

BIRMINGHAM THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

CERTIFICATE IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
STUDENT HANDBOOK

2012 - CURRENT
EDITION

Welcome from BTS

Dear Student:

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ. We are excited that the Lord has prompted you to enroll in the Certificate in Christian Ministry program at Birmingham Theological Seminary. I encourage you to take the time to read this CCM Student Handbook. You will find that it answers many of the questions you will have as you proceed through this academic program.

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

We pray that your studies in the Certificate in Christian Ministry Program will better equip you to lead God’s Church.

May the Lord use you greatly to advance the Kingdom!

In the Service of the King of Kings,

The Staff of Birmingham Theological Seminary

About This Handbook

This is a condensed version of the Birmingham Theological Seminary student handbook, and is intended specifically for students in the Certificate in Christian Ministry (CCM) program. It is presented in this format as a convenience to the CCM student, not to replace or supersede the full ordinary student handbook (available at www.birminghamseminary.org).

In general, this CCM Handbook contains two categories of information: (1) policies which are unique to the CCM program; and (2) policies which apply to all BTS students, including those who are not in the CCM program. Except for policies unique to the CCM program, any conflicts in language will be resolved in favor of the full BTS student handbook.

About the BTS Website & CCM Website

We recognize the potential for CCM students to be confused by information found in the main BTS website (birminghamseminary.org) and information found in the CCM website. CCM students may be interested in learning more about BTS and its programs from birminghamseminary.org. However, the CCM website contains all the information the CCM student needs to apply, take classes, access readings, take exams and complete the CCM. In the event of an apparent conflict between instructions or information on these two websites, the student should follow the CCM website instructions.

Example: The CCM website contains a specific application process, which can be completed online. The main BTS website contains a lengthier application process and requires the student to submit transcripts and reference forms. The CCM student should follow the application process on the CCM website.

How to Contact Birmingham Theological Seminary

Mailing Address

2200 Briarwood Way
Birmingham, AL 35243
United States of America

Email Address

ccm@birminghamseminary.org

BTS Certificate in Christian Ministry Website

bts.thirdmill.org

Main Birmingham Theological Seminary Website

www.birminghamseminary.org or www.btsweb.com

Statement of Faith

BTS adheres to the following Statement of Faith:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Mission

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

BTS is theologically Reformed, evangelistic in focus and committed to the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture. The seminary strives for academic excellence, through a program of instruction which is practical and useful for effective ministry.

Our Vision

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

Accreditation/Licensure

BTS is accredited by the *Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries* (ARTS). ARTS is an accrediting association comprised of graduate institutions holding to the doctrines of the Reformed faith. Although ARTS imposes a rigorous accreditation process on its member schools, students should be aware that ARTS is not currently recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or the U. S. Department of Education as an approved accrediting agency.

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

Privacy of Student Records

BTS will make reasonable efforts to ensure that information contained in student records is not be released to third parties without the express written consent of the student (including transcripts). However, BTS reserves the right to release such records to its contractors and government agencies as necessary to conduct the ordinary operations of BTS, including tax reporting and financial compilations or audits, or as required by law or court order.

Student Lifestyles

BTS is a religious, non-profit Seminary representing Jesus Christ to Birmingham and the world. BTS expects its students to conduct themselves in a manner that will not raise questions regarding their Christian testimonies

(I Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17). A Christian lifestyle should reflect the Biblical perspective of integrity and appropriate personal and family relationships, business conduct and moral behavior. BTS students are expected to demonstrate a teachable spirit, an ability to share love for others, a willingness to live contentedly under authority and a commitment to follow Matthew 18 principles when an issue arises with others. The BTS Statement of Faith expects all students to maintain a lifestyle based on Biblical standards of moral conduct in which Christ has pre-eminence (Colossians 1:18). Students who fail to meet this standard may be placed on probation, suspended or dismissed from the CCM program; applicants who fail to meet this standard may be denied admission.

Revisions to the CCM Handbook

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

Suspension, Modification or Termination of the CCM

BTS reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to suspend, modify or terminate the CCM program at any time. In the event BTS elects to terminate the CCM program, it shall have no obligation or liability to the CCM student or non-student CCM website user. Modifications to the CCM curriculum or requirements within a particular class shall apply to CCM students who have not completed those class or classes affected by the modifications or requirements.

Student Contact Information

Current student contact information is necessary for the staff and faculty at BTS to communicate with the students. It is the responsibility of every student to ensure that BTS has accurate postal address information and a current email address. Students must advise the Seminary office if their postal address or email address changes. Notifications should be sent to ccm@birminghamseminary.org.

Ordination

BTS provides Christ-honoring studies in accordance with its mission statement. BTS does not ordain clergy or attempt to evaluate an individual's personal calling or position in the body of Christ.

Resolution of Conflicts

BTS is a Christian institution and CCM students are professing Christians. BTS and the student believe the Bible commands them to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (see Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8).

Therefore, any claim or dispute arising from or related to the student's relationship to BTS or application to or participation in the CCM program shall be settled by mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker® Ministries (complete text of the Rules is available at www.Peacemaker.net). Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. The parties understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this agreement and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

ADMISSIONS & ACADEMIC MATTERS

Residency Restrictions

BTS offers the CCM only to non-US residents, regardless of citizenship or immigration status. Non-U.S. residents admitted into the CCM program may take courses in the CCM curriculum for academic credit and will, upon satisfactory completion of all required courses, earn a Certificate in Christian Ministry from BTS. The specific requirements for each course are set forth in the instructions for that course.

U.S. residents (regardless of citizenship or immigration status) may **not** take the CCM courses for academic credit at BTS or earn the BTS Certificate in Christian Ministry. However, U.S. residents may and are encouraged to view the courses, download the readings and take the quizzes and exams for their own edification. US residents who are US citizens or who satisfy

applicable US immigration laws should consider the Seminary's course and degree offerings other than the CCM.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Birmingham Theological Seminary does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, handicap, or national or ethnic origin (except for the residency restrictions noted above) in the administration of its educational and admission policies. BTS does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities including admission or employment, except in matters relating to ordination, and certain courses (which are not part of the CCM) are restricted to men, as related to the question of ordination.

Enrollment Policy & Admissions Procedures

BTS does not utilize the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Graduate Record Examination, or any other standardized test as a measure for admission.

The admissions procedures for the CCM program are found on the CCM website at bts.thirdmill.org. Individuals may apply at any time, but must meet the admission requirements and be accepted in order to enroll in CCM courses. Applicants for admission will be notified when a decision has been reached on their application.

The Certificate in Christian Ministry Curriculum (27 credits)

- * Old Testament Survey
 - o Kingdom, Covenants & Canon of the Old Testament (2 credits)
- * Hermeneutics
 - o He Gave Us Prophets (1.5 credits)
- * Pentateuch
 - o The Primeval History (1 credit)
 - o Father Abraham (1 credit)
- * Gospels & Acts
 - o The Gospels (2.5 credits)
 - o The Book of Acts (1 credit)
- * Pauline Epistles
 - o The Heart of Paul's Theology (1.5 credits)
 - o Paul's Prison Epistles (2 credits)
- * Introduction to Theological Studies
 - o Building Your Theology (1 credit)
 - o Building Systematic Theology (2 credits)

- Building Biblical Theology (2 credits)
- * Basic Christian Doctrine
 - The Apostles' Creed (3 credits)
 - We Believe in Jesus (2.5 credits)
- * Biblical Ethics
 - Making Biblical Decisions (4 credits)

Student Sabbaticals and Changes in CCM Curriculum

Individuals who apply and are accepted to the CCM program, but who do not complete any courses within a year after acceptance, must re-apply. Students sometimes find the need to take a break in taking courses due to personal or professional matters. If a student returns to complete the CCM program after a break from studies and has not taken classes in a two-year period, the student may be required to submit an updated application. In addition, the student must comply with the CCM curriculum and requirements current at the time the student returns to the CCM program.

Credit Transfers and Recognition of the CCM

Academic credits earned in the CCM program may not be transferred to or applied to any other certificate or degree offered by BTS. Likewise, academic credits earned in any other BTS certificate or degree program may not be transferred or applied to the CCM. BTS will not accept for transfer into the CCM academic credits earned at any other institution.

BTS has no objection to other institutions or organizations accepting academic credits earned in the CCM for transfer or any other purpose. However, BTS makes no representations that the CCM credits are transferrable to any other institution or that the CCM itself will be recognized by any governmental body, agency, denomination, organization or church.

International (Non-US) Students

The CCM is offered only to non-US residents. CCM students must affirm that they are not residents of the United States of America in their application and must exit the program in the event they become a US resident after acceptance and before completion of the CCM. In no event will the CCM certificate be mailed to a US address or allow any individual

to pick up the CCM certificate directly from BTS, regardless of the student's explanation.

International (non-US) students seeking admission to any of the other academic programs offered by BTS must comply with US immigration law. Additional information on the admissions process for international students is available in the full BTS Student Handbook.

Fees and Tuition

BTS does not charge any fees or tuition for participation in the CCM. However, donations to Birmingham Theological Seminary are welcome and may be sent to 2200 Briarwood Way, Birmingham, AL 35243, USA.

Course Materials

Reading assignments for CCM courses have been compiled by BTS from resources which BTS believes to be in the public domain. These texts are believed to have no known U.S. copyright or other restrictions. BTS does not charge for permission to use these materials and does not grant or deny permission to publish or otherwise distribute these materials.

Video content for each course is produced and provided by Third Millennium Ministries (IIM) at no charge. Study guides, quizzes, exams and similar materials on the CCM website have been compiled by IIM and/or BTS for the CCM program. BTS and IIM ask that you request permission before making copies of any materials on the CCM website, other than the reading assignments.

Time Limits, Grades & Re-Taking Exams

Students may take courses in the CCM at their own pace and there are no academic deadlines for completion for course or the certificate program itself. Students must make at least a 75 on each exam in order to pass that particular exam. Exams may be re-taken multiple times, although the student must wait at least five days between exam attempts. The first grade of 75 or better which the student earns in the course is the grade which will be recorded and counted for the course, regardless of whether subsequent attempts yield a higher grade. Students must have a 75 or better average in the course to complete the course. Grades on quizzes, study guides and any student exercises are not counted toward the course average. Students may not have any outside assistance in taking exams.

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

A	96-100	=	4.0 Quality Points
A-	90-95	=	3.5 Quality Points
B	85-89	=	3.0 Quality Points
B-	80-84	=	2.5 Quality Points
C	75-79	=	2.0 Quality Points
F	Below 75	=	0.0 Quality Points

Grade Point Averages (GPA)

As stated above, the student must earn at least a 75 on each exam to pass that exam and a 75 average for each course to pass that course.

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

Withdrawal Policy & Re-Taking Courses

Students may not withdraw from a course once starting the course, but must complete the course in its entirety before signing up to take it again. There are no limits on the number of times a student may take a course. However, the first grade of 75 or better for the course earned by the student is the grade which will be recorded and counted toward completion of the CCM.

Student Code of Ethics

***Academic Integrity**

BTS assumes that all of its students desire to pursue all academic work with honesty and scholarly integrity. Breaches of academic honesty and integrity are infringements of the mutual faith and trust essential to the academic enterprise and are contrary to the student’s profession of faith in Christ.

Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student’s performance are

prohibited. Examples of activities include, but are not limited to, the following definitions:

- Misrepresentation of Academic Records – Misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student’s transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to BTS. *Examples: forging a Registration Form or a grade report; tampering with computer records, etc.*
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty – Knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of this code. *Example: working together on an exam.*
- Unfair Advantage - Attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. *Examples: gaining or providing unauthorized access to examination materials (either past or present); obstructing or interfering with another student’s efforts in an academic exercise; etc.*
- Computer Crimes - Damaging or modifying computer programs without permission. *Examples: piracy of copyright-protected software; hacking; constructing viruses; knowingly introducing viruses into a system; copying programs and data belonging to others, and so on.*

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

Completion

Upon completion of all requirements in the CCM, BTS will mail or e-mail the student a Certificate in Christian Ministry to the student address on file or deliver it via the CCM website. In no event will the CCM certificate be mailed to a US address or allow any individual to pick up the CCM certificate directly from BTS, regardless of the student’s explanation. Students who complete the CCM may not participate in the Seminary’s formal graduation ceremony.

The responsibility for meeting the requirements for the CCM rests with the individual student. If all requirements are not completed, the CCM will not be awarded.

BTS Official Transcripts

Before a student can receive an official transcript the transcript fee must be paid.

Official Copy:

A written request must be submitted on the transcript request form available online at the BTS website. There is a fee of \$20 for each official CCM transcript requested. **Official transcripts are not sent to the student, but may only be sent to a third party.**

Student Copy:

Students are able to obtain an “unofficial” record of their academic work via the CCM website at no charge.