Doctor of Philosophy Program
(Cordova Campus)

Description of the Doctor of Philosophy Program (PhD)

The doctor of philosophy degree equips students for advanced scholarship, independent research, effective teaching and preaching, and service in church-related ministries that benefit from advanced Christian scholarship. The doctor of philosophy program involves a minimum of two years of study beyond the master of divinity degree or its equivalent. Students entering the program should be aware that three or more years are frequently needed for completion of the degree requirements, depending upon individual circumstances.

The doctor of philosophy program consists of graduate seminars, an examination covering each seminar as it is completed, comprehensive written examinations, directed reading and research, teaching under faculty supervision, the writing of a dissertation, and an oral examination covering the dissertation and related fields. The program is specifically oriented toward preparing students for teaching in universities and seminaries; for specialized church, missions, and denominational leadership; and for scholarly writing.

Educational Objectives of the Doctor of Philosophy Program

In addition to the program objectives set forth in connection with the master of divinity program, the doctor of philosophy program is designed to provide opportunity for students to develop in the following advanced disciplines:

Creative Scholarship

The doctor of philosophy program seeks to guide students to develop the capacity for critical evaluation and quality in research which produces creative scholarship and contributes to the field of theological knowledge and literature.

Independent Research and Writing

The doctor of philosophy program seeks to guide students to develop competence in principles of independent research and to achieve a proficiency in the techniques of scholarly writing.
Graduate-Level Teaching

The doctor of philosophy program seeks to guide students in advanced studies in a specialized field and to help them develop skills which qualify them for teaching at the graduate level in a college, university, or theological seminary.

Specialized Leadership

The doctor of philosophy program seeks to prepare students for the assumption of specialized pastoral leadership in the church, in missions, and/or in administrative leadership in the denomination.

Admission Requirements and Procedure for the Doctor of Philosophy Program

General Qualifications

The doctor of philosophy is the highest academic degree offered by the Seminary. The program is reserved for students of exceptional academic ability and promise. Students must demonstrate an understanding of the basic techniques of scholarly research and writing, as well as an ability to communicate through effective teaching. They must be committed to the program and demonstrate that they are willing to fulfill the time requirements and the disciplinary standards that are required for distinguished scholarly achievement. Students’ health, finances, and outside responsibilities must be within such a level of tolerance that they are not unduly distracted from reasonable pursuit of the demands of the program. Read the Regulations Regarding Female Students section in this catalog.

Undergraduate Degree Requirements

Applicants must have a Bachelor of Arts degree or its equivalent from an accredited college or university, including sixty semester hours of liberal arts content. Any exception must be approved by the Doctor of Philosophy Committee.

Seminary Degree Requirements

Applicants must have a master of divinity degree or its equivalent from this Seminary or from another accredited seminary which has comparable language requirements. Students must have maintained in their master of divinity work or its equivalent to a 3.0 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) or better. Any exception must be approved by the Doctor of Philosophy Committee.

Biblical Language Requirements

All applicants must have completed a minimum of six semester hours of Greek and six semester hours of Hebrew. However, if the major field of study is to be in New Testament, the student is required to have completed an additional nine