



# Doctor of Theology Degree in Thanatology – *The Study of Death*

## The Thanatologist

### The School of Thanatology

The **CAPSTONE Doctor of Theology Degree in Thanatology** often known as ***The Study of Death*** is tailored for those interested in the multidimensional study of death, covering the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual facets and processes that accompany the end-of-life journey and transition beyond. Students will learn to provide compassionate support and guidance to individuals nearing death, as well as to their families and friends, utilizing a diverse array of rituals to help navigate these significant moments. The program also emphasizes engagement with individuals who, while having stepped away from conventional religious groups, still seek meaningful support or companionship during the critical times of their loved one's passing.

**10 Required Courses | 0 Electives | 4 Units of CPE | 1 Dissertation**

### Within the D.TH. In THAN you will engage with:

#### REQUIRED COURSES

There is a set number of Required Courses. The required courses titles, and descriptions follow.

#### ELECTIVE COURSES

Electives, when included in the requirements for an academic Degree, may include any 400-Level courses from Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, Spiritual Direction, Clinical Pastoral Psychotherapy, or Thanatology.

#### UNITS of CPE

Some of the students will already have taken 1, 2, 3, or 4 units of CPE elsewhere, and that is ok. Those units you have taken elsewhere, upon approval, will count towards your academic Degree. If you are still in need of 1, 2, 3, or 4 units of CPE in order for you to obtain the required 4 for the Doctorate, or 2 for the Master, we utilize the Graduate Academy of CPE Supervision (GACS).

#### GACS CPE

A bold statement indeed, however, we see our **Graduate Academy of CPE Supervision** as the only existing CPE program in the world that utilizes ALL of the areas emphasized in the Education / Teaching / Supervision of Clinical Pastoral Education & Training (CPE) including: Formation of the Chaplain/Pastor/Spiritual Care Provider, SCA's 19 Quality Indicators, Skills & Abilities from the Field, Psychodynamic Psychotherapeutic Chaplaincy, Character First, Family Systems, Existential/Theological/Philosophical Reflection, Bio-Psycho-Socio-Spiritual (Holistic) Chaplaincy, Interfaith Multifaith Chaplaincy, and What it means to be a Spiritually Literate Chaplain. From Anton Theophilus Boisen & Richard Clarke Cabot (1923) to Best Practices (2024) with an emphasis in Spiritually Integrated Chaplain Functioning.





## D.TH. in THAN | 69 Credits

10 Required Courses | 0 Electives | 4 Units of CPE | 1 Dissertation

The **CAPSTONE Doctor of Theology in Thanatology Degree** often known as ***The Study of Death*** provides students the skill set and knowledge to seek and integrate concepts of death education and spiritual care into their professional Thanatology practice.

The **D.TH. in Thanatology Degree** coursework is designed to combine theoretical and practical learning, emphasizing critical thinking, analysis of thanatology concepts and practice, and the reading and application of research.

### **The D.TH. In THAN Degree Learning Outcomes:**

Student will demonstrate knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with:

- The current state of knowledge regarding Thanatology, including philosophy, principles, and legal and ethical responsibilities of providers.
- Various settings in which Thanatology can be integrated into practice and the unique needs of individuals and families in those settings.
- Introductory use application of research methods.
- The design and implementation of educational practices relating to death, the dying process, end-of-life decision making and bereavement.
- Communication and networking for personal and professional growth, collaboration, leadership, and change management.

Students will participate in courses, assignments with deadlines, and the opportunity to learn with likeminded professionals. The Degree ends with the student writing a **Dissertation** that identifies a topic within **Thanatology**, investigates it through research, and proposes practical solutions. In addition, general suggestions are made as to how others in their field can practically use the research findings, and other problem areas may be identified for future investigation.

Doctorate-level courses combine taught components with independent research in a student's area of expertise. Students will be challenged and encouraged to utilize specialist knowledge and advanced research skills in each course to evaluate, synthesize, and apply their learning to the field of professional **Thanatology**.

**Prerequisite:** Master Degree

**Course Modality:** Asynchronous Online and Hybrid Practicum Clinicals





## D.TH. in THAN | 69 Credits

### COSTS

**10 Required Courses | 0 Electives | 4 Units of CPE | 1 Dissertation**

Course #	Requirements	Credits	Price
<b>FEES</b>			
	CAPSTONE Application		\$75
	CAPSTONE Enrollment		\$75
	GACS Application		\$75
	GACS Enrollment		\$75
	CAPSTONE Technology		\$275
	CAPSTONE Administrative		\$500
	CAPSTONE Graduation		\$275
<b>10 REQUIRED</b>			
TH421	Fundamentals of Thanatology	3C x \$275 =	\$825
TH422	Death and Dying	3C x \$275 =	\$825
TH423	End of Life Decision Making	3C x \$275 =	\$825
TH424	Assessing Spiritual Needs of the Dying	3C x \$275 =	\$825
TH425	Grief and Loss	3C x \$275 =	\$825
TH426	Ethics in End of Life Care	3C x \$275 =	\$825
TH427	Cultural Competence	3C x \$275 =	\$825
TH428	Funeral Practices	3C x \$275 =	\$825
TH429	Traumatic and Sudden Death	3C x \$275 =	\$825
DD422	Doctoral Project and Dissertation Writing Course	3C x \$275 =	\$825
<b>4 CPE UNITS</b>			
CPE521	Unit 1 of GACS Clinical Pastoral Education	6C x \$275 =	\$1,650
CPE522	Unit 2 of GACS Clinical Pastoral Education	6C x \$275 =	\$1,650
CPE523	Unit 3 of GACS Clinical Pastoral Education	6C x \$275 =	\$1,650
CPE524	Unit 4 of GACS Clinical Pastoral Education	6C x \$275 =	\$1,650
<b>1 DISSERTATION</b>			
CDP444	Capstone Dissertation Paper	15C x \$275 =	\$4,125
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>69 C</b>	<b>\$20,325</b>

*(Books: Each course may require approximately \$150 for books.)*

<b>OPTION A</b>	w/ 0 Units of CPE from GACS	<b>69 C</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,375</b>
<b>OPTION B</b>	w/ 1 Unit of CPE from GACS	<b>69 C</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,725</b>
<b>OPTION C</b>	w/ 2 Units of CPE from GACS	<b>69 C</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$17,925</b>
<b>OPTION D</b>	w/ 3 Units of CPE from GACS	<b>69 C</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$19,125</b>
<b>OPTION E</b>	w/ 4 Units of CPE from GACS	<b>69 C</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,325</b>





## The Thanatologist

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**TH421**      **Fundamentals of Thanatology**      **3 credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** This course provides an introductory overview of the multifaceted study of thanatology and invites students to reflect on their own perspectives pertaining to the end of life. Conceptual frameworks and theories surrounding death, dying, and bereavement will be introduced to further cultivate critical thinking through the thanatological lens. Emphasis will be on understanding cross-cultural and social attitudes surrounding death-related experiences, spiritual/religious needs, suicide and traumatic death, bereavement, end of life planning and common ethical concerns pertaining to assisted death. The importance of death education and a brief exploration of the evolution of bereavement in the digital age will also be discussed.

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**TH422**      **Death and Dying**      **3 Credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** This course will look at myriad aspects of death and dying. Topics covered include developmental tasks at end of life across the lifespan, hospice and palliative care, the healthcare system, communication and having difficult conversations, family dynamics/history, legacy and meaning making, ethical issues, social perspectives on dying and attitudes toward death and causes and patterns of death in Western societies, influential theories and complementary/alternative therapies.

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**TH423**      **End of Life Decision Making and Planning**      **3 Credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** Topics covered include designation of decision making, ethical wills, dignity therapy, age related issues with EOL planning, mass/social media and political influences, values and attitudes toward planning, values and beliefs and their effects, quality vs quantity, patient's rights, landmark legal cases, impact of medical technology and ethics around end-of-life care planning. We will also explore medical aid in dying (MAID).





## The Thanatologist

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS - CONTINUED

**TH424**      **Assessing and Addressing Spiritual Needs of the Dying**      **3 Credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** Assessing and providing spiritual comfort for the dying and their families will be covered in this course. Topics include assessment of needs and interventions, religious vs spiritual, ethics for chaplains and other caregivers, final goodbyes and rituals, family systems, developmental considerations, interventions theories past and present, anticipatory grief and risk assessment/mediation for spiritual crisis. Review of practices across various faith traditions.

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**TH425**      **Grief, Loss and Bereavement**      **3 Credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** This course will cover the many aspects and theories surrounding grief and mourning. Topics will include theories on grief across life span, anticipatory grief, complicated grief and other ways that grieving impacts lives. We will also look at grieving practices across religions and touch on cultural practices as well.

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**TH426**      **Ethics in End-of-Life Care**      **3 Credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** This course will explore the ethical considerations in end-of-life care including medical interventions, POLST, Do Not Resuscitate vs Allow Natural Death and other issues arising specifically in the area of Thanatology.

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**TH427**      **Cultural Competence and Inclusion in Thanatology**      **3 Credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** This course will look at different practices and beliefs across various cultures and ethnic groups. Topics covered will include cultural influences on death and dying, how death and dying practices vary among different cultures, racial disparities in death outcomes, marginalized populations and death as well as other cross-cultural aspects.

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## The Thanatologist

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS - CONTINUED

**TH428**      **Funeral Practices and Post Death Rituals**      **3 Credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** This class will look across the spectrum of funeral practices across cultures as well as the rise of alternative funerals, home funerals, green burials and other rituals. Exploring traditional funerals, celebration of life ceremonies and other post death practices will be included.

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**TH429**      **Traumatic and Sudden Death**      **3 Credits**

*(No prerequisite required)*

**Description:** In this course we will look at violent deaths including sudden losses via accident, violence, suicide and other ways that can lead to complicated grief. We will explore societal issues that lead to these events and the myriad ways in which these types of death influence survivors from family members to the community in which they occur. Sociological and psychological theories surrounding these phenomena will be explored.

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**DD422**      **Doctoral Project and Dissertation Writing**      **3 credits**

**Description:** This course serves as an introductory course in the dissertation writing process. This course deals with both the theoretical and practical aspects of designing dissertation research and with writing the proposal and dissertation. The core objective of this course is to provide guidance and motivation to the doctoral student so that the methodology and the entire prospectus will be approved by the student's dissertation committee. This course also provides students with the opportunity to interact with colleagues who are engaged in the same process.

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## The Thanatologist

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS - CONTINUED

**CDP444**      **Capstone Dissertation Paper**      **15 credits**

**Description:** SCA UTS doctoral programs consist of three primary components: the coursework, the experiential education, and the dissertation. The student completes coursework to develop and hone critical thinking skills, writing skills, and knowledge. The units of CPE act as the internship putting skills and theories learned into praxis and practical application. The purpose of the coursework is to prepare the student to become a doctoral candidate. The doctoral dissertation is the final academic requirement for the doctoral program and is designed to evaluate the candidate's capabilities as a scholar.

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<b>CPE521</b>	<b>Clinical Pastoral Education</b>	<b>#1</b>	<b>6 credits</b>
<b>CPE522</b>	<b>Clinical Pastoral Education</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>6 credits</b>
<b>CPE523</b>	<b>Clinical Pastoral Education</b>	<b>#3</b>	<b>6 credits</b>
<b>CPE524</b>	<b>Clinical Pastoral Education</b>	<b>#4</b>	<b>6 credits</b>

**Description:** SCA CAPSTONE utilizes the Graduate Academy of CPE Supervision (GACS) for teaching Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). CPE is the experiential component of the Doctoral programs. GACS offers updated, current, contemporary Clinical Pastoral Education and Training. CPE centers in the past have traditionally created dividing lines similar to the silos offered in the medical care industry. CPE cognate groups have fallen victim to the same type of one-upmanship as has befallen many of our religious groups and denominational subtleties today. GACS utilizes all of the major areas such as pastoral psychotherapy, spirituality, skills, formation, interfaith, and multifaith perspectives in it's search for the best way that a chaplain or spiritual care provider can offer healing to those in need and in pain. Utilizing a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual perspective the helping professional can draw from many resources in order to assist someone in their spiritual journey. GACS takes CPE back to the days of Boisen and Cabot, yet stays relevant with today's highly competitive market of quality indicators, best practices, and interfaith chaplaincy and spiritual care.





## The Thanatologist

### FIND MORE INFORMATION

For additional questions please contact our office at (253)442-6850 or email us at [info@CAPSTONEuniversity.org](mailto:info@CAPSTONEuniversity.org)

### Developing the Next Generation of CPE Supervisors & Spiritual Care Professionals

#### CAPSTONE FAST FACT – Degrees. Units. Programs

**CAPSTONE University** provides education for professional learners at every level:

**Doctoral Programs:** Five doctoral degrees designed for the working professional wanting to capitalize on their helping skill-set.

**Master’s Programs:** Five masters degrees designed for the student wanting to focus their learning in a specific helping field.

**Executive Diploma Programs:** Fourteen executive diplomas furthering the education of experienced professionals that aim to polish and refine their skill-set in the helping industries.

**Professional Specialty Certificate Programs:** Eleven online certificate programs to help you become a specialist in an essential specific area within the professional helping industry.

**Clinical Pastoral Education Units:** Provided by the **Graduate Academy of CPE Supervision**.

**CPE Supervisor Education Fellow Units:** Developing future CPE Supervisors / Educators

### Doctor of Theology Degrees

D.TH. in CPP	Doctor of Theology in	Clinical Pastoral Psychotherapy	(72 credits)	(\$21,150)
D.TH. in THAN	Doctor of Theology in	Thanatology	(69 credits)	(\$20,325)
D.TH. in SD	Doctor of Theology in	Spiritual Direction	(66 credits)	(\$19,500)
D.TH. in SC	Doctor of Theology in	Spiritual Care	(63 credits)	(\$18,675)
D.TH. in CH	Doctor of Theology in	Chaplaincy	(60 credits)	(\$17,850)

### Master of Theology Degrees

M.DIV. in PM	Master of Divinity in	Pastoral Ministry	(45 credits)	(\$13,725)
M.TH. in SD	Master of Theology in	Spiritual Direction	(45 credits)	(\$13,725)
M.TH. in SC	Master of Theology in	Spiritual Care	(45 credits)	(\$13,725)
M.TH. in CH	Master of Theology in	Chaplaincy	(45 credits)	(\$13,725)
M.TH. in SCN	Master of Theology in	Spiritual Care Nursing	(45 credits)	(\$13,725)

