



Xavier University of Louisiana

Unique History, Mission and Results

INSTITUTE FOR BLACK CATHOLIC STUDIES (IBCS) GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM (ThM)

June 25 -July 17, 2010

DESCRIPTION OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY DEGREE PROGRAM

The Graduate Division of Xavier University offers a Master of Theology, Th.M., degree through the Institute for Black Catholic Studies (IBCS). The Th.M. degree is an interdisciplinary degree in pastoral theology. This program is the only graduate program in pastoral theology in the United States that is taught from a Black Catholic perspective.

The mission of the Degree Program is to develop interdisciplinary theologically grounded ecclesial ministers who will embody and promote effective ministry of the Church in the African American Community in the light of Roman Catholic and African American religious and cultural traditions. The master's degree program is designed to provide graduate-level professional education in systematic and pastoral theologies, pastoral ministry, preaching, catechetics, ethics, aesthetics, history and the social sciences with a focus that reflects the Black religious, cultural and Catholic experience. The program brings together theory and practice in an interdisciplinary context of rigorous academic study to provide students with knowledge, skills and values needed for professional ministry in the Black community.

The program has a diverse set of goals that are sensitive to the professional and pastoral interest of the students. The focus participants for graduate studies are lay ministers, vowed religious and deacons, as well as clergy who are engaged in or preparing for ministry in Black and Multicultural Catholic parishes and diocesan offices in the areas of parish leadership, religious education, liturgical leadership, campus ministry and education.

The degree focuses on the religious, cultural, and historical contributions of Black Catholics to the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. To that end, the program engages students in the theological traditions, pastoral methods and approaches that reflect the Black religious and cultural experiences of Black Catholics and the Black community.

The IBCS graduate degree program develops the student's competencies in contemporary pastoral and theological practices. Internationally and nationally known Black Catholic theologians, biblical scholars, historians, and scholars in various fields in the arts and sciences comprise the faculty of the IBCS. Hence, the curriculum of the IBCS both experiments with the best in new research in Black historical, philosophical, cultural studies and critiques and integrates that knowledge for the enrichment of Catholic systematic, moral, and pastoral theologies and pastoral ministry.

Graduates from the IBCS degree program will be able to: sharpen their skills to recognize the ministry needs in the Black community draw on sound pastoral and theological theory to respond to those needs deepen their understanding of the culture, tradition and faith experiences of Blacks in the Catholic Church

Community life is integral to the IBCS program – daily prayer, daily Eucharist, liturgical experiences, collaborative study, theological reflection, shared meals, social events and– contribute to its holistic environment of study, prayer study and celebration..





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SUMMER 2010 ---MASTER DEGREE PROGRAM COURSES

IBTH 5000 Pro-Seminar: Methodology. This course introduces students to Black Catholic Studies as a constituent component of African American Religious Studies. It presents the methods of the disciplines that form the core of the degree curriculum and, in particular, assists students to become familiar with pertinent theological issues, vocabulary, and traditions. **Required for all new degree-seeking students.**

IBTH 5010 Black Approaches to Theology. Stresses the nature, methods and sources of Black Theology; the reasons justifying its existence and its relationship to other theologies within the Roman Catholic Tradition. **Required for all new degree-seeking students.**

IBTH 5060 Black Psychology. Constructs effective pastoral communication with Black congregations by review of major interpersonal, social, and systematic issues from a perspective based upon sound analysis stemming from recognition of cultural differences.

IBTH 5080 Black Approach to Sacraments. Introduces ritual and symbol in the African and African American traditions and their relationship to the seven Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church.

IBTH 5430 Black Spirituality: Black spirituality engages the mind and heart in a dynamic union with the transcendent and immanent God as experienced in the heart of the community. It is rooted in the history and experience of African American peoples in the United States. Using various resources and methods (prayers, preaching, song, spiritual autobiographies, slave narrative, biographies, spiritual interviews and film) this course will engage students in a critical examination of the roots, development and characteristics of the spirituality of Black peoples in the United States as well as a participative experience of Black spirituality as found in the religious expression of the community.

IBTH 5660 Issues in the Black Family. This sociology course investigates the myths, realities, facts, strengths and weaknesses of the African American community in a way that will assist those who minister in the Black community. Various structures and forms of African American family life are studied to learn how these forms affect ministry in the community and in the church.

IBTH 5997 Integrative Colloquium. Helps students in the third or fourth summer of study to enter more deeply into the *habitus* of pastoral theology, that is, a way of thinking, reflecting, conversing, and writing about questions and issues that emerge from their ministry and ministerial research. Like the Master's in Pastoral Studies, the Colloquium provides students with structured and interdisciplinary engagement and opportunities for refining research, theological analysis and reflection, and writing. Specifically, the Colloquium assists students to meet the goal of preparing successful drafts of (a) the major theological research paper and (b) the Practicum proposal.