DESCRIPTION

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 3 committees of the faculty (Constructive Studies, Historical Studies, and Religion and the Human Sciences) 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).

- Master of Arts in Religious Studies (AMRS)- flexible program designed for those who are interested in developing a broad basis of understanding in religious studies. It is an ideal program for those practicing other professions, such as law, medicine, business, education, journalism, the arts, etc.
- Master of Arts in Divinity (MA)- foundational program in the academic study of religion. It is designed for those who wish to acquire the requisite skills to develop a research agenda for doctoral study or to establish a basis for a career in related fields, such as education, publishing, government service, non-profit leadership, etc.
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)- intensive cohort-based program that prepares students for public religious leadership both in traditional ministerial professions and in new and emerging forms of ministry. The MDiv curriculum provides a sequence of studies that requires the student to (1) establish a breadth of competence in religious studies; (2) develop a thorough understanding of textual, historical, and theoretical foundations for religious leadership; and (3) integrate this classical program of learning with rigorous and reflective practice. MDiv students may participate in dual degree programs with the University’s Irving B. Harris School of Public Policy (MDiv/MPP), Law School (MDiv/JD), and the School of Social Service Administration (MDiv/MASW).
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)- an advanced course of study and research that prepares students for a lifetime of field-defining scholarship, intellectual leadership, and teaching in the academic study of religion.

Non-Discrimination Statement

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 identity, national or ethnic origin, age, status as an individual with a disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law (including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972). For additional information regarding the University of Chicago’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct, please see: http://harassmentpolicy.uchicago.edu/page/policy (http://harassmentpolicy.uchicago.edu/page/policy/).

Accreditation Statement
General Description

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.