

## Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Ph.D. Program

Department: Theological Studies

Degree or Certificate Level: Ph.D./Graduate

College/School: College of Arts & Sciences

Date (Month/Year): September 2021

Primary Assessment Contact: Elizabeth Block

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2019-2021

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2018

### 1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

Program Learning Outcome #5: Graduate students will acquire the skills necessary to succeed on the academic job market as well as to flourish as successful academic professionals.

### 2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

It has now been four years since the advent of our Professional Development Series for Ph.D. students, which began in Fall 2017. This series runs on a two-year cycle. Year One covers professional development within the academy and offers almost-weekly seminars on topics such as time management in graduate school, writing an academic article, navigating academic conferences, crafting your CV, and writing your teaching philosophy. Year Two exposes Ph.D. students to alternative job possibilities ("alt ac") outside the tenure track. We invite guest speakers, who work in journalism, publishing, academic administration, non-profit organizations, museums, and secondary education, to share their experiences and advice to prepare Ph.D. students for a variety of job possibilities. In order to assess whether the Professional Development Series has been successful in preparing students to succeed on the academic job market and as successful academic professionals, we collected the following data:

1. Attendance at professional development seminars
2. Participation in professional development activities associated with the seminar (reported on Annual Review Forms)
3. Ph.D. Student Annual Review Forms
4. Exit Interviews
5. Job Placement Rates

### 3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

All faculty who work with Ph.D. students in some capacity (coursework, advising, mentoring graduate assistants) meet in April each year to complete Ph.D. student annual reviews. We discuss students' participation in professional development activities and their attendance at the Professional Development Series (see Annual Review Form in Appendices). Additionally, as a student is preparing for graduation, their mentor conducts an Exit Interview, which collects data about how prepared they are to enter the job market and what job offers they already have. This is shared with the Coordinator of Graduate Programs in the department, who shares it with the Graduate Studies Committee and Department Chair. Elizabeth Block, Coordinator of Graduate Programs, reviewed notes from the Department's Student Annual Review Meetings in Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 as well as Annual Review Forms and Exit Interviews from AY 2019-2020 and AY 2020-2021.

#### 4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Student attendance at the Professional Development Series is 100%, apart from weeks when students are excused for sickness or conflicts. Our graduates in 2020 and 2021 have a 100% job placement rate (See Appendix). Additionally, in the past two academic years, our Ph.D. students in years 3 and beyond of the program (after coursework) have presented papers at high profile academic conferences and published articles and book chapters, indicating that their professional development in the Department has been strong. Ten Ph.D. students presented a combined total of 37 papers at academic conferences. Eight Ph.D. students published a combined total of 12 book chapters, essays, and/or book reviews.

#### 5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

The data tells us that our Professional Development series is effective. The Department is preparing students for academic and alt-ac careers upon graduation.

#### 6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

The Ph.D. assessment report was shared with the Department Chair and will be distributed to the Graduate Studies Committee. We will discuss these findings at our September Graduate Studies Committee Meeting as we consider what adjustments we will make to our program in the coming year.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

The findings indicate that we are successful in implementing Learning Outcome #5. However, our data collection process could be more organized and efficient. We will work on comparing data over longer periods of time going forward to look for trends and changes.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

**7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes**

**A.** What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

The last time Learning Outcome #5 was assessed was in 2018. At that time, it was noted that student attendance at the Professional Development Series was not always high. We have remedied that by making sure first- and second-year Ph.D. students know this is a requirement of the program. Additionally, they receive reminder emails every Monday about Tuesday's Professional Development topic/speaker.

**B.** How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

This change has been assessed by keeping track of student attendance at the Professional Development Series, which is 100% unless a student is sick or has a conflict, about which they notify the Coordinator of Graduate Programs in advance.

**C.** What were the findings of the assessment?

Student attendance is now high.

**D.** How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

We will continue to monitor student attendance and make sure Ph.D. students are attending these required Professional Development seminars.

**IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.**

## 2021 Theological Studies Ph.D. Program Assessment Report Appendices

### Appendix A: Data on Employment and Professional Development Activities (specifically conference presentations and publications) for AY 19-20 and 20-21

Table 1: Post-Graduation Employment

Name	Employment
2020 Graduates	
Charles Kim	Saint Louis University, Department of Theological Studies
Joshua Schendel	Executive Editor, <i>Modern Reformation Magazine</i>
2021 Graduates	
Alec Arnold	Director of Ministry Formation, Bon Secours Mercy Health, Marriotsville, MD
Isaac Arten	Saint Louis University, Department of Theological Studies
Stephen Lawson	Assistant Professor of Theology, Austin Graduate School of Theology, Austin, TX

Table 2: Ph.D. Student Conference Presentations 2019-2021

Name	Title	Meeting/Location	Date
2019-2020			
Isaac Arten	“A matter of profit and loss belonging to another world”: Reality as Marketplace in Nineteenth-Century British Protestant Theological Anthropology.”	American Academy of Religion: San Diego, CA	Nov. 2019
	“Linking Historical and Constructive Theology through Ethnographic Methods”	Ecclesiology and Ethnography Network Durham Conference: Durham, England	Sept. 2019
	“Ethnography and the Constructive Potential of Historical Theology”	Ecclesiology and Ethnography Network Canadian Conference: Winnipeg, MB	June 2019
	“‘Yet ye see I am rich’: A Material Rhetoric of Property and Possession in Nineteenth-Century English Missionaries’ Theological Anthropology”	Midwest Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion: Muncie, IN	April 2019
Joseph Grono	“The Bride and the Body: Liturgical Ecclesiology in Ambrose and Augustine”	Graduate Student Conference, sponsored by the Center for Scriptural Exegesis, Philosophy, and Doctrine at Mundelein Seminary. Mundelein, IL.	October 2019
	“The Bloodless Sacrifice of the Martyr: The Kontakia on George Ascribed to Romanos the Melodist”	Annual Meeting of the North American Patristics Society. Chicago, IL.	May 2020
Deepan Rajaratnam	“The <i>Sensus Fidei</i> of the Poor: A Theological Locus from which to Respond to Economic Exclusion”	Catholic Theological Society of America (Baltimore, MD)	June 2020 (postponed until June 2021)
	“The Emergence of White Catholicism: The Intersection of Race and Space in U.S. Catholic Church”	Midwest American Academy of Religion (Muncie, IN) *Accepted but the conference was cancelled due to COVID19.	March 2020
	“Ecclesiology as Theodicy: Discerning the Spirit in the Midst of Ecclesially Caused Suffering”	Midwest American Academy of Religion (Muncie, IN) *Accepted but the conference was cancelled due to COVID19.	March 2020

	“The Spirit Has Called Me, the Church Should Install Me: The Theologian as an Ecclesially Repositioned Public Intellectual”	American Academy of Religion (San Diego, CA)	November 2019
	“The Legacy of Catholic Whiteness: Discerning Ecclesial Political Action in the Age of Trump”	Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology XII (Leuven, Belgium)	October 2019
	“Discerning the Spirit in a Polarized Church: An Application of Catholic Social Teaching to the Concept of <i>Sensus Fidelium</i> ”	New Wine, New Wineskins. (South Bend, IN)	July 2019
Chelsea Trotter	“When the Devil Entered the Garden of Eden: Re-evaluating the Tradition of Satan as the Edenic Serpent.”	Presented at the Symposium for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at SLU	June 2019
Anna Williams	“The Afterlife of a Heretic: Theodore of Mopsuestia and His Legacy as Scriptural Interpreter”	Dorushe Graduate Student Conference, Saint Louis, MO	May 2020
	“A Secret and Spoken Sign: The Divine <i>Remza</i> in the Homilies of Narsai”	Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, CA	November 2019
	“Christ in all Scripture? The Diversity of Early Christian Views”	Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA	November 2019
	“Hagiography of a Greek Heretic: Theodore of Mopsuestia in Barhadbeshabba's Ecclesiastical History”	North American Syriac Symposium, Providence, RI	June 2019
	“The Survival of Condemned Books: How the Writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia Escaped Destruction”	Saint Louis University Graduate Student Research Symposium, Saint Louis, MO	April 2019
2020-2021			
Isaac Arten	“‘Who do you say that I am?’ Signifying ‘Jesusness’ in James MacMillan’s <i>Passions</i> ,” co-authored with Samantha Arten	Society for Christian Scholarship in Music conference (virtual)	2021
Laura Estes	Respondent, “Hermeneutics and Unity in and after Scripture: Genesis 3”	Christian Scholars Conference, Lipscomb University	June 2021
	Panelist, “The Mixed Legacy of Historical Criticism in Churches of Christ”	Christian Scholars Conference, Lipscomb University	June 2021
	“Naming Hagar’s Children”	Seventh Dorushe Graduate Conference in Syriac Studies	May 2021
	“The Shifting <i>Ḥanpe</i> in Syriac Christian Thought”	Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting	December 2020
David Justice	“Negating Capitalism: The Beloved Community as Negative Political Theology and Positive Social Imaginary”	American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (online)	December 2020
	“The Relationship between Hatred and Love in MLK’s Theology”	Midwest American Academy of Religion annual meeting (online)	April 2021
Ethan Laster	“‘For the Love of the Son:’ Death and Exemplarity in Jacob of Serug’s Memra on the Maccabean Martyrs.”	Syriac Studies Section. Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting. Online.	November 2020
	“Sensing the Cross in Late Ancient East Syriac Prayer.”	AAR-Midwest Regional Conference. Online.	April 2021

	“Embodied Christology: Miaphysitism and Ascetic Suffering in John of Ephesus’s Lives of the Eastern Saints”	North American Patristics Society Annual Meeting. Chicago.	May 2021
	“Heavenly Existence and Asceticism in John the Solitary: A Case Study.”	Seventh Dorushe Graduate Student Conference on Syriac Studies. Saint Louis, MO.	May 2021
	“The Divine Body and Ascetic Bodies: Theopaschism and Suffering Saints in John of Ephesus.”	Christian Scholars Conference Annual Meeting. Nashville, TN.	June 2021
Deepan Rajaratnam	“An Integrated Model of Yves Congar’s Communion Ecclesiology: A Resource for Interpreting Pope Francis’ Categories of Center and Periphery”	College Theology Society (Virtual Conference)	June 2021
Tracy Russell	“The Bridal Chamber of the Heavenly Bridegroom: Gender and the Metaphor of Betrothal in Syriac Virgin Martyr Texts”	American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (online)	December 2020
	“Virgin Martyrs and Christian Identity in Late Antique Syriac Christianity”	Dorushe Graduate Student Conference in Syriac Studies, Saint Louis University (online)	May 2021
	“The Celibate Martyr: Discourses of Martyrdom and Asceticism in Late Ancient Syriac Virgin Martyr Narratives”	North American Patristics Society annual meeting (online)	May 2021
Mitchell Stevens	Title not submitted	North American Patristics Society	May 2021
	Title not submitted	Dorushe Graduate Student Conference in Syriac Studies, SLU (online)	May 2021
Anna Williams	“Fifth-Century Florilegia and the Reception of Antiochene Exegesis”	Society of Biblical Literature	November 2020 (rescheduled for November 2021)

Table 3: Ph.D. Student Publications 2019-2021

Author	Publication	
Alec Arnold	with Charles E. Bouchard, OP, STD, “Sponsors and the Crisis in Long-Term Care: Is This a ‘Man from Macedonia’ Moment?” <i>Health Progress</i> 102 (2021): 5–10. <a href="https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/health-progress/sponsors-and-the-crisis-in-long-term-care.pdf?sfvrsn=0">https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/health-progress/sponsors-and-the-crisis-in-long-term-care.pdf?sfvrsn=0</a>	2021
Isaac Arten	“Old gods here in this land with no gods: Divine Presence in Neil Gaiman’s American Gods,” in <i>Theology and Neil Gaiman</i> , ed. Zachary B. Smith (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, forthcoming).	2020
Tony Crescio	“An Augustinian Correction to a Faulty Option: The Politics of Salt and Light.” <i>Journal of Moral Theology</i> 10.1 (2021): 46-72	2021
	“Making All Things New: The Laity as Transfigurers of the World.” <i>Gregorianum</i> 102.1 (2021): 151-72	2021
	Book Note. <i>Augustine and the Dialogue</i> by Erik Kenyon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). <i>Ancient Jew Review</i> , February 21, 2021: <a href="https://www.ancientjewreview.com/read/2020/11/21/book-note-augustine-and-the-dialogue">https://www.ancientjewreview.com/read/2020/11/21/book-note-augustine-and-the-dialogue</a>	2021
	Review of Rebecca Langlands, <i>Exemplary Ethics in Ancient Rome</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). <i>Journal of Moral Theology</i> 10.1 (2021): 234-236.	2021
	Review of Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler, <i>Virtue and Theological Ethics: Toward a Renewed Ethical Method</i> (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018). <i>Reading Religion</i> , November 25, 2020.	2020
Laura Estes	Book Review for <i>Stone-Campbell Journal</i> : Donald Fairbairn’s <i>The Global Church in the First Eight Centuries</i>	2020
Joseph Grone	A chapter, “Book XIII: The Heart Finds Rest through the Church,” in a commentary on Augustine’s <i>Confessions</i> from St. Paul Seminary Press (St. Paul, MN).	2020

Phillip Hussey	“Creation and Predestination,” co-authored with Michael McClymond. In <i>The Oxford Handbook to Jonathan Edwards</i> , edited by Douglas Sweeney and Jan Stievermann. Oxford: OUP, 2021.	2021
Ethan Laster	Translation of Jacob of Serug’s “Memra on the Maccabean Martyrs” still in progress for submission to Gorgias Press’s Jacob of Serug translation series.	2021
Chelsea Trotter	Lead contributor in <i>Didymus the Blind's Commentary of Psalms 26:10-29:2 and 36:1-3 (Tura Papyri)</i> . Edited by Lincoln Blumell, Gregg Schwendener, and Thomas Mackay. Turnout, Brepols, 2019.	2019

**Appendix B: Ph.D. Student Annual Review Form**

**M: Ph.D. Annual Review Form**

Doctoral Student Annual Review Form

*Students: Please complete electronically, sign, and submit hard copy to the Director of Graduate Studies by **March 15**.*

**Student Information**

Date of Evaluation: _____	Phone: _____
Name: _____	Banner ID: _____
Email: _____	Mentor: _____
Graduate Program: _____	
Area of Specialization: _____	

Are you on Academic Leave?             Yes             No

If yes, please attach a copy of your Leave Agreement to this review.

**Academic Coursework**

Previous courses: List chronologically all previous courses you have taken since enrolling at SLU, including the grades you received. Lines can be added to the table as you progress. You can find this information using Banner Self Service.

Term	Course #	Course Title	Instructor	Credits	Grade

Current courses: Which courses are you taking now? Lines can be added to the table as you progress.

Course #	Course Title	Instructor	Credits

**Language acquisition**

List any language competency exams you have taken, the dates of those exams, and their results. Provide an expected timeline for the fulfillment of all language requirements (indicating in which languages you intend to demonstrate competency, how you intend to acquire competency, and when you plan to take the competency exams).

### Comprehensive Examinations

List the comprehensive exams you have taken, the dates of those exams, and their results. Provide an expected timeline for the completion of all exam requirements.

--

### Dissertation Research

Describe your current progress with the research requirements of the program (i.e., thesis, dissertation). Provide expected timelines, with dates, for completion of the major components of your thesis or dissertation (i.e., prospectus defense, written drafts of individual chapters, final written version, committee approval, oral defense).

--

### Assistantship Activities

Support: Have you received financial support from either SLU or external organizations? If so, what is the source (teaching assistantship or research assistantship from department, presidential scholarship, external fellowship, etc.)? Indicate whether your source of support included a stipend and the duration of the support contract. If none, leave blank.

Term	Source and Type of Support

Teaching: In which courses and semesters have you been a Teaching Assistant? In which courses and semesters have you been the Primary Instructor? If none, leave blank.

Term	Course #	Course Title	Instructor (for TAs)	Role

Research: With which faculty and in which semesters have you been a Research Assistant? If none, leave blank.

Term	Faculty Member	Main Activities

**Professional Development**

List below all presentations at professional meetings and conferences for the current academic year. Include any presentations to occur over the rest of the academic year, including summer.

List below all articles or manuscripts submitted for publication this academic year, indicating the journal to which they were submitted and the results of editorial reviews.

List below all internal or external grant submissions (or your participation in submissions) this academic year, indicating the funding source to which they were submitted and the results of the reviews, if known.

Describe any specialized training in teaching. Have you completed, or do you plan on completing, the Certificate Program in Teaching from the Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning?

List below all internships that you have had this academic year, indicating the place, time commitment, and activities of the program.

List all professional organizations of which you are a student member, including any offices held.

Describe any professional service and/or leadership positions associated with the university, graduate education, department or program. Indicate your title and dates of service.

List any awards, honors, and achievements you have received this academic year.

Are there any other factors that you would like to have included in your evaluation?

**Evaluation: to be completed by Faculty**

Based on the faculty's discussion, the quality of your work was rated in each of the following areas.

	<b>Not Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>Meeting Expectations</b>
<b>Academic Quality of Coursework</b>		
<b>Research Quality of Thesis, Prospectus, or Dissertation</b>		
<b>Research Quantity (timely completion of project)</b>		
<b>Comprehensive Examinations</b>		
<b>Language Acquisition</b>		
<b>Assistantship Quality and Quantity</b>		
<b>Teaching Quality</b>		
<b>Professional Development</b>		
<b>Collegiality</b>		

Commentary (Include specific, written goals for the upcoming year if a student is “not meeting expectations” in any area.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Graduate Studies' signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C: Exit Interview Form

### D: Exit Interview

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
Track: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How would you rate your overall experience at SLU in terms of theological education?
2. Please comment on the interaction with faculty and the quality of instruction and mentoring you received as a graduate student.
3. Which courses were most valuable for you? Which were least? Were there any courses you wished could have been available? Did you have enough flexibility to take the courses that were of interest to you?
4. For MTS/MARE students: did the program enable you to develop a general theological literacy by providing you with a basic background in the main areas of Catholic theology?

For Ph.D. students: did the program train you to research and teach at a high level?

5. Did you find the DTS to be a supportive community, both socially and spiritually?
6. Please comment on the structure and operation of the program. What worked well? What could be improved?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to add about the structure of our programs, student satisfaction or ideas for improvement?
8. What are your plans for after graduation?
9. Please provide your post-graduation contact information:

Address:  
Telephone:  
Email address (non-SLU)