Propaedeutic Stage

The Propaedeutic Stage of the PPF6 serves as a foundational period of twelve months accompanied by a priest formation advisor. Seminarians in this stage develop a self-giving heart, a deep prayer life, and a stirring of intellectual curiosity. They gain skills toward pastoral charity and an opportunity to grow in healthy friendships and fraternal relationships.

Envisioned as an integrated formation journey through the four dimensions of the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral, across these four, distinct stages, "the Propaedeutic Stage is an indispensable phase of formation with its own specific character" (*Ratio Fundamentalis*, no. 59). Through development and growth in holiness and faithfulness as a baptized disciple discerning a call to ordained priestly ministry, the seminarians' relationship with Jesus Christ is the focus.

The propaedeutic community provides a sacred space for growth in self-knowledge, openness, trust, docility, and commitment. The areas of focus in this first stage include the following across all four dimensions:

- **Self-awareness and self-discipline:** docility, work ethic, humility, self-reflection
- **Relationship skills:** affective maturity, friendship, transparency, basic social skills
- **Prayer:** silence, spiritual direction, *Lectio Divina*
- **Chastity and celibacy:** growth in habits of solitude
- **Scripture and doctrine:** familiarity with Sacred Scripture and Church teaching
- **Vocational awareness:** discipleship, discernment, priestly identity
- **Study habits:** intellectual curiosity, love of learning, reading and writing skills
- **Pastoral charity:** generosity and self-giving
- **Pastoral awareness:** the parish, diocesan, and the universal Church

Human and Spiritual Formation

Through these dimensions, the Propaedeutic Stage serves to accompany a seminarian in their growing relationship with Jesus Christ and as they become evangelizing disciples through specialized formation to conform our world to the heart of Christ. Vocational discernment

through the gift of the Holy Spirit unfolds within the community as the seminarian comes to a decision regarding dedication to continuing priestly formation or to return to the lay Catholic state, decisions confirmed by the seminary.

Seminarians will be living together in community at the Dehon House, separate from the main seminary building. This twelve-month, seven-day-a-week program includes time shared with the whole seminarian community in the first half of the day, participating in the liturgical horarium of Morning Prayer and Holy Mass, breakfast and lunch, and Catholic Studies courses. The second half of the day will be spent at the Dehon House in spiritual conferences, formation meetings, Evening and Night Prayer, as well as house meetings and responsibilities. Fridays will include affinity experiential learning activities as well as a Community Night.

One-to-one formation advising as well as spiritual direction takes place bi-weekly. Formal affinity group sessions take place weekly. There will be additional days of reflection and retreats in addition to the seminary's Days of Recollection and Rector's Conferences.

Intellectual Formation

In alignment with the PPF6, Sacred Heart's Propaedeutic Stage encompasses the study and engagement of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Catholic spiritual tradition and priestly identity, reading and praying Sacred Scripture, and the local and universal dimensions of our Catholic heritage (PPF6, nos. 268–271).

Desired Outcomes

Following the goals and benchmarks of the PPF6 (nos. 268–271), intellectual formation during the Propaedeutic Stage inculcates:

- A grasp of biblical literacy and the arc of salvation history
- An engagement and love of Christian doctrine
- Familiarity with the Church's Fathers and Doctors
- Admiration for the Church's saints, especially in the North American context
- An appreciation for the relationship between faith and culture
- Healthy habits for reading and studying aligned with the spiritual life
- "Intellectual curiosity and love of learning" as part of preparation for the study of philosophy and theology

Academic Curriculum

Fall Semester

Course number, credits, and name

DT 501	2	Catholic Doctrine I
LS 501	2	Catholic Spiritual Tradition & Priestly Identity I
SS 501	2	Reading Sacred Scripture I

Spring Semester

Course number, credits, and name

DT 502	2	Catholic Doctrine II
LS 502	2	Catholic Spiritual Tradition & Priestly Identity II
SS 502	2	Reading Sacred Scripture II

For students who need up to nine (9) credits, the limit for the Propaedeutic Stage (PPF6, no. 298), Sacred Heart also offers Catholic Heritage I and Catholic Heritage II. Through pilgrimages to regional and international sites, these courses explore the wisdom of past generations as manifested in the rich tradition, unexpected history, cultural diversity, and spiritual life of the local and universal Church.

Fall Semester

Course number, credits, and name

CA 500	3	Catholic Heritage I: Sal Terrae

Spring Semester

Course number, credits, and name

CA 505	3	Catholic Heritage II: Sint Unum

Past pilgrimages for these courses have explored the legacy of the French Jesuits in the Great Lakes region, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, immigrant communities and women religious in urban contexts, the life of Ven. Samuel Mazzuchelli along the Mississippi River, Eastern rite Catholic parishes and cathedrals in Wisconsin and Illinois, the National Shrine of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini in Chicago, and a journey to meet the Holy Father in Rome.

All Propaedeutic Stage courses are typically taken pass/fail and may be applied towards the Master of Arts in Catholic Studies. *(See page 19.)*

See Core Course descriptions beginning on page 60. See Financial Information beginning on page 86.

Pastoral Formation

The primary goal of Sacred Heart's Pastoral Formation in the Propaedeutic Stage is the development of an awareness of the pastoral situation of the local community, the development of self-gift and contact with the poor, and growth in concern for others. There will be opportunities for hands-on experiences to learn and grow in these competencies as individuals and as a community in the diverse landscape of Milwaukee's ministries.