

Doctor of Philosophy in Biblical Interpretation and Theology

The PhD in Biblical Interpretation and Theology (PhD BTH) is an advanced, rigorous program integrating New and Old Testament exegesis with the disciplines of both biblical and systematic theology.

The PhD in Biblical Interpretation and Theology is intended for exegetically and theologically knowledgeable students desiring to prepare for scholarly theological leadership in the church. The program's special emphasis on the integration of hermeneutics, exegesis, and theology reflects the central role that theology plays in the life of the church. Students engage in advanced analysis of the reciprocal influence of hermeneutics, exegesis, biblical theology and systematic theology. The development of well-grounded biblical theologians in today's church is more pivotal as the church interacts with a rapidly changing, vastly challenging global culture.

While the program includes examination of hermeneutics and theology within the Pentecostal tradition, it also is designed to explore biblical scholarship within a broader, evangelical framework, thus preparing individuals for service to the church and academy in diverse contexts.

Many of the current students are already serving in a wide variety of vocations that include academic teaching and writing, and various forms of leadership in the local church, global missions, parachurch organizations, and denominations. The program equips students specifically for scholarly leadership in biblical studies, theological studies, and as learned practitioners in other areas of service to the church.

Program Structure

The PhD BTH program is structured on a five-year, full-time model, consisting of at least two and a half years for the course work (more commonly three years) followed by an additional two years of comprehensive exams and dissertation research and writing. Each course requires a one-week in-person residency at the seminary. Additional trips to Springfield may be required for study and mentoring purposes.

The program may be completed in four years if the student has exceptional biblical and modern language skills and no entrance deficiencies; however, the average time to complete the program is anticipated to be approximately five years.

The program provides for original research and scholarship in one of three specializations:

- New Testament Interpretation and Biblical Theology
- Old Testament Interpretation and Biblical Theology
- Biblical Interpretation and Systematic Theology

Graduates from this program will have made a significant contribution to original research in their area of specialization.

Requirements for Degree Completion. The PhD BTH consists of 60 credits earned in the following categories of study:

- 20 credits of core seminars
- 8 credits of supervised readings
- 20 credits of electives
- Comprehensive exams covering the core seminars and specialty corpus
- 12 credits for the Dissertation proposal, research and writing

Course Load. An average student load is 12-16 credits per year (3-4 courses). Full time status requires at least 4 credits per semester.

Program Duration. Students can expect to complete the coursework within three years. An additional two years, at least, should be anticipated to sustain the comprehensive exams and complete the dissertation. That means the student can anticipate approximately five years from the time of full admission to degree completion if the student maintains full-time status during the coursework phase,

soon thereafter sustains the comprehensive exams, and then completes the dissertation in a timely fashion. The timeline for those who receive provisional admission, meaning the student is deficient in a prerequisite such as one or more of the language requirements, or theology/church history, is anticipated to be longer.

Students who exceed seven years will incur additional fees. A special petition to the Department and Seminary Dean is required for approval to continue beyond the tenth year. (See the *Financial Information* section of this Catalog for PhD BT Program Extension Fee Information.)

Language Proficiency Timeline. Proficiency in Greek and Hebrew, for those who do not have sufficient coursework in the biblical languages, must be demonstrated within the first two years of coursework.

Proficiency may be demonstrated by examination, or by completion (with a grade of B or better) of Greek/Hebrew courses at AGTS or another accredited institution of higher learning. The coursework required to satisfy the minimum biblical language requirement is two years of either Greek or Hebrew, and one year in the other.

Proficiency in the approved modern language (usually German or French) must be demonstrated prior to the comprehensive exams. Proficiency may be demonstrated by transcript evidence of successful coursework (grade of B or better), by examination, or by completing the AGTS German or French for Research courses with a grade of B or better.

Admission Requirements

1. **Academic:** Baccalaureate degree or the equivalent from an accredited college or university and an accredited MDiv or MTh/ThM, MPhil or STM with a focus on biblical and theological studies, with a minimum 3.5 cum GPA on a 4.0 scale. Other Master-level (MA, MATS, MACM, MAR, etc.) degrees will be considered if the student can demonstrate aptitude for advanced study.
2. **GRE** (*Graduate Record Exam*) is required (school code 3355).
3. **English:** For applicants whose primary language is other than English, a TOEFL score of 585 or equivalent (school code 6022).
4. **Writing:** Submission and approval of a writing sample that demonstrates graduate-level research and writing skills.
5. **Vocational Essay:** A 2000-word Vocational Essay is required that details: A) The applicant's personal testimony and spiritual journey; B) His or her personal sense of vocation to academic and ministry leadership; C) Professional goals; and D) Plans to make original contributions to his or her field.
6. **Biblical Languages:** One full year each (2 semesters) of biblical Hebrew and New Testament Greek. Students lacking coursework for this entrance requirement may demonstrate competency in a biblical language by taking a proficiency exam. Students planning to concentrate in either the Old Testament or the New Testament must have a second full year (2 semesters) of either Hebrew or New Testament Greek, corresponding to their concentration.
7. **Research Language Proficiency.** The program requires research proficiency in English as the primary research language and a second modern research language (usually German or French). Competency in a modern research language must be demonstrated during the first two years of the program before beginning work on the dissertation. Competency can be demonstrated in one of two ways: 1) successful completion of a modern language course that facilitates and measures translation skill, or 2) taking and successfully completing a modern language translation exam offered through the PhD BTH program. **Note:** Additional ancient and modern languages may be required as needed for the completion of dissertation research. OT and NT disciplines require extra work in their respective languages. Other linguistic skills may be required depending on one's dissertation topic and the modern language most germane to the field of study. For example, a student doing a dissertation on a Latin American Liberation theologian would need to translate Spanish. A dissertation on a Western church father of the 4th century would likely require translation facility in Latin.
8. **Recommendations:** Three completed Letters of Recommendation are required.
9. **Technology:** Acceptable computer and Internet competencies.

These are the minimal requirements. The Admissions Committee selects applicants with the strongest qualifications. Candidates who meet only minimal requirements in some areas but are exceptional in others may be accepted. The overall combination of strengths that the applicant brings to the program is assessed in the admissions process.

Co-requisites. In exceptional cases, some candidates may be admitted to the program with insufficient background in the biblical or theological disciplines. If admitted, the student must complete the necessary work and demonstrate the competencies necessary for advanced scholarship prior to enrolling in his or her first PhD courses.

Application Procedures

To apply for admission:

1. Apply online [here](#). There will be a \$75 non-refundable application fee or \$15 for readmissions.
2. Provide contact information, including email addresses, in the online admissions application of those you choose to provide you with academic, ministerial, and personal recommendations.
3. Send a recent photograph, academic writing sample, vocational essay, and evidence of biblical and modern research languages competency (e.g., exam completion, transcript) to the PhD BTH Program Coordinator.
4. Request that official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions ever attended to be sent to the PhD BTH Program Coordinator.
5. Take the GRE exam and have the results sent to the PhD BTH Program Coordinator (the AGTS school number is 3355). If GRE has been taken within the last five years, the student score may be sent in lieu of retaking the exam.

You may email the PhD BTH Program Coordinator, phdbt@agts.edu, for further information.

Application Deadlines. A student may enter the program during any one of the three course sessions, which allows the student to begin courses as soon as they have been accepted. The following deadlines facilitate this schedule:

- To begin in February, all application files must be submitted by December 1.
- To begin in June, all application files must be submitted by April 1.
- To begin in October, all application files must be submitted by August 1.

Admission is highly selective. Applicants will be evaluated by the Bible and Theology Department. They will be notified in writing regarding the status of their acceptance into the PhD BTH program.

PhD BTH Academic Policies and Procedures

(See the Seminary Academic Policies and Procedures section of this catalog for academic policies and procedures that apply to all programs.)

Academic Status. Participants will remain in good academic standing in the PhD BTH program if they maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average, meet all financial obligations to the Seminary, and conduct their personal lives with spiritual, moral, and professional integrity, maintaining fitness for ministry (see *the AGTS Student Handbook*). The administration reserves the right to dismiss any participant whose integrity in any of these areas is deemed unacceptable.

Probation and Dismissal. A student making a "C" in one of the five core courses is placed on probation and should retake the course. A student will be dismissed upon making two "C's."

Language Requirements. All language requirements must be met before the formal research and writing stage of the dissertation.

Research Dissertation. Participants will write a research dissertation that advances knowledge in their chosen field of study and enables the participant to be considered an original voice in the discipline.

Transfer Credits. An individual may transfer in a total of eight doctoral credits if they have an earned doctorate in a related field (e.g., Ph.D.) or an advanced degree beyond the MDiv such as the MPhil, STM, MTh or ThM. Such credits (as determined by the Bible and Theology Department) will apply to the elective courses and must meet the following criteria:

1. All courses transferred must have been taken within the last five years.
2. Transfer credits must be from appropriately accredited institutions.
3. Student must have earned a passing grade of "B" or higher (3.0 on a 4.0 scale).
4. Transfer credits must be relevant to the PhD BTH program.

To request transfer credit, official transcripts must be reviewed by the Bible and Theology Department before consideration for doctoral credit will be given. (Any exception to the standard policy must be recommended by the Seminary Academic Council.)

Courses Open to Unclassified Doctoral-Level Students. A limited number of non-degree-seeking, post-MA persons who are not pursuing the PhD BTH degree at AGTS may be allowed to take PhD BTH courses if they satisfy admission requirements for the PhD BTH program. These opportunities will be evaluated on a space-available, case-by-case basis. Permission from the instructor of each selected course is also required.

Audit Policy. Graduates of AGTS doctoral programs are eligible for one free master or doctoral-level audit (3-4 credits) per academic year, on a space-available basis. There is a \$90 processing fee.

Graduation Requirements

1. Satisfactorily completed all PhD BTH program requirements. This includes completion of 60 credits of course work (20 from Core Courses, 8 from the Supervised Reading courses, 20 from Elective courses, and 12 from the Dissertation process).
2. Met a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0, including no more than one C.
3. Be in good standing at the Seminary.
4. Passed the PhD BTH Comprehensive Examinations.
5. Completed an acceptable and approved PhD BTH dissertation.
6. Made an acceptable oral defense of the PhD BTH dissertation.
7. Submit a graduation application by the deadline provided in the university's academic calendar.
8. Received approval to graduate from the Bible and Theology Department, Seminary Academic Council, and Faculty.
9. Attended the Commencement ceremony.

Program: Biblical Theology (PhD BTH)

Type: PhD BTH

Core Courses

Core Courses

Item #	Title	Credits
BTH 901	Core 2 - New Testament Use of the Old Testament	4
BTH 902	Core 4 - Literary Methods	4
BTH 903	Core 1 - Hermeneutical Frameworks	4
BTH 905	Core 3 - Biblical-Theological Models and Methods	4
BTH 906	Core 5 - Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit	4

Required Supervised Readings

Required Supervised Readings

Select two of the three following courses:

Item #	Title	Credits
BNT 930	Readings in New Testament Interpretation and Theology	4
BOT 930	Readings in Old Testament Interpretation and Theology	4
THE 930	Readings in Systematic and Historical Theology	4

Elective Courses

Elective Courses

Item #	Title	Credits
BNT 941	Studies in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts	4
BNT 942	Studies in the General Epistles	4
BNT 943	Studies in the Writings of John	4
BNT 945	Studies in the Writings of Paul	4
BNT 949	Life and Writings of Paul (Study Tour)	4
BOT 941	Studies in the Prophetic Writings	4
BOT 942	Studies in the Psalms and Wisdom Literature	4
BTH 921	Post-Biblical Jewish Hermeneutics and Writings	4
BOT 943	Studies in the Pentateuch and Historical Books	4
BTH 922	Special Topics in Biblical Theology	4
BTH 931	Global Hermeneutical Models	4
BTH 941	Epistemology and Christianity	4
BTH 942	Biblical Worldview in the Arts and Sciences	4
BTH 943	History of Pentecostal Theology	4
BTH 945	Field Experience	4
THE 941	History of Biblical Exegesis and Theology I	4
THE 942	History of Biblical Exegesis and Theology II	4
THE 943	Special Topics in Theology	4

Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive Exams. The student shall, after the completion of the 48 credits of seminars, take the Comprehensive Exams. The exams will be graded Pass or Fail. If a student fails he/she may petition the Program Director to retake the exam(s). A second failure results in termination from the PhD program. After the successful completion of the Comprehensive Exams the student will prepare and submit the Dissertation Proposal and, upon approval of the proposal, will begin work on the dissertation. For more information about the Comprehensive Exams, see the *AGTS BTH Participant Handbook*, available from the Program Coordinator's office.

Item #	Title	Credits
BTH 998	Comprehensive Exam Preparation	

Dissertation Research and Writing

Dissertation Research and Writing

Dissertation Proposal. After all the coursework is completed, the Comprehensive Exams passed, and any co-requisite expectations satisfied, students will submit a Dissertation Proposal. They will work closely with the Advisor /Dissertation Committee chair to make the work a clear, distinct, substantive and unique work. Proposals will be evaluated, and the following assessments offered:

- Accepted, no revisions
- Accepted with minor revisions
- In Process, significant changes needed
- Rejected (This will be rare, especially as the student works with the Advisor; however, there will be one opportunity for a resubmission within six months.)

Dissertation. A research dissertation advances knowledge in the field of study and enables the participant to integrate and apply his or her learning in global academic and ministry contexts.

Dissertation Submission. The student will work closely with his or her Advisor/Dissertation Committee chair on the writing of the dissertation submission and sequentially submit individual chapters. The Advisor/Dissertation Committee chair will give timely critique and feedback and the student is expected to make the appropriate changes and edits. When the dissertation is completed, the student will submit the final draft for review by his or her entire Dissertation Committee, in preparation for the Oral Defense. When the dissertation has been successfully defended and all other graduation details completed, the degree will be awarded.

For more information about the dissertation proposal, submission and defense, see the *AGTS 8TH Participant Handbook* available from the Program Coordinator's office

Item #	Title	Credits
BTH 999	Biblical Interpretation and Theology Dissertation	2-4
	Total credits:	60