

# Graduate CATALOG

2026–2027



**Highlands College**

A Life of Eternal Impact

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# Academic Calendar

## Fall Semester

August 3	Monday	Term A: Pre-Course Access Opens
August 10	Monday	Term A: Begins
August 14	Friday	Course Drop Add/Deadline
September 4	Friday	Term A: Course Withdrawal Deadline
October 2	Friday	Term A: Ends
October 5	Monday	Term B: Pre-Course Access Opens
October 12	Monday	Term B: Begins
October 16	Friday	Term B: Course Drop/Add Deadline
November 6	Friday	Term B: Course Withdrawal Deadline
December 4	Friday	Term B: Ends

## Spring Semester

January 4	Monday	Term A: Pre-Course Access Opens
January 11	Monday	Term A: Begins
January 15	Friday	Course Drop/Add Deadline
February 5	Friday	Term A: Course Withdrawal Deadline
March 1	Monday	Term A: Pre-Course Access Opens
March 5	Friday	Term A: Ends
March 8	Monday	Term B: Begins
March 12	Friday	Term B: Course Drop/Add Deadline
April 2	Friday	Term B: Course Withdrawal Deadline
April 30	Friday	Semester: Ends
May 1	Saturday	Commencement

# Academic Catalog

This *Academic Catalog* describes the policies and academic programs of Highlands College in effect at the time of publication. Students should become familiar with the regulations in this Catalog and assume the proper responsibilities concerning them.

Highlands College admits students who are Christians of good character, of any race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, and other school-administered programs.

## About Highlands College Welcome from the Chancellor

Welcome to America's Ministry Leadership University. It is with great joy that I invite you into this historic inaugural season. Your decision to pursue a graduate education at Highlands College reflects a deep commitment to making an eternal impact. We are honored to partner with you in this next chapter.

Since its founding, Highlands College has existed to supply the Church with leaders of competence, character, and spiritual maturity, holistically trained to lead lives of eternal impact by fulfilling the Great Commission. As we now launch graduate studies, that mission continues with renewed vision and expanded reach. My prayer is that your time here will strengthen your capacity to lead faithfully and advance the Church.

At Highlands College, we believe leadership begins with surrender to Jesus and devotion to His Word. Our graduate program is designed to challenge and refine you academically while deepening your spiritual foundation. As you engage with faculty, peers, and course content, we hope you grow not only in theological understanding but also in leading with humility, integrity, emotional maturity, and genuine love for people.

I encourage you to remain teachable and expectant throughout your time at Highlands College. Some of the greatest transformations occur when God stretches us. If you fully invest in this season, you will graduate with renewed vision, practical leadership tools, and a deeper confidence in the purpose God has placed on your life.

Thank you for entrusting Highlands College with this important stage. We cannot wait to see how God will use your life and ministry to influence generations and make a lasting Kingdom impact.

For His Glory,  
Chris Hodges  
Chancellor

## Our Story

Highlands College was founded in 2011 by Chancellor Pastor Chris Hodges, founding pastor of Church of the Highlands, to meet the urgent need for well-equipped ministry leaders. His vision was to create a biblical higher education model integrating academic instruction with ministry training, character formation, and spiritual development.

Today, Highlands College offers an accredited four-year program for students, leading to a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree in a ministry-specific field, and now a two-year program leading to a Master of Biblical and Theological Studies and a Master of Arts in Ministry Leadership. In 2015, the Highlands College Board of Directors decided to pursue accreditation. Highlands College was granted accreditation on February 15, 2023.

## State Licensing and Accreditation

Highlands College is an Alabama non-profit corporation licensed through the state of Alabama's Private School Licensure Division and is accredited by the Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation (5850 T. G. Lee Blvd., Ste. 130, Orlando, FL 32822, 407-207-0808) to grant certificates and degrees at the Associate, Baccalaureate, and Master's levels.

## NC-SARA

Highlands College is approved by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) to participate in the SARA initiative. This allows us to offer distance education to students in participating SARA states. For more information about NC-SARA, please visit [www.nc-sara.org](http://www.nc-sara.org).

## Administration Board of Directors

**Ronnie Bennett**  
**Duane Donner**  
**Chris Hodges, Chairman**  
**Dr. John C. Maxwell**  
**Jana McDonnell**  
**Patricia Oh**  
**Scott Olson**  
**Mark Pettus**  
**Ken Polk, Vice-Chairman**  
**Darryl Rosser**  
**Mike Stockard**  
**Glenn Siddle**  
**Dr. Courtney J. Winston**

## Officers

**Kay Hargrave, Chief Advancement Officer**  
**Matthew Brumfield, Chief Financial Officer**  
**Katie Reeves, Secretary/General Counsel**  
**Jordan Williamson, Chief Operating Officer**

## Campus Location

3660 Grandview Parkway  
Birmingham, Alabama 35243  
(205) 963-6900

## Vision, Mission, and Goals

### Vision

To educate, equip, and empower leaders in a ministry academy model, applying leading-edge methods in world-class facilities where students launch into their calling to expand the Kingdom of God.

### Mission

Highlands College is a biblical higher education institution that exists to supply the Church with leaders of competence, character, and spiritual maturity, holistically trained to lead lives of eternal impact by fulfilling the Great Commission.

### Goals

Highlands College will:

- Strengthen the Four Pillars of Ministry Leadership.
- Improve and enhance the academy leadership development model.
- Develop student services that propel success.
- Expand educational platforms.
- Refine the implementation-driven operating model.
- Continue to build a world-class training ground for world-changing leaders.
- Fund the future.

## Student Learning Objectives

The graduates of Highlands College will be known for their commitment to:

The authority of Scripture as evidenced by:  
the knowledge, interpretation, and integration of Scripture  
the possession of a biblical worldview

The pursuit of a Christ-centered life as evidenced by:  
a personal devotional life with God  
a godly character  
a healthy, active lifestyle  
an investment in life-giving relationships

The passion of lifelong learning as evidenced by:  
the intentional pursuit of truth  
creative problem solving

The calling of ministry leadership as evidenced by:  
the discovery of, and devotion to, personal calling  
the development of leadership and vocational skills

The advancement of the Kingdom as evidenced by:  
service to the Church  
stewardship of time and resources  
commitment to finishing well

## The Four Pillars of Highlands College

### Academic Instruction

Highlands College students grow in the highest standards of excellence as they develop their intellect and increase their knowledge of God. Students become lifelong learners across various disciplines, strengthening their understanding of their Christ-centered calling in engaging classroom settings.

### Ministry Training

Highlands College equips students to be the hands and feet of Jesus through exceptional hands-on ministry training and empowers students to take ownership in every area of church life. Highlands College gives students leadership training and opportunities to develop the skills needed to make a difference in the world.

### Character Formation

Highlands College challenges students to live a life of excellence by living a healthy, active lifestyle and growing their leadership abilities. Students develop Christ-like character through relationships with mentors and peers during their time at Highlands College.

### Spiritual Development

Highlands College students strengthen their devotion to God through the local church, chapels, small groups, and relationships with others. Students are disciplined by spiritually mature church and academic leaders.

### Statement of Faith

Students, Faculty, and Staff agree with the beliefs expressed in this Statement; and commit to living in accordance with these beliefs.

### Holy Bible

The Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is the authoritative Word of God. It alone is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths. In its original writing, it is inspired, infallible, and inerrant. (II Timothy 3:16; I Peter 1:20-21; Proverbs 30:5; Romans 16:25-26)

### Trinity

There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are coequal and coeternal. (I John 5:7; Genesis 1:26; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 3:7-11)

### Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. On earth, Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. He is the only man ever to have lived a sinless life. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, died on the Cross for mankind, and thus, atoned for our sins through the shedding of His blood. He rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will return again in power and glory. (John 1:1, 14, 20:28; I Timothy 3:16; Isaiah 9:6; Philippians 2:5-6; I Timothy 2:5)

## Virgin Birth

Jesus Christ was conceived by God the Father, through the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Trinity) in the Virgin Mary's womb; therefore, He is the Son of God. (Matthew 1:18, 25; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:27-35)

## Redemption

Man was created good and upright, but by voluntary transgression he fell; his only hope of redemption is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Gen. 1:26-31, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-21)

## Regeneration

For anyone to know God, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential. (John 6:44, 65; Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5)

## Salvation

We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ: His death, burial, and resurrection. Salvation is a gift from God, not a result of our good works or of any human efforts. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16, 3:8; Titus 3:5; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 16:31; Hebrews 9:22)

## Repentance

Repentance is the commitment to turn away from sin in every area of our lives and to follow Christ, which allows us to receive His redemption and to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Thus, through repentance we receive forgiveness of sins and appropriate salvation. (Acts 2:21, 3:19; I John 1:9)

## Sanctification

Sanctification is the ongoing process of yielding to God's Word and His Spirit in order to complete the development of Christ's character in us. It is through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life. (I Thessalonians 4:3, 5:23; II Corinthians 3:18, 6:14-18, II Thessalonians 2:1-3, Romans 8:29, 12:1-2, Hebrews 2:11)

## Jesus' Blood

The Blood that Jesus Christ shed on the Cross for both our sinfulness and our sins, enabling all those who believe to be free from the penalty of sin, which is death. (I John 1:7; Revelation 1:5, 5:9; Colossians 1:20; Romans 3:10-12, 23, 5:9; John 1:29)

## Jesus Christ Indwells All Believers

Christians are people who have invited the Lord Jesus Christ to come and live inside them by His Holy Spirit. They relinquish the authority of their lives over to him thus making Jesus the Lord of their life as well as Savior. They put their trust in what Jesus accomplished for them when He died, was buried, and rose again from the dead. (John 1:12; John 14:17, 23; John 15:4; Romans 8:11; Revelation 3:20)

## Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Given at Pentecost, it is the promise of the Father, sent by Jesus after His Ascension, to empower the Church to preach the Gospel throughout the whole earth, one of the signs being speaking in other tongues along with other gifts. (Joel 2:28-29;

Matthew 3:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:5,8, 2:1-4, 17, 38-39, 8:14-17, 10:38, 44-47, 11:15-17, 19:1-6)

## The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is manifested through a variety of spiritual gifts to build and sanctify the church, demonstrate the validity of the resurrection, and confirm the power of the Gospel. The Bible's lists of these gifts are not necessarily exhaustive, and the gifts may occur in various combinations. All believers are commanded to earnestly desire the manifestation of the gifts in their lives. These gifts always operate in harmony with the Scriptures and should never be used in violation of Biblical parameters. (Hebrews 2:4; Romans 1:11, 12 :4-8; Ephesians 4:16; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6-7; I Corinthians 12:1-31, 14:1-40; I Peter 4:10)

## The Church

The church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of Jesus' Great Commission. Every person who is born of the Spirit is an integral part of the church as a member of the body of believers. There is a spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:22, 2:19-22; Hebrews 12:23; John 17:11, 20-23)

## Sacrament of Water Baptism

Following faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the new convert is commanded by the Word of God to be baptized in water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and by full immersion. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-38; 10:47-48)

## Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A unique time of communion in the presence of God when the elements of bread and grape juice (the symbols of Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ) are taken in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-25)

## Sacrament of Marriage

We believe that because God our Creator established marriage as a sacred institution between one man and one woman, marriage is a covenant only between one man and one woman, as clearly conveyed in God's inerrant Scriptures, including for example in Matthew 19:4-6 where in speaking about marriage Jesus referred to the fact that "he which made them at the beginning made them male and female." (Genesis 1:27, 5:2)

## Sexuality

We believe sexuality and the divinely prescribed boundaries for its expression are covered clearly in the Holy Scriptures, which limit sexual expression to the marital relationship of one man with one woman. Homosexual acts, adultery, bestiality, and all forms of fornication are categorically condemned in the Holy Scriptures. We believe that sexuality is assigned by God at conception, male or female, whatever that may be, and the Holy Scriptures does not permit an individual to alter their sexual identity physically or otherwise. (Deuteronomy 23:1, 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Romans 1:26-27; Proverbs 5:3-5, 8-13; 7:21-27; Galatians 5:19; Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27; 19:18; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9; James 2:11; Leviticus 20:10-21; 1 Corinthians 10:8, 6:18; Jude 7)

## Healing of the Sick

Healing of the sick is illustrated in the life and ministry of Jesus and included in the commission of Jesus to His disciples. It is given as a sign. It is also a part of Jesus' work on the Cross and one of the gifts of the Spirit. (Psalm 103:2-3; Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:17-18; Acts 8:6-7; James 5:14-16; I Corinthians 12:9, 28; Romans 11:29)

## God's Will for Provision

It is the Father's will for believers to become whole, healthy, and successful in all areas of life. But because of the fall, many may not receive the full benefits of God's will while on earth. That fact, though, should never prevent all believers from seeking the full benefits of Christ's provision in order to better serve others.

- Spiritual (John 3:3-11; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 10:9-10)
- Mental and Emotional (II Timothy 1:7, 2:11; Philippians 4:7-8; Romans 12:2; Isaiah 26:3)
- Physical (Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 8:17; I Peter 2:24)
- Financial (Joshua 1:8; Malachi 3:10-11; Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6-10; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalm 34:10, 84:11; Philippians 4:19)

## Resurrection

Jesus Christ was physically resurrected from the dead in a glorified body three days after His death on the Cross. In addition, both the saved and the lost will be resurrected; they that are saved to the resurrection of life and they that are lost to the resurrection of eternal damnation. (Luke 24:16, 36, 39; John 2:19-21, 20:26-28, 21:4; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:42, 44; Philippians 1:21-23, 3:21)

## Heaven

Heaven is the eternal dwelling place for all believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All of God's children will reign forever in a new heaven and a new earth. (Matthew 5:3, 12, 20, 6:20, 19:21, 25:34; John 17:24; II Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 11:16; I Peter 1:4; Revelation 21:1-5)

## Hell

After living one life on earth, the unbelievers will be judged by God and sent to Hell where they will be eternally tormented with the Devil and the Fallen Angels. (Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:43-48; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 14:9-11, 20:12-15, 21:8)

## Second Coming

Jesus Christ will physically and visibly return to earth for the second time to establish His Kingdom. This will occur at a date undisclosed by the Scriptures. (Matthew 24:30, 26:63-64; Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; II Thessalonians 1:7-8; Revelation 1:7)

# Admission Requirements

Highlands College is designed to give students an experience that challenges them to grow in the same ways Jesus grew as a young man: in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and with man (Luke 2:52). Acceptance to Highlands College is an honor reserved for students who are ready for the challenge of committing at least two years of their life to prepare for their future in ministry.

Applicants must meet the following admissions requirements to be accepted into Highlands College.

1. Be a United States Citizen or have a visa permitting college attendance.
2. Be a committed follower of Christ.
3. Demonstrate a strong sense of the call of God on their life.
4. Be a current, regular, and active member of a local church for at least three months.
5. Ensure access to sufficient financial resources to cover tuition and fees.
6. Meet the following academic requirement:
  - ▶ Hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally or nationally accredited institution.
  - ▶ Have earned a minimum 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale.
7. Affirm agreement with the Highlands College Statement of Faith.
8. Be active in a local church ministry.
9. Complete the following admission requirements:
  - ✓ Online application
  - ✓ Affirm the Highlands College Statement of Faith
  - ✓ HC Interview
  - ✓ Complete the Christian Experience Questionnaire
  - ✓ Meet the Minimum Technical Standards
  - ✓ Official transcript showing a conferred bachelor's degree
  - ✓ Satisfactory Social Media Check
  - ✓ Resume
  - ✓ 1,000 Word Personal Faith and Vocational Essay: Written statement of purpose outlining calling, goals, and alignment with the Highlands College Mission
  - ✓ Recommendations (See Online Recommendation Forms)
  - ✓ Satisfactory background check
  - ✓ Application Fee
  - ✓ Paid enrollment deposit
  - ✓ Signed Post-Acceptance Documents (PADS)

The Admissions Committee will review the application information, and the Admissions Department will notify the applicant of a decision. In some cases, an applicant may be

asked to provide additional evidence that they meet these requirements, or the Admissions Committee may apply additional conditions concerning the above entry requirements. Based on our experience of the demands for a vocation and calling in ministry, these requests are in the applicant's best interest. Exceptions may be permitted in very limited circumstances at the discretion of the Admissions Department.

## Application Process

The application process consists of completing an online application form and submitting all program-specific requirements and supporting documentation. The application for admission is on the Highlands College website, [www.highlandscollge.edu](http://www.highlandscollge.edu).

Once the application package, including all required supporting documentation, is complete, the Admissions Committee will review the application and make an admission decision. The Admissions Committee meets monthly to review completed applications.

The Admissions Department will notify applicants of the outcome of their application. Applicants accepted for admission who do not enroll in the application year for which they applied must complete a new application for admission for another application year.

## Online Recommendation Forms

Applicants must request an electronic recommendation form as part of their application. This recommendation should be completed by two individuals. One recommendation completed by an individual with a close, pastoral relationship with the applicant, such as a pastor, pastoral staff, small group leader, etc., who can testify to the applicant's relationship with Jesus, leadership skills, and Christian character. One recommendation should be completed by an individual who has direct academic experience with the applicant, such as a professor, academic advisor, instructor, etc., who can speak to the applicant's intellectual ability, communication skills, work ethic, and capacity for success in graduate-level study. The recommendations may not come from a relative. Highlands College may call this individual for more information about the applicant to follow up concerning academic or behavioral issues disclosed in the application process.

## Background Authorization Consent

Applicants should complete the Background Check Consent Form in the Admission Application. This form will be completed by applicants while completing the online application.

If there are questions or issues regarding the applicant's background check, the Admissions Committee, in partnership with the Security Department, will decide whether the applicant qualifies to enroll.

## Transcript Submission

Applicants must submit an official transcript or other formal certification verifying completion of the earned accredited bachelor's education requirement. Current undergraduate applicants should request one transcript at the time of application, followed by a final transcript upon graduation. All transcripts submitted, both in progress and final, must be official and sent directly to Highlands College from the accredited institution. Transcripts issued to the student are considered unofficial and cannot be used for admission consideration. All current undergraduate graduates must request a

final transcript that includes grade point average (GPA) and graduation date.

Official transcripts are also required from all colleges and universities attended (once enrollment is concluded). An in-progress official transcript may be submitted for preliminary evaluation if the applicant is presently enrolled; however, it must be followed by an official transcript showing all final grades once the applicant has been promoted to graduate status.

Applicants accepted for admission will not be enrolled in classes until required official transcripts have been received. Highlands College will only accept official transcripts, not photocopies or documents marked "Issued to Student." All transcripts from a foreign institution must be translated, received in English, and evaluated for equivalency by a transcript evaluation service. Applicants must use one of the following transcript evaluation services for academic transcript(s) evaluation:

www.jsilny.org  
www.evalcompany.com  
www.ece.org  
www.wes.org

Official transcripts can be submitted electronically to [admissions@highlandscollege.edu](mailto:admissions@highlandscollege.edu). Official transcripts can also be mailed directly to the following address:

Highlands College  
ATTN: Admissions Department  
3660 Grandview Parkway  
Birmingham, Alabama 35243

## Student Information Release

Highlands College is committed to student safety, growth, and development as individuals prepare for ministry. During a student's enrollment, situations may arise where student information needs to be shared between Highlands College departments and small group leaders for the benefit of the student. Student privacy is essential, and Highlands College seeks to maintain appropriate discretion regarding information sharing.

## Technology Requirements

Students are expected to maintain access to a personal computing device that supports required academic software and college systems, including Microsoft 365, the Student Information System (SIS), the Learning Management System (Blackboard), and other institutional platforms required for coursework, communication, and engagement.

## Technical Standards

Highlands College imposes strict technical standards to ensure students possess the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for a career in full-time ministry. These standards, with or without reasonable accommodations, must be met for students to enroll at Highlands College. The Student Success team assesses the reasonableness of accommodations, ensuring they do not undermine the educational process.

These abilities and skills, as determined by Highlands College, are as follows:

- **Observation Skills:** A student must be able to use the sense of vision, hearing, and somatic sensation in order to assimilate information quickly and accurately in the classroom and in ministry training fields. Students will be expected to participate in an active learning approach and must have the capacity to remain engaged for extended periods, fully participate in class discussions, and make oral presentations to groups.
- **Communication Skills:** Students must be able to read, speak intelligibly, and hear sufficiently to affect an adequate exchange of information and create rapport with team members, congregation, and others. A student must be able to read and write English effectively to fulfill academic requirements and maintain accurate records as needed in ministry. Students must be able to accurately interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.
- **Behavior and Social Skills:** Students must possess the physical and emotional health required for the application of their intellectual abilities and the employment of sound judgment appropriately and promptly. Students must display emotional stability, a spirit of teamwork and cooperation, compassion, sensitivity, respect, honesty, reliability, perseverance, and concern for others in order to facilitate interpersonal relationships and provide effective pastoral care while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Students must exercise good judgment, accountability, professional integrity, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to receive and integrate feedback. Students must demonstrate the skills required to effectively manage heavy workloads, function professionally under stress, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of the uncertainties inherent to ministry.
- **Cognitive Skills:** These abilities include an aptitude for rapid problem-solving, the capability to independently access, interpret, and respond to academic and ministry information, and to respond to pastoral scenarios. Assimilate, critique, prioritize, and appropriate the Christian story as understood through scripture, tradition, reason, experience, and as centered on the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Psychomotor Skills:** Students must possess the physical skills, talents, and abilities to perform the essential physical task functions of academics and areas in ministry training.

## Probationary Admission

Highlands College offers Probationary Admission in the limited circumstance of offering admission to an applicant who does not meet the requirements for standard admission. Probationary Admission students must earn a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 2.0 by the end of their first semester. Students will be placed in "good standing" status if they meet this requirement. Students who do not meet this requirement will be dismissed from the program. Students may appeal the decision of dismissal. If an appeal is denied, the student may reapply for admission after a period of five months after their probationary semester.

## Provisional Admission

Highlands College offers Provisional Admission in the circumstance of an applicant who is a strong candidate for admission but needs additional time to obtain the required admission application documentation. Provisionally admitted students must submit all the necessary admission application documentation before enrollment. Highlands College may revoke admission if required documentation is not received prior to enrollment or the applicant presents new evidence that no longer meets the minimum application requirements.

## Application Denial and Reapplication

The Admissions Department will notify applicants who are not accepted for admission. An applicant denied admission can appeal the decision of the Admissions Committee if they feel additional information might influence the evaluation of their application.

If an applicant wishes to appeal an admission decision, they should submit the following items to [graduatestudies@highlandscollege.edu](mailto:graduatestudies@highlandscollege.edu). The items for an appeal should be submitted via attachments in one email with the applicant's name and "Admission Decision Appeal" in the email's subject line.

- Submit one to three letters of recommendation from pastors/staff from the church where the applicant currently serves, including their contact information.
- Submit a typed one to three-page essay answering the following questions:
  - ▶ Why do you feel called to attend Highlands College?
  - ▶ Why do you think you will be successful at Highlands College?
  - ▶ What have you done and are continuing to do to prepare yourself spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically for the rigorous demands of Highlands College and eventual placement into full-time ministry?
  - ▶ Are there additional factors not included in your initial application that you would like the Admissions Committee to consider?

When Highlands College receives all appeal requirements, we will notify the applicant via email. The Admissions Department will inform the applicant regarding a decision on the appeal within 15 business days of receipt of all appeal documents. Appealing an admission decision does not guarantee acceptance into Highlands College. However, the Admissions Committee will consider the items mentioned above to determine if the additional information warrants acceptance.

The deadline to submit all items for an admission appeal is July 1. Applicants denied admission may reapply five months from the date the prior application was submitted for the following application year.

# Financial Information

Obtaining a college education requires a significant financial investment. Highlands College seeks to make such an education affordable to students from diverse economic backgrounds through endowment income and generous gifts of donors.

## Online Tuition and Fees

### Full-Time Tuition

Graduate Tuition (per credit hour)	\$600
36-hours for MBTS tuition total	\$21,600
36-hours for MAML tuition total	\$21,600

### Additional Fees

Application for Admission (Non-Refundable)	\$50
Course Repeat	\$300
Leave of Absence Request	\$250
Replacement Diploma	\$25
Replacement Diploma Cover	\$35
Returned Check	\$35
Technology Fee (per semester)	\$200

### Payment Guidelines

New students will be invoiced for their tuition and applicable fees for the upcoming academic year following their commitment to Highlands College. Continuing students will be invoiced for tuition for the upcoming semester upon registration. Monthly payment plans are available.

For a student to be enrolled in classes, have access to courses and course materials, and attend Highlands College events, all tuition must be paid in accordance with applicable payment due dates. Payment plans are available. Highlands College does not participate in federal financial aid programs, such as Title IV or Veterans Administration.

### Outstanding Balances

Any student whose account becomes past due for 30 days or more is placed on financial hold. This prevents future course enrollment and the ability to request transcripts or diplomas. Once the account is current, the financial hold will be removed.

All students must either have a zero balance or maintain a current payment status in an approved payment plan to participate in the graduation ceremony. Students who owe a balance will not receive their diplomas and can only receive or send transcripts once the balance is paid.

### Refunds

The Academic Calendar lists a Drop/Add deadline for each semester. A student may be eligible for a refund only if the student formally withdraws on or before the Drop/Add deadline.

# **Degree Programs**

## **Programs of Study**

Highlands College prepares students to become tomorrow's leaders by holistically training students in academic instruction, character formation, ministry training, and spiritual development. More than a traditional Bible college, Highlands College offers graduate studies in various ministry interests so students can discover their unique calling and graduate educated, qualified, and confident in their ability to lead a life of eternal impact.

The requirements for graduation for all graduate programs are listed in this Catalog and on Degree Completion Plans. Each Degree Completion Plan includes a recommended Course Sequence. Graduate students declare a concentration upon acceptance to Highlands College. Students may process a change of degree at any time following matriculation.

## **Ministry Engagement Requirement**

Graduate programs at Highlands College include required co-curricular components designed to support spiritual formation, leadership development, and ministry application within the context of the local church through a supervised ministry format. Students will complete this requirement through either Church of the Highlands Residency, an in-person experience that integrates ministry placement, leadership development, and community engagement, or a structured, Highlands College-directed ministry experience within an approved context that includes guided ministry involvement and leadership development aligned with program outcomes. Participation in the assigned pathway is required and is considered part of course attendance and program completion.

## **Technology Skills and Requirements**

Students must possess basic technological proficiency to participate fully in online and hybrid coursework. This includes the ability to navigate the Learning Management System, use technology software, communicate through digital platforms, manage online assignments, and maintain reliable internet access necessary for program and academic requirements.

## **Change of Degree**

A change of degree occurs when a student desires to change enrollment from a current degree program to any other degree program. Students who wish to initiate a degree change should complete a Change of Degree request. Forms are available from the Registrar.

Students must meet all requirements of the new degree before they may change to that program. Due to the differences in program requirements, the decision should be made in consultation with Student Accounts and the Registrar Team. Changing degrees may extend the student's anticipated date of graduation. Approval to request a degree change is not definite and is subject to final approval. Decisions are final and may not be appealed.

# School of Theology

## Master of Biblical and Theological Studies (MBTS)

The Master of Biblical and Theological Studies (M.B.T.S.) provides graduate-level training in biblical interpretation, theological reflection, and ministry application. The curriculum establishes a strong foundation through coursework in biblical interpretation, Old and New Testament theology, theological method, Christian theology, theological ethics, and practical theology, complemented by spiritual formation. Advanced coursework allows students to deepen their engagement with Scripture and theology through focused study in areas such as preaching, world religions, and advanced Old or New Testament studies. The program includes required ministry engagement components that support theological dialogue, spiritual growth, and ministry integration. Graduates are prepared to interpret Scripture faithfully, engage theological questions thoughtfully, and apply biblical insight in teaching, discipleship, and ministry contexts.

### Program Learning Outcomes

**Interpret and Apply Scripture.** Demonstrate the use of reliable tools, biblical languages, and methods to interpret the Bible in its historical, literary, and theological context for teaching and ministry.

**Understand and Defend Christian Doctrine.** Articulate and defend the core beliefs of the Christian faith through biblical exegesis, historical theology, and theological reasoning.

**Engage Worldviews.** Demonstrate a Biblical response to major world religions and contemporary worldviews, integrating theology into ministry, preaching, and discipleship.

## Master of Biblical and Theological Studies (M.B.T.S.)

**Important:** This degree plan is effective for those starting this degree program in the fall of 2026. This degree plan will remain in effect for students who do not interrupt enrollment or change degree programs.

### Core Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Biblical Foundations</b>		
BIBL 510	Biblical Interpretation	3
BIBL 521	Old Testament Theology	3
BIBL 522	New Testament Theology	3
<b>Theological Essentials</b>		
THEO 510	Theological Method	3
THEO 520	Christian Theology	3
THEO 530	Theological Ethics	3
THEO 540	Practical Theology	3
<b>Practical Ministries</b>		
PMIN 510	Spiritual Formation	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>24</b>

### Concentration Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
PMIN 610	Christian Preaching	3
BIBL 630	Biblical Language Tools	3
THEO 659	World Religions	
or THEO 660	Historical Theology	3
BIBL 640	Advanced Old Testament Study	
or BIBL 650	Advanced New Testament Study	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>12</b>

*All applicable prerequisites must be met.*

### Graduation Requirements

- **36** Total hours must be completed through Highlands College
- **2.0** Overall grade point average
- **Grade of 'C'** Minimum is required for all courses
- **100%** Of the concentration must be taken through Highlands College
- **Co-Curricular** All requirements must be satisfied through a supervised ministry format.
- **Graduation Application** Submission of Degree Completion Application must be completed within the last semester of a student's anticipated graduation date
- All requirements must be completed within **4 (four)** years from the date of initial enrollment

# Master of Biblical and Theological Studies (M.B.T.S.)

## Example Course Sequence

<b>First Semester</b>			<b>Second Semester</b>		
BIBL 510	Biblical Interpretation	3	THEO 520	Christian Theology	3
PMIN 510	Spiritual Formation	3	BIBL 521	Old Testament Theology	3
THEO 510	Theological Method	3	THEO 540	Practical Theology	3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		
				<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Third Semester</b>			<b>Fourth Semester</b>		
THEO 530	Theological Ethics	3	BIBL 630	Biblical Language Tools	3
BIBL 522	New Testament Theology	3	THEO 659	World Religions	3
PMIN 610	Christian Preaching	3	or THEO 660	Historical Theology	3
			BIBL 640	Advanced Old Testament Study	3
			or BIBL 650	Advanced New Testament Study	3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		
				<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

# School of Theology

## Master of Arts in Ministry Leadership (MAML)

The Master of Arts in Ministry Leadership (M.A.M.L.) equips ministry leaders to integrate biblical and theological foundations with practical leadership skills for service in local church and nonprofit environments. The curriculum builds a strong scriptural and theological core through courses in biblical interpretation, Old and New Testament theology, theological method, Christian theology, and theological ethics, followed by focused training in practical theology and spiritual formation. Leadership-focused concentration courses emphasize Christian preaching, pastoral care, ecclesiology, and organizational culture and change to prepare students for effective ministry leadership. The program includes required ministry engagement components that support leadership development, collaborative learning, and ministry application. Graduates are prepared to lead with biblical conviction, pastoral sensitivity, and organizational clarity in complex ministry and nonprofit settings.

### Program Learning Outcomes

**Interpret and Apply Scripture.** Demonstrate use of reliable tools and methods to interpret the Bible in its historical, literary, and theological context for leadership and decision-making.

**Integrate Theology and Leadership.** Apply biblical and theological principles to organizational strategy, pastoral care, and church growth.

**Effective Leadership in a Complex World.** Apply visionary, pastoral, and culturally aware leadership that addresses ministry challenges with biblical wisdom.

## Master of Arts in Ministry Leadership (M.A.M.L.)

**Important:** This degree plan is effective for those starting this degree program in the fall of 2026. This degree plan will remain in effect for students who do not interrupt enrollment or change degree programs.

### Core Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Biblical Foundations</b>		
BIBL 510	Biblical Interpretation	3
BIBL 521	Old Testament Theology	3
BIBL 522	New Testament Theology	3
<b>Theological Essentials</b>		
THEO 510	Theological Method	3
THEO 520	Christian Theology	3
THEO 530	Theological Ethics	3
THEO 540	Practical Theology	3
<b>Practical Ministries</b>		
PMIN 510	Spiritual Formation	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>24</b>

### Concentration Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
PMIN 610	Christian Preaching	3
PMIN 620	Foundations of Pastoral Care	3
THEO 630	Ecclesiology and Liturgy	3
PMIN 640	Organizational Culture and Change	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>12</b>

*All applicable prerequisites must be met.*

### Graduation Requirements

- **36** Total hours must be completed through Highlands College
- **2.0** Overall grade point average
- **Grade of 'C'** Minimum is required for all courses
- **100%** Of the concentration must be taken through Highlands College
- **Co-Curricular** All requirements must be satisfied through a supervised ministry format.
- **Graduation Application** Submission of Degree Completion Application must be completed within the last semester of a student's anticipated graduation date
- All requirements must be completed within **4 (four)** years from the date of initial enrollment

# Master of Arts in Ministry Leadership (M.A.M.L.)

## Example Course Sequence

<b>First Semester</b>			<b>Second Semester</b>		
BIBL 510	Biblical Interpretation	3	THEO 520	Christian Theology	3
PMIN 510	Spiritual Formation	3	BIBL 521	Old Testament Theology	3
THEO 510	Theological Method	3	THEO 540	Practical Theology	3
<b>Total</b>			<b>Total</b>		
<b>9</b>			<b>9</b>		
<b>Third Semester</b>			<b>Fourth Semester</b>		
THEO 530	Theological Ethics	3	PMIN 620	Foundations of Pastoral Care	3
BIBL 522	New Testament Theology	3	THEO 630	Ecclesiology and Liturgy	3
PMIN 610	Christian Preaching	3	PMIN 640	Organizational Culture and Change	3
<b>Total</b>			<b>Total</b>		
<b>9</b>			<b>9</b>		

# Student Services

## Academic Advising

The Graduate Studies Advisor partners with students throughout their graduate journey by providing academic advising, course registration, and program progression. The Graduate Studies Advisor ensures that every graduate student receives support and direction from their first day of class through their degree completion.

## Ministry Placement

This program is designed for individuals actively engaged in ministry through vocational roles, volunteer capacities, or ministry residencies. Should Placement services be needed, Ministry Placement supports students in developing the spiritual, personal, and professional competencies necessary to pursue vocational ministry opportunities. Through Placement, one-on-one coaching, and career services, students receive guidance in preparing for ministry placement.

The Placement team provides support in resume and portfolio development, interview preparation, and connections with ministry leaders. Highlands College partners with a network of churches and ministries to provide job and internship opportunities through the Placement Job Board. Students also have opportunities to engage with visiting pastors and ministry leaders seeking candidates for open roles.

## Library

The Library partners with faculty and team to provide a core collection of scholarly resources along with various technological services that support the College's vision and mission and students' educational endeavors.

For further information about the Library, including current hours of operation and a list of services provided, students can direct inquiries to [library@highlandscollege.edu](mailto:library@highlandscollege.edu).

## Writing Lab

The HC Writing Lab exists to support students in all aspects of their writing. The HC Writing Lab partners with learners to develop clarity, critical thinking, research skills, and effective writing processes to support their educational goals. Through virtual consultations, resources, and workshops, the HC Writing Lab fosters a culture of writing within the HC graduate studies community that empowers scholars as they impact spheres of ministry around them.

For further information about the Writing Center, students can direct inquiries to [writingcenter@highlandscollege.edu](mailto:writingcenter@highlandscollege.edu).

## Resolution Process

If a student cannot resolve a concern with another student, Highlands College Faculty or team member, or a Church of the Highlands Pastor or team member, the student should follow the resolution process described below. Students should follow the procedure listed in the Academic Catalog to address grade appeals and grade disputes directly with their Instructor. For any

additional concerns, the student should follow this resolution process.

The purpose of a resolution process is to provide a relational and equitable process to resolve student concerns. Highlands College is committed to the scriptural principles found in Matthew 18:15-17. A direct approach between the offended person and the offender, "speaking the truth in love," when appropriate, will resolve most issues. Therefore, when appropriate, the student should first attempt to discuss the matter privately with the other person to resolve the matter.

A student may express concerns by submitting a Resolution Form [linked here](#) within 7 days of the occurrence. The student will receive an immediate acknowledgment of receipt of the information and can expect a timely response. Every measure is taken to respect the student's concerns and protect the confidentiality of all information submitted. Students with specific concerns regarding their experience at Highlands College are encouraged to use this form to make those known. The Resolution Committee will review and respond promptly to all completed forms. Anonymous submissions will not receive a response.

The Resolution Committee is a small group of Highlands College team members. Depending upon the nature of the concern and the response level needed, a Resolution Committee member may respond directly to the student. The Resolution Committee may also elevate the matter to the Office of the President for review. Highlands College cannot guarantee that it will resolve every issue raised to the satisfaction of a student or a group of students.

Students enrolled in a Highlands College Graduate program from another SARA state may file a SARA-related complaint if it involves:

- Fraud or misrepresentation
- Inaccurate information about tuition, accreditation, job placement, or licensure
- Non-compliance with distance education standards under the C-RAC Guidelines

These students must first exhaust Highlands College's internal complaint process. If unresolved, the student may file a complaint with Highlands College's SARA State Portal Entity: Alabama Commission on Higher Education ([www.ache.edu](http://www.ache.edu)); email: [acheinfo@ache.edu](mailto:acheinfo@ache.edu); phone (334) 242-1998. More information is [linked here](#).

The Highlands College Graduate program will maintain a confidential log of all complaints and resolutions for internal review and improvement. A summary of complaint categories and outcomes will be reviewed annually by the Executive Team.

If you need support completing the form or discerning the appropriate next steps, please contact the Highlands Graduate team via email [registrar@highlandscollege.edu](mailto:registrar@highlandscollege.edu).

# Academic Policies

## Student Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable U.S. Department of Education program.

Highlands College does not receive funds from the U.S. Department of Education and is not subject to FERPA. However, ethical principles for the confidentiality of student records are important to Highlands College. The College has established policies and procedures that align with FERPA regulations.

FERPA gives parents certain rights concerning their children's education records. When a student turns 18 years old or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parents to the student. For more information, contact the Registrar Team.

## Credit Hour Determination

The term credit hour is the unit used to measure coursework at Highlands College. The Faculty and Administration determine the credit hours awarded for courses in accordance with the vision, mission, and student learning objectives of Highlands College. This measure meets the Carnegie Collegiate Student Hour Guidelines, related Federal definitions, and requirements, and the Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission (ABHE) on accreditation standards, policies, and guidelines. The number of credit hours assigned to a course should reflect the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and the appropriate amount of time spent by a student in a course, otherwise known as "time on task."

The following are principles and working definitions, conforming to sound and commonly accepted practices, regarding the credit hour and the basis for its determination.

- The Faculty and Administration are responsible for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum; therefore, they are responsible for determining credit hours.
- Credit-hour equivalency for online coursework is determined by a student's total time on task, including time spent learning, studying, and completing assignments. Instructional time and student preparation time are combined to represent the student's total time on task of 2,250 minutes for one credit hour of academic credit.

## Course Delivery Methods

Highlands College offers courses through an online format. The instructional method is identified in the course description and/or course schedule. Highlands College aligns the appropriate delivery method for each course with institutional policies, accreditation, and compliance approvals.

## Class Attendance

Class modules have been specifically designed to enable students to meet the course's objectives. Students are expected to interact with the course modules through interaction,

contribution, and communication. Attendance in online courses is expected and determined by active participation within the official course dates.

## Attendance

Attendance in an online course may be established by submitting an assignment that can receive a grade. Students who do not attend within the first week of a semester by submitting required academic assignments will be dropped from the course.

Graduate courses include required ministry engagement components. Participation in these components is considered attendance and is required for successful course completion. See the Ministry Engagement Requirements section of this catalog for additional details.

## Failure due to Absences

Students who begin an online course but later stop attending without requesting a course withdrawal or officially withdrawing will earn a Failure due to Absences grade of "FA."

An "FA" will be recorded when a student has not attended or participated in course activities for 21 consecutive days or longer. This grade indicates that the student ceased course participation.

The grade "FA" is recorded regardless of the student's grade in the course at the time the student violates the relevant absence standard. A course in which the student earns a grade of "FA" counts toward the student's attempted credit hours, adversely affects the student's GPA, and carries the same weight as if the student had earned a grade of "F."

Students who anticipate difficulty continuing in a course are encouraged to contact Academic Advising as soon as possible to discuss available options.

## Grading

At the end of the term/semester, instructors assign a grade for every course that carries academic credit. Highlands College calculates grade point average (GPA) on a 4-point scale.

Letter Grade	GPA
A+	4.3
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C	2.0
D	1.0
F	0.0
FA	0.0

## Chancellor's and Dean's Lists

Highlands College publishes a Dean's List and a Chancellor's List at the end of each Fall and Spring semester to give recognition for outstanding academic achievement. A student must be full time to

be eligible. The Dean's List requires an overall semester GPA of 3.70-3.99, and the Chancellor's List requires an overall 4.0 semester GPA or greater.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the vision and mission of Highlands College to develop world-class leaders who possess intellect and virtue and who love the truth in accordance with a biblical worldview. In cases of alleged academic dishonesty, Highlands College will investigate and review according to the principles, policies, and procedures outlined in the Student Handbook and this Academic Catalog. Academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in any of the following behaviors.

- Plagiarism (Refer to the Plagiarism section of this catalog.)
- Misuse of Artificial Intelligence (Refer to the Artificial Intelligence section of this catalog.)
- Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, study aids, or people for personal assistance in academic work or examinations, including, but not limited to, the following actions:
  - ◆ Looking at an examination paper or answer sheet of another student
  - ◆ Obtaining, before the administration of a test, unauthorized information regarding the test
  - ◆ Possessing or distributing an exam or exam questions
  - ◆ Using any unauthorized materials or equipment during an examination
  - ◆ Cooperating or aiding in any of the above
- Fabrication: Altering, contriving, or inventing information that would be deceptive in any academic exercise, written or otherwise. Misrepresentation of attendance or absence.
- Misrepresentation of Academic Records: Altering of any portion of Student Records
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Aiding another to violate the Academic Integrity Policy of this Institution
- Unfair Advantage: Using improper means to attempt to gain a more favorable advantage on an academic assignment or exercise
- Multiple Submissions: Using the same work to fulfill requirements for more than one assignment or course without prior approval from all instructors involved
- Sabotage: Deliberately acting to obstruct, destroy, damage, or inhibit the use of materials or equipment
- Substitution: Using a proxy or acting as a proxy in an academic assignment or exercise
- Tolerating Academic Dishonesty: Failing to address academic dishonesty promptly

## Penalties for Violations of Academic Integrity

The College may impose one or more of the following penalties for a confirmed instance of academic integrity or dishonesty, including previous infractions.

- A failing grade on the assignment in question
- A failing grade in the course
- Suspension from the College for a determined period
- Dismissal from the College

## The Use of Artificial Intelligence

Highlands College entrusts students with the ethical responsibility of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in a manner that strengthens their intellectual and academic abilities. AI should support, not replace, personal effort and active engagement in learning. One's effort should come both before and after the use of AI, ensuring it functions as a tool that enhances learning and creativity rather than replacing personal thought or original contribution.

AI detection tools may be used to identify improper use of AI in assignments. When flagged, instructors will review version history and student understanding to determine if misuse occurred. Highlands College follows a developmental process that includes a conversation with the instructor to help students learn appropriate, ethical use of AI in future work.

AI use is treated as collaboration with other people and students may explore ideas with AI tools, but all submitted work must be their own or properly cited. Misuse of AI may constitute a violation of academic integrity and result in disciplinary action. Questions regarding acceptable use should be directed to the course instructor for clarification.

## Academic Progress

### Academic Standing

Students must maintain an overall cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 to remain in good academic standing.

### Transfer Credits

For the 2026–2027 academic year, Highlands College does not accept transfer credit toward graduate degree requirements. All coursework applied to graduate programs must be completed through Highlands College. Students seeking additional information should contact the Registrar Team.

### Course Registration

The Registrar Team enrolls students in courses before the start of each semester. Students are encouraged to contact the Registrar with questions or concerns regarding the registration process and the scheduling of classes.

### Course Add or Withdrawal

Highlands College Graduate Studies operates on a cohort model, in which each incoming class progresses through a prescribed sequence of courses together. This structure fosters community, collaboration, and shared learning experiences throughout the program.

Because courses are sequential and cohort-based, schedule adjustments are limited. Graduate students who experience circumstances that may prevent continued enrollment in a course should consult with the Registrar to discuss available options. For extended interruptions, students should review the Leave of Absence Policy for additional guidance.

### **Leave of Absence**

Graduate students who need to interrupt their studies temporarily for medical, personal, or employment reasons may apply for a Leave of Absence. A leave of absence allows a student to pause enrollment for a specified period without reapplying for readmission. However, when the leave of absence ends and the student returns, they must still meet all admissions requirements.

A student can request an Emergency Leave of Absence after the term withdrawal deadline for physical or mental health reasons or any other personal or family emergency up to the remainder of the term or semester. If a student requests a Leave of Absence after the Withdrawal deadline, the student will remain in the course unless an Emergency Leave of Absence is approved.

Students on academic probation who are approved for a leave of absence will remain on academic probation upon return. Students requesting a leave of absence before the course withdrawal deadline may receive a grade of “W.” A student who requires an absence of more than two semesters must withdraw from the College and apply for readmission when the student seeks to resume their studies.

Students should contact the Registrar to submit a leave of absence. Students must submit a \$250 fee with their request for a leave of absence. Approval for a leave of absence is not automatic. The Academic Review Committee must approve all leave of absence requests. Decisions are final and are not subject to appeal.

A student who does not receive approval for a leave of absence must notify the Registrar of their intent to stay enrolled or withdraw from the College within seven days. If the student does not notify the College, they will automatically be withdrawn.

### **Course Incomplete**

Graduate students who cannot complete coursework by the last day of class due to unavoidable circumstances such as illness, injury, or family emergencies may request a temporary grade of “I” (Incomplete) from the instructor. Approval is at the instructor’s discretion and may be denied if a passing grade is not attainable or if the reason is insufficient.

If approved, the instructor will set a deadline for completing the remaining coursework, not to exceed five days beyond the end of the term. A final grade must be submitted within one week after that deadline. The GPA remains unaffected until the final grade is posted.

### **Grade Appeal**

Course assignment grade appeals must be addressed before the end of the course. If a student disagrees with a course assignment grade, the student should follow this procedure.

- Communicate with the course instructor to discuss the disagreement before the end of the course.

- If the student does not receive a satisfactory explanation or resolution of the grade in question, the student may then submit a written request for review to the Graduate Studies Dean before the end of the course.

The Graduate Studies Dean may then choose to meet with the instructor, the student, or both before deciding. The decision is final and is not subject to appeal.

### **Grade Dispute**

If a student identifies an error in a course assignment grade or wishes to dispute a course grade after the end of the course, the following procedures and time limits apply.

- The student’s request should identify the rationale for the requested review and explain why they did not raise the issue during the course.
- The student should request a meeting with the course instructor to discuss the assigned course grade and present supporting evidence no later than two weeks after the last day of the term or semester.
- If the student does not receive a satisfactory explanation or resolution of the course grade in question, the student may submit a written request for review to the Graduate Studies Dean within one week after the instructor’s decision.

The Graduate Studies Dean may then choose to meet with the instructor, the student, or both before deciding. The decision is final and is not subject to appeal. If the Graduate Studies Dean is also the course instructor, the student may appeal in writing to the Academic Review Committee.

### **Course Repeat**

Students who earn a final grade of “F” or “FA” in any course or a final grade below a “C” in a student’s coursework will be required to repeat the course. There is a \$300 Course Repeat Fee. Both course instances will appear on the student’s transcript, and the student’s grade point average will include both grades earned.

The student will automatically be reenrolled into the course and the Registrar Team will notify the student if the course repeat extends the student’s original graduation date.

### **Academic Probation**

If a student’s overall cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 at the end of any semester, the Registrar places the student on academic probation. Academic Probation status automatically disqualifies the student from graduation until the student returns to good academic standing.

Students on academic probation are allowed one semester to raise their overall cumulative GPA to a minimum of 2.0. Such students should seek counsel from the Graduate Studies Advisor to maximize the opportunity to return to good standing.

### **Withdrawal from Highlands College**

Student enrollment automatically renews each semester until one of the following events occurs.

- ▶ Graduation

- Withdrawal
- Academic or disciplinary dismissal
- Expulsion
- Non-payment of tuition or fees
- Prolonged non-attendance and inactivity exceeding 21 days
- A Leave of Absence non-return

A student who decides to withdraw from Highlands College must submit a Highlands College Withdrawal Request to the Registrar. Students can obtain forms from the Registrar Team. A withdrawal review conversation with the Registrar Team is strongly encouraged.

Students can locate the dates for the course withdrawal deadline on the Academic Calendar. Students who want to withdraw from the College before this deadline must contact the Registrar. There may be financial adjustments or consequences.

Highlands College Withdrawal Requests submitted after the course withdrawal deadline will be reviewed and processed before the next semester starts. Requests after this deadline may carry financial and/or academic consequences.

## Suspensions

In the case of any expulsion or suspension for the remainder of the academic semester, the student will not be allowed to complete classes for that semester. At that time, the student is responsible for following the withdrawal process with the Graduate Studies Advisor. The student will earn a grade of "W" with no credit earned in any courses.

## Dismissal

Students on academic probation have one semester to bring their overall cumulative GPA to a minimum of 2.0. Students who are unsuccessful in earning a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 2.0 after their probationary semester are subject to academic dismissal.

Students subject to academic dismissal will have their records reviewed by the Academic Review Committee. Students can submit a written statement for the Academic Review Committee's consideration, but are not required to do so.

The Academic Review Committee will decide the student's status, even if the student voluntarily withdraws from the College. The decision of the Academic Review Committee is final and is not subject to appeal. The Academic Review Committee will decide on one of two possible outcomes.

The Academic Review Committee may dismiss a student. The student's transcript will reflect the dismissal. Academic dismissal does not absolve the student of their financial obligation to the College. Dismissed students may apply for readmission to the College following a minimum of one year from the date of dismissal.

The Academic Review Committee may allow a student to continue on academic probation. These students have a second semester to earn an overall cumulative GPA of at least 2.0. If a student does not earn an overall cumulative GPA of at least 2.0

by the end of the second semester of academic probation, the student may be subject to immediate academic dismissal without further review.

Students who voluntarily withdraw from the College before being permitted to continue on academic probation are eligible to apply for readmission at any time. If accepted for readmission, however, the student will automatically be returned to academic probation status. If the readmitted student does not earn an overall cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 by the end of the first semester, the student may be subject to immediate academic dismissal without further review.

Students may not use voluntary withdrawal to evade dismissal. Students who voluntarily withdraw from the College before the Academic Review Committee ruling for dismissal will have their dismissed status reflected in their academic record and will not be eligible to apply for readmission until at least one year after the dismissal.

The College reserves the right to withdraw a student for cause at any time. The Standards of Conduct section of the Student Handbook details policies for non-academic dismissals.

## Appeals

All appeals must be made in writing and sent directly to the Graduate Studies Advisor. Appeals must be made within fourteen (14) days of the initial decision. The Graduate Studies Advisor will provide the details of the appeal to the Executive Leadership of the College. The decision of the Executive Leadership is final, and there is no subsequent hearing or appeal.

## Judicial Process

Discipline is the responsibility of every member of the community. Self-discipline is the highest form of discipline and is inextricably linked to a growing Christian lifestyle. However, when an individual fails to exercise self-discipline, discipline becomes the college community's responsibility. The following policies and procedures are not exhaustive but describe behavior that is inappropriate for graduate-level students. Disciplinary action may be taken if a student is found to violate Highlands College's values and principles.

Depending on the circumstances, especially those of a more serious nature that impact the individual or campus community, Highlands College Leadership may need to become involved immediately, with the goals of correction, safety, and growth in mind. Many scriptures inform our process, including Galatians 6:1-5, Hebrews 12:7-11, Matthew 18:15-17, 21-35, and Colossians 3:12-17.

Infractions entail offenses that include but are not limited to the following that were signed during the admissions process:

1. Any action that violates the Highlands College Statement of Faith
2. Any action that violates the Highlands College Community Covenant

Sanctions are determined by the Graduate Program Judicial Committee. Sanctions may vary depending on the nature and severity of the offense.

1. **Warning:** A written notice to the student that the student is violating or has violated institutional regulations.
2. **Suspension:** Temporary separation of the student from Highlands College for a definite period, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for the student's return may be specified. If these conditions are not met, the student will be dismissed. Suspension follows the Leave of Absence protocol in this handbook.
3. **Expulsion:** Dismissal of the student from Graduate Program. The student is not eligible to return.

# Faculty

## **Marguerite Armistead**

*Director of the Writing Center*  
B.A., Auburn University  
M.A., Auburn University

## **John Ball**

*Dean of Biblical Studies*  
B.B.A., Belmont University  
M.A.T.S., Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary  
M.Div., Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity  
Ph.D., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

## **Dr. Kevin Bussey**

*Professor of Biblical Studies*  
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*Instructional Designer*  
B.S., Auburn University  
M.S., Auburn University

# Course Descriptions

Each course is identified by a four-letter prefix and a three-digit number. The letters represent the academic area.

## Biblical Studies (BIBL)

### BIBL 510

#### Biblical Interpretation

#### 3 Credit Hours

Introduces the principles and tools of biblical hermeneutics. Emphasizes grammatical-historical methods, theological interpretation, and application in ministry. Students will evaluate various approaches and develop skills to interpret and teach Scripture faithfully and clearly.

**Prerequisite(s):** No prerequisite (entry-level graduate core)

### BIBL 521

#### Old Testament Theology

#### 3 Credit Hours

Surveys the structure, content, and theological message of the Old Testament. Focuses on the narrative, major themes, and covenants. Students will engage with historical backgrounds, theological contributions, and implications for Christian faith and practice.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion or concurrent enrollment in BIBL 510

### BIBL 522

#### New Testament Theology

#### 3 Credit Hours

Surveys the structure, content, and theological message of the New Testament. Focuses on the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation. Students will engage with historical backgrounds, theological contributions, and implications for Christian faith and practice.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of BIBL 510

### BIBL 630

#### Biblical Language Tools

#### 3 Credit Hours

Equips students to use biblical language resources for exegesis and interpretation. Introduces basic elements of Greek and Hebrew vocabulary, grammar, and syntax using digital tools. Students will develop skills to engage original language insights in preaching and teaching.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of BIBL 510

### BIBL 640

#### Advanced Old Testament Study

#### 3 Credit Hours

Provides in-depth study of a selected Old Testament book with attention to its literary structure, historical context, and theological message. Emphasizes teaching and preaching preparation rooted in sound exegesis and gospel application.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of BIBL 510 and BIBL 521

### BIBL 650

#### Advanced New Testament Study

#### 3 Credit Hours

Engages a selected New Testament book in depth with attention to its theological themes, historical background, and pastoral relevance. Students will practice expository preparation, demonstrating faithful interpretation and contextualized application. **Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of BIBL 510 and BIBL 522

## Practical Ministries (PMIN)

### PMIN 510

#### Spiritual Formation 3 Credit Hours

Explores the theology and practice of spiritual formation as a lifelong journey of growth into Christlikeness. Examines biblical foundations, classic disciplines, and contemporary models of spiritual development. Students will engage in personal practices and evaluate strategies for guiding others in spiritual growth within ministry contexts.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

### PMIN 610

#### Christian Preaching 3 Credit Hours

Introduces the theology, structure, and delivery of biblical sermons. Emphasizes Christ-centered interpretation, Spirit-empowered proclamation, and contextual relevance. Students will prepare and deliver sermons, and receive feedback.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of BIBL 510

### PMIN 620

#### Foundations of Pastoral Care

#### 3 Credit Hours

Examines the theological and practical foundations for pastoral care in the local church. Explores various topics relevant to the practice of pastoral care. Students will develop a biblical philosophy of care and practice basic counseling skills within ethical and spiritual boundaries.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of PMIN 510

### PMIN 640

#### Organizational Culture and Change

#### 3 Credit Hours

Examines organizational structures, culture, and the behavioral dynamics that shape leadership and management. Emphasizes decision-making, motivation, communication, and team performance through a biblical worldview. Students will analyze case studies to develop strategies for leading effectively in complex ministry and organizational settings.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of PMIN 510

## Theological Studies (THEO)

### THEO 510

#### Theological Method

#### 3 Credit Hours

Introduces the task of doing theology grounded in Scripture, informed by tradition, and attentive to culture. Explores sources,

norms, and methods of theology. Students will evaluate theological positions and begin forming a coherent, biblically rooted theological method.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

## **THEO 520**

### **Christian Theology**

#### **3 Credit Hours**

Surveys central doctrines of the Christian faith. Engages historical and contemporary voices to deepen theological understanding. Students will articulate and apply core doctrines in ministry contexts.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

## **THEO 530**

### **Theological Ethics**

#### **3 Credit Hours**

Examines the moral vision of the Christian life. Explores biblical ethics, virtue formation, and major contemporary issues such as sexuality, justice, and bioethics. Students will evaluate ethical frameworks and develop biblically faithful responses to moral challenges.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of THEO 510

## **THEO 540**

### **Practical Theology**

#### **3 Credit Hours**

Bridges theological reflection and ministry practice. Emphasizes integration of doctrine with Christian ministry. Students will cultivate habits of theological reflection and apply them to real-world ministry challenges.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of THEO 510

## **THEO 630**

### **Ecclesiology and Liturgy**

#### **3 Credit Hours**

Examines the nature, mission, and marks of the Church through biblical and theological lenses. Explores historical and contemporary expressions of worship, sacraments, and liturgical practices. Students will connect church models with ministry leadership and spiritual formation.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of THEO 510 and THEO 520

## **THEO 659**

### **World Religions 3 Credit Hours**

Examines the beliefs, practices, and worldviews of major global religions. Analyzes their theological positions and cultural influence. Students will develop Christian engagement with world religions and cultivate a framework for gospel witness.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of THEO 520

## **THEO 660**

### **Historical Theology**

#### **3 Credit Hours**

Surveys the development of Christian doctrine from the Early Church to the Modern Era. Focuses on key figures, councils, and controversies that shaped the faith. Students will explore the relevance of historical theology for contemporary belief and practice.

**Prerequisite(s):** Graduate standing and completion of THEO 510 or THEO 520