curriculum.

Credit for work completed in other institutions may be granted after evaluation by BTS. No credit will be given for work receiving less than a “C” or its equivalent. Grade point averages will only be determined by work completed at Birmingham Theological Seminary.

Transfer credit will be given the grade of “T”. Students are required to pay a posting fee of \$30 per transfer credit hour. Bachelor/undergraduate courses cannot be transferred as graduate courses. Credits are not given for “Life” or ministry experience. Course work completed to earn a Bachelors or Masters Degree cannot be used toward earning another degree. Core courses in the various degree programs at BTS (equivalent courses at other institutions will be considered on a case by case basis) need not be repeated to pursue another degree. Only professional components of the additional degree must be completed. Some additional work may be required.

Transfer students must complete at least one-third of the hours required for any degree program at Birmingham Theological Seminary. Transfer students may be required to take more than the minimum requirements for graduation because courses taken elsewhere may not be equivalent to those in the BTS curriculum and all courses are transferred at the rate of two (2) credit hours per course.

## **ACCEPTANCE TO SEMINARY**

A student is considered fully accepted when all required documentation is received and approved. A student may be accepted to BTS provisionally when there is outstanding documentation such as an official transcript. Upon acceptance to the seminary, a letter of acceptance is issued to the student.

## **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS**

In order to validate program prerequisites and transfer credits (if applicable), official transcripts are required within 30 days of application. Copies or student-issued transcripts may be used during the enrollment process for preliminary evaluation; however, they are not considered official.

To be considered official, transcripts must be sent to BTS via one of the methods:

- The educational institution sends the official transcript directly to BTS via postal mail, or
- The educational institution sends the official transcript to the student in a sealed envelope, and the student sends the sealed envelope to BTS. (If the seal is broken before arriving at BTS, the transcript will not be considered official)

Students who fail to ensure that all official transcripts have been submitted to BTS: (1) may not be admitted to a particular BTS degree program or be allowed to continue in the program, (2) will not be permitted to graduate until they have ensured that BTS has received all of the required official transcripts.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRANSCRIPTS**

If international transcripts are not in English, an English translation is also required. Whenever possible, BTS will evaluate international credentials in-house. For any international credentials BTS determines must be evaluated by an approved outside evaluation agency, BTS will notify the applicant/student accordingly. The applicant/student will be responsible for contacting the outside evaluation agency, as well as any costs incurred.

## **THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM (D.MIN)**

### **PASTORAL LEADERSHIP**

BTS has designed its Doctor of Ministry program in Pastoral Leadership to accommodate both the bi-vocational male pastor and the fulltime male pastor active in the ordained ministry. Each member of our program faculty

has obtained a terminal degree but they are also full-time ministry practitioners. They have learned to integrate biblical, historical, practical and theological resources into successful ministries; therefore, they serve as academicians as well as mentors to the student.

## **Program Requirements**

The Doctor of Ministry degree requires a satisfactory completion of 30 hours of course work as prescribed in the curriculum. The student is expected to maintain a GPA of at least 3.1 with no more than one C grade in the entire program. The M.Div. or its educational equivalent (including at least one of the biblical languages from an acceptable seminary) and three years of ministry experience are prerequisites for admission. Students with an MA in a ministry field may apply after five years of ministry with the submission of a scholarly paper of 15-20 pages reflecting the student's ministry growth during these five years. The doctoral committee will determine any additional prerequisites that may be required.

The Doctor of Ministry program, including a dissertation or project cannot be completed in less than three years. The degree must be completed seven years from the date of enrollment. Students may apply for a one-year extension to the doctoral committee.

## **Admission**

Applications may be secured from the seminary office and must be submitted prior to admission to the program. Non-English language students must submit TOEFL scores. Consideration by the doctoral committee will include the completed application, above average preaching skills, evidence of cultural appreciation, evidence of the application of Scripture to the care of souls, and administrative skills in managing the ministry. These matters will be assessed through personal references, a personal interview and whatever testing the administration deems useful.

## **Program Structure**

D.Min. courses are offered in three intensive, one-day sessions during the semester, with the equivalent of two class days being fulfilled through internet form work with the student's cohort. The day of the week will usually be Friday, though each class may negotiate the day of the week with the professor. The one regular exception to this format will be the Church Revitalization course. This course will meet Thursday afternoon through Sunday noon in conjunction with the Church Revitalization Seminar at Briarwood Presbyterian Church usually during the third week of January.

## **BIBLICAL COUNSELING**

### **Program Requirements**

The Doctor of Ministry degree requires a satisfactory completion of 30 hours of course work as prescribed in the curriculum. The student is expected to maintain a GPA of at least 3.1, with no more than one C grade in the entire program. The Master of Divinity or its educational equivalent (including at least one of the biblical languages from an acceptable seminary) and three years of ministry experience are prerequisite for admission. Students with an appropriate MA who meet the prerequisites may apply. The doctoral committee will determine any additional prerequisites that may be required.

The Doctor of Ministry program, including the Internship may not be completed in less than three years. The degree must be completed in seven years from the date of enrollment. Students may apply for a one-year extension to the doctoral committee.

Currently the program is being offered in a cohort format. The seminary begins recruiting the year preceding the class beginning.

### **Admission**

Applicants may secure a form from the seminary office. Applications must be submitted prior to admission to the program. International students whose primary language is not English must submit TOEFL scores. Also, procedures required for foreign students in relationship to immigration policies are applicable.

Consideration by the doctoral committee will include the completed application, evidence of cultural appreciation, evidence of the application of Scripture to the care of souls, and administrative skills in managing the ministry. These matters will be assessed through personal references, a personal interview and/or whatever testing the administration deems useful.

### **Other Matters**

All administrative concerns not specifically addressed with reference to the Doctor of Ministry Program in Counseling should be referenced to the Director of the program or the VP of Academic Affairs.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Birmingham Theological Seminary has been approved by the Department of Homeland Security, a department of the United States Federal Government, to accept international students (F-1 Visa type only). International students seeking admission to BTS should complete all admissions requirements listed above and complete the following forms:

- Supplemental application form
- Affidavit of financial support
- Proof of medical insurance beginning January 2007
- Proof of English proficiency (TOEFL score of 500 minimum on paper test and 173 on computer test)

International students accepted are required to enroll in a minimum of 8 credit hours per semester, Fall and Spring for Masters Program. Doctoral Program students must enroll in 3 hours per semester for Fall, Spring and Summer equaling 9 hours per calendar year, maintaining at least a B average. International students must pay all fees and tuition when registering in accordance with their affidavit of financial support.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSIONS**

All International students must apply for admission to Birmingham Theological Seminary. The admission process must be 100% complete prior to the issuance of Form I-20 and before the applicant is eligible for enrollment. In order to be in compliance and to meet all requirements, please read and adhere to the following:

1. **Review of your academic credentials.** Applicant must be able to provide proof of a baccalaureate degree from an undergraduate institution.
2. **Meeting the required scores for English as a second language.** The score is required by non-native English-speaking countries. A score of **500** is required for the written exam, and a score of **173** is required for the computer-based exam. The TOEFL score may be waived for the following:
  - a. Non-native speakers who hold degrees or diplomas from post-secondary institutions in English-speaking countries.
  - b. Non-native speakers who have successfully completed at least a two-year course of study in which English was the language of instruction.

- c. Applicants who transfer from institutions in the United States or Canada whose academic course work received favorable critique relative to its demands and duration.
  - d. Non-native speakers who have taken the test within the past two years.
  - e. Non-native speakers who have successfully pursued academic work at schools where English was the language of instruction in an English-speaking country for a specified period, generally two years.
3. **Legitimate sponsor.** To ensure that your sponsor is both willing to sponsor you for the duration of your studies and is capable of doing so, an Affidavit of Financial Support form must be completed in its entirety, with appropriate supporting documents. The form must show the documents of support in American dollars.
4. **A complete and properly filled out BTS application form and International student supplemental form.** Both forms must be filled out in their entirety as part of the application and admission process.
- a. Make arrangements for a place to stay in the U.S. Many students have friends, relatives or sponsor(s) who live in Birmingham with whom they may be welcome to stay temporarily or throughout the duration of their course of study. Every student must have a local address on file with the Birmingham Theological Seminary. The seminary must be informed immediately of a change of address. **It is imperative that we have a current local address on file at all times**

5. **Upon receipt of Form I-20 from Birmingham Theological Seminary, do the following:**

As soon as possible, make an appointment with the U.S. Embassy in your country. Any delay could affect your approval. In some countries,

- a. Embassy appointments must be made several months in advance. The embassy should issue a U.S. Visa, valid for at least one year.
- b. Complete necessary financial preparations.
- c. Upon arriving in Birmingham, please call the seminary office at 205-776-5650 to schedule an appointment. Bring the following to your scheduled appointment: Form I-20, Visa, Passport, and I-94 card.
- d. At that time we can assist you with setting your degree plan and preparation for the upcoming semester.

### **VETERANS AFFAIRS STUDENTS**

Students interested in obtaining VA educational benefits should contact the office of the Registrar, Meg Hawley at 205-776-5354 or [mhawley@briarwood.org](mailto:mhawley@briarwood.org).

## **FEES AND TUITION**

Application Fee .....\$30  
Doctoral Application Fee .....\$175  
(To be paid once at time of application: non-refundable)

Late Registration Fee .....\$25 per course  
(Applied to accounts not fully paid by the first day of class)

### Tuition Charges:

Credit ..... \$100.00/Class Hr.  
Non-Credit (Audit)..... \$40.00/Class Hr.  
(due no later than the first day of class to avoid late fees)

### Doctoral Program

Credit ..... \$150 per hour  
Course Material Fee ..... \$15 per course  
Drop/Add Fee ..... \$15 per course  
Outside Reader fee for Dissertation ..... \$400.00

Transfer Credit/Posting Fees ..... \$30 per hour  
Biblical Counseling Internship Fee ..... \$100.00  
Clinical Material Fee ..... \$50.00  
Returned Check Fees ..... \$35.00  
Graduation fee (required of all graduates) ..... \$200.00  
Duplicate or replacement diploma ..... \$30.00

### Distance Education Fees

Interactive CD-ROM Material Fee ..... \$40.00  
DVD Material Fee ..... \$80 .00  
*Audio* CD Material Fee (shipping) ..... \$5.00  
*DVD* Material Fee (shipping) ..... \$10.00  
Extension for Directed Study/Distance Education (30 day) ..... \$50 per course  
Annual Student ID Badge ..... \$15.00

## **WHEN TO APPLY AND ENROLL**

BTS operates on a continuous enrollment system. This means that any qualified applicant may enroll in courses and/or degree programs offered by BTS at any time. The applicant must meet the established admission requirements.

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Approximately, two months prior to the beginning of each semester, the schedule is posted on the BTS web site. One month prior to the beginning of each semester, the semester's course schedule and registration form will be published in the BTS Newsletter. The BTS Newsletter is mailed to all students and BTS alumni. **Pre-registration is strongly encouraged to ensure materials are available the first night of class.** Students may complete a registration form and return it via mail, email, fax, or in person with a live signature not typed. BTS accepts cash, checks and most credit cards. To avoid late charges, fees must be received in the BTS office no later than the first day of class. Students must register before attending class. No student may register for a class after the second week of the semester. Late fees will apply after the first of the semester. Students may register for a distance education course during Seminary office hours at any time.

## **STUDENT ID BADGES**

BTS requires identification badges for each student. The badges help identify students at the various seminary locations. Badges should be worn to all classes. The badges and ID cards may also be used to secure students discounts at certain stores. The ID badge and card also allow entrance to certain libraries. New ID badges are printed each fall semester and are valid for one year. All badges expire on August 31<sup>st</sup> each year. The fee for an ID badge is \$15 and is not optional.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

Each student is responsible for obtaining all required materials and books for classes. **These should be obtained before attending class unless the professor has not notified the seminary office of required textbooks and materials.** Textbooks may be purchased at the Briarwood bookstore or online at Amazon.com or at similar book sellers. Each semester's textbook list is published on the web site [www.birminghamseminary.org](http://www.birminghamseminary.org) or may be obtained from the seminary office. A Material Fee of \$15 will be charged when a course supplement is provided for a course.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor and/or seminary office prior to the absence. A student will be permitted two absences per semester in a course. Tardiness may be recorded and three

unexcused tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence. Unexcused absences and tardies exceeding the allowance may result in the student being dropped from the course with an “F” grade.

### **LOCATION OF CLASSES**

Classroom locations will be listed on the course registration forms and semester schedules. Directions to most locations are posted on the seminary web site.

### **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Students need to be aware that the seminary's financial commitment to the faculty is based upon class size. It is therefore extremely important for students to understand the withdrawal policy. If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from a class, he/she must submit a withdrawal request form to the registrar. Forms are available in the seminary office or on the seminary website. If the student simply discontinues attending class after the first week of class or anytime thereafter without submitting a withdrawal request form, the student will be liable for the entire tuition charge for the class and will receive a failing grade for the course. Upon submission of the form, the student will be responsible for tuition in accordance with the policy stated below.

Students withdrawing from courses will receive a 50% financial tuition credit within the first two weeks of the beginning of the semester, for use in future semesters. There will be no financial credits issued after the second week of class.

If a refund is desired, it must be requested in writing by the student; otherwise, any paid tuition will be credited to future courses.

A course may be dropped without penalty through the first two weeks of any regular semester. Unauthorized withdrawal will cause the student to receive a failing grade in the course. Authorized withdrawal later than two weeks will be listed on the student transcript as W (withdrawn).

A course may be changed from Credit to Audit at any time through the end of the second week of the semester. No credit of tuition or refund will be made in the event of such a change. An audit student may change from audit to credit by submitting an approving statement signed by the professor of the course and paying the increased tuition.

## **DROPPING/ADDING A COURSE**

Students may drop and/or add courses until the end of the second week of the semester for a fee of \$15 per course.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Complete financial information may be found in the current catalog, on the website, or in this Student Handbook. Students may also contact the Seminary Office. All fees and charges are subject to change and will be applied according to the most current listings.

**NOTE:** Course grades, degrees, and transcripts will not be issued until financial or other obligations (including Library fines and fees) of the student are met. No student may enroll for a class until all financial or other obligations from previous semester are satisfied.

## **ACCOUNT INFORMATION**

Students may obtain their own account information by contacting the Registrar at telephone 205-776-5354, or fax at 205-824-8407. Students must provide proof of identification in order to receive information regarding their financial account.

## **CURRENT ACCOUNT**

A student's account is considered a current account when a student has a zero balance or has preregistered for a semester but has not paid the balance and the semester has not yet begun.

## **DELINQUENT ACCOUNT**

**A delinquent account is one with due charges.**

**Students with delinquent accounts lose the following privileges:**

- Not allowed to register for future courses.
- Drop/add and degree change Registrations or Re-registrations may not be prepared.
- An extension may not be given to a student with a delinquent account.

- Materials may not be charged to an account if the account is delinquent. In this case materials must be paid for by cash, money order or credit card (no checks) at time of order.

Students may also lose the privilege to have their lessons graded when accounts are delinquent. When the account is brought to current status, these privileges are regained. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Seminary Office when the account has been brought back to current.

### **FINANCIAL AID**

Because of generous contributions from various churches, foundations, and individuals, BTS is able to keep tuition, fees and other costs to a minimum. BTS current tuition is approximately 1/4 of other institutions. Funds are not available for financial aid or scholarships to students except through contributions designated for student grants for disbursement of those limited funds.

### **FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Students experiencing financial difficulty may petition to have their payments rescheduled. Those students must contact the VP of Academic Affairs to discuss their financial situation.

### **REFUND POLICY**

All refund requests must be in writing.

### **RETURNED CHECK POLICY**

Checks returned for non-payment to BTS will carry a surcharge of \$35.00 that will be billed to the student's account along with the amount of the check. Students demonstrating repeated irresponsibility in this area will be subject to having their program of study interrupted and to being dismissed as a student, or such other action deemed appropriate by the Seminary.

### **THIRD PARTY FINANCIAL SOURCES**

Whether or not the entire amount or a portion of the tuition/fees amount shown on the Registration is to be paid by the third party source, **the person signing the Registration is responsible for fulfilling the financial obligations of the Registration. Payments made by a third party to cover**

**tuition or fees of a particular student are not considered charitable contributions to BTS.**

## **TUITION CHARGES**

Tuition cost is assessed on a semester credit hour basis. An explanation of Tuition Charges follows:

There is a commonly held misconception that tuition charges are based on student progression in a degree program, and that, as long as a student does little or no work, no cost is incurred by the seminary.

Tuition pays for academic services. Many of these services are provided or contracted for at the front end of a degree program and include such things as:

- Curriculum development and review,
- Processing of student materials orders,
- Admissions activities,
- Processing of student records,
- Permanent retention of student records in both electronic and hard copy format,
- Faculty advisors and graders,
- Lecture royalties,
- Physical plant and upkeep, and
- Student materials such as the Catalog and Student Handbook.

Since these services are provided whether or not a particular student takes advantage of them, the additional expenditures generated by a student's actual submission of lessons or other use of any of these services is only a miniscule part of the total operating budget of the seminary.

Since BTS is operated largely on tuition dollars received, if one student fails to pay his/her financial obligation, it adds to the financial burden of the remaining students. Since these students are also actively involved in ministry, often in difficult financial situations, BTS must insist that all students fulfill their financial obligations whenever possible to protect the entire student body from increases in tuition and fees.

**BTS tuition is about one-fourth the national average.**

# ACADEMIC INFORMATION

## CODE OF ETHICS

### **\*Academic Integrity**

BTS assumes that all of its students desire to pursue all academic work with honesty and scholarly integrity. Breaches of academic honesty and integrity are infringements of the mutual faith and trust essential to the academic enterprise.

Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited. Examples of activities include, but are not limited to, the following definitions:

- Cheating - Using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations or other academic work, or preventing or attempting to prevent another from using authorized assistance, material, or study aids. *Examples: using a cheat sheet in an exam; altering a graded exam and resubmitting it for a better grade, and so on.*
- Plagiarism – Using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific and proper acknowledgement. *Examples: misrepresenting another's work (paper, report, article, or computer work) as one's own original creation and submitting it for an assignment; using someone else's ideas without attribution; failing to cite a reference or to use quotation marks where appropriate, and so on.*
- Fabrication – Submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. *Examples: making up data, misrepresenting data; citing nonexistent or irrelevant articles, and so on.*
- Multiple Submissions – Submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement. *Example: submitting the same paper for two different classes without the instructors' express prior approval.*
- Misrepresentation of Academic Records – Misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student's transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to BTS. *Examples: forging a Registration Form or a grade report; tampering with computer records, and so on.*
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty – Knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of this code. *Example: working*

- together on an exam or others' assignments intended to be an individual project without the instructor's express or prior approval.*
- Unfair Advantage - Attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. *Examples: gaining or providing unauthorized access to examination materials (either past or present); obstructing or interfering with another student's efforts in an academic exercise; lying about a need for an extension for an exam or paper; continuing to write even when time is up during an exam etc.*
  - Computer Crimes - Damaging or modifying computer programs without permission. *Examples: piracy of copyright protected software; hacking; constructing viruses; knowingly introducing viruses into a system; copying programs and data belonging to others, and so on.*

Those students whose work definitively can be shown to breach academic honesty or scholarly integrity will face academic investigation. Sanctions will be imposed, ranging from grade reduction to, course failure to dismissal from the school.

**\* Proctored Examinations**

Students required to take certain examinations are asked to identify a proctor who is willing to monitor the examination, arrange a test time with the proctor, and provide the proctor's name, address, and occupation. Students may select any responsible adult to serve as proctor to whom they are not related by either blood or marriage. BTS will send the testing materials to the proctor in time for the arranged testing time. The proctor will administer the examination and return it directly to the school. Students are expected to take all exams within two weeks of the receipt of the exam materials.

**GRADING SCALE AND QUALITY POINTS PER HOUR**

The seminary has adopted a four point grading scale as follows:

A	96-100	=	4.0 Quality Points
A-	90-95	=	3.7 Quality Points
B	85-89	=	3.0 Quality Points
B-	80-84	=	2.7 Quality Points
C	75-79	=	2.0 Quality Points
C-	70-74	=	1.7 Quality Points

D	65-69	=	1.0 Quality Point
D-	60-64	=	0.7 Quality Point
F	Below 60	=	0.0 Quality Points

In addition to the students meeting due dates and using correct English, the following guide will serve as general criteria for grades. Final grades for each course are given at the discretion of the member of faculty responsible for that course.

- A Represents a superior understanding of the subject matter, prompt and complete preparation of assignments, outstanding ability as manifested by such things as original thinking, extra reading or projects, and an interested attitude in and contribution to class discussions (4 grade points per semester hour).
- B Represents a good understanding of the subject matter, prompt and complete preparation of assignments, above average ability as manifested by reading comprehension, and an interested attitude in and contribution to class discussion (3 grade points per semester hour).
- C This work is satisfactory but is lacking in a significant area and does not show a grasp of some basic principles.
- D There is serious problems with this work, though it is still passable. It represents a poor performance in comprehending the course content and only meets the minimal standard of the professor.
- F This work is unacceptable and fails to meet the requirements of the assignment.

In a course in which a failing grade has been received (including an Inc/F), a student who has feasible reasons may ask the professor to grant permission to take a re-examination or complete a reassignment of sufficient quality to raise the grade to an F/D. Such work must be completed within 21 days after notification of the failing grade. If the grade is raised to an F/D, the student receives credit for the course, but no quality points are counted in calculating the student's general standing. When a student repeats a course where he or she has earned an F, the F remains on the transcript but the new grade will be used in calculating the grade point average (GPA).

## **GRADE POINT AVERAGES (GPA)**

Quality points will be computed for each course by multiplying the number of quality points designated for a grade, by the number of course hours. For example, the student takes a two-hour course and receives a “B,” which equals 3 quality points for each hour. Since it was a 2 hour course, this equals 6 quality points.

In a given semester, if the student takes 4 two-hour courses and receives an “A” grade on one, a “B” on the next, a “C” on the third, and a “D” on the fourth, this would equate to 8 quality points on the first, 6 quality points on the second, 4 quality points on the third and 2 quality points on the fourth. The hours taken total 8, the quality points total 20. Dividing the 20 quality points by the 8 hours, the average quality points for the semester is 2.5.

All Seminary students are required to maintain an overall cumulative grade point of 2.0. At the end of any semester, a student whose overall average is below “C” will be placed on academic probation. If, after the next semester, the student has not raised the average to at least “C,” the student will be dismissed for academic reasons.

## **STUDENT EVALUATIONS**

Each semester, students are asked to complete a course evaluation for each class completed either by paper form or online. Where paper evaluation forms are used, the professor should designate a student to distribute and collect the student evaluation at the end of the semester. If an evaluation form is not given to the student, the student may pick up copies from the seminary office and return the completed forms to the seminary office.

## **SEMESTER GRADES**

Course grades will be issued at the end of each semester. Grades will ordinarily be mailed to students the third week after the end of the semester. Permanent records will be maintained for each student. These records will show grades and hours earned.

Grades will not be issued, academic credit will not be awarded, official transcripts will not be issued until all financial obligations are met and all admission paperwork received.

## **INCOMPLETE GRADES**

Incomplete assignments and grades should always be the exception and not the rule. Should a student find it impossible to complete work on time, the professor should be the first to know. The professor is required to report a grade of an “I” (Incomplete) to the seminary office within two weeks of the end of the semester. The student has six weeks from the semester’s end to have the professor change the incomplete grade to a final grade. If no final grade is received in the seminary office by the six-week deadline, a failing grade will be posted to the official transcript. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure course work is to the professor in time to submit a grade within the six week period.

All course materials must be submitted to the respective professors at the end of the semester (last day of classes). Thereafter, course materials may be submitted for up to six (6) weeks after the end of the semester directly to the offices of the Registrar with the permission of the professor. If a student submits course materials after the end of the semester but within the six (6) weeks grace period, the student’s grade will be lowered by one letter grade. The course materials will not be accepted after the six (6) week grace period and a failing grade will be posted to the student’s transcript.

## **UNSATISFACTORY GRADES**

In the event an unsatisfactory grade is received in a class, the student may re-take the course in an effort to improve his or her grade. The student must register and pay for the course again. The unsatisfactory grade from the first course does remain on the transcript.

## **SCHOLASTIC PROBATION**

The V.P. of Academic Affairs has the discretion to place a student on probation based upon poor academic performance and/or academic violation of BTS policies, and/or relevant student improprieties. The terms and conditions of the probation will be documented in writing to the student. The V.P. of Academic Affairs may place an incoming student on academic probation for an initial period (usually three courses) during which the student will be monitored for satisfactory progress.

## **WRITING POLICY**

BTS has made the decision to adopt the Turabian style of writing format for all research papers, clinicals, and dissertations (DMin). All papers are to be doubled-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font. This will bring consistency and less confusion for both students and professors. In this technological age, information is readily available; make sure that you understand about giving reference sources the proper recognition. (See page 48 for information on Software to assist in the Turabian formatting)

In conjunction with the required course text, there should be additional readings of 600-1000 pages, along with a course project of twelve to fifteen pages that would incorporate at least two footnotes per page and a bibliography of at least five to seven references.

## **STANDARDS OF WORK**

BTS has established minimum academic standards for all students. These standards concern academic progress and evaluation of student work. Students are considered to be making satisfactory academic progress if they maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 for Master's and Doctoral students.

If students fail to maintain the required GPA, they may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation is a period in which students must achieve a prescribed level of academic performance. If placed on academic probation, Master's and Doctoral students must achieve a "B" or better for each of three consecutive courses during the probationary period. Students who fail to demonstrate improved academic performance will be referred to the V.P. of Academic Affairs for appropriate action.

## **GRADUATION**

The responsibility for meeting the requirements for a degree rests with the individual student. If all requirements are not completed, a degree will not be awarded. It is important for each student to have an understanding of all graduation requirements.

Students must notify the Seminary office of their intention to apply for graduation at least one year before graduation. Formal graduation ceremonies are held in May of each year. Each graduate is required to pay a

graduation fee prior to graduation, whether or not the student participates in the graduation ceremony. The fee is determined and reported to prospective graduates the first of each calendar year.

A Pre-graduation assessment is required. Contact the registrar or VP of Academic Affairs for the necessary paperwork.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### **Grades/Faculty**

Students who are dissatisfied with a submission grade or comments received from an evaluator are asked to contact the faculty member of record and discuss the grievance with the faculty member. (Faculty contact information is available by calling the Seminary Office.) The faculty member can modify the evaluation by contacting the VP of Academic Affairs, or requesting that the student resubmit the lesson directly to the faculty member for reconsideration.

If the student still believes a lesson submission was unfairly evaluated, he/she may resubmit the original graded copy along with an unmarked copy of the original submission to the VP of Academic Affairs. A cover letter requesting a second evaluation of the lesson and agreeing to pay the appropriate re-grading fees should accompany the student's resubmission. The student will be charged a re-grade fee equal to the amount determined by the VP of Academic Affairs to cover the actual re-grading and processing costs for the submission in question. The second grade becomes the grade of record, even if it reflects a lower score. If this resolution is unsatisfactory, then the parties involved may appeal the decision to a Commission of three board members chosen by the Chairman. The decision of this Commission is final.

Students may request to be assigned to another evaluator by sending a written request stating their grievance with the assigned faculty member to the VP of Academic Affairs. The VP of Academic Affairs will contact the student with a decision regarding the request.

Students are provisionally able to request to resubmit to receive a passing grade, but are not permitted to resubmit lessons merely to receive a higher grade. (Any grade above "F" is considered passing.) If a student's overall GPA falls below the minimum required for graduation, the student should petition the Academic Committee in writing to re-register for the course.

## **Faculty Initiated Resubmissions**

Faculty have the responsibility to evaluate all work sent to them. Faculty cannot return work if deemed unacceptable without first evaluating and making comment on the evaluation form. In some instances, individual faculty members may at their discretion allow papers to be reworked as needed if deemed unacceptable to the faculty receiving the lesson with the understanding that if student wishes to exercise this option the student will be charged a resubmission fee of 50 cents per page with a \$5.00 minimum. If faculty chooses to allow students this option they must enter the following note on the evaluation form along with their signature:

“You may opt to resubmit your lesson for the chance of a better grade. Note: you will incur a 50 cent/page re-submission fee with a \$5.00 minimum (See notes attached.)”

The faculty member would then attach a brief letter to the evaluation form outlining the rationale for why he/she wished to have the student resubmit (should the student take advantage of this option). Students wishing to exercise the option provided by the faculty must then attach the letter from the faculty giving them permission to resubmit along with the original evaluation form when they resubmit their second attempt. It is up to the faculty as to how he/she will handle the lesson upon resubmission viz., how/if they will adjust the grade. A student who does not wish to exercise the original granted by the faculty member to resubmit would then be assigned the grade according to the original evaluation form. If the student is dissatisfied with the grade received and the faculty option, the student may proceed with aforementioned student grievance procedures.

## **Other Issues**

Grievance relating to other issues, academic or non-academic, may be submitted in written form to the V.P. of Academic Affairs. However, students are encouraged to consult with the appropriate individuals working in the department relevant to the grievance before filing a grievance. In addition, Academic Advisors are equipped to work with students to solve most issues; therefore, students are also advised to contact an Academic Advisor to seek a possible solution before filing a grievance.

## **BTS OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS**

Before a student can receive a transcript, official or student copy, all fees must be paid.

### **OFFICIAL COPY:**

A written request must be submitted on the transcript request form available in the Seminary office or online at the BTS website. There is a fee of \$10 for each official transcript requested. **Official transcripts are sent to a third party only.**

### **STUDENT COPY:**

There is no charge for student copies of transcripts. Student transcripts are issued each semester once grades are posted **or** as needed when a distance education course or a directed study course is completed.

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

BTS maintains accreditation through the Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries (ARTS), which has not yet obtained recognition from the U.S. Department of Education and the Council of Higher Education Association (CHEA). In response to the proliferation of “diploma mills,” some states have tightened their laws regarding which out-of-state institutions can offer classes and degrees to their residents. The tendency in those states is to exclude all institutions which do not have an accreditation recognized by CHEA or the U.S. Department of Education. While BTS believes that the classes and degree programs it offers are of high quality, prospective students should be aware of this issue. If you live in a state which has adopted restrictions on out-of-state institutions of higher learning like the ones described above, BTS may not be able to offer you the distance classes described on this website or in its catalog for academic credit.

A number of courses offered at BTS are available on CD-Rom or DVD for the student who is not able to attend a course in a live setting. Students may enroll in a Distance Education (DE) course one at any time. There is a separate form to be completed to enroll in a DE course, available in the Seminary office or online. Students are responsible for purchasing textbook(s). Four months is the maximum time allowed for completion of a DE course; however, these four months do not have to correspond with a seminary semester. To obtain a distance education course, please contact the

seminary administrative assistant at 205-776-5356 or by email at [bts@briarwood.org](mailto:bts@briarwood.org).

The student is expected to spend the same amount of time that he/she would if they were taking a scheduled class. If a student exceeds the four month allotted time frame, a request for a one-time extension must be applied for with a fee of \$50.00. The extension is for one month. The required extension forms are available on the BTS website or in the Seminary office. If the course is not completed in this time frame, the student must re-enroll and re-pay the course tuition.

In order to receive exams, a student must elect a proctor to request and oversee the administration of the examination. A proctor may be the student's pastor, an elder, deacon, etc. He or she may not be the student's spouse or other family member. Please have the proctor provide the following information to the seminary and request each examination when ready. This may be done via mail, fax, or e-mail to [bts@briarwood.org](mailto:bts@briarwood.org).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the student \_\_\_\_\_

### **DIRECTED STUDIES**

To set up a directed study course, contact the Registrar at the Seminary office.

#### **Course Description**

Directed studies are course credits obtained by working directly with a professor in a group of 2-4 students or on an individual basis. These arrangements are permitted only for students who cannot schedule a necessary course prior to their planned graduation. Otherwise students are expected to enroll and attend class as scheduled. The course must be completed within a four month time frame.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain the professor's and the seminary's approval for the directed study.

## **Guidelines**

- 1) Minimum of two book reports – the combined readings should be 600-1000 pages; each report is to be a minimum of five (5) typed pages per instructions given in number three below.
- 2) The book report must reflect that the student has read and comprehended the materials.
- 3) The report should demonstrate critical thinking and analysis of thoughts, interaction of student and author, and show application/affect to his/her personal life and or ministry.
- 4) Minimum of two exams is recommended based on course directions of the respective professor. (Type of exams at professor's discretion)
- 5) There will be one course project based on the nature of the course which is to be twelve (12) to fifteen (15) pages in length. (Guidelines to be set by the professor.) The course project is to have an average of two footnotes per page, demonstrating acceptable academic standards. In addition, a bibliography of five to seven books, journals or periodicals are to be consulted.
- 6) All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. Any papers not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Papers are to include Times New Roman Script font and be double spaced.
- 7) Students will have four months to complete the course. The student is expected to spend the same amount of time that he/she would if taking a scheduled class. If students exceed the four month allotted time frame a request for a one-month extension must be applied for with a fee of \$50.00. Incomplete work at the end of the extension period will result in a failing grade and the course must be retaken to receive credit.
- 8) The professor will set scheduled meeting times with student for guidance, verification, counseling and mentoring.

# RESOURCES

## STANDARDS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

BTS generally uses the Turabian style of formatting as a standard for all papers, for all classes. However, students should regard individual professor preferences if they communicate any variance in outlining their requirements for papers. Professors retain discretion in determining how “formal” a paper must be, excluding papers (research papers, clinicals, and dissertations) which must be prepared in Turabian format. Beyond those variances, students should follow the Turabian style, as outlined in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate Turabian. Students may also find it helpful to use the StyleEase formatting software for developing proper citations. An additional book that BTS students will find helpful is *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology* by Nancy Vyhmeister.

## LOGOS BIBLE STUDY SOFTWARE REQUIREMENT

Information: everyone in seminary has to process information, some doing a better job than others. Books, lectures, lexicons, the Internet, libraries, CDs and videos; all of these and other media have to be sifted and sorted through, condensed, restated, quoted, absorbed, refined and sometimes refuted. As a student in the past you may have done this using a notebook and pen, note cards, or maybe a computer. You read, highlighted, clipped, jotted down, dog-eared, and possibly attempted to remember the information you were encountering. Your goal: a finished product. You take the raw materials of information and hopefully produce a finished product of useful information. This is not to ignore the spiritual dynamic, but the processing of information is no less a part of ministry.

Birmingham Theological Seminary (BTS) has discovered an invaluable resource to help our students not only now during their seminary years, but through the rest of their lives in ministry. The Logos Bible Study software is the most advanced and comprehensive Bible study software on the market today. Not only is it software (search, notes, bookmark, graph, etc.) but it is a library as well. Instead of having Calvin’s Institutes on your shelf, you’ll have it in Logos where you can search it for words or Scripture references. Suddenly, a book that before could only be read can now be completely searched in seconds for the topic at hand. This is true for numerous versions of Scripture, commentaries, classical and contemporary books, and other useful resources for those in ministry. Furthermore, the original language

tools of Logos allow students who have studied Greek and/or Hebrew to dig deeper than ever, and more quickly. Imagine entering a passage of Scripture and in seconds having every Greek or Hebrew word listed in original order, parsed and defined, with hyperlinks to your lexicons next to them! Yet it will also allow students who know no Greek or Hebrew to actually study in the original language. Through easy-to-use hyperlinks, students can navigate through various texts and gain more information than they could ever imagine. And Logos is fully customizable, allowing you to build your own library the way you want it.

Beginning with the fall semester of 2006, new Master of Divinity (M.Div.) and Doctor of Ministry-Pastoral Leadership students will be required to purchase the Logos Scholar's Library or higher. BTS strongly recommends that M.Div. students purchase the Scholar's GOLD Library with the Theological Journals Volume 5 add-on. The additional books in the Scholar's Gold Library will be extremely beneficial to M.Div. students, in particular the language tools. There are some titles that are arguably worth, by themselves, more than the price difference. The Theological Journals Volume 5 will be extremely valuable to any student during the research process. This add-on has over \$4000 worth of journals including Bibliotheca Sacra from 1934-2001, Westminster Theological Journal from 1960-2000, The Master's Seminary Journal from 1990-1999, and numerous years worth of journals from 11 other seminaries and institutions. This requirement must be met within completing 10 hours of the program.

All new degree-seeking students and Distance Education students will be required to purchase the Logos Scholar's Library or higher beginning fall semester 2006. BTS strongly recommends the Logos Scholar's Library with the Theological Journals Volume 5 add-on for the same reasons mentioned above. This requirement must be met within completing 10 hours of the program.

All degree-seeking students are eligible to purchase any of the Logos Bible Study libraries at **50% off the retail price**. Students must purchase during regularly scheduled semester enrollment periods. Also, Logos will divide payments into 6 equal installments.

New Students in the Master of Arts Program and Doctoral program in Biblical Counseling will be required to purchase the Journal of Biblical Counseling 25 Years CD-ROM collection. Current Biblical Counseling Masters and Doctor of Ministry Students are highly encouraged to purchase the LOGOS edition of the Biblical Counseling Library. It will be a great addition to your personal library.

**Logos Scholars gold is available for student usage in the Briarwood library. Contact the Seminary office for the password.**

All students are encouraged to purchase and use the StyleEase program for formatting term papers according to the Turabian style (the required style of BTS). Although not required, this inexpensive piece of software will make it much easier and faster for students to meet the format requirements for all papers submitted in BTS classes. This software is available at [www.styleease.com](http://www.styleease.com) please contact the V.P. of Academic Affairs for additional information.

### **OTHER RESEARCH INFORMATION**

The **Theological Journal Library** CDs are available online at [www.galaxie.com/store/default.asp](http://www.galaxie.com/store/default.asp).

### **LIBRARY**

The BTS Library is located in the Briarwood Presbyterian Church facility. Students are welcome to check out books as long as they adhere to the rules of the Library. BTS also has library privileges at Southeastern Bible College located on Valleydale Road and Samford University on Lakeshore Drive. Student ID badges must be presented. Any fees incurred are the responsibility of the student.

**Logos Scholars Gold is available for student usage in the Briarwood library. Contact the Seminary office for the password.**

### **BTS FORMS**

All required forms are available in the Seminary office or online at [www.birminghamseminary.org](http://www.birminghamseminary.org).

