
GENERAL DESCRIPTION

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Founded in 1890 by John D. Rockefeller, the University of Chicago is a private, coeducational institution located on the South Side of Chicago. Under the leadership of its first president, William Rainey Harper, the University introduced innovations that are now considered commonplace in American colleges and universities: the four-quarter system, extension courses and programs in the liberal arts for adults, the junior college concept, equal opportunities for women in education, and an emphasis on broad humanistic studies for undergraduates.

Throughout its history, the University has sought to maintain an atmosphere of free, independent inquiry that is responsive to the needs of communities outside the University itself. Today, the University includes six graduate professional schools (Business, Divinity, Law, Medicine, Public Policy, and Social Service Administration), four graduate divisions (Biological Sciences, Humanities, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences), the undergraduate College, and the Graham School of General Studies.

William Rainey Harper, the first president of the University of Chicago, was also a distinguished Semiticist and a member of the Baptist clergy. He believed that the academic study of religion should be a central endeavor of a great research university, to prepare scholars for careers in teaching and research, and ministers for service to the church. These commitments led him to bring the Morgan Park Seminary of the Baptist Theological Union to Hyde Park, making the Divinity School the first professional school at the University of Chicago.

The Divinity School continues to pursue Harper's vision of an institution devoted to systematic research and inquiry into the manifold dimensions of religion. One of the world's leading institutions in the academic study of religion, the Divinity School prepares students for careers of scholarship, teaching, and public religious leadership. The School generates knowledge about the history, theology, beliefs, and practices of world religions through a broad and rich array of methodological and theoretical approaches that is deeply informed, intellectually curious, and honestly engaged. The result is a diverse community of scholars and professionals who guide the public's understanding of religion.

Work at the Divinity School encompasses the full range of the academic study of religion. Faculty are organized in 4 committees (Constructive Studies, Historical Studies, Literature, Media, and Cultural Studies, and Social and Cultural Sciences of Religion) and 11 areas of study— Anthropology and Sociology of Religion; Bible; History of Christianity; History of Judaism; History of Religions; Islamic Studies; Philosophy of Religions; Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture, Religions in the Americas; Religious Ethics; and Theology.

The Divinity School offers four degree programs—the Master of Arts in Religious Studies (AMRS), the Master of Arts in Divinity (MA), the Master of Divinity (MDiv), and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D).

Notice of Non-Discrimination

In keeping with its long-standing traditions and policies, the University of Chicago considers students, employees, applicants for admission or employment, and those seeking access to University programs on the basis of individual merit. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, national or ethnic origin, shared ancestry, age, status as an individual with a disability, protected military or veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law.[1] For additional information regarding the University of Chicago's Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct, please see: <https://www.uchicago.edu/en/non-discrimination> (<https://www.uchicago.edu/en/non-discrimination/>)

[1] This Policy is consistent with federal, state, and local regulations governing non-discrimination and harassment including: the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended), the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1991, Executive Order 11246, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, the Illinois Human Rights Act, the City of Chicago Human Rights Ordinance, and the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance.

Accreditation Statement

The Divinity School is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. All degree programs are approved.

