

University of St. Thomas-Houston Partners with Word on Fire Institute to Launch First-Ever Master's Program in Evangelization and Culture

New accredited M.A. program opens to students this spring, combining the online prowess of the Word on Fire Institute with the traditional college feel of UST-Houston

Houston, TX, March 20, 2024 – It is no secret that the Church has been hemorrhaging members in recent years. Troubled by polarization, skepticism, narcissism, our culture aches for the peace and joy of life in Jesus Christ. But how can they hear the truth of the Gospel anew? To take on this challenge, Word on Fire Institute and UST-Houston created a new accredited Master's of Arts program offering academically rigorous engagement with the thinkers, ideas, and practical methods necessary to proclaim the Gospel to a secularized and tech-saturated world.

“This program is the first of its kind. Learning theology with a laser-sharp focus on evangelization is exactly what is needed now,” affirmed Dr. Tom Harmon, Associate Director of Catholic Studies at UST-Houston. “We are so excited to be able to offer a program that will give students the formation and practical skills they need to carry out the Great Commission in their own lives.”

The Word on Fire Master's of Arts in Evangelization and Culture at UST-Houston will launch in June 2024. All courses are taught live online, with an optional intensive in-person summer residency on the campus of UST-Houston. There will be no pre-recorded lectures. All students will have dedicated faculty available to them throughout the program. Faculty is populated by faithful scholars and Catholic thought leaders, including Word on Fire Institute professors.

“We created the program to offer Word on Fire Institute Members (now over 24,000) a means to receive an accredited advanced degree in the Word on Fire evangelical ethos,” Dr. Matt Petrusek, Senior Director of Word on Fire Institute, said. “Drawing on Bishop's Barron's charisma and broad appeal, we also created the program to supply the Church with intelligent, high-spirited, and culturally-agile evangelists who are well-equipped to identify and engage with the ‘seeds of the Word’ wherever they exist in the world, especially the digital world.”

All courses present theology through the lens of evangelization. “The program teaches students how to employ the Church's rich philosophical, theological, moral, and artistic traditions, both classical and contemporary, to evangelize the culture and draw individuals into, or back to, the Church,” Harmon said.

Examples of core curriculum courses include Christology for Evangelists, Biblical Theology for Evangelists, and Reading & Writing for Evangelists. The core curriculum will be supplemented by elective courses such as Dante for Evangelists and Spirituality for Evangelists. The optional summer residency at

UST-Houston promises to be particularly enriching, offering students immersion in Catholic culture and a period of intensive study. This year, the Summer Intensive will be June 1-7.

To learn more about this program, visit <https://www.stthom.edu/MAEvangelization>.

For more information and a complete press kit, visit <https://www.stthom.edu/EvangelizationPress>.

Dr. Tom Harmon and Dr. Matt Petrussek are available for comment. To schedule an interview, contact Carrie Kline at carriek@missionadvancementpartners.com.

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About the University of St. Thomas

The University of St. Thomas is a comprehensive Catholic university, grounded in the liberal arts. Committed to the unity of all knowledge, UST offers programs in the traditional liberal arts, professional, and skilled-based disciplines. Graduates of the University of St. Thomas think critically, communicate effectively, succeed professionally, and lead ethically.

About the Word on Fire Institute

The Word on Fire Institute exists to propagate the work and content of Bishop Robert Barron in an interactive, relational, digital education format, and to form missionaries in the Word on Fire ethos of evangelization, emphasizing Bishop Barron's style and methods of evangelizing the religiously unaffiliated.