

Catholic Studies

What Can I Do With This Major? • Career Pathways

University of St. Thomas

Catholic Studies at St. Thomas — a Catholic university — offers a uniquely rich intellectual formation in the history, theology, philosophy, social teaching, and cultural contributions of the Catholic tradition. This degree develops graduates who think rigorously about questions of meaning, ethics, justice, and the common good. These capacities translate into meaningful careers in ministry, education, nonprofit leadership, healthcare ethics, policy, law, and any field where moral reasoning and human flourishing are at stake.

CONVENTIONAL CAREER TRACKS

All roles below are accessible with a bachelor's degree and 0–2 years of experience (internships count).

Track	What you'll do	Sample Job Titles (BS)
Ministry & Pastoral Work	Serve faith communities through pastoral care, religious education, youth ministry, and sacramental preparation.	■ Campus Ministry Coordinator ■ Youth Minister ■ Director of Religious Education (DRE) ■ Parish Administrator ■ Pastoral Associate ■ Retreat Director
Catholic & Faith-Based Education	Teach theology, religion, and ethics in Catholic schools, universities, and faith formation programs.	■ Theology Teacher (Catholic school) ■ Religious Education Coordinator ■ RCIA Director ■ Faith Formation Director ■ University Ministry Staff ■ Catholic School Administrator
Nonprofit & Social Services	Lead or support mission-driven organizations serving vulnerable populations guided by Catholic Social Teaching.	■ Nonprofit Program Coordinator ■ Social Services Case Manager ■ Community Outreach Specialist ■ Development Associate ■ Volunteer Coordinator ■ Advocacy Program Manager
Communications & Publishing	Write, edit, and produce content that engages Catholic and broader audiences on faith, culture, and social issues.	■ Catholic Media Writer / Editor ■ Communications Coordinator ■ Grant Writer ■ Social Media Manager (faith org) ■ Religious Publishing Associate ■ Content Strategist
Healthcare & Bioethics	Apply Catholic ethical frameworks in hospital chaplaincy, bioethics consultation, and healthcare administration.	■ Hospital Chaplain (with CPE) ■ Bioethics Committee Coordinator ■ Healthcare Ethics Consultant (entry) ■ Patient Advocacy Specialist ■ Spiritual Care Coordinator

NON-CONVENTIONAL & EMERGING TRACKS

Paths that sit at unexpected intersections — often less competitive and equally rewarding.

Emerging Area	Roles You Might Not Expect
Law & Public Policy	Policy Analyst • Legislative Aide (faith & values lens) • Nonprofit Advocacy Director • Human Rights Analyst • Legal Aid Coordinator • Religious Liberty Attorney (J.D. track)

International Development & Peacebuilding	International NGO Program Coordinator • Peace & Justice Advocate • Catholic Relief Services Associate • Conflict Mediation Coordinator • Human Trafficking Prevention Specialist
Philosophy, Ethics & Corporate Culture	Ethics & Compliance Analyst • Corporate Social Responsibility Manager • Organizational Values Consultant • DEI Program Coordinator • Leadership Development Facilitator
Academia & Intellectual Life	Graduate Researcher (theology / philosophy) • University Teaching Assistant • Think Tank Analyst • Catholic Intellectual Life Director • Philosopher in Residence

WHERE A GRADUATE DEGREE TAKES YOU

A graduate degree meaningfully expands your ceiling and opens leadership, research, and specialized roles.

M.Div. / M.A. Theology	Ordained Minister (if applicable), Pastoral Director, University Theology Faculty, Retreat Director.	The standard graduate credential for pastoral leadership and university-level theology teaching; M.Div. is required for ordination in most traditions.
Ph.D. Theology / Religious Studies	University Professor, Department Chair, Research Scholar, Seminary Faculty.	Required for tenure-track academic positions in theology and religious studies — a competitive and rewarding path for serious scholars.
J.D. (Law)	Attorney in religious liberty, nonprofit law, healthcare law, or public interest work — Catholic Studies is excellent pre-law preparation.	Strong analytical writing, ethical reasoning, and philosophical formation translate powerfully into legal study and practice.
M.A. Bioethics / Healthcare Ethics	Clinical Bioethicist, Hospital Ethics Committee Director, Healthcare Policy Analyst.	A growing field at the intersection of medicine, philosophy, and theology — Catholic health systems (Ascension, CommonSpirit) actively recruit bioethicists.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Pair Catholic Studies with a complementary major or minor in philosophy, theology, social work, or political science to strengthen your career positioning.
- Pursue ministry internships, CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) units, or service-learning placements to build applied experience.
- UST's Catholic identity is an asset in your job search — leverage connections to the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Catholic Charities, and local Catholic schools.
- Develop strong writing and public speaking skills — communication is central to every career path available to Catholic Studies graduates.
- Engage with Catholic Social Teaching deeply — it is increasingly relevant to conversations about business ethics, environmental policy, and social justice.
- Consider graduate school in theology, law, bioethics, or public policy — Catholic Studies is outstanding graduate school preparation across multiple disciplines.

This guide reflects current workforce trends and is updated annually. Job titles may vary by employer, industry, and market. Visit the UST Career Development Center for personalized advising and employer connections.