STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

COLUMBIA
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The Columbia Theological Seminary academic calendar is your primary guide to the current academic year. It includes semester starting/ending dates, final exam dates, holiday breaks, and more. Click here to access the most current version of the academic calendar at any time.

DIRECTORY

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 520
Decatur, GA 30031

STREET ADDRESS
701 S. Columbia Drive
Decatur, GA 30030

PHONE: 404.378.8821

WEBSITE: www.ctsnet.edu

ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM: www.columbiacurrent.com

OFFICE DIRECTORY

Academic Affairs	404.687.4521 wishart-christiank@ctsnet.edu
Admissions	404.687.4517 admissions@ctsnet.edu
Advancement	404.687.4525 thompsonv@ctsnet.edu
Business	404.687.4510 businessofficestaff@ctsnet.edu
Center for Lifelong Learning	404.687.4577 lifelonglearning@ctsnet.edu
Communications	404.687.4530 cuthbertsonj@ctsnet.edu
Computer Services	404.687.4561 computerservices@ctsnet.edu
Contextual Education & International Partnerships	404.687.4519 lingenfeltera@ctsnet.edu
Educational Technology & Media Services	404.687.4635 vaughanj@ctsnet.edu
Enrollment Management & Vocational Outreach	404.687.4668 emvostaff@ctsnet.edu
Student Financial Services	404.687.4529 financialaid@ctsnet.edu

Human Resources	404.687.4654
	saulsj@ctsnet.edu
John Bulow Campbell Library (JBCL)	404.687.4610
	ctslibrary@ctsnet.edu
President's Office	404.687.4515
	riveras@ctsnet.edu
Refectory	404.687.4551
	businessofficestaff@ctsnet.edu
Registrar	404.687.4576
	registrar@ctsnet.edu
Senior Advisor for Flourishing And Belonging	404.687.4504
	reyesr@ctsnet.edu
Student Formation & Campus Culture	404.687.4523
	sfccstaff@ctsnet.edu
Worship Life	worshiplifestaff@ctsnet.edu
Title IX Coordinator	404.687.4654
	saulsj@ctsnet.edu

COMMUNITY LIFE AT COLUMBIA

Student Formation and Campus Culture

The Office for Student Formation and Campus Culture (SFCC) is at the heart of community life at Columbia Theological Seminary. SFCC is in Campbell Hall (CH214). Throughout the academic year, students can participate in a wide range of programs and activities related to community life, spiritual formation, and vocational discernment.

The Columbia Current | It's What's Happening in Columbia Life

The Columbia Current is SFCC's online news hub for what's happening at Columbia. The Columbia Current provides a central location for all announcements, events, jobs, and information one may need at Columbia. During the fall and spring semesters, SFCC sends an email digest of campus news and events.

Click here to submit a posting to the Columbia Current. Submissions are due by Wednesday at 5pm for publication the following Monday. All submissions must include the name and contact information of the submitter and/or the primary contact person for the announcements. No commercial submissions will be accepted.

Pastoral Care and Spiritual Support

SFCC is responsible for providing pastoral care within the student community. Our Campus Minister is available for one-on-one pastoral care and holistic resourcing for mental, spiritual, and emotional flourishing. Students are invited to seek care and support from SFCC student staff members. Students are also encouraged to bring the pastoral needs of others in the community to the attention of the Campus Minister. Students and families are also encouraged to find church homes in the Atlanta area. Becoming a part of a congregation can greatly assist students in developing a network of care.

Counseling Services

Columbia Theological Seminary is committed to the mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being of students. Master's-level students are eligible for up to $300 per academic year in counseling financial assistance, available on a first-come, first-served basis. While the Seminary partners with several counseling centers in the Atlanta area, students may work with any licensed therapist. To access these funds, students must first contact the campus minister, which helps the Student Formation and Community Culture (SFCC) team track support accurately. Students are responsible for selecting a provider and negotiating the rate directly. For more information about counseling resources and support, contact the campus minister or SFCC.

Spiritual Direction Resources

In addition to counseling, the Seminary offers opportunities to explore your spiritual journey, discern God's will in the decisions you face, learn new spiritual disciplines, and practice new ways to pray, deepen your faith, hope, and sense of life purpose in a confidential, supportive, and nonjudgmental setting. Opportunities include subsidized individual and group spiritual direction, as well as reduced-cost enrollment in courses toward the completion of the Certificate in Spiritual Formation Contact the campus minister for more information.

Confidentiality

When tending to the pastoral care needs of students, Columbia Theological Seminary faculty and staff will not disclose pastoral confidences to anyone except when (i) it is mandated by law, (ii) it may prevent a clear and immediate danger to the student or others, (iii) it is used for the purposes of pastoral supervision, or (iv) it is authorized in previously obtained written permission. In the case of a threat to the health and well-being of the student or others, Columbia will take reasonable precautions for the protection of the intended victim. These precautions may include, but not limited to, the notification of campus security.

Student ID Cards

The John C. Bulow Library provides student ID cards to all entering students during New Student Orientation. ID cards serve the following functions: primary on-campus student ID, Atlanta Regional Consortium for Higher Education (ARCHE)

access card, campus security identification, Agnes Scott swimming pool access card, and more. Should a student lose their ID, they may obtain request a replacement ID from the Library after paying a $25 replacement fee.

Worship Life

Chapel

The Columbia community gathers for worship to express our thanksgiving for and need of God's grace, to hear God's word, and to pray for the church and the world. Chapel begins at 10:10 am in either the Campbell Hall Chapel or the Harrington Center Chapel. During the fall and spring semesters, the community observes the following chapel schedule:

Tuesday	**Service of Word**	**10:10-10:50am**
Friday	**Service of Word & Table**	**10:10-10:50am**

Summer and January terms include opportunities for Dinner & Worship on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm.

The Columbia Theological Seminary Sound Theology Choir rehearses on Tuesdays from 1:45 to 2:45 pm.

Chapel is led by faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other invited guests. A detailed schedule can be found on the Columbia Current.

Most chapel services are livestreamed and available at the Office of Worship Life at Columbia Seminary YouTube channel.

Community Forum

Community Forum is another essential aspect of Columbia's worship life. Thursday Forums provide an alternative to Columbia's typical chapel/worship format. Forums offer the Columbia community opportunities to consider significant issues for the Church in the world and to be directed in spiritual formation. Announcements of upcoming forums can be found on the Columbia Current.

Convocations & Special Worship Services

In addition to regular worship services, the Seminary community gathers for convocations and other special services several times during the academic year. At the opening convocation and commencement, students are recognized for outstanding academic work and service to the Church through the presentation of awards, prizes, and fellowships.

On the evening prior to graduation, the Columbia community gathers for worship. The baccalaureate preacher is chosen by the faculty from a list of names submitted by the graduating class in the year prior. Each fall, the Worship and Convocations Committee solicits suggestions from faculty members and students for the preacher for the following academic year. Suggestions from the students graduating in the next academic year are made to the committee through the specified SGA class representative. At a spring faculty meeting, the committee recommends at least three baccalaureate preachers, typically, in order of preference, and including a brief autobiographical sketch. The recommendations must consider racial, gender, and cultural diversity. The faculty may approve the persons in the order recommended or they may change the order.

Center for Academic Literacy (CAL)| Academic Writing & Support

The Center for Academic Literacy (CAL) offers free workshops, one-on-one coaching, and other programming to enrich your competencies in analytical writing, critical reading and thinking, effective communication, study skills, research, and other graduate-level academic literacies. CAL also offers one-on-one coaching consultations, occasional workshops, and an array of print and electronic resources to help you thrive during your studies.

You can schedule a one-on-one consultation with an academic coach to discuss a skill or project at any point in your process. Coaching is available in both in-person and online modes. Click here to schedule a 30-minute or 60-minute appointment. Walk-ins are also welcome.

If you have questions, please stop by JBC Library or email inquiries to writing@ctsnet.edu.

Vocational Support & Career Services

The Office of Student Formation and Campus Culture maintains a wide range of resources for vocational discernment and placement. Many of these resources can be found online in the Columbia Current. Resources include workshops, assistance with PCUSA ordination exams, job postings, on-campus interviews, and much more! If you have questions about vocation, contact the dean of students or the assistant dean for student life and formation.

Job Postings

Student Formation and Campus Culture maintains a job posting site for all jobs sent to the seminary. The site includes full-time, part-time, volunteer, paid, local, and international employment opportunities.

Presbyterian Church (USA) Standard Ordination Exams

PC(USA) students, who are seeking ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament, are required to pass five standard exams in Bible Content, Biblical Exegesis, Theological Competence, Worship and Sacraments, and Church Polity. Information for these exams including dates, registration, and costs, can be found at the PC(USA) Ordination Exam website. Authorization to take these exams must come from the student's Committee on Preparation for Ministry (or equivalent body) within the presbytery under which they are under care.

Resources for exam preparation can be found online. A Columbia login is required. Preparation sessions, led by members of the faculty, may be offered to assist students in their studies.

Supply Preaching

Local congregations regularly request pulpit supply. Students who have completed P530 and wish to explore their call to pastoral ministry by engaging in occasional preaching in area congregations should contact the Student Formation and Campus Culture.

Reports to Denominational Supervisory Committee

Upon completion of a signed consent form received during the Candidate Discernment Consultations (CDC) process, the following reports may be sent to the ministry discernment body appropriate to the tradition/denomination of the student, such as the Committee on Preparation for Ministry of the student's home presbytery:

- Supervised Ministry placements and final reports.
- Candidacy Discernment Consultation minutes and report of the faculty's action.

The denominational supervisory committee will be informed if a student chooses not to release any of the information above.

Student Organizations

Student Government Association

The Student Government Association (SGA) is the official representative and advocating body of students of Columbia Theological Seminary. The SGA is composed of elected student body officers, elected class officers, and representatives from each student organization that collectively work to better community life on campus through sustainable programs, advocacy, and campus events. Matters of concern to the student community may be referred to the administration and/or faculty committees by the SGA.

There are many ways to get involved, from serving as an elected officer to volunteering for a faculty committee and even starting a new campus organization. All students are welcome to join one of the monthly meetings and offer perspectives on issues within our community.

African Heritage Student Association (AHSA)

AHSA creates space for students whose cultural, ancestral, or lived experience is connected to the African diaspora. The association fosters community, celebration, advocacy, and mutual support, while inviting all who are committed to the flourishing and advancement of African heritage and Black identity at Columbia.

Asian Student Association (ASA)

ASA is a community of students with heritage, family, or cultural roots in Asian and Pacific Islander contexts. The group celebrates the diversity of Asian identities and supports one another in navigating life, faith, and formation. ASA also seeks to enrich Columbia's community life by amplifying Asian voices and perspectives.

Fellowship for Theological Discussion (FTD)

FTD gathers members of the Columbia Theological Seminary community in casual, off-campus settings to explore theologically grounded questions about life, current events, and personal or social concerns. Each week's conversation centers on a guiding question circulated in advance. All are welcome to join these spirited, thoughtful, and open discussions.

Imago Dei

Imago Dei seeks to promote the welcome and inclusion of all people, especially those who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Imago Dei seeks to help the Columbia community engage with issues surrounding inclusion on campus, in our churches, and in the world. Imago Dei hosts events and forums to foster conversation between people with different world views around gender and sexuality and train organizational leaders to be effective in creating safe spaces.

International Student Association (ISA)

ISA builds community among international students and those with global lived experiences. The association celebrates the rich cultural, linguistic, ethnic, gender, spiritual, and denominational diversity of our student body and supports one another in the journey of learning, belonging, and mutual care across difference.

Shaping Attention to God's Earth (SAGE)

SAGE brings together students, faculty, and staff to foster ecological awareness and action rooted in faith. Through practices of sustainability, spiritual reflection, and campus-wide initiatives, SAGE calls attention to food justice, environmental stewardship, bodily wellness, and reverence for creation as sacred and interconnected.

Seminary Families

Seminary Families welcomes students who are part of partnered or caregiving relationships. The group fosters friendship, spiritual support, and connection through gatherings such as Bible study, shared meals, seasonal events, and family-friendly outings. All partners and families are warmly welcomed to participate in this community.

Seminarians for Peace (SFP)

Seminarians for Peace seeks to help Columbia Theological Seminary move toward fulfilling the call to be a prophetic people by engaging in social activism as a community. The members of SFP collectively seek to advocate for social change, be a resource for those thinking about the importance of activism and community action and offer learning opportunities as the community engages in matters of social/political activism.

Women in Ministry (WiM)

Women in Ministry exists to empower women and gender-expansive individuals in all expressions of ministry. Through shared experiences, mutual encouragement, and events that nurture spiritual growth and vocational clarity, the group affirms the sacred call and leadership of those historically marginalized in church and society.

Student Involvement in Institutional Governance

Students participate in the governance of the Seminary by serving on faculty and administrative committees and commissions, and through a student representative on the Board of Trustees. Generally, the dean of students appoints basic degree students to committees and, in consultation with lead professors, appoints advanced degree students to committees.

- Advanced Degrees Committee
- Contextual Education & International Partnerships Committee
- First-Level Master's Degrees Committee
- Search Committees
- Sustainability Commission
- Worship & Convocations Committee

COLUMBIA SEMINARY POLICIES

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Columbia

Inclusive Language Policy

Columbia Theological Seminary promotes the usage of inclusive language about human beings and expansive language about God as a part of the Seminary's intersectional commitment to the full participation of women, persons of color, and LGBTQIA+ persons in the Church and the world.

a. Inclusive language with reference to human beings intentionally seeks to acknowledge the diversity of humankind. Such language should enable everyone across differences such as ability, age, ethnicity, gender identity, national origin, race, and sexuality to feel fully included, respectfully addressed, and equally valued before God.

b. Expansive language with reference to God seeks to express the diverse ways the Bible and our theological traditions speak about God. Such language should enable everyone across differences such as ability, age, ethnicity, gender identity, national origin, race, and sexuality to recognize themselves as equally made in the image of the Triune God, the Heavenly Parent, Christ the Mediator, and Holy Spirit, the Sustainer of Life.

We recognize there are different perspectives on inclusive and expansive language in a Seminary community, as persons representing many denominations and traditions use different language for God, and that the use of such language often requires time, love, patience, instruction, and careful consideration. With these considerations in mind, the policy of Columbia Theological Seminary concerning the use of inclusive language is: **All members of the Seminary community are expected to use inclusive language in all academic and communal settings including, but not limited to, class sessions, assignments, written coursework, online discussion forums, class presentations, and all seminary-provided digital platforms, publications, official statements, and worship.** When expressing points of view, all members of the Seminary community are expected to uphold the dignity of other human beings. In academic settings, omissions of inclusive language for human beings will be a factor in the grading of students. To learn more about inclusive language, click here to access the inclusive language learning module from the Center for Academic Literacy.

Equal Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Harassment Policy ("Anti-Discrimination")

This Policy does not mediate Title IX concerns; the Seminary has adopted a separate **Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy.**

Columbia Theological Seminary affirms its commitment to promoting the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of its theological and educational enterprise. Through federal, state, and local law and Seminary policy, the Seminary prohibits harassment of or discrimination against any person based upon sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), race, religion, nationality, hearing status, personal appearance, color, political affiliation, source of income, place of business, residence, religion, creed, ethnicity, national origin (including ancestry), citizenship status, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, family responsibilities, veteran or military status (including special disabled veteran, Vietnam-era veteran, or recently separated veteran), predisposing genetic characteristics, domestic violence victim status or any other protected category.

The **Equal Opportunity Anti-Discrimination Anti-Harassment Policy** covers nondiscrimination in employment and access to educational opportunities. Any member of the Seminary community who acts to deny, deprive, or limit the educational, employment, residential, and/or social access, benefits, and/or opportunities of any member of the Seminary community, guest, or visitor based on their actual or perceived membership in the protected classes listed above violates the Policy on anti-discrimination. When brought to the attention of the Seminary, any such discrimination will be appropriately addressed and remedied by the Seminary according to this Policy. Non-members of the Seminary community who engage in discriminatory actions within Seminary programs or on Seminary property are not under the jurisdiction of this Policy but can be subject to actions that limit their access and/or involvement with Seminary programs because of their misconduct. Non-members of the Seminary community who engage in discriminatory actions within Seminary programs or on Seminary property are not under the jurisdiction of this Policy but can be subject to actions that limit their access and/or involvement with Seminary programs because of their misconduct.

Each member of the Seminary community is expected to uphold this Policy as a matter of mutual respect and fairness. Each community member is responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with this Policy as a condition of enrollment and employment.

All allegations of discrimination and harassment based on the protected categories other than sex-based harassment will be covered by this Policy. All claims involving sex, sexual orientation, gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence will be covered under the **Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy.** These claims will be referred to the Title IX Coordinator. These claims will be referred to the Title IX Coordinator.

Inquiries related to this policy may be made externally to:
Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100
Customer Service Hotline #: (800) 421-3481
Facsimile: (202) 453-6012
TDD#: (877) 521-2172
Email: OCR@ed.gov
Web: http://www.ed.gov/ocr

If this is an employment discrimination matter, your inquiry also may be made here:
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
Contact: http://www.eeoc.gov/contact/

For more information regarding Columbia's policies visit the Columbia website.

Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (Title IX)

This Policy addresses all forms of sex and gender-based discrimination and harassment, including sexual violence.

Columbia Theological Seminary is committed to creating and maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from unlawful discrimination based on sex under Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, Clery Act, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Sexual harassment and retaliation under the **Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy** will not be tolerated by Columbia Theological Seminary and is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including permanent dismissal from the seminary and/or termination of employment.

Seminary Complaint Policy

Columbia Theological Seminary (henceforth, "the Seminary") welcomes open communication from students, faculty, and staff regarding its policies and practices. **Feedback helps the Seminary evaluate, clarify, and improve processes, policies, and procedures.**

If a member of the Seminary has a complaint, the person should, first, attempt to resolve the complaint with the individual directly responsible. If direct communication is not possible and/or unsuccessful, the person should communicate with the directly responsible individual's supervisor.

If direct communication and/or supervisor communication is not possible or unsuccessful, a person may lodge a more formal complaint using the Online Complaint Reporting Form, which will forward a copy of the complaint to the associate dean of student formation. Complaints may also be submitted in writing. If the complaint is with the dean of student formation, the complaint should be submitted in writing directly to the President of the Seminary (AloyoV@ctsnet.edu). Written complaints should include:

1. the name of the person(s) and/or office against whom the complaint is being filed;
2. a detailed description of the incident(s) – providing dates and times where possible;
3. a description of any attempts taken to resolve the matter informally; and
4. a clear statement of the desired outcome or remedy being sought.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the associate dean of student formation will forward the complaint to the president and vice president responsible for the area. The vice president responsible for the area will engage in an initial review of the complaint to ensure the complaint is within the scope of the Seminary Complaint Policy. Should the vice president determine further action is necessary, they will conduct a thorough and fair review of the complaint, which may include follow-up conversations with parties involved. The review shall be completed within fourteen (14) business days of receipt of the complaint.

Ordinarily, the vice president will respond to complaints with a determination, copying the president and dean of students, within fourteen (14) business days of receipt of the complaint from the dean of students. The dean of students will assist with and monitor progress and response to the complaint. Copies of the complaint, response, and all related correspondence and documentation will be maintained in the office of the dean of students. If the complaint is with the dean of students, copies of the complaint and response will be maintained in the president's office.

The Seminary recognizes its obligation to ensure that students, faculty, and staff who make complaints do not suffer adverse treatment because of the complaint. If a member of the Seminary community alleges such treatment, they will be referred, as appropriate, to the Seminary Grievance Policy, Anti-Discrimination Policy, or Seminary Complaint Policy.

Seminary Appeals Policy

All appeals of grievances shall be administered by the **Appeals Policy**, which is co-convened by the associate dean for academic administration and the associate dean for student formation. Please refer to the Seminary Appeal Policy for more information, which is co-convened by the associate dean for academic administration and assistant dean for student life & formation. Please refer to the Seminary Appeal Policy for more information.

Grounds for Appeal

At the conclusion of any process adjudicated by the Seminary Complaint Policy, Seminary Grievance Policy, Equity Resolution Process, or Sexual Misconduct Process, a party may appeal the decision on the following grounds:

- There was a procedural error, irregularity, or other inaccuracy on the part of the Seminary of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result would have been different had there not been such an irregularity;
- There exists evidence of discrimination, prejudice, or bias on the part of the adjudicatory body making the recommendation or any members thereof;

- The existence of extenuating circumstances affecting the reporting or responding party's performance of which the initial adjudicatory body in question was not aware at the time the recommendation was made, and which could not reasonably have been presented at the time.

Dissatisfaction with the decision or determination of the initial adjudicatory body alone is not a valid ground for an appeal.

Seminary Grievance Policy

The Grievance Policy is the Seminary's process for adjudicating grievances among Seminary community members, including students, staff, administrators, and faculty. This policy applies only to grievances regarding actions taken directly and specifically against the reporting party by the responding party or conduct explicitly directed toward the reporting party by the responding party. This policy may also address problems, concerns, or grievances related to the infringement upon an individual's right to free expression, unfair treatment in a situation, or harassment not based upon a protected class. This policy cannot be used to challenge Seminary policies and procedures.

Seminary Appeals Policy

The Seminary's students, faculty, staff, and administration have the right to appeal certain processes. The Appeals process reviews appeals of matters adjudicated by the Seminary's Grievance Policy and Anti-Discrimination Policy. Until further notice, appeals of decisions made by the Judicial Commission or the Academic Standing Commission will be adjudicated via the appeal process outlined in those policies.

All appeals of grievances shall be administered by the Seminary Appeals Panel, which is co-convened by the Associate Dean for the Office of Academic Affairs and the Associate Dean for the Office of Student Formation.

Policy Regarding Amorous/Sexual Relationships Between Individuals of Unequal Power

The Seminary is committed to providing and maintaining a working and learning environment that is fulfilling and equitable for all members of the Seminary community including students, faculty, and staff. Implicit in this commitment is that all community members conduct themselves in an ethical manner in their interactions and relationships with each other. To achieve this goal, relationships between students, faculty and staff must be based on integrity, respect, and trust. Any amorous or sexual relationships between community members that call these principles into question interfere with the mission of the Seminary. See **Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy**.

Disability Services & Accommodations

Columbia Theological Seminary welcomes any student with a documented disability and accommodates special academic needs which are determined on an individual basis with appropriate documentation. Such disabilities include learning, physical and cognitive impairments. Columbia Theological Seminary complies with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Robert Hay, Vice President for Business and Administration, serves as the Section 504 Coordinator, and is in 106 Campbell Hall, and can be reached by phone at 404-687-4512.

Ann Clay Adams, Associate Dean for Academic Administration, works with academic accommodations and is in 113 Campbell Hall, and can be reached by phone at 404-687-4524.

Both the Disabilities Guide for students and faculty and the Disability Registration Packet can be found on the public notices section of the Columbia's Student eCampus (login required), The Columbia Current, and on the Columbia Theological Seminary website.

Alcohol & Other Drugs Policy

Columbia Theological Seminary is committed to the health and well-being of the members of our community. In the spirit of this commitment and in compliance with the United States Department of Educations' Drug Prevention Program, this

policy statement regarding controlled substances is being issued. This policy pertains to all employees (including work-study students) as well as all students taking courses at the Seminary for credit.

The unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol by employees or students on Seminary property or as part of the Seminary activities is strictly prohibited as mandated by the Board of Trustees. Participation in such activities may subject employees or students to criminal prosecution under Federal, Georgia, or local laws, which provide for substantial terms of imprisonment and fines. Terms of up to life imprisonment as well as fines more than $1,000,000 may result from violating such statutes. Whereas alcohol is a legal substance, this policy applies to the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcohol – i.e., unlawful activities involving alcohol, including by or with underage students.

Any employee who violates the above prohibition or who illegally uses controlled substances before reporting for work will be subject to corrective disciplinary action and penalties up to and including immediate discharge from employment at Columbia Theological Seminary. As a condition of employment at the Seminary, each employee will: a) abide by the terms of this statement; and b) notify his/her supervisor and the Vice President for Business and Administration of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace, no later than five days after such conviction.

Any student who violates the above prohibition will be subject to corrective disciplinary action and penalties up to and including expulsion from the Seminary. Such discipline and penalties will be administered by the judicial commission of the faculty.

For more information about the health risks associated with particular types of drugs and alcohol, please visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse's page, Commonly Abused Drugs Charts.

Resources
- Office of Student Formation and Campus Culture - 404-687-4523
- Human Resources (for Employee Assistance Program information) - 404-687-4654
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Referral Hotline - 800-454-8966
- Narcotics Anonymous - 800-945-4673
- Alcoholics Anonymous 800-839-1686

Smoking Policy

In accordance with the City of Decatur Clean Air Ordinance, smoking is strictly prohibited in all public places and places of employment within the City of Decatur. Smoking may occur outdoors but no less than 20 feet from any entrance.

All guest rooms, residence halls, seminary-owned vehicles, and campus buildings are smoke-free.

Smoking means inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted cigar, cigarette, e-cigarette, oral smoking device, or pipe containing any weed, plant, nicotine-based liquid, or other combustible substance in any manner or in any form.

CAMPUS SERVICES & INFORMATION

Omnilert Emergency Alert System

Columbia utilizes the Omnilert Emergency Alert System to send instant emergency alerts to all registered subscribers via email, phone call, and text message. The system is used to communicate emergencies, including, but not limited to, severe weather warnings, gas leaks, fires, bomb threats, crime watch, and boil-water advisories. Omnilert may also be used to communicate campus closings. Individual class cancellations will be communicated by the faculty member.

Seminary-provided email addresses of current basic degree students, faculty, and staff are automatically loaded into the system as the default method of communication. Current basic degree students, faculty, and staff will receive email notifications by default. No action is required. One may opt to update their online profile to include additional email addresses, phone numbers (for voice and text), and update their emergency communication preferences. Advanced degree students may opt into the Emergency Alert System. This service is provided free of charge to all Columbia community members; however, individual text message and cell phone rates may apply.

Updating Your Omnilert Profile

All basic degree students are preloaded into the system. So, creating a new account is not necessary. However, all users must visit https://ctsnet.omnilert.net/subscriber.php and follow the instructions below:

1. Select: "Forgot Username?" (do not click Create a New Account)
2. Enter your seminary-provided email address
3. Omnilert will email your username to your seminary-provided email address
4. In your web browser, click "Return to Log-in".
5. The default password is "password". If you previously changed your password, click "Forgot Password?" to change the password, again.
6. Login to update your profile. Select Account to change your password and Services to add additional emergency contact information.

Campus Closing and Class Cancellation

The Seminary's Omnilert Emergency Alert System may also be used to notify the community of campus closures and/or class cancellations. While Omnilert is the primary method for communicating campus closures the Seminary may also communicate campus closures/class cancellations via email or official Seminary social media channels.

Members of the Columbia community may also obtain information about class cancellations and/or business delays and closures in the following ways:

- Text message notification from Omnilert Emergency Alert System
- Check the Columbia Theological Seminary website. Updated information will be posted on the Seminary's homepage
- Check social media using the official Columbia Life Facebook Page, X (Twitter) feed, or Instagram.

Individual class cancellations will be communicated by the professor or the Office of Academic Affairs via email.

Harrington Center Guest Rooms

The Harrington Center has accommodations for official guests of the Seminary. If available, students may reserve a room for relatives or friends at the following rates (good through June 30, 2026):

Double occupancy, twin beds	$112.00 per night + tax
Single occupancy, twin bed	$87.00 per night + tax
Queen Bed	$99.00 per night + tax

HC Guestroom reservations can be made with the facilities department by emailing Facilities@ctsnet.edu

Parking on Campus

All faculty, staff, and students are required to register their vehicles and display a parking decal on the rear window of the vehicle. While the parking decal is free, one must register here to receive the decal. Once registration is complete, visit the Office of Student Formation and Campus Culture to pick up your parking decal.

Students who live on campus should park in the parking lot between the Marcia Riggs Commons and Florida Hall residence buildings. Students who commute to campus should utilize spaces adjacent to the John C. Bulow Library, Harrington Center, Richards Center, Broyles Leadership Center, and street parking on Kirk Road and Inman Drive.

The designated visitor parking is in front of Campbell Hall. Visitor parking is reserved from 8:00am – 5:00pm for guests of Columbia, and it should not be used by current students, faculty, or staff.

As part of the institutional commitment to ecological sustainability, Columbia Theological Seminary provides preferred parking locations for (1) low-emission/ fuel-efficient Vehicles and (2) high-occupancy vehicles. These preferred parking locations are for use by vehicles that (1) are either Zero Emission Vehicles or are rated a minimum of 40 on the American Council Energy Efficient Economy vehicle rating guide and (2) carpooling or vanpooling on the day using the parking space. Employees and Students are requested not to use the preferred parking locations if the above criteria are not met.

Any vehicle parked in violation of Columbia policies and regulations is subject to ticketing and/or towing by the Agnes Scott College Department of Public Safety. The following actions will result in a vehicle being ticketed or towed:

- Driving or parking vehicles on campus sidewalks
- Vehicles parked in yellow curb areas, fire lanes, or other undesignated parking areas
- Vehicles parked in designated visitor spaces 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, with a Columbia decal
- Vehicles parked in handicap accessible parking without proper tags and identification

Those who violate parking policies will receive one warning ticket each fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) without penalty. Subsequent tickets will incur a minimum $25 fine. Vehicles parked in fire lanes will be immediately towed at the owner's expense. No warnings will be administered to those who park in fire lanes.

Food Services

Food Pantry
A food pantry for some grocery items is available at the Marcia Riggs Commons Building. The pantry is restocked throughout the academic year.

Food Storage and Preparation for Commuters
A refrigerator and microwave are available for student use in the BLC Food Prep Room. These appliances are provided as a courtesy, and it is the shared responsibility of the community to keep them clean and in good working condition. All food items must be labeled with the student's first and last name. The refrigerator is intended for short-term use and should only be used for food storage during the week. The refrigerator is cleaned every Friday. Any items left inside after 3:00 p.m. will be discarded.

The Refectory (Dining Hall)
The Refectory is a significant aspect of Columbia's life together. It provides a place for faculty, staff, students, and guests to meet and share meals. Thus, Refectory meals are provided on a subsidized basis in service to the Columbia community.

Columbia offers lunch during the academic year when classes are in session. There is no cost for lunch for enrolled students. Lunch is available for non-enrolled students for a fee of $10.00.

The Refectory is open Monday – Friday at the following times when fall and spring courses are in session:

Breakfast	8:00 – 9:00 am
Lunch	12:30 – 1:30 pm

The Refectory is closed on weekends, during spring break, and other times when classes are not in session.

Health & Safety Precautions

In the event of a public safety event that poses potential threats to the health and safety of the Columbia community, the Seminary may opt to temporarily suspend all food services until such a time that it is safe to resume such services.

Recreation

Exercise Room

Marcia Y. Riggs Commons (Riggs Commons or MRC) has an exercise room on the ground floor that is available to all members of the Columbia community, which includes currently enrolled students, visiting guests, faculty, and staff. One must be at least 18 years old to use the exercise room. Additional policies and procedures are posted in the exercise room and must be followed.

Athletic Field

The athletic field is located between the main campus and the Village apartments. The field can be reserved by students, faculty, and staff. To make a reservation, contact the Facilities Department by emailing Facilites@ctsnet.edu

Decatur YMCA

Students of Columbia Theological Seminary may take advantage of scholarships (if applicable) at the Decatur YMCA (1100 Clairmont Ave, Decatur, GA 30030). For more information, contact the Decatur YMCA (404.377.9622).

Agnes Scott Swimming Pool

For more information, contact the Robert W. Woodruff Physical Activities Building (404.471.6495) Students, faculty, staff, and their immediate family members have guest access to the **Agnes Scott College Woodruff Physical Activities Center Swimming Pool**. To enter, show your valid Columbia Theological Seminary ID and sign in at the front desk. Columbia guests may use the pool during all posted **lap swim times**. Note that the pool is generally closed during school breaks and holidays. Please call **404-471-6495** for current hours, access details, and other information.

Copiers

A photocopier is available for student use in the John Bulow Campbell Library (JBCL). Additional copying guidelines can be found in the library section of this handbook.

Lost and Found

The Business Office (Campbell Hall 106) serves as the official lost and found. If you find a lost item, please turn it into the Business Office promptly. To inquire about a missing item, visit or contact the office directly.

Paper Shredding

Secure shredding bins are provided on campus for sensitive documents. Bins are located on the first floor stairwell of Campbell Hall, in the Harrington Center, and in the John Bulow Campbell Library (JBCL).

Notary Public

Notary public services are available on campus:
>
> Jody Sauls, Director of Human Resources
>
> Felicia Thimas, Operations Coordinator/Business Office

Seminary-Provided Email Accounts

All official communication from the Seminary - including coursework, registration, and community notices is sent to your **seminary-provided email account**. Emails sent to this address are considered official notice. Students are strongly encouraged to use this account when contacting faculty or staff about seminary-related matters. Technical support information regarding email can be found in the Educational Technology & Media Services section of this handbook.

Incoming Mail

Students who reside on campus will receive a mailbox and corresponding key at the time of move-in. Mailboxes are located on the main floor of Campbell Hall. Lost keys should be reported to the Operations Coordinator and will be subject to a fine. Students can obtain their mailbox key from the Business Office.

Intra-Campus Mail

Intra-campus mail for students and faculty should be placed in the slot near the Business Office door. Please use box numbers on all inter-office mail. Confidential items should be sealed in an envelope. Intra-campus mail is delivered to boxes at 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Intra-campus mass mailings are strictly prohibited. Campus-wide information should be submitted to the Columbia Current for distribution. Exceptions can be made by a member of the President's Council.

U.S. Mail

On weekdays, incoming U.S. Mail is placed in student and faculty mailboxes by 10:00 a.m. Mail is not delivered on Saturdays. Packages may be picked up in the Mail Center in the basement of Campbell Hall.

Out-going mail is picked up from the U.S. Mail slot across from the mailboxes at 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Clothes Closet

The Clothes Closet is located at Mission Haven (235 Inman Drive, Decatur, GA 30030). Members of the Columbia community are welcome to visit the Clothes Closet. A Columbia ID card is required to enter. Children under the age of 12 are not permitted in the Clothes Closet. Please check their website and Columbia Life regarding hours.

Facilities

Weekday Building Hours

Broyles Leadership Center	8:00am – 5:00pm
Campbell Hall	8:00am – 5:00pm
John Bulow Campbell Library	Hours Vary
Harrington Center	8:00am – 5:00pm
Richards Center	7:00am – 7:00pm

All buildings are locked 24 hours a day on weekends, holidays, and when school is not in session. Propping open locked doors is strictly prohibited. In the event of a public safety event that poses potential threats to the health and safety of the Columbia community, the Seminary may opt to keep doors locked 24 hours a day.

If you experience an issue with building access, please contact the facilities coordinator in the business office or the Agnes Scott Department of Public Safety.

After Hours Building Access:
The Harrington Center, Campbell Hall, Broyles Leadership Center, and residence halls can be accessed 24 hours a day with the Business Office-provided keypad access code. Access codes are changed frequently and distributed to students via email. Please do not share the access codes with non-seminary personnel.

Room/Space Reservations
All room and space reservation requests must be submitted via the Facilities Reservation Form. Please email Facilities@ctsnet.edu for more information. All campus meetings and activities should be placed on the campus calendar as soon as possible to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Displays/Announcement Posting
Please do not attach any material to any surface on campus other than the bulletin boards or the sign holders on doors. This prohibition includes doors, walls, and other surfaces in public areas in all buildings on campus. Permission to erect a display on campus may be requested from the Office for Student Formation and Campus Culture.

John Bulow Campbell Library (JBCL) Resources
The library provides resources and spaces to support your research and to foster exploration of theological questions and concerns beyond the traditional classroom setting. The library's collections include print and electronic books, journals, databases, church records, and various media resources. Services include a professionally staffed reference and circulation desk, email-based research support, and access to computer workstations equipped with Microsoft Office, Adobe Pro, and Genopro. Designed with theological learners in mind, the library offers a large quiet reading room, individual study rooms, and flexible spaces for both small and large group collaboration—all enhanced by ample natural light. Other features include:
- Scanner/copier
- Children's Library (3rd floor)
- Height-adjustable tables
- Stability balls
- Portable whiteboards
- Circulating laptops (available at the circulation desk)

Checking Out Materials
The loan periods and loan limits for regular circulating books are as follows:

Degree Program	Loan Period	Loan Limit
First-Level Master's Degrees	28 days	20
ThM	One semester	50
DMin and DEdMin	One semester	20
ThD	One semester	50

All notices (courtesy and overdue) are sent to your seminary email account. Renewals may be made by calling the circulation desk (404-687-4610) or by logging in to the library catalog and renewing online. Reference works and periodicals do not circulate outside the library.

Course Reserves
All required textbooks and reading materials are purchased in print (in English and Korean, if available) and electronic format (if available) and are placed on reserve at the circulation desk. Reserve checkout periods vary by item type.

Fines

Materials are designed to be shared by the entire community; therefore, library items must be returned within set time limits. All notices (courtesy and overdue) are sent on a regular basis to your Columbia Theological Seminary email account. If you do not return materials on time, the following fines/fees are applied to your account.

Regular Check Out	25¢ per day (up to $10)
Reserve Content	$10 per day (75¢ per hour)
CDs	25¢ per day
DVDs	$3.50 per day
Lost Items	$100 replacement fee+ $10 processing fee

If your fines/fees exceed $50, a hold will be placed on your account. Failure to pay the fine/fees will result in a hold on your Business Office account thus preventing registration for the next academic term, graduation, and transcript requests.

Photocopiers and Scanners

A photocopy machine/scanner is available in the library for student use. The scanner offers the ability to email scans, save scans to a USB drive, color scanning, and two-sided scanning. Federal copyright laws apply to all copies and scanning capabilities. Printing course-related documents is free to all current students.

Inter-library Loans & Access to Atlanta Theological Institutions

Columbia is a member of the Atlanta Regional Consortium for Higher Education (ARCHE), which allows students to borrow materials from other member libraries through the Interlibrary Use (ILU) program. Students interested in this option should contact the John Bulow Campbell Library staff to obtain an ILU card.

ILU borrowing requests are processed through the OCLC Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system and may take 2–4 weeks to fulfill, depending on the lending institution. For article copies, the lending library sets the cost, which is passed on to the student. Due dates and late fees for borrowed materials are also determined by the lending library and must be honored accordingly. In compliance with copyright law, the library may not request more than five articles from the same periodical within a five-year period. All patrons are expected to follow U.S. copyright regulations.

Staff contact for Interlibrary Use: Liz Miller – 404-687-4617

C. Benton Kline, Jr. Special Collections and Archives

The archives house primary sources from the histories of Columbia Theological Seminary and the wider Presbyterian Church. The archives include minutes and records from southern Presbyterian churches and the presbytery, synod, and general assembly levels; records and personal papers that document the history of Columbia Theological Seminary; and historical periodicals. Research services and access to archival materials are available by appointment. Digitized material is available via the library website. Please contact archives@ctsnet.edu or 404-687-4628.

Educational Technology & Media Services

Media Services provides management and technical support for the Student Portal, Zoom, and Moodle, as well as audio/visual equipment and production support for the Columbia community. All Media Services facilities and equipment are available for on-campus use by faculty, staff and students with assistance provided by the Media Services staff.

Media Services requests should be submitted at least one week (but no later than 48 hours) prior to the date of the event. Requests can be made via email to Jeff Vaughan or by phone (404-687-4635).

Available Equipment

Faculty, staff, and students may use any of the following materials and equipment in conjunction with a Seminary program, class, or class project:

- LCD Projector
- DVD Video Player
- Laptop PC (for use in projection)
- Digital Video Camera

- Wired Microphone
- P/A System
- Audio Recorder
- Color Flatbed Scanner

Please check with the Educational Technologist to see what equipment may be checked out for off-campus use.

Production Services

The Media Services staff can assist with the following services in conjunction with a Seminary program, class, or class project:

- Audio / Video Recording
- DVD / CD Duplication
- Video / Audio Online Editing Facilities
- Teleconferencing

- Lamination
- Large Format Color Printing for Posters
- PC-based Multimedia Presentations
- Training or Orientation on any of the above

Certain production services may include fees, depending on scope. Contact Media Services for detailed pricing information.

Recordings of Chapel Services

Media Services also records and streams chapel services. Chapel recordings are stored on the Office of Worship Life YouTube page, available at this link: Office of Worship Life YouTube Livestreams.

Microsoft 365 for Students

Columbia Theological Seminary has contracted with Microsoft to provide the Microsoft 365 service to actively enrolled Columbia Theological Seminary students. Microsoft 365 for Education includes the following:

- One Exchange based @students.ctsnet.edu email account per student
- Microsoft 365 online web access 1TB of cloud storage per student account (OneDrive)
- A full desktop version of the current Office Suite - installable on up to 5 devices (Mac, PC, Android, iOS) per student account

Use of this service is governed by the Columbia Theological Seminary Policy for Acceptable Use of Technology, Microsoft 365 Conditions, and the terms and conditions of the Columbia Theological Seminary contract with Microsoft.

Email

Student email accounts are assigned by the Seminary and are hosted with Microsoft 365. The assigned student email account is the official electronic communication vehicle between the Seminary and the student. Student email can be accessed using the Microsoft 365 web portal. If students are unable to access their email, Computer Services will confirm the proper configuration of their mailbox on our servers but cannot troubleshoot student software or hardware. The Seminary does not back up student email data and cannot guarantee the restoration of any lost emails.

Email Policy

Whenever you send an email, your name and e-mail address are included in each mail message. You are responsible for all electronic mail originating from your email address.

- Forgery (or attempted forgery) of email messages is prohibited.
- Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other users are prohibited.
- Attempts at sending harassing, obscene and/or other threatening email to another user are prohibited.
- Attempts at sending unsolicited junk mail, "for-profit" messages or chain letters are prohibited.

Additional Software and Services

The Seminary may also provide additional services to students through Microsoft 365. Beyond email, additional Microsoft 365 software and services are not required for matriculation at the Seminary. Additional services are provided as-is and the Seminary cannot troubleshoot student software or hardware. While the Seminary will make a concerted effort to clearly communicate in a timely manner any significant changes, the Seminary reserves the right to remove or alter the services provided at any time. It is the responsibility of the user to back up their data. The Seminary cannot be held responsible for any data loss related to service changes or account deletion.

For providing a convenient and enjoyable end-user experience, the Seminary will provide information and instructions to students regarding the use and configuration of Microsoft 365 accounts and services via the eCampus site. Training resources for Microsoft 365 can also be found at https://support.office.com.

Account Termination

After graduation, your Microsoft 365 email will be changed to @alumni.ctsnet.edu, your @studnets.ctsnet.edu will be set as an alias. Upon permanent withdrawal, student Microsoft 365 accounts are immediately closed. All data associated with the account is permanently deleted upon account termination. The Seminary will provide instructions for copying email and OneDrive files to an offline location; however, it is the user's responsibility to ensure that all data has been properly copied before account termination.

Student Groups

Upon approval from the dean of students and network systems administrator, the Seminary will provide email and storage resources for campus-oriented student-based groups. As with other non-email Microsoft 365 services, these services are provided as-is. The Seminary reserves the right to remove or alter the services provided at any time. It is the responsibility of the student group members to back up their data. The Seminary cannot be held responsible for any data loss related to service changes or group deletion.

Network Computing Policy

Columbia Theological Seminary is responsible for securing its network and computing systems to a reasonable and economically feasible degree against unauthorized access and/or abuse, while making them accessible for authorized and legitimate users. This responsibility includes informing users of expected standards of conduct and the punitive measures for not adhering to them. Any attempt to violate the provisions of this policy will result in disciplinary action in the form of temporary revocation of user accounts, regardless of the success or failure of the attempt. Permanent revocations can result from disciplinary actions taken by a panel judiciary board called upon to investigate network abuses.

The users of the network are responsible for respecting and adhering to local, state, federal, and international laws. Any attempt to break those laws through the use of the network may result in criminal action against the offender by the proper authorities or civil liability. If such an event should occur, this organization will fully comply with the authorities to provide any information necessary for the legal process.

General Computing Policy

Once a user receives a username to be used to access the network and computer systems on that network, they are solely responsible for all actions taken while using that username.

- Applying for a username under false pretenses is a punishable disciplinary offense.
- Sharing your username and password with any other person is prohibited. If you do share your username and password with another person, you will be solely responsible for the actions that the other person undertakes.
- Deletion, examination, copying, or modification of files and/or data belonging to other users without their prior consent is prohibited.
- Attempts to evade or change resource quotas are prohibited.

- Continued impedance of other users through mass consumption of system resources, after receipt of a request to cease such activity, is prohibited.
- Use of facilities and/or services for commercial purposes is prohibited.
- Any unauthorized, deliberate action that damages or disrupts a computing system, alters it normal performance, or causes it to malfunction is a violation regardless of system location or time duration.

Network Security

As a user of the network, you may be allowed to access other networks (and/or the computer systems attached to those networks).

- Use of systems and/or networks in attempts to gain unauthorized access to remote systems is prohibited.
- Use of systems and/or networks to connect to other systems, in evasion of the physical limitations of the remote system/local, is prohibited.
- Decryption of system or user passwords is prohibited.
- The copying of system files is prohibited.
- The copying of copyrighted materials, such as third-party software, without the express written permission of the owner or the proper license, is prohibited.
- Intentional attempts to "crash" Network systems or programs are punishable disciplinary offenses.
- Any attempts to secure a higher level of privilege on Network systems are punishable disciplinary offenses.
- The willful introduction of computer "viruses" or other disruptive/destructive programs into the organization's network or external networks is prohibited.

Technology Support for Students

The computer services and educational technology departments provide students with the following support:

- Administer and maintain classroom technology, such as classroom computers, projectors, and audio systems.
- Administer and maintain campus information systems, such as Microsoft 365 and Moodle.
- Administer and maintain the wired and wireless campus network.
- Create, administer, and maintain student network accounts (used to access Microsoft 365, Moodle, and the library catalog).
- Troubleshooting account support for Compass, Moodle, Microsoft 365, and other student systems (e.g., password resets, etc.)
- Provide technical resources for students through the site, the Student Technology Hub, located on the Columbia Theological Seminary's intranet, eCampus.
- For help with any of these issues, you can submit a ticket to the student help desk: https://studenthelp.ctsnet.edu.

While members of Technical Services will always do our best to assist students, we cannot directly support the following:

- **Personal hardware devices.** Technical Services can provide guidance regarding student's personal computers, tablets, phones, and other devices. However, we cannot work on these devices directly. For example, by changing settings or physically repairing.
- **Personal software/operating system.** Technical Services can provide guidance regarding student's personal device software and operating system. However, we cannot work on these devices directly. For example, by installing/uninstalling/configuring software or drivers.

NOTE: Usually, fellow students are a productive resource for information or troubleshooting. In instances where professional assistance is needed, we may recommend locally based, paid third-party consultants.

Students who need assistance with Columbia Theological Seminary technology should first consult the Student Technology Hub then email ComputerServices@ctsnet.edu.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

Definitions

Advanced Degree Programs

Advanced degree programs include the Master of Theology (ThM), the Doctor of Ministry (DMin), and Doctor of Educational Ministry (DEdMin).

Atlanta Theological Association (ATA)

Members of the ATA are Columbia Theological Seminary, Candler School of Theology (Emory University), Erskine Theological Seminary, The Interdenominational Theological Center, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, and McAfee School of Theology (Mercer University).

Atlanta Regional Consortium for Higher Education (ARCHE)

Members of ARCHE are Agnes Scott College, Brenau University, Clark Atlanta University, Clayton State University, Columbia Theological Seminary, Emory University, Georgia Gwinnett College, Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Kennesaw State University, Mercer University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, Oglethorpe University, Savannah College of Art and Design, Spelman College, University of Georgia, University of West Georgia.

Compass

Compass serves as the Seminary's official administrative database for all student records. Compass is the platform on which students register for courses each semester/term, receive grades, and can view their schedules, student accounts, and unofficial transcripts.

First-Level Master's Degree Programs

First-level master's degree programs include the Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS), Master of Arts in Practical Theology (MAPT), and Master of Divinity/Master of Arts in Practical Theology Dual Degree (MDiv/MAPT). These degrees may be referred to as basic degrees.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 as amended, sets forth requirements designed to protect the privacy of students. FERPA states that:

- Students must have access to official records directly related to the student.
- Students must have an opportunity to challenge such records on the grounds that they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise inappropriate.
- Educational institutions must have written permission to release personally identifiable data to persons other than faculty and administrators who have a legitimate educational interest.
- Educational institutions must notify students of these rights.
- Students have the right to file complaints with the Family Policy Compliance Office concerning alleged failures by the Seminary to comply with the FERPA.

The registrar maintains student records. Requests for access to student file materials must be given in writing to the registrar, and reasonable effort will be made to grant access within 72 hours of the written request. Seminary policies on retention and disposal of student records are in accord with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers publication "Guide for Retention and Disposal of Student Records."

Columbia Student Covenant

Upon entering Columbia Theological, all students answer the following questions during convocation, as stipulated by the Seminary's bylaws and plan of government:

"Relying upon God's grace, will you, so long as you are a student of Columbia Theological Seminary, promise and covenant to be diligent in your studies, seek academic excellence, pursue such learning as joins mind and heart, and strive to live your life consistent with your calling as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Will you promise and covenant to make the worship of God a central feature of your life, and seek to grow in spiritual maturity and Christian discipleship?

In recognition that growth in Christian discipleship and theological education is a life-long process, will you promise and covenant to engage throughout your life in regular periods of disciplined study to sustain your ministry and enlarge your skills, for the sake of the church and its mission in the world?"

Students are expected to engage in all academic work with this covenant in mind.

Academic Honor Code

Each student is responsible for honesty in taking examinations, writing papers, and fulfilling all other academic requirements of the student's degree program. This means that cheating on exams and plagiarism (representing another's ideas and words as one's own without sufficient notation) can potentially lead to dismissal from the Seminary Students who witness academic dishonesty are expected to either speak directly with the student involved trusting that the student will then self-report the infraction to the professor or report the incident themselves to the professor of the course in question.

Academic Integrity

All assignments submitted by a student must be the student's own work. Submitting or signing one's name to an assignment assumes this implicit pledge: *"On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this work, nor do I have knowledge of any breach of the honor code that I have not reported."*

Plagiarism and Understanding Artificial Intelligence for Student Academic Use

At Columbia, plagiarism is defined as the representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with the submission of academic work, graded or otherwise. In other words, plagiarism means a person presents or uses words or ideas of others, including AI platforms such as ChatGPT, without giving credit to the original source. Students are responsible for being aware of and preventing intentional and unintentional plagiarism. **Plagiarism is intellectual theft and academic dishonesty, and it can result in serious disciplinary action.** The faculty reserves the right to use any method, including computer software, to investigate instances of plagiarism.

A student must give credit to the original creator of words and ideas whenever:

1. Directly quoting another person's words, whether oral or written

2. Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theories

3. Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinions, or theories of others, whether oral or written

4. Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative materials

5. Offering materials assembled or collected in the form of projects or papers for previous courses

6. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT. All AI must be used in accordance to the [Artificial Intelligence Policy for Student Academic Use](#).

Understanding how to properly cite sources is a crucial part of scholarly communication. Columbia uses the latest edition of A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Turabian), as its style manual. The Director of Public Services and the Center for Academic Literacy staff are available to support students with learning how to use the style manual and cite sources. Students are expected to abide by Chicago Turabian (9th Edition) citation style in notes-bibliography form unless directed otherwise by the instructor in the course syllabus. The Preventing Plagiarism Guide is also helpful.

The Seminary policy related to plagiarism falls under the Seminary's Honor Code and its description of procedural interventions. A student found to have plagiarized is subject to the discipline of the faculty and the Judicial Commission. Such disciplines may include, but are not limited to, suspension or dismissal from the Seminary.

Who owns the copyright to my coursework?

The copyright to coursework belongs to the student according to Columbia's Intellectual Property Rights Policy. Coursework is an exception to Seminary ownership and is listed under exception 1 and 2. Exception 1 states, "A regular academic work product is owned by the creator and not the Seminary." Exception 2 states, "Intellectual property created solely for the purpose of satisfying a course requirement is owned by the creator and not the Seminary."

Credit Hour Valuation

While the educational progress of students cannot ultimately be measured by the number of credits earned, a system of course valuation is necessary to assure consistency in the curriculum. Columbia Theological Seminary defines one (semester) credit hour as equivalent to a minimum of one hour per week on in-class instruction or engaged learning over 12 weeks of instruction, plus two more weeks of out-of-class independent learning in which exams are taken, or papers are produced, for a total of 14 weeks. It is expected that for each one credit hour, a minimum of two hours of preparation has taken place. A three-credit course would indicate at least 36 hours of instruction, plus two periods of assessment through examinations and/or production of written work, along with the necessary out-of-class preparation.

DMin and DEdMin courses ordinarily meet over a two-week period for a minimum of 30 hours of direct in-class instruction, as well as in engaged learning activities outside the classroom, including small groups, online discussion forums, and pre- and post-course assignments, for a minimum of 36 hours of guided instruction for a 3-credit course.
For supervised ministry courses, 200 hours of engagement are awarded 3 credit hours, and 400 hours of engagement are awarded 6 credit hours. This correlates with the time and credit level of the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education, which awards CPE credit.

Satisfactory completion of a course is ultimately determined not by the amount of time invested, but by the extent to which the student meets the course's learning goals and objectives.

Academic Course Load

Generally, MDiv, MA(TS), and MAPT students take a maximum of 12 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters. Students in these degree programs seeking full-time student status are required to take a minimum of nine (9) credit hours in the fall and spring semesters.

January and Summer Terms

During the January term, students taking three-credit hours are considered full-time. During the summer term, students taking three hours are considered full-time for Columbia Student Financial Services.

In the spring semester, a student taking three-credit hours during the January term and six-credit hours during the spring semester shall be considered full-time with regard to their eligibility for federal student aid.

Course Overload

Students with a cumulative GPA of 3.30 or higher may register for up to 15 credit hours with advisor approval. Students who wish to take more than 15 credit hours must file a formal petition with the associate dean for academic administration for approval. Students who wish to take more than 12 credit hours who do not meet the GPA requirement must also file a formal petition with the associate dean for academic administration. Students who wish to take more than six (6) credit hours during the summer term must also petition the associate dean of academic administration for permission.

Attendance Policy

While students are expected to attend all classes, the Seminary recognizes that there are times when a student may miss class due to unanticipated reasons such as personal/family health or other emergencies. A student registered for a residential or hybrid course must attend at least 80% of class sessions to be eligible to pass the course. Ordinarily, this would equate to a maximum of 2 absences for a course that meets 12 times during the term, and a maximum of 4 absences for a course that meets 24 times in a term. In the case of asynchronous online courses, the student must complete at least 80% of the assigned work in a quality manner. **A student is expected to attend 80% of any given class session in order to be counted as present. Missing any portion of a class can affect your participation and/or your final grade.** These requirements apply to all courses, unless the instructor of the course has posted and announced a different attendance policy.

Appropriate Classroom Behavior

Because Columbia Theological Seminary is an educational institution and a community of theological inquiry and formation for ministry in the service of the Church of Jesus Christ, it is incumbent upon both professors and students to foster a teaching environment that is conducive to learning and characterized by mutual respect. To ensure that all participants can give their undivided attention to the instruction at hand, maintaining proper classroom etiquette is crucial. This would include, for example, silencing cell phones during class time and refraining from distracting behavior such as computer activity unrelated to classroom learning and unsolicited talking during lecture.

Zoom Etiquette

To ensure a successful Zoom classroom meeting and engagement in a productive learning environment, students should keep the following "do's and don'ts" in mind:

Do's

- Choose a clean, quiet space for class, and dress in a way that reflects respect for yourself and the learning environment.
- The student should inform all household members of their class schedule and location and kindly ask them not to interrupt during class time.
- The full name of the student should show up appropriately.
- The student should be aware of the background, lighting, and noise.
- The student should be muted until the student is required to talk. Use the Zoom functions to communicate if needed (chat, raise your hand, answer yes/no, etc.).
- Use an appropriate Zoom background if desired.
- The student should turn off/silence their cell phone and close other windows on their computer.
- The student should be on time for class. The student should contact their instructor using the preferred communication method listed on the syllabus if they will be late to class or if they have experienced a loss of connection during the session.
- Remain engaged by maintaining focus on the class session; the student should make an effort to keep eye contact with the speaker on the screen and actively participate when appropriate.
- The student should be prepared to take notes (on their computer or in a designated notebook) or to access course material (have the textbook, Moodle course page, or readings available).

Don'ts

- The student should not enter a Zoom to which the student was not invited, share the Zoom access information for their class with others, or enter under a different name.
- Take screenshots, cell phone pictures, or otherwise record the meeting, their classmates, or their instructor without express permission.
- Change their name or change their Zoom background during the meeting.
- Walk around during the class meeting.
- Use the chat for side conversations with classmates.
- Avoid sitting with your back to a window or bright light, as it can make your face difficult to see on camera. Instead, position lighting in front of you to ensure clear visibility.
- Have conversations with other people off-camera during class.
- allow household members to walk behind you during class or meetings, as it can be distracting to others and affect the learning environment.
- Engage in texting, social media, work for other classes, or other distractions while in class.

Class Visitors

One-time visitors are welcome to Columbia classes with instructor approval. Students registered for a class should contact the instructor in advance to request permission to bring a one-time visitor to class. Some courses may not be suitable for visitors.

Those who wish to visit a course regularly and/or audit a course should contact the Office of Academic Affairs.

Final Examinations

Final examinations are scheduled prior to the end of the semester. Exams must be taken at the scheduled time except in times of emergency, wherein the associate dean for academic administration may grant a written excuse, including an alternate time for the exam to be completed.

Grading

MDiv, MA(TS), and MAPT Students

Assignments are graded utilizing the following criteria: creativity, mastery of material, ability to clearly organize and express ideas, and the ability to relate to other learnings. The Columbia grading scale is:

A	4.0	Outstanding	C +	2.3	Standard
A –	3.7	Superior	C	2.0	Slightly below standard
B +	3.3	Very Good	C –	1.7	Below standard
B	3.0	Good	D	1.0	Serious deficiencies
B –	2.7	Slightly above standard	F	0.0	Unacceptable

An F is earned when the total work of the course is unacceptable or not completed within the semester/term or by the date of the approved extension.

Pass/fail grading designations are:

- S (Pass) – work that represents sufficient mastery of the content of the course to merit course credit
- U (Fail) - work that represents insufficient mastery of the content of the course to merit course credit and is equivalent to an F.

Pass/Fail Option for MDiv, MA(TS), and MAPT Students

Students may choose to take a course pass/fail under certain conditions:

- Third-year MDiv students may opt to take up to six credit hours of elective coursework pass/fail if the instructor grants permission in the first two weeks of the course.
- MAPT students in academic good standing may take one of the three non-concentration electives (3 credits) pass/fail in their final semester of study if the instructor grants permission in the first two weeks of the course.

Advanced Degrees Students

The grading scale for ThM, DMin, and DEdMin students is as follows:

A	4.0	B –	2.7
A –	3.7	C +	2.3
B +	3.3	C	2.0
B	3.0	F	0.0

An F is earned when the total work of the course is unacceptable or not completed within the semester/term or by the date of the approved extension.

Pass/fail grading designations are:

- S (Pass) – work that represents sufficient mastery of the content of the course to merit course credit
- U (Fail) - work that represents insufficient mastery of the content of the course to merit course credit and is equivalent to an F.

Guidelines for MDiv Student Status and Degree Completion

Students must complete all work for the MDiv program within six years after beginning their coursework. After six years, a student must request a degree extension using the form found on Student eCampus or the Columbia Current. Columbia utilizes the following criteria when classifying MDiv student status:

Status	Credit Hours Completed
Junior	< 27 hours
Middler	27 – 57 hours
Senior	> 57 hours

Academic Appeals

Course Grade Appeal

Appeals to change a course grade should be submitted in writing, first, to the course instructor within two weeks of receipt of the grade. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal to the instructor, the student may appeal in writing to the dean of faculty. The dean of faculty will convene a review committee comprised of the dean, the associate dean for academic administration, the associate dean for academic programs, and a faculty member. The review committee will consider the appeal and, as part of their deliberations, meet with the student and instructor separately as necessary. The review committee will share its decision with the student and instructor in writing. The decision of the subcommittee is final.

Academic Appeals

Any decision of the Academic Standing Commission may be appealed to the Executive Committee of the Faculty (ECF) by filing a written notice of appeal with the dean of faculty within two weeks after the student receives the decision of the Academic Standing Commission. If the student has been dismissed for lack of satisfactory progress in their program, that

appeal must include a plan of completion. The ECF will consider the appeal and, as part of their deliberations, meet with the student as necessary. The decision of the ECF is final.

After the appeals process has concluded, the dean of faculty shall inform the student(s) in writing of their status and report to the financial aid officer and vice president for Enrollment Management and Vocational Outreach of any changes in status that might have a bearing on financial aid. The student's advisor may also be notified.

Other Appeals
All other requests for academic exceptions and/or appeals to degree requirements and academic policies must be submitted in writing to the Office of Academic Affairs. After consultation with all necessary parties, the Office of Academic Affairs will communicate to the student in writing. A copy of the petition and decision will be placed in the student's record.

Temporary Grades
Students enrolled in courses that are designed to take longer than one semester/term of coursework will receive the grade "IP" (Work In Progress). Students who have received a written exception to turn in late work from the instructor and associate dean for academic administration will receive the grade "E" (excused/exception/extension). Neither temporary grade carries any credit. Failure to complete coursework within the prescribed timeframe will result in a grade of F or U for the portion of the course for which the extension was granted.

Course Evaluations
Students are provided the opportunity to submit course evaluations at the end of each semester/term through email communications from the associate dean for academic administration. While a standard evaluation form is provided, some instructors develop an alternate format for the administered evaluation. Course instructors will not have access to student evaluations until all course grades are submitted. Course evaluations are completely anonymous unless a student includes self-identifying information.

Cross Registration
Columbia is a member of the Atlanta Theological Association (ATA) and the Atlanta Regional Consortium of Higher Education (ARCHE). Enrolled students in good standing may cross-register at ATA and ARCHE schools through Columbia as space permits at receiving institutions. Students will be required to complete a Cross Registration Application Form in the Office of Academic Affairs to initiate the cross-registration process with the registrar. Students will only pay the Columbia tuition rate.

Columbia students may cross-register for no more than two courses per semester/term. Cross-registered courses count toward the student's courseload. A student taking cross-registered courses is still limited to courseload policies at Columbia. Please consult with the registrar regarding course limits in each cross-registration agreement.
Registration and course dates vary between ATA and ARCHE member schools. Students must adhere to registration dates and academic calendars of receiving institutions or be subject to penalties as outlined by the receiving institutions.

Please see the academic catalog for other academic program partnerships, such as the Hispanic Scholars Program or National Capital Semester for Seminarians.

Courses at Non-Theological Institutions
Master of Divinity Students may take up to four elective courses at non-theological graduate schools, after receiving permission from the dean of faculty. All courses must be at a graduate level. A petition for such permission should be submitted to the dean of faculty and include an outline of the courses to be taken and how those courses further the vocational aims of the student.

No Cost Electives for Graduating Master's Students

Graduating seniors in the MDiv, MA(TS), or MAPT degrees are permitted to take up to three elective courses (nine credit hours) at no cost in their final semester. To take advantage of this benefit, the student must meet all program requirements with the exception of three credit hours needed to complete the degree. The student must enroll in the course required to graduate and pay tuition for this course. Students may not register for more than 12 hours of coursework, even if taking courses at no cost.

Furthermore, students may not use credits earned beyond those necessary to meet graduation requirements toward future degree program work at Columbia. This benefit does not apply to independent studies or cross-registration courses.

The No Cost Elective Request Form is available in the Office of Academic Affairs or on eCampus.

Advanced Standing & Special Studies

Students with a strong background in an area of the curriculum, or who demonstrate unusual proficiency in their coursework, are granted opportunities for advanced standing. Requests for advanced standing should be made to the associate dean for academic administration.

Students who satisfactorily demonstrate prior achievement of a course's objectives may be exempt from the course and permitted to take an advanced course in the area.

Academically qualified students may be permitted to engage in special study as a route to the establishment of competence in a required course rather than taking one or several required courses.

Seeking Advanced Standing in Biblical Languages

Students seeking advanced standing in Greek or Hebrew who do not satisfy Columbia's degree requirements or transfer policies may take a proficiency exam in the language at no cost. If the proficiency exam is passed, the student will be awarded credit for the basic language course, but not the exegesis course. Students may repeat the exam to improve their score. The registrar schedules all language proficiency exams.

Candidate Discernment Consultations (CDC) MDiv
Mid-Course Conversation (MCC) MAPT
CDC/MCC for MDiv/MAPT

CDCs, MCCs, and CDC/MCCs are degree requirements for students in the specific programs above. These events take place at the mid-point in a student's studies and are managed by the Office of Academic Affairs. They consist of a team of faculty and students who offer consultation and guidance to the candidate whose event it is. More about the specifics of each of these can be found in the appropriate degree manual or on Student eCampus or the Columbia Current.

Independent Study

Students may take one independent study per first-level master's degree program. To take an independent study course, the student must:

1. Discuss the potential for an independent study course with a faculty member in the area of study and obtain faculty approval.
2. Submit a written request to engage in an independent study to the Office of Academic Affairs. The request should include information about the supervising faculty person and the area of study, including assigned reading, major assignments, and the nature of the course.

3. The dean of faculty will evaluate all independent study requests, considering faculty workload and the student's demonstrated academic ability.
4. With the dean of faculty's approval, the student must submit the independent study form to the Office of Academic Affairs. The form must be reviewed and/or amended by the professor with whom the student plans to study.

Honors Projects

MDiv students in their final year (63 credits by start of Fall Term) with a cumulative GPA of 3.60 or higher and 3.80 or higher in their proposed area of study may propose an Honors Project to the area chairperson for possible approval. The Honors Project consists of guided study in the fall and spring semesters, which totals six credit hours. The student needs to have space for two elective courses in their degree audit to accommodate an Honors Project.

Students will select a professor with whom they will work from the biblical, historical doctrinal, or practical theology areas. If the area determines a project should receive honors, advisors will grant an A to the student for each semester of study. If the area determines that the project should not receive honors, the advisor will determine the final grade for each semester of study with input from the area. The full Honors project policy is found on Student eCampus or the Columbia Current.

Degree Reclassification for First-level Master's Degrees Students

The process for changing degree programs is multifaceted and designed to help the student think through all areas impacted by this change. Below are the eligibility requirements and materials necessary to request a degree reclassification.

To qualify for degree reclassification for a first-level master's degree, a student must:

1. Have no failing grades in any course.
2. Not be on academic probation.
3. Have a zero balance on their billing account (which the business office certifies).
4. Complete the degree reclassification process through the following schedule:
    a. For all first-level master's degrees, this would occur no earlier than after completing 12 credit hours (at least half of which are core required courses).
    b. For those reclassifying from the MDiv into the MA(TS) or MAPT or for those reclassifying from the MA(TS) into the MDiv, MAPT, or MDiv/MAPT, this would occur no later than after completing 24 credit hours.
    c. For those reclassifying from the MDiv into the MDiv/MAPT, this would occur no later than after completing 60 credit hours.
    d. For those reclassifying from the MAPT into the MDiv or MDiv/MAPT, this would occur no later than after completing 36 credit hours.
5. If a student is reclassifying to a first-level master's degree with additional hours or adding an additional degree, a student must:
    a. Not be found guilty of a Title IX or Title VI violation (which the Office of Academic Affairs considers within their endorsement form).
    b. Have a minimum 3.0 GPA (without rounding up)

Degree reclassification materials should be submitted to Enrollment Management and Vocational Outreach Office. Emvostaff@ctsnet.edu The Admissions Committee will review your application and make a decision. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify you of its decision. Eligibility and full instructions regarding the process can be found on Student eCampus in the General Forms area.

Due Dates & Course Assignment Extensions

All assignments are due on the date/time specified by the course instructor. Late work will receive an appropriate grade reduction. Final exams and final papers are due at the time specified by the professor and will not be accepted after midnight on the last day of the examination period unless an extension has been granted.

All requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the professor and associate dean for academic administration. The extension request form is available in the Office of Academic Affairs and on Student eCampus and Columbia Current. In the event a student is unable to complete the form due to a medical crisis or other extenuating circumstance, the student should contact the Office of Academic Affairs as soon as they are able.

For lengthy medical crises or other extenuating circumstances, a longer extension may be granted. Generally, a longer extension will result in a course load reduction in the following semester/term. Failure to complete coursework within the prescribed timeframe will result in a grade of F or U for the portion of the course for which the extension was granted.

Ordinarily, students are not allowed to begin a new term with uncompleted work from a previous term.

Extension dates cannot extend beyond the following dates:

Fall semester	December 31
January term	January 31
Spring semester	May 31
Summer term	August 31

Dropping & Withdrawing from Courses

Dropping a Course

Each semester, the Office of Academic Affairs announces an add/drop period. During the first portion of this period, students can drop a course without tuition penalty. During the second portion of this period, a student can drop a course with a tuition penalty. Courses dropped during the add/drop period do not appear on a student's transcript and no grade or credit is recorded. After the add/drop period closes, a course drop is no longer possible. Students who fail to request a course drop by the final deadline must remain enrolled in the course through the end of the semester/term, receiving a grade consistent with their course performance.

Withdrawing from a Course

Once the window of time from dropping courses, without or with tuition penalties, has passed for a particular academic term, a course drop (course no longer appears on the transcript record and no grade or credit is recorded) is no longer possible. If a course drop is not requested by the final course drop deadline, students then either continue in the course to the end of the term and earn a passing grade and course credit, or they earn a failing grade and receive no course credit.

However, if, after the final course drop deadline, students experience a major emergency or major change in circumstances (health, family, life), and if they are passing the course(s) at that time, they may petition the dean of faculty for the course designation of "W" = withdraw (shows on transcript, no credit, does not affect GPA, no tuition refund) rather than either an "F" = failure (shows on transcript, no credit, does affect GPA, no tuition refund) or, for courses that are S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) a "U" = Unsatisfactory (shows on transcript, no credit, does not affect GPA, no tuition refund). The standard point when a "W" is no longer possible and an "F" or "U" is necessary is at the mid-term or mid-point of the course. In considering petitions for a course designation of withdrawal, the dean of faculty consults closely with the course instructor(s), with one factor being the level of sincere effort on the part of the student in the course(s). Documentation may be requested in considering such a request.

Transcripts

The registrar processes and issues transcripts weekly on Thursdays. To request issuance of a transcript, please complete the Transcript Request Form and send it to the registrar at the email address on the form. Official transcripts are sent directly to the receiving institution. Detailed instructions related to transcript requests and processing are found in the top section of the Transcript Request Form.

There is no cost for transcripts processed on the usual weekly cycle.

Expedited Transcripts

An emergency fee of $20 per mailed transcript will be charged for transcript requests that need to be processed sooner than the weekly processing cycle. Emergency requests will be processed within 24 hours from receipt of the request during the business week.

Continual Enrollment, Leave of Absence, and Withdrawal from Seminary

All students who are enrolled in a master's degree program at Columbia Theological Seminary are required to be enrolled continuously (taking at least 3 credit hours) every fall and spring semester after matriculation. Continuous enrollment does not apply to January and Summer terms. For doctoral programs, continuous enrollment is defined as taking at least three credit hours in an academic year.

Leave of Absence

A student may take a leave of absence for one semester if the student experiences conditions that severely interfere or interrupt the student's ability to succeed in their courses. A leave of absence provides a mechanism for students experiencing such unusual circumstances to be exempt temporarily from the continuous enrollment policy.

A leave of absence requires approval by the senior vice president and dean of faculty. A leave of absence will be granted only for good cause such as serious medical and health-related issues; major financial and employment issues; pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom; adoption or fostering of a child; childcare, elder care; other significant family issues; and other major personal circumstances that interfere with the ability to undertake graduate study. A leave of absence is granted for one semester but may be extended to a second semester if the student's petition for an extension is approved. A student who fails to enroll in classes at the end of the leave of absence shall be withdrawn administratively from the Seminary. Should the student then wish to resume their studies, they must reapply through the regular admission process.

Withdrawal

A student considering withdrawal is treated with special concern. The dean of students and the academic advisor will help think through personal and vocational implications. The associate dean for academic administration will counsel regarding academic implications. A student who withdraws from Columbia forfeits all financial assistance (scholarships and financial aid) previously awarded for the term in which such action occurs. A student must follow one of the processes below. A student who does not follow the appropriate procedures will continue to be responsible for expenses incurred at Columbia Theological Seminary, will receive F grades in all courses, and will not be eligible for readmission.

To withdraw in good standing, the student must:

1. Discuss the situation with the dean of students, their advisor, or an associate dean in the Office of Academic Affairs.
2. Complete a withdrawal form;
3. Clear all accounts with the Business Office, Library, and the Office of Student Financial Services.

Readmission is through the Academic Standing Commission for a period of one year; beyond that, the student must reapply through the admission process. The forms for leave of absence and permanent withdrawal can be found on Student eCampus in the academic forms section, the Columbia Current, or by contacting the registrar.

Inactivity and Dismissal

A student enrolled in the MDiv, MAPT, MA(TS), or ThM programs who does not register for classes in a semester will be contacted and urged to initiate a leave of absence. If the student fails to register or to initiate a leave of absence, the student will be administratively withdrawn at the next meeting of the Academic Standing Commission. If the student was in good standing, the student may petition the dean of faculty within two weeks of receiving the letter of dismissal to register for classes for the next term and continue in the degree program.

A DMin or DEdMin student who does not register for classes for 12 months will be contacted by the Office of Academic Affairs and encouraged to register for additional courses. If the student indicates that they do not intend to continue in the program, the student will be requested to initiate a permanent withdrawal. If the student does not then register for classes or initiate a withdrawal, they will be automatically considered inactive and will be dismissed administratively from the program at the next meeting of the Academic Standing Commission. If the student was in good standing, they may petition the dean of faculty within two weeks of receiving the letter of dismissal to register for classes for the next term and continue in the degree program.

BUSINESS & FINANCE: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Billing & Payment

Paying Tuition & Fees

Students must make satisfactory arrangements with the Business Office to pay charges for tuition, fees, room and board by the deadline set at the beginning of each term. In making such arrangements, a student is given credit as payment for the following items:

- Actual payment
- Columbia financial assistance (scholarships and Student Financial Services) awarded for the term
- A written pledge from an outside source (i.e., home congregation, presbytery, PC(USA) grant and/or loan) detailing the amount of money which will be forthcoming during the term
- A written commitment from a lending institution concerning monies to be disbursed to the student's account during the term (i.e., William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan). A Direct Loan application must be filed with the Office of Student Financial Services by the fee payment deadline established by the Business Office at the beginning of each term

Payments on student accounts should be placed in the slot labeled for such payments outside of the Business Office. There is a $25 charge for each check presented to the Seminary that is returned by a bank for insufficient funds. Payments may also be made via credit card on the Compass student portal.

Account Credit Balance Withdrawals

Students with credit balances who wish to withdraw money from their accounts should make their requests using the student check request form and submit them to the Business Office. Students are limited to two withdrawals each month. Students are encouraged to view their student ledger through the Compass Student Portal.

Delinquent Accounts

If a student's account becomes delinquent for any reason, the student will be ineligible to register for or begin the next academic term until the account is current.

Grades and academic transcripts will not be released for a student whose account is delinquent. Academic transcripts will not be released for students who have withdrawn or dropped out and have unpaid accounts with the Seminary. All accounts with the Business Office and Library must be cleared before a student is eligible for graduation.

Emergency Assistance Fund

The Office of Student Formation and Campus Culture (SFCC) manages an emergency assistance fund to assist students experiencing financial emergencies. Applications for the student emergency fund can be found on the SFCC page of the Columbia Current. The emergency fund is a last resort after all other options have been explored. This fund is disbursed at the discretion of the Student Emergency Fund Review Board.

Student Financial Services

Columbia Theological Seminary has a generous, comprehensive financial assistance program to support both full-time and part-time students working towards a degree at the master's level. Advanced Degree students may be eligible for minimal scholarships, so they must apply early to be considered. (Special or visiting students are not eligible for scholarships). Financial assistance is provided through the generous gifts of donors and income from endowed scholarship funds. Eligibility is determined by the information provided on the student's admissions application. Student Financial Services

has three components: Scholarships, Student Loans, and Financial Literacy. Several types of academic scholarships are available to entering, full-time basic degree students:

Scholarships

The Presidential Scholarship is the most prestigious scholarship that is offered by Columbia. One student is awarded this scholarship each academic year. The award covers the full cost of tuition, student activity fees, a housing stipend (covers approximately 10 months of housing in a one-bedroom apartment on campus), a living stipend (meant to off-set meals) and a $5000 stipend. The award is renewable and requires the student to have **a 3.50 GPA or higher**, attend classes full time, show outstanding potential in ministry and community service, as well as one who represents The Columbia Theological Seminary community as an ambassador.

The Columbia Scholarship is a one-year award with the possibility of renewal. The scholarship will be renewed if the recipient maintains full-time status, a cumulative GPA **of 3.30 or higher**, and continues to show outstanding potential for ministry. The award covers the full cost of tuition, student activity fees, a housing stipend (covers approximately 10 months of housing in a one-bedroom apartment on campus), and a living stipend (meant to off-set meals). Renewal will not be granted to students with incompletes on their transcripts after June 1. The award will not be continued for students who add another degree program unless approved by the admissions and financial services departments.

The Dr. Winona Jones-Ducille Scholarship is named for the first woman of color to graduate from Columbia. To qualify, a student must be African American by birth or a permanent resident, a full-time student who self-identify their race or ethnicity, and be a qualified applicant to a first-level master's degree program, after the 2020 academic year. The award covers the full cost of tuition, student activity fees, a housing stipend (covers approximately 10 months of housing in a one-bedroom apartment on campus), and a living stipend (to off-set meals). The scholarship will be renewed if the recipient maintains full-time status and a cumulative GPA **of 3.30 or higher**

International Scholarship: all incoming international students are eligible for the international scholarship. The scholarship requires full-time enrollments, and the award covers the full cost of tuition, student activity fees, a housing stipend (covers approximately 10 months of housing in a one-bedroom apartment on campus), a living stipend (meant to off-set meals). The scholarship will be renewed if the recipient maintains full-time status and a cumulative GPA **of 3.30 or higher**

The Columbia Friendship Circle funds several need-based scholarships for PC(USA) students only with family responsibilities and significant unmet need. Students who receive this award must be enrolled full-time for the year that the scholarship is awarded and will maintain SAP. The scholarship will be renewed if the recipient maintains full-time status, a cumulative GPA **of 3.30 or higher**

The William Catto Scholarship is a full tuition and fees renewable award that is granted for the duration of a student's first-level master's degree program. To qualify, a student must be African American by birth or a permanent resident, a full-time student who self-identify their race or ethnicity, and be a qualified applicant to a first-level master's degree program, after the 2020 academic year. The student must maintain full-time status to be renewed each academic year.

The Promise of Ministry Award is a full-tuition scholarship for Presbyterian students who are qualified applicants for a first-level master's degree program, after the 2020 academic year. These scholarships are renewable in succeeding years based on continued evidence of leadership ability and promise for ministry. The student is responsible for fees.

The Community Award is a Full-Tuition scholarship for non-Presbyterian students who are qualified applicants for a first-level master's degree program, after the 2020 academic year. These scholarships are renewable in succeeding years based on maintaining full-time enrollment as well as continued evidence of leadership ability and promise for ministry. The student is responsible for fees.

Part Time Scholarships

Working Scholars Program:

The Working Scholars Program is a Student Financial Services grant for master's level students at Columbia Theological Seminary. The intent of the program is;

1. to enable students with demonstrated need to pursue part-time studies
2. to pursue full-time studies when the student does not qualify for other scholarship programs
3. to serve as a safety net for those students who may have been previously awarded a scholarship and are no longer able to maintain full-time studies (9 credit hours in a semester) or have not met the renewability threshold to continue with their scholarship.

The Working Scholars Program offers Student Financial Services to students based on the number of credit hours they are taking. The more courses that are taken, the more aid that is provided. Students taking:

  i. Six to eight...................... up to 90% of tuition is covered.
  ii. Three to five: .... up to 75% of tuition is covered.

To qualify for the Working Scholars Program, a student must submit a FAFSA application to the Student Financial Services office no later than two weeks before starting classes. Once eligibility for the program is certified, the student must submit materials annually if they continue to be part-time. A student need only be making Satisfactory Academic Progress to remain eligible for this program.

If a student who had a scholarship which requires a certain GPA for renewability finds that their GPA does not meet the threshold of renewability at the end of the academic year, that student must file a Working Scholar's Application with the Student Financial Services office to maintain eligibility for financial aid. If the student's GPA rises within the academic year, they will be eligible to reclaim their original scholarship.

Likewise, if a student who had a scholarship which requires a full-time load (9 or more credit hours) and the student wants- or needs to drop to part time status for the next semester, the student may consult with the Student Financial Services Office regarding their eligibility for the Working Scholars Program. Once a student can return to full-time studies and has a GPA that meets the threshold of renewability, the student may regain their original scholarship. A student will be eligible to reclaim their scholarship in any term in which they are full-time, and need not wait until the next academic year, provided that the student's GPA meets the threshold of renewability.

Any student who has not submitted materials to the Student Financial Services Office will not receive Student Financial Services and therefore will be responsible for their tuition. This would apply to a student who does not qualify for a previously awarded scholarship due to not being able to sustain a full-time load and/or does not meet the renewability threshold for the scholarship.

Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA)

Incoming students (Domestic) must complete the FAFSA before enrolling. Each year, the Office of Student Financial Services determines the deadline for submission and communicates the date directly to all incoming students. Returning students must complete the FAFSA before the Office of Student Financial Services calculates aid for the upcoming year which begins July 1st. Returning students are encouraged to complete the FAFSA form online **by April 15** of each year.

Additional Policies & Procedures Governing the Student Financial Services Program:

To qualify for full Institutional Aid, a person must be a full-time student registered for at least nine credit hours in the fall and spring semesters, three credit hours during January term, and three credit hours during the summer term may count toward the full-time credit hours for program requirements. All Students may receive financial assistance for fewer than nine credit hours by participating in our Working Scholars Program. A student engaged in a yearlong internship is not a full-time student and is ineligible for financial assistance from the Seminary. A student who withdraws from the Seminary forfeits any Student Financial Services awarded during the term in which such action occurs.

To be eligible to receive Student Financial Services for a semester/term a student must:

- be making satisfactory academic progress
- have paid the term's fees or made other arrangements with the Business Office
- have submitted a certificate of hospitalization insurance and a health form by the established deadlines

Students may use Student Financial Services for expenses at the Seminary, including a maximum of 12 credit hours of supervised ministry courses for which a student may be exempted, cross registration at schools of the Atlanta Theological Association and the Atlanta Regional Consortium for Higher Education, and cross registration at other PC(USA) seminaries for one semester.

Institutional Student Financial Services may not be used for exchange programs or other programs of study not included above. A student must apply for additional Student Financial Services for these programs. Students may receive consideration for aid for up to the following number of credit hours:

MDiv Students[1]	90 credit hours
MAPT Students	48 credit hours
MATS Students	48 credit hours
MDiv/MAPT Students	114 credit hours[2]

A Student Financial Services recipient must report to the Office of Student Financial Services changes in financial status (e.g., an unanticipated increase in financial resources) and receipt of unanticipated gifts of $100 or more, which may impact eligibility for financial assistance. If the student's income has changed since filing the FAFSA, they may submit documentation to receive a professional judgement which will change their eligibility.

Returning International students must submit a Columbia Student Financial Services application form no later than April 30 each year with a re-admission form.

Other Funding Sources

Students may qualify for external aid and are encouraged to explore and apply for aid from the following potential funding sources:

- denominational bodies
- a student's home/sending congregation
- individuals in a student's home/sending congregation
- local and neighboring churches

---

[1] includes credits earned from advanced standing, exchange programs, etc.

[2] 120 credit hours for students who entered during the 2017-18 academic year or earlier.

- family and friends
- former financial supporters

Students are also encouraged to explore the following websites, which provide outside grant, scholarships, and income-based assistance:

- fastweb!
- The Forum for Theological Exploration
- The Greater Atlanta Presbytery
- Georgia Department of Human Services
- Georgia Department of Community Health
- Georgia Department of Labor

Funding for PC(USA) Students

The PC(USA) grants funds annually. Each April, information about funding, application, and deadlines is published online. Applications should be submitted directly to the PC(USA). The Office of Admissions & Student Financial Services is happy to assist applicants by completing the advisor's response and financial sections.

Inquirers and candidates may apply for Presbyterian Study Grants of up to $6,000.00.

Presbyterian Grant and Loan Funds are administered according to the policies of the PC(USA) Office of Student Financial Services for Studies. An applicant for a grant must be enrolled as an inquirer or a candidate June 30th. Students may apply for loans throughout the year.

Title IV Funds

The Seminary participates in the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, regulated by Title IV policies and procedures.

The Seminary also certifies applications for (Domestic) students who seek Federal Student Loans through the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program. An applicant must be enrolled in a degree program on at least a half-time basis (six credits per fall/spring semester for MDiv, MAPT, MATS, and MDiv/MAPT students in any given term) and must be making satisfactory academic progress as determined by the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy. DMin and DEdMin are eligible for federal loans if enrolled in a minimum of three credit hours in any given term.

All applicants are required to complete a FAFSA, provide any other requested supporting documents to the Office of Financial Services for verification, and participate in an initial loan entrance interview with the director of Student Financial Services or online.

Loan applicants must sign a Master Promissory Note and complete Entrance Counseling at the studentaid.gov website. When verification is complete, loan eligibility has been determined, and the student has specified the loan amount, the director of financial services will complete the process. Each student must be aware of their borrowing history and amount owed before getting a loan. William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans may be used for studying abroad in programs approved by the Seminary and count toward the student's degree program.

If a recipient of loan funds does not complete the period of enrollment for which a loan application was certified and a portion of the loan fund was applied to Seminary fees in accordance with federal policy, the Seminary must refund to the Title IV programs the unearned amount. This amount is determined by using specific formulas based on the length of time the student was enrolled. If the federal refund causes a deficit in the student's account, the student will be billed.

Columbia Theological Seminary students who receive William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans are required to have an entrance interview, at the time of the first loan request at the Seminary, as well as an exit interview on-line prior to withdrawal, graduation, or dropping to less than half-time status. Both the entrance and exit interviews may be completed online. The third-party agency will provide confirmation of the online interview to the Student Financial Services office.

In accordance with federal requirements for institutions participating in the federal loan program contact information for the Student Loan Ombudsman is provided below:

FSA Ombudsman
P. O. Box 1843
Monticello, KY 42633

Phone: 877-557-2575
Fax: 606-396-4821

Contact the Office of Student Financial Services for more information about the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan program. Phone: 404-687-482.

Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits

Students who have questions about their VA eligibility should contact the Department of Veterans Affairs at 1.888.442.4551 for educational questions and/or 1.800.827.1000 for other inquiries. Additional information regarding VA benefits is available on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website.

A new student eligible for VA benefits should provide a copy of the students VA Certificate of Eligibility Letter to the registrar at the Office of Academic Affairs as soon as possible after confirming enrollment in a degree program.

To continue receiving VA benefits, continuing students must confirm with the registrar the total number of credits to be reported by the registrar to the VA, for each academic term. It is the responsibility of the student to follow-up with Veterans Affairs when payments are not received in a timely manner.

The Offices of Academic Affairs and Student Financial Services must be notified of all changes to a student's classification and/or course schedule if the student is receiving VA benefits. Columbia Theological Seminary complies with the requirements of Title 38 United States Code Section 3679(e) by not penalizing students who receive VA benefits for possible delayed disbursement funding from the VA, after students are certified by the Seminary with the VA for tuition and fees for any academic term.

Refund Policy

Tuition
Subject to the following schedule, students are entitled to refunds when they drop a course or withdraw from school with approval from the Seminary. A course is considered dropped at the time the registrar receives written notice from the student requesting a course drop. A student is considered to have withdrawn from the Seminary when a petition for withdrawal is approved by a Seminary dean.

Fall and Spring Term Classes (Full-term)
By the end of the:

First week	100%
Second week	80%
Third week	50%
Fourth week	25%

After fourth week	0%

Courses Six to Seven Weeks in Duration
By the end of the:

First week	100%
Second week	50%
Third week	25%
After third week	0%

January Term Classes and DMin and DEdMin Intensive Courses
By the end of the:

First day of class	100%
Third day of class	50%
After third day of class	0%

No refund of course supervision fees or of clinical pastoral education fees will be made. No refund of activity fees will be made after completion of the second week in Fall or Spring Terms. No refund of Cultural Immersions program fees will be made after the third day of class.

Room and Board
A student who has entered into a lease agreement for a Seminary housing unit for a term or semester is responsible for payment in full unless written notice that the unit will not be used is given to the vice president for business and administration at least two weeks before the first day of classes. In that case, a 100 percent refund will be made. In other cases, a refund amount may be given upon the initiative of the Seminary. A minimum charge of one month's rent will be assessed as a penalty for breaking a lease.

A student who withdraws or drops out of school must vacate Seminary housing and cease using its dining facilities or be held liable for room and board charges beyond the student's last date of attendance.

CAMPUS SAFETY & SECURITY: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The safety and security of the Seminary are of utmost importance. While Columbia Theological Seminary takes every precaution to ensure the safety of the community, the potential for crime always exists. The Seminary seeks to promote safety on campus, prevent crime, and respond quickly when crime arises, relying, in part, on the cooperation of students and employees.

Disclosure of Campus Security and Crime Statistics

Each year, in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security and Crime Statistics Act, Columbia Theological Seminary releases campus safety and security policies and crime statistics to all current students and employees. Campus security policies and crime statistics are made available to prospective students and employees upon request and on Columbia Theological Seminary's website.

The Seminary administrators with significant responsibility for student and campus activities are campus security authorities and must report any security violations in a timely manner. If a campus security authority is notified of the occurrence of a crime that threatens the safety of the community, the campus security authority will warn the community in a timely fashion.

Campus security authorities will also proactively inform the Columbia community of crime prevention and security regularly through Seminary communications and during Seminary-sponsored events (e.g., new student orientation, forum, faculty meeting, etc.)

Campus Security Services

Columbia Theological Seminary contracts with Agnes Scott College to provide security services. A security officer is on duty at the Seminary 24 hours a day. The Decatur City Police Department also patrols the neighborhood regularly.

Personal Agency, Responsibility, and Reporting

To further ensure safety on campus, members of the community are expected to adhere to the following guidelines and requirements:

- Immediately report any crimes or suspicious activities to the Agnes Scott College Department of Public Safety (404.471.6900). Agnes Scott will investigate the complaint and notify the Decatur Police Department or the necessary public service department if additional assistance is required.
- Respect all rights, privileges, and sensibilities of others. Actions that threaten or endanger an individual or community, in any way, will be treated as serious offenses and subject to disciplinary action.
- Lock all vehicles parked on campus for any period.
- Refrain from leaving packages, purses, backpacks, and other valuables in vehicles, in plain sight.
- Do not leave personal items unattended.
- Walk with a friend at night.
- Be familiar with fire exits and evacuation procedures posted near building exits.
- Ensure that hallways and public areas are free of personal property in all buildings.

Questions, concerns, and suggestions for improving campus security can be directed to the vice president for business and administration or the dean of students.

Emergency Contact Information

Agnes Scott Police   404.471.6900

Decatur Police	911
Fire Department	911
Ambulance	911

Contacting Emergency Authorities

Emergencies requiring police assistance, firefighters, or an ambulance should be immediately reported using a personal cell phone or the nearest available landline. Courtesy telephones are located on the first floor of the Richards Center, the Harrington Center, Florida Hall, Riggs Commons, and Campbell Hall. When phoning authorities, always use your first and last name and provide a specific location where the emergency is occurring.

Solicitation

Solicitation is against the law in the City of Decatur. Thus, solicitors are not allowed on campus. If someone is observed soliciting on campus, please contact Agnes Scott College's Department of Public Safety at 404.471.6900. If the solicitor has a specific personal need, the appropriate authorities will direct them to the appropriate relief agency.

Firearms

In compliance with the Safe Carry Act of Georgia (HB60), Columbia Theological Seminary strictly prohibits the carrying of firearms on campus, even by concealed carry weapons permit holders, by anyone other than a duly authorized law enforcement personnel.

Furthermore, individuals engaged in Columbia Theological Seminary-related business off-campus may not carry a firearm while representing the Seminary without written permission from the President or Vice President for Business and Administration.

APPENDIX A: TITLE IV – SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

Title IV Policy

A Columbia Theological Seminary student who is a recipient of a William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) or federal work-study must make qualitative and quantitative satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree program in which they are enrolled if they are to continue participation in the Title IV Student Financial Services program.

Title IV Measurements & Procedures

Qualitative Measurement

Qualitative satisfactory progress will be determined by the Academic Standing Commission of the faculty at the end of each fall and spring semester. Students in basic degree programs must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.30 or higher. Students in advanced degree programs must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or higher.

Quantitative Measurement

Enrollment status is defined as all degree students taking classes under a credit hour system. Definitions for full-time and half-time status are as follows:

	Half Time	Full Time
Summer Term		
All degree programs	1.5 credits	3 credits
Fall & Spring Semesters		
MDiv, MATS, MAPT	6 credits	9+ credits
ThM, DMin, DEdMin	3 credits	6+ credits
January Term		
All degree programs		3 credits

Quantitative Determination of Satisfactory Progress

Generally, a student must successfully complete 80% of the coursework that they attempt. The following schedules establish the amount of successful credit a student must have attained by the end of each increment of each degree program:

Degree Program	Maximum Credit Hours Attempted	Maximum Time Frame	Required Hours at the End of Each Increment*
MAPT	60	5 years	80%
MATS	60	5 years	80%
MDiv	108	6 years	80%
ThM	37.5	5 years	80%
DEdMin	54	6 years	80%
DMin	45	6 years	80%

* The period ending with the fall and spring semesters of each academic year. An academic year begins with the summer term and ends with the spring semester of any given academic year.

Incomplete Courses, Aid, and Record of Review

Students receiving Title IV funding must adhere to all policies as outlined in the Academic Policies and Procedures section of the Student Handbook. Courses that are not completed, failed or courses from which students withdraw after the

course drop deadline will be treated as courses unsatisfactorily completed in determining quantitative satisfactory progress.

A student who does not maintain satisfactory academic progress can re-establish eligibility by successfully completing the appropriate number of credit hours and/or attaining the cumulative GPA required at the end of the next fall or spring semester.

Appeals and the Record of Review process are administered by the Office of Academic Affairs.

APPENDIX B: ACADEMIC WRITING GUIDELINES

1. Accomplishing the Assigned Task

Answer the Question
The most important thing a writer can do in their academic writing is to **answer the question or questions that are being asked**. A writer cannot succeed at the assignment without doing this. Answering the question(s) requires the writer to:

- correctly identify and critically analyze the question(s).
- ask themselves constantly what their answer to the question(s) is; and
- use the question(s) and their answer(s) to focus their writing.

Follow Instructions
Along with answering the question(s), writers must **follow instructions**. This seems basic but failing to follow instructions has been the downfall of many students. A student may write an excellent twelve-page paper but get marked down because they omitted important elements of the assignment or wrote twice as much as they were supposed to. The instructor has been deliberate in crafting the assignment instructions; students should likewise be deliberate about following those instructions.

2. Engaging sources

Consulting Quality Sources
A key to good research and writing is choosing to **consult quality sources** (when the choice is up to the student). By identifying and consulting resources that contain sound scholarship and good information, the student will arrive at more well-informed and well-reasoned conclusions.

Students are also encouraged to consult sources with a variety of viewpoints. This practice will enable them to develop their critical thinking skills and their own views more robustly given the diversity of evidence before them, rather than simply adopting a single presented perspective.

The type of resource needed by the student may change depending on the assignment. For instance, news articles may be useful sources for a contextual analysis, while they would be less convincing sources for an exegesis paper. Students should consult their instructors if they are uncertain about what constitutes a quality source. The John Bulow Campbell Library and Center for Academic Literacy can provide guidance on these matters as well.

Critically Engaging Sources
To effectively integrate the voices they consult, students must **critically engage their sources**. Simply restating the source's content is not enough; the student must use that content in the articulation of their argument. The student must take the initiative to tell the reader, fairly and objectively, what the quote, paraphrase, or summary of the source says *and* why it matters to the conversation happening in the paper. Sources should play a role, either as support or counterargument, in presenting the point the student is trying to make in the paper.

Citing Sources
Whenever the student incorporates source material into their paper, they must tell the reader whose voice it is, where it comes from, and how to find it – in other words, they must **cite their sources**. Whether in-text citation happens in parenthetical or footnote form, and whether the student is required to affix a bibliography or works cited page, they must acknowledge their sources to signal those sources' contributions to the student's thought and writing. This practice signals respect for the work that the student is drawing from.

Students are expected to abide by the Chicago Turabian (9th edition) citation style, in notes-bibliography form, unless explicitly directed otherwise by the instructor in the course syllabus.

The student should always cite direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries. They should also cite material they are incorporating from previous assignments they have written, even though it is their own work, unless they have been expressly invited to include this material by their instructor.

The student does not need to cite common knowledge (what constitutes common knowledge may be dependent upon the audience) or their original thought, as the point of citation is to indicate the unique contributions of others.

If the student is ever unsure about whether to cite something, they are encouraged to err on the safe side and cite.

3. Qualities and Values of Good Writing

The following are important qualities of academic writing at Columbia Theological Seminary, including values cherished in academic writing more broadly, as well as some specific to the Seminary. Students should strive to reflect these qualities in their own writing.

Clarity is, simply put, the quality of being clear. Writers who demonstrate clarity express their thoughts fully, coherently, and vividly. Clarity is important because it helps the reader successfully understand what the writer is trying to say.

Focus is the quality of staying on track, of making sure that the entire paper ties together to support the idea(s) articulated in response to the question(s) asked. Focus helps to ensure that the writer truly and fully completes the task asked of them in their assignment without getting distracted.

Critical thinking is thinking that objectively analyzes and evaluates ideas on their own merits, identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Critical thinking is crucial for academic writing; it demonstrates the writer's ability to think independently, ask good questions, assess evidence, examine personal biases, engage in conversation, identify areas for further study and growth, and arrive at well-reasoned conclusions.

Coherence and flow are the qualities of writing that hold a paper together as a unified, logical progression of thought. Whether this regards the coherence of ideas within an argument, or the flow of words and style used to articulate that argument and its supporting ideas, these qualities help to ensure that the writer has produced not only a polished paper but also a paper that makes sense.

A good paper at Columbia Theological Seminary also abides by the **Inclusive Language Policy** drafted by Seminary faculty. The policy was adopted to reflect a commitment to respecting the diversity that exists among people and among the ways God is represented and understood.

Inclusive language deliberately includes those whom traditional vocabulary has excluded, especially regarding gender. For example, inclusive language favors "humanity" over "man" when referring to all people. Also, recognizing that God does not fit into any one gender category, inclusive language involves using non-gendered language (e.g., "Godself," "they/them/their") or an array of differently gendered language (e.g., using *both* "he/him/his" *and* "she/her/hers") to refer to God.

4. Grammar and Style

Students are expected to spellcheck, proofread, and format their papers properly. While such tasks may seem unrelated to the content of the paper, correct grammar and style enhance clarity, indicate the writer's attention to the project, and prevent unnecessary distraction from the content of the paper.

On some matters of grammar and style, the writer may have multiple correct options (e.g., some compound words are collapsed into a single word according to some sources and hyphenated according to others). The student may choose whichever version they wish in such cases; however, that choice must remain consistent throughout the assignment.

5. Organization and Argument

The Structure of Academic Writing Assignments

Columbia Theological Seminary's students are asked to compose many different genres of writing over their course of study – everything from exegesis to liturgy, from ethnography to lesson plan, from sermon to master's thesis, from reflection paper to verbatim. As such, the expectations for Seminary writing are not uniform and should be discerned thoughtfully using the information provided by faculty for each individual assignment, including the assigned genre.

Rhetorical Structure of Thesis-Based U.S. Academic Writing

Despite the diversity in possible writing genres, **academic writing in the U.S. often abides by a particular rhetorical structure, outlined below, that characterizes much (but not all) assigned writing in the Seminary**. These guidelines for thesis-based writing will, therefore, hold true for many written assignments at Columbia Theological Seminary.

As acknowledged above, some genres and/or professors will require students to structure an assignment differently. When a professor's instructions differ from the rhetorical structure outlined in this section, students should **always defer to the professor's instructions** (see section on **following instructions** above). If a student is uncertain about the expectations of an assigned genre, they should approach the professor for clarification.

General Outline of Thesis-Based Academic Writing Structure in the U.S.

1. *Introduction* (with **thesis statement**)

   The introduction should invite the reader into the paper and lay the groundwork for the conversation the student is having within the paper. This paragraph or section introduces the question, topic, or problem to which the student is responding as well as a brief, strong summary of the student's response to that question, topic, or problem (see **thesis statement** below). Introductions usually do not contain much detail.

   A **thesis statement** is a clear and concise articulation of the writer's controlling idea for the entire paper. It makes a claim, answers the question that is being asked, and focuses the paper, all usually in a single sentence at the end of the introductory paragraph. This is a necessary component of all thesis-based American academic writing; without a thesis statement, the reader does not know what the writer understands the main claim to be.

2. *Supporting paragraphs:* A thesis statement cannot explain itself. The writer must use the paragraphs between the introduction and conclusion to offer support for the argument they articulated in the thesis statement, thereby building their case. In these paragraphs, the writer should walk the reader through the research, logic, observations, etc. that led them to the claim they have stated.

3. *Conclusion*

   The conclusion is where the writer offers a final, memorable, fresh, and concise articulation of the paper's argument. A good conclusion ties the ideas of the paper together succinctly to refresh the reader's memory and reinforce the writer's main points. No new information should be introduced in the conclusion.

Making a Claim

The thesis statement is not the only place in a paper where the writer **makes a claim**. This must happen throughout the paper in support of the major claim in the thesis statement. Any time the writer states their position or arrives at a conclusion that takes them one step closer to the main idea in the thesis statement, they make a claim. These claims

themselves must be supported. When a writer makes a claim, they must tell the reader how they came to hold that position.

Each claim in a paper is a point where the writer's unique voice and critical thinking come forward. It is a chance to actively engage in the scholarly conversation. Unless otherwise directed by the instructor, writers may use the first person ("I"/"me") to clearly state their claims and avoid passive language. However, while first-person language can sometimes be helpful, it is not usually necessary in academic writing and is not required for the claim to reflect the writer's perspective. The writer can state the claim quite plainly, especially with ample support, without having to qualify it with a phrase like, "I contend that…"

Paragraph Structure

To some degree, the writer can understand each paragraph as a miniature paper. The **structure of a paragraph** should include a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a final sentence that can transition cleanly into the next paragraph. A general rule of thumb is that paragraphs should contain a minimum of 3-4 sentences to ensure that the paragraph adequately supports its own point and advances the writer's thought.

At the same time, paragraphs should not be excessively long; for example, a single paragraph should never exceed one page. The writer should be attentive to whether all the contents of a paragraph belong together in support of the same point. If not, the writer should divide the paragraph into smaller paragraphs addressing separate (though related) points. They may need to add more support to one or more of these shorter paragraphs to do so.

Transitions are key in moving from one paragraph to the next. While paragraphs may have their own individual topics or points, they are part of the larger whole of the paper. Transitions provide the flow of logic from one paragraph to the next, linking them into a single trajectory of thought. The writer may use transitional words or phrases, or they may craft the final sentence of one paragraph and the beginning of the next to seamlessly relate to each other.

6. Claiming Your Voice

Although there are certain prescribed expectations and standards for academic writing assignments and their component genres, professors still want and invite the student to be their authentic selves within the parameters of the assignment.

Students are not expected to agree with all their conversation partners in these assignments. While they continue to hold their own beliefs and opinions, whether contrasting or similar, students will be expected to make the case for these beliefs and opinions in a fair and respectful dialogue with their conversation partners.

Making a claim (see above) is a component of claiming one's voice. The student is invited to express themselves authentically – again, provided that they demonstrate the required understanding of the material and a thoughtful, reasoned response.

The student may use humor, reasoning, vocabulary, structure, etc. as a genuine expression of themselves so long as the assignment still satisfies the guidelines above.

7. Freedoms Regarding Specific Debates

British vs. American Spelling and Punctuation Systems

Both the British and American systems are legitimate; one (American) is simply the dominant system in the United States. Students who were educated in a context that teaches British English may continue to use the British system, as doing otherwise would distract these students from the actual task of the assignment. Students are encouraged to indicate their use of the British system to their instructor, so the instructor knows to expect it. Students who were not educated in a context that teaches British English are expected to abide by the American system.

Regardless, the system in use should be consistent; for instance, a single paper should not contain British quotation punctuation in one paragraph and American quotation punctuation in another.

The Third-Person Singular "They/Them/Their"

The use of "they/them/their" as a third person *singular* pronoun has historically been considered ungrammatical. Recently, however, with growing sensitivity toward gender diversity, the need for a non-binary third-person pronoun has become apparent. Authorities on grammar and style are increasingly allowing and affirming the use of the singular "they/them/theirs."

Students may choose to use the third-person singular "they/them/their" without concern of penalty. Students may also continue to use "she/he" or variations thereof as the general third person singular.

APPENDIX C: POLICIES FOR ON-CAMPUS STUDENT HOUSING

Columbia Theological Seminary student housing is only available to full-time, first-level master's degree students. Generally, students are eligible for on-campus housing for the duration of their degree program as outlined below:

Master of Divinity students*	3 years
Master of Arts students	2 years
Dual degree students	4 years

MDiv students entering Columbia with advanced standing may not be eligible for housing for three years.

When a student withdraws from the Seminary or ceases to be enrolled as a full-time student, the student forfeits any right to remain in student housing.

Housing Assignments

Housing assignments are made by **the Business Office.** Generally, housing assignments are made during enrollment and maintained through the student's time at the Seminary.

Returning Students

Students may opt to remain in their current unit even if they do not plan to occupy the unit in the summer term. Generally, students are not allowed to move units during the academic year. Move requests are subject to approval by the Operations Coordinator and the VP of Business and Administration. Students may not request to move to a different unit of the same configuration. Move requests are considered each spring based on seniority and availability. Approved move requests must occur at the end of the spring semester.

License Agreement

All students occupying on-campus housing are required to complete a license agreement. The housing license serves as a formal housing contract between the individual and Columbia Theological Seminary. It should be read carefully, and a copy should be retained by the licensee. Of particular importance to the licensee are the following items:

- The time for the license,
- Safeguards and rules regarding keys, and
- Deposit provisions

Deposits

Students occupying on-campus housing are required to pay a security deposit equal to one month's rent prior to occupancy. Students who fail to pay the deposit by the Business Office's specified date may forfeit their housing unit. Any deposit, less deductions and penalties for damages and cleaning, will be returned within 30 days of vacating a student housing unit.

If a student moves from one housing unit to another, all damages and fees associated with the former unit must be paid prior to moving and a new deposit must be paid for the new unit.

If a student withdraws from Columbia, the student has 30 days to vacate student housing. Failure to vacate may result in forfeiture of the security deposit.

Mandatory Community Meetings

All students living in on-campus housing shall be required to attend at least two mandatory community meetings – one per semester – wherein residence life will outline health, safety, community, and other guidelines.

Vacating Units

The maintenance team will inspect all student housing units once occupants vacate the unit. If damages are identified that exceed normal wear and tear, the student will be billed for the full expense of all repairs. If it is determined that the housing unit is not cleaned in accordance with the terms of the lease, the student will be penalized and billed for all cleaning fees.

Moving Out

Spring graduates must move out of the residence halls on or before the last day of May.

Temporary Vacancy

There is a $100 storage fee for temporary vacancy during the summer for students (Licensee) who plan to leave their apartment for the entire months of June and July. For this to apply, Licensee agrees to turn in their apartment key to the business office and leave the premises no later than May 31 and return to their apartment, no sooner than August 1. Personal belongings may remain in the apartment. All perishable items must be removed, and the unit must be left clean and orderly. Your apartment key is to be turned into the operations coordinator, and you can keep your mailbox key. A Vacating Checklist will be provided by the operations coordinator.

On-Campus Housing Security

Residence hall exterior doors are locked 24 hours a day. Residence hall interior/room doors and doors to apartments should always be locked. If your room or apartment door is defective and/or can be easily manipulated, please file a maintenance request here.

https://studenthelp.ctsnet.edu/
Click the AZURE Button
Select the MAINTENANCE CATEGORY.

Pet Policy

Columbia Seminary prohibits pets in all campus buildings except as allowed under the terms of this policy. Certified Service Animals are exempt from the general campus prohibition and must be registered with the Operations Coordinator and/or Vice President for Business & Administration.

Certified Service Animals and Certified Emotional Support animals are exempt from all fees outlined in this policy.

Certain pets will be allowed in and may be domiciled in the following student housing units:

Marcia Riggs Commons *(MRC)*   **Village Apartments**

1. For the purpose of this policy, pets shall include **only dogs and cats.**

2. Pet owners are expected to exercise responsible control over their pet and should always be aware of the impact the pet may have on other residents, faculty, staff, students, and visitors to Columbia Theological Seminary. All persons have a right to peaceful, safe experiences on campus. Thus, the seminary and all pet owners should prioritize the health and safety of all members of the community.

3. All pets allowed on Columbia Theological Seminary property under the terms of this policy are the full and exclusive responsibility of their owner, who must occupy a student housing unit.

4. Pets may only be domiciled in the housing units listed above.

5. No more than one pet may be domiciled in any student housing unit.

    a. Students occupying a shared living space (**e.g., a two-bedroom apartment in MRC**) with someone who is not a member of their family will be **limited to one pet per person.**
    b. Students occupying a shared living space (**e.g., a four-bedroom apartment in MRC**) with persons who are not members of their family **may not exceed two pets total per housing unit.**

6. The weight of each pet shall not exceed 50 lbs.

7. When outside of their assigned housing unit, all pets, including cats, must be on a leash while on seminary property.

8. Pet owners are required to comply with all City of Decatur codes and ordinances regarding their pets. This includes ordinances related to licensing, vaccinations, and picking up pet waste.

    a. All pets must be spayed/neutered prior to being domiciled in a pet-friendly housing unit. All pets domiciled on campus shall also have up-to-date rabies and distemper shots and must be licensed.
    b. A copy of the shot record and license must be presented to the Operations Coordinator at the time the annual lease agreement is signed. Failure to present appropriate documentation and records will result in an automatic fine of $100.00 per day.
    c. The student must proactively provide documentation to the Operations Coordinator. It is not the responsibility of the Seminary to remind students that shot records and licenses be filed with the business office.
    d. Should shot records/licenses expire in the middle of a lease agreement, the student must submit an updated record to the Operations Coordinator. If shots/licenses expire during the lease agreement, the resident will be charged $50 per day until the updated records/licenses are submitted.

9. Pet owners are fully responsible for all damages to Columbia Theological Seminary property caused by their pet.

10. Pet owners are responsible for any mess or damage made by their pet on Seminary property.

11. No pets shall be tied to trees, doors, or in any way block the passage of individuals through hallways and entryways.

12. If a pet owner ceases to be a resident of a student housing unit, the authorization to domicile a pet on campus shall be terminated. Such terminations shall be effective on the date on which the pet owner vacates their designated student housing unit.

13. Neighborhood residents and guests of Seminary residents must also comply with all pet policies and procedures. Members of the Seminary are encouraged to politely inform guests of pet policies if they observe them behaving in a manner that is out of compliance.

Pet Deposit

In addition to the standard housing security deposit, every resident on campus who owns a pet shall provide the Seminary with a $200.00 **non-refundable** pet deposit to be used against any property damage, cleaning, and fumigation costs that the Seminary incurs because of the pet's behavior or condition. Residents will also be billed directly for any costs for cleaning and/or damage repair beyond the deposit amount.

Failure to pay the pet deposit and/or properly notify the Seminary of a pet will result in an automatic fine of $300.00. Residents will have 15 days to remove the pet from campus. Failure to remove the pet from campus will result in an additional automatic fine of $75.00 per day per pet until the pet is removed.

Monthly Pet Fees

The monthly pet fee is $25 and will be charged as follows:

$125 for the Fall Term (August – December)

$125 for the Spring Term (January – May)

$50 for the Summer Term (June and July)

Caged Pets

Columbia Seminary only allows dogs and cats in designated pet-friendly housing units. Caged pets are not permitted in any Seminary housing. Anyone found to be domiciling a caged pet in on-campus housing will be charged an automatic fine of $300.00. Residents will have 15 days to remove the pet(s) from campus. Failure to remove the pet(s) from campus will result in an additional automatic fine of $75.00 per day per pet until the pet(s) is removed.

Cleaning

Columbia Seminary expects that all residents who register pets regularly clean and/or groom their pets. Pet owners should also proactively clean up after their pets inside and use appropriate cleaning agents to ensure the housing unit is free of pet odor and stains (e.g., Nature's Miracle).

Maintenance & Service Requirement Caged, Removed, Owner Present

Should a professional staff member need access to a resident's unit (e.g., maintenance staff), the pet owner must cage and/or remove the pet from the unit during the timeframe the professional staff member is present.

Nuisance, Excessive Noise, and Barking

No nuisance of barking, howling, or excessive noise by pets will be allowed in designated pet-friendly housing units.

Violence and Aggression

In cases involving a pet that has caused physical injury to another pet or person, or displayed violent tendencies, the Housing Committee will hold a meeting to determine the merits of the case. If the case is substantiated, the pet involved will be permanently removed from campus within five (5) business days of the Housing Committee's decision. Failure to remove the pet(s) from campus will result in an automatic fine of $300.00 per day until the pet(s) is removed.

Upon receipt of the complaint and prior to the determination of the case, the dean of students will direct the owner of the pet involved that the pet must be kept under direct control (e.g., muzzle or leash) in all areas on campus pending the outcome.

Pet Complaints and Infractions

Any complaint about pets should be addressed in the following manner:

- If a member of the Columbia community has a complaint, the written complaint should be filed with either the Vice President and Dean for Student Formation and Campus Culture or the Vice President for Business and Administration.
- If you have an issue with another resident regarding their pet(s), approach that person and ask for their assistance in the matter. If the problem continues, report the matter to the Office of Student Formation and Campus Culture for assistance.
- Where non-compliance with Seminary policies is involved, first offenses will result in a written warning and a reminder to adhere to campus policies and procedures.
- Subsequent violations of Seminary policies and procedures will result in a hearing with the Housing Committee at a called meeting. Should the pet owner not attend the meeting, an automatic fine of $150.00 will be applied to their account, and the owner may be required to remove the pet(s) from campus.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

Any questions, comments, or concerns related to pet policies and procedures and the interpretation or enforcement thereof should be submitted in writing to the **Operations Coordinator via email at Housing@ctsnet.edu**. The Operations Coordinator will consult with appropriate Seminary administrators – normally, the Vice President for Business & Administration and Vice President for Student Formation and Campus Culture – in making any recommendations or decisions.

Insurance

Columbia Theological Seminary is not responsible for the loss of or any damage to personal property. Students occupying student housing are strongly encouraged to obtain basic renters' insurance.

Keys

Duplicating keys to student housing is strictly prohibited.

Replacement Keys & Lock Out Service

During Seminary business hours, students may regain access to their unit by contacting the Residence Life Office. After hours, students may regain access to their unit by contacting the Agnes Scott Department of Public Safety or Campus Security Office at 404.471.6355.

Replacements for lost keys may be obtained through the Business Office for a $15 fee.

Receiving Mail

U.S. Postal Service Residence Halls Mailing Addresses
Addressing U.S. Postal Service Mail:

Marcia Riggs Commons or Florida Hall	**Village Apartments**
Full Name	Full Name
CTS Box # _____	604 Kirk Road Apt# ___
Columbia Theological Seminary	Decatur, GA 30030
701 S. Columbia Drive	
Decatur, GA **30030**	

Pest Control

Pest Control issues should be filed with the Business Office using the Pest Control Log. Pest Control services are provided four times a year in all campus residences.

Smoke Alarms

Disabling smoke alarms in any Seminary-owned building is strictly prohibited. Residents are also strongly encouraged to test their smoke alarms monthly. If a smoke alarm is not functioning properly, please contact the Business Office immediately.

Maintenance

Altering wiring, plumbing, or adjusting Seminary-owned property in student housing is strictly prohibited. All nonemergency maintenance requests should be submitted via Campus Compass. Students should not assume that another resident has reported problems in public spaces. If a student notices a maintenance issue in a public space, the student should always report it via Campus Compass.

In the case of an emergency maintenance issue, such as the breakdown of an essential service (plumbing, lighting, heating, lock, etc.) or a problem that threatens health and safety, immediately contact the Business Office (404-687-4510). After business hours, students should immediately contact Agnes Scott Department of Public Safety (404-471-6355).

Seminary Provided Furniture

Removal of seminary-provided furniture from housing units is strictly prohibited.

Cooking and Cleaning

Community cooking areas are available on a first-come, first-served basis in the Marcia Riggs Commons basement. Residents are responsible for the cleanliness and orderliness of these areas.

Resident assistants will help develop community covenants in the housing to determine weekly cleaning schedules and a rule of life. Cleaning includes, but is not limited to, unloading the dishwasher, washing dishes, discarding kitchen trash and recycling, cleaning countertops, and removing expired/spoiled foods from the refrigerator and freezer.

Laundry Facilities

Laundry facilities are offered as a courtesy to on-campus residents. Washers and dryers are in the following locations:

Florida Hall	Marcia Y. Riggs Commons	The Village
1st, 2nd, 3rd floors	Basement	Laundry building

Laundry maintenance issues can be reported in any of the following ways:
1. Via App: Download the *CSC ServiceWorks* Service Request App to your smartphone; scan the license plate (barcode) on the machine or enter the number and click *submit*.
2. Via Phone: Call Customer Support at 800.762.3452.
3. Via Website: Go to cscsw.com; click on *Request Service*; enter the machine license plate number; and click *submit*.

Waste & Recycling

Trash cans are located on each floor of residence halls and should only be used for small waste items. All other waste should be discarded in the large outdoor dumpsters.

Columbia Theological Seminary strongly encourages community members to recycle. Recycling receptacles are provided in all campus buildings, and recycling bins are available in the lower parking lot behind the Harrington Center. The City of

Decatur provides regular pickup of recycled materials. For additional information about recycling in the City of Decatur, click here.

Recyclable Items (Unsorted) Metal coffee cans

- Tin cans (vegetables, soups, etc.)
- Newspapers & Magazines
- Junk mail and catalogs
- White milk jugs
- Clear and green plastic soda and water bottles
- Chipboard (cereal boxes, six-pack containers, shoe boxes, etc.)
- All plastics labeled with the recycling logo and numbers 1 through 7
- All HDPE or No. 1 plastic containers: black planting trays and black plastic flowerpots, bleach bottles, yellow plastic milk cartons, etc.
- Glass – sorted separately into marked bins

DO NOT RECYCLE THESE ITEMS:
- Pizza boxes
- Paper milk cartons