



MIDDLER REVIEW

Master of Divinity (M.Div.)

Overview

The **Midler Review**, a meeting held at the midpoint in the M.Div. program—Congregational and Chaplaincy tracks—is a comprehensive review of your theological understanding of ministry, field education or CPE experience, academic record, and development of proficiencies in ministry in the light of your personal vocational objectives and, if you are in the process for ordination, your denomination's requirements for ordination.

The **Midler Vocational and Theological Essay** offers an opportunity for you to

- reflect critically and constructively on your progress to date in the M.Div. program,
- demonstrate your integration of scholarly theological disciplines with your vocational journey narrative, communal spiritual practices, and
- articulate a vision of transformative and spiritually rooted leadership.

Midler Review Objectives

This Midler Review meeting is a time of support, assessment, review, and planning. You are responsible for scheduling, planning, gathering, and inviting your attendees. Your primary faculty advisor chairs the meeting. This meeting is attended by you, your primary faculty advisor, perhaps a second advisor (which may be assigned by the Dean's Office,) your field education or CPE supervisor, a peer, and, if relevant, a denominational representative.

Process

Shortly before the completion of your Field Education placement or CPE program, you should be ready to schedule your Midler Review meeting. This meeting should occur within 4-6 weeks of this course/program completion, to assure your most current reflections on your experiences. Your primary faculty advisor chairs the meeting; however, it is your responsibility to plan your Midler Review, to gather and invite your attendees, and to submit a Midler Summary Sheet to the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Registrar at least one week in advance of the meeting.



At least one week before the review, please send a copy of your essay along with other Middler materials to your panel members, to give them ample time to read it before your meeting.

You must coordinate with your advisor to organize and schedule an appropriate time to hold your review with the panel members, in person (whenever possible) and remotely. Review panel members should consist of the following:

- you,
- your primary advisor, and perhaps a second advisor (which the Dean's Office may assign,)
- your field education or CPE supervisor,
- a peer, someone who has been in class with you and can offer helpful feedback to your academic and vocational journey,
- a denominational representative, if appropriate.

Middler Review Materials

You will gather and prepare a set of materials for distribution to all panel members at least 10 days prior to the review meeting. You can work with your faculty advisor and panel members to collect some of these documents. *These documents can be found at the Community Engaged Learning (CEL) office. They will be posted online soon.*

- Middler Review Guideline Sheet
- Copy of your current transcript, including grades
- Current Stackable Master of Divinity Program Worksheet
- Self-Assessment Form
- CPE Supervisor or Field Education Mentor Final Evaluation
- Vocational and Theological Essay
- Ordination Requirements (if applicable)

As part of the opening of the Middler Review, you will give a 10-15 minute oral presentation to supplement your essay. In this oral statement, you will integrate your sense of call, theological studies, and practice of ministry.

This oral presentation is not distributed to the panel members in the materials packet.



Middler Review Essay Prompts

The rubric on the last page of this document will help identify key elements that will help you address all expected topics of reflection.

The **Middler Vocational and Theological Essay** offers an opportunity for you to reflect critically and constructively on your progress to date in the M.Div. program, demonstrate your integration of scholarly theological disciplines with communal spiritual practices, and articulate a vision of transformative and spiritually rooted leadership.

This **15–20-page essay**, prepared in consultation with your advisor well in advance of the Review, is shared with the Review panel members and provides a foundation for the Review itself. The essay should reflect your engagement with the learning outcomes of the M.Div. program in relation to your particular vocational goals, giving due attention to each of the following prompts:

1. How do sacred texts, theological traditions, and their varying interpretations shape the practice of ministry (in relation to, for example, preaching, worship, pastoral care, education, and community organizing)? How has your engagement with these texts and traditions shaped your own theological convictions (concerning, for example, God, Christ, sin, salvation, ecclesiology, sacramental practice, the issues involved in theodicy, such as suffering and evil, and other similar matters)? In what ways do you envision constructing and advancing theological work in your own religious/spiritual tradition?
2. Describe and articulate your own social location (with respect to race, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, gender, class, etc.) and how these contextual factors shape the development of theological ideas and spiritual practices. What kind of strategies are the most effective for engaging with contexts that are different from your own and for the sake of social and economic justice?
3. How are the spiritual practices that you have developed and are developing crucial for a leadership style marked by social justice, personal integrity, cultural humility, shared accountability, and a sustainable vision for a world where all can thrive and flourish?
4. Where would you locate the best partnerships (with individuals, groups, and organizations) for informing and enhancing the work you hope to undertake in the world? Indicate why such collaborative efforts are vital for constructive theological work and effective ministry.



5. Identify at least three “growing edges” moving forward in your process of integrating the intellectual disciplines of theological education with the practice of ministry for the sake of organizing and nurturing communities of social transformation.

While you are not expected to address these prompts definitively (much less comprehensively) in an essay of this length, the responses will provide important material to help your Review panelists to:

- assess with your particular areas of academic strength and limitation;
- refine and hone your vocational aspirations and professional goals; and
- discern together how best to utilize the time remaining in your program.

*Example Vocational and Theological Essays can be found on the [PSR Student Resources](#) page. Scroll down and select **MDiv Resources and Forms**.*

Middler Project Assessment Rubric

	Excellent	Acceptable	Needs Improvement
Content/Clarity of Vision	<p>Answers the prompt questions.</p> <p>Clear flow of a narrative from where the student began upon entering seminary, to what they learned, to how they see themselves leading going forward.</p>	<p>Answers some of the prompt questions but is missing some key elements.</p> <p>No explicit flow of narrative describing the theological and vocational journey the student began at the beginning of their seminary experience, how their experience has been impacted, and where they see themselves going forward.</p>	<p>Did not address the prompt questions and/or reads more like a biography rather than a reflection of what the student has learned in their theological education and how that has impacted their vocational journey.</p>
Integration/Clarity of Formation	<p>Uses specific authors, articles/books, lectures, sacred texts, and other class content to showcase what has impacted the student in their theological and vocational formation.</p>	<p>Cites some elements learned from classes at PSR/GTU, but better integration is needed to show the impact on student's theological and vocational formation.</p>	<p>Little to no citations from specific class content is used to show how PSR/GTU classes have impacted the student's theological and vocational formation.</p>
Leadership/Clarity of Vocational Identity	<p>Presents a more nuanced and mature understanding of vocation and deepening of ministerial call in the student's self-description</p>	<p>Is vague about growth and understanding of vocational call and its deepening</p>	<p>Reveals no change or deepening of vocational call and identity</p>
Style	<p>Content flow is well-written and organized in a logical manner.</p> <p>Grammar, spelling, and citations are all properly done. Paper was edited and presented to the standard of graduate-level academic writing.</p>	<p>Content flow is confusing, but the ideas are still communicated well enough to understand, or grammar, spelling, and citations were so poor it became a hindrance to reading the essay easily.</p>	<p>Essay was difficult to read because content flow was not organized enough to make sense, and/or grammar, spelling, and citations were poorly done or not edited enough to the standard of graduate-level academic writing.</p>