

Guide to YDS/FES Joint Degree Requirements

Recognizing the professional and academic possibilities for combining environmental and religious studies, the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (FES) and Yale Divinity School (YDS) offer a joint degree program. This option is especially oriented to students who wish to integrate work with environmental issues and religious communities in their professional careers, and to those who wish to study the cultural and ethical dimensions of environmental problems. The joint degree is especially supported by co-appointed faculty, and by the Forum on Religion and Ecology.

The program does not provide an integrated program of study, but rather a way to pursue two independent degree programs, each with their own integrity. There are no courses required specifically for the joint-degree program. Joint degree students are, however, encouraged to take at least one of the courses co-listed in both schools, and to work with co-appointed faculty.

Admissions & Tuition

In order to enroll in the joint degree program individuals must apply separately to both FES and YDS and be admitted to both. Individuals are encouraged to apply to both schools at once; however, someone already enrolled in one of the schools may apply to the other for admission the following year. For further information about expected academic background, contact the respective deans of admission.

Students enroll in one school for the first year, then the other school for the second year, and then split semesters for the third year (or, if pursuing the three-year M.Div., alternating each full year).

A student may start in either school, and should attend the orientation for one school before the first year and the other school before the second year. Note the required technical modules for incoming FES students.

The student pays tuition to the school in which s/he is enrolled each semester. Financial aid is awarded separately by each school, and students should consult with the separate financial aid officers.

Students may take courses at either school no matter where they are enrolled, but should take the majority of the courses within the school of their primary residence.

Degree Requirements

There are two primary degree tracks at YDS, an M.Div (72 hours) and an M.A.R. (48 hours). There are two main degree tracks at FES: the management oriented M.E.M and M.F., and the research focused M.E.Sc (all 48 hours). The most flexible combination for the joint degree is the MEM and MAR with a concentration in ethics.

With careful planning, joint degrees can usually be completed in one year less than it would take to pursue them both separately because the total credit hours required for each degree is reduced by 12 hours. (Credit hours for two-year degrees are reduced from 48 to 36 hours, and for the three-year M.Div from 72 to 60 hours.)

Students must meet all other requirements for each degree, with the following exceptions:

- the MDiv “Christian ethics requirement” can be satisfied by joint degree students taking “Environmental Ethics” or “Environmental Theologies.” (These co-listed courses may count as an elective in either the FES or YDS degree program and still meet the Christian ethics requirement.)

For the MDiv all area requirements, totalling 57 hours, must still be met. Note, however, that most co-listed or FES classes may count toward the 9 hours in Area V, and some co-listed courses may count toward the 12 hours in Area II. Meeting all the MDiv requirements in a joint degree program requires careful planning. If the student must also meet denominational ordination requirements (e.g. Lutheran, Episcopalian), the joint degree may take more than 4 four years to complete.

No course may count for credit hours in both degree programs, but in some cases a course registered for credit hours toward the degree in one school may satisfy a degree requirement in the other. (For example, a student might register for “Asian Religions and Ecology” as three elective credit hours toward the MEM degree, and it would also meet the “non-Christian religion” requirement for M.Div students.)

Note that the MEM, MEd, MFS and MF degrees require a master’s thesis project and that the MDiv requires either a year of supervised ministry or summer-intensive supervised ministry, such as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). All MDiv students are also expected to participate in the “evaluation and assessment” program.

Some courses are cross-listed in both schools. Where they are, they count toward meeting area requirements in each school as listed – but cannot count for both simultaneously. The student must specify to the registrar which degree program s/he wishes the credit hours to count. (A list of these courses is available from co-appointed faculty.)

In the concentrated MAR programs the student’s faculty adviser will determine that degree requirements have been met. For those wishing to take many courses on topics in “religion & ecology,” the MAR-Ethics concentration offers the most flexibility. This degree program requires 18 hours of ethics courses (found in Area II and Area V

of the YDS Bulletin; many FES courses also count, as approved by the student's YDS adviser). While it usually requires 18 further hours of foundational courses, with approval from the student's adviser and the registrar, some or all of those hours may be individually planned.

Students will be assigned advisers at both YDS and FES. In consultation with the registrars at both schools and with the academic dean, Emilie Townes at YDS, or Director of Student Services (FES), students should develop a plan for meeting all requirements, and submit it to their advisers, updated each semester.

Relevant Faculty

John Grim – Senior Researcher and Senior Scholar, FES/YDS/RELS

Fred Simmons - Assistant Professor of Ethicsm YDS

Mary Evelyn Tucker – Senior Researcher and Senior Scholar, FES/YDS/RELS