



DEGREE OFFERED

Master of Arts in Culture and Spirituality

CERTIFICATES

Certificate in Culture and Spirituality
Sabbatical Programs

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Sophia Center cultivates a capacity for a listening heart by celebrating Earth, Art, and Spirit and offers a Masters of Arts degree in Culture and Spirituality, a nine-month Certificate in a semester and weekend format and a one-semester Sabbatical. The program seeks to integrate the inward journey of personal transformation and the outward journey of social transformation, ecology, spirituality and justice, meditation and restoration, the intellectual and artistic, drawing on religious perspectives from the world's wisdom traditions, science, women and indigenous people. With this in mind the program prepares participants to be leaders in the fields of ecological sensitivity, social justice and spiritual fulfillment.

The Sophia Center creates an international learning community that undertakes with integrity and depth the redeeming work of our time and the historical mission to which all humanity is called: the "Great Work" of our generation of transforming the entire cultural paradigm to protect humanity and the planet from destruction while encouraging a new era of well-being for the entire Earth Community.

Sophia Center students engage in this transforming process: they honor an approach that is rooted in courage, strength and compassion. They join a highly respected international faculty of scholars, social and environmental justice leaders, and spiritual practitioners who energize a world of living ideas and illuminate the complexities of modern spirituality. Drawing on sources as diverse as the medieval mysticism of Hildegard of Bingen, the contemporary prophecies of Teilhard de Chardin, the quantum physics of Fritjof Capra, the cosmological vision of Thomas Berry, the insights of indigenous cultures, the work of eco-feminism and the spiritual practices of classical traditions of world religions. The Sophia Center in Culture and Spirituality offers the students of the world a meaningful immersion into and investigation of the convergent forces of religion, art, justice, and science.

Sophia Center has established shared educational arrangements with other institutions: the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley,

Genesis Farm Learning Center in New Jersey, and the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco.

At Sophia Center, students understand the New Cosmology through core courses and seminars, experience it through creative processes and forums, and express it through field placements, internships, and projects, as they fashion a dynamic integration of the New Creation Story and the Story of Geo-justice (personal, social, and ecological), and engaged cosmology.

The Sophia Center draws upon the wisdom of yesterday and today while preparing participants to meet the challenge of tomorrow as they deepen their capacity to listen with the ear of the heart, recognize and explore. They experience the divine in self, life and all creation, the wonder, beauty and belonging that resides in the vast universe and the recesses of their soul.

In summary, the Sophia Center nurtures an integral and inclusive human presence that is open to the divine, celebrates ultimate mystery, and is designed to create a compassionate community of life for the children of every species. The curriculum makes available the work of cultural historian and geologist, Thomas Berry.

You are invited to visit our campus, attend classes, and meet individually with the program director of the Sophia Center. In addition to full-time students, the Sophia Center welcomes auditors and part-time students.

FORMAT

The Sophia Center's course of study has been designed to meet the needs and schedules of people from many life situations. Students can attain a fully accredited Master of Arts in Culture and Spirituality or choose the Sophia Certificate as a framework for study. Other options include a four-month sabbatical program or attendance at a weekend or summer institute. The Sophia Center staff will work with all students to personalize their approaches to the courses offered.

Master of Arts in Culture and Spirituality *(9-month Program Format)*

The nine-month Master's program require 31 units of work and is comprised of two semesters, each including required and elective courses chosen by the student to augment her/his particular area of interest.

The first semester Core Course

Spirituality of Earth, Art, and Spirit— meets weekly. Students develop

an overview of their place within the dynamics of life and spirituality of creation. They reflect on the epic of the universe and their own story in the context of an unfolding universe from the perspective of science, history, theology, culture and contemporary events.

The second semester Core Course

Geo-Wisdom: Cosmology and The Human Spirit—meets weekly and focuses on the student as a participant in the transformation of self, society, culture, and ecology including the work of restructuring and restoration. They explore their spiritual journey from the perspective of Earth Literacy, Dream, the transformation of desire, Story, Geo-justice, Mystical and Engaged cosmology. Through a culture of Belonging, Liberation, and Action they prepare to contribute to the Great Work—humanity’s historical mission and the emergence of a planetary spirituality that balances mysticism and political love.

For each student, the nine-month curriculum is organized around one of three areas of interest: Earth, Art, or Spirit. The student chooses one as an area of emphasis, and each semester selects courses outside the Core Course that emphasize that focus. She/He chooses a name for the area of concentration. This name contributes to their work of right livelihood upon graduation.

Facilitated group discussions (wisdom circles) on the universe story, each participant’s spiritual narrative, and in-field experiences provide guidance, support, and critical reflection. The Public Forum, Friday Night Conversations, and Special Events seminars present contemporary mystics and prophets, including poets, ecologists, politicians, dancers, scientists, feminists, mythologists, artists, ritual leaders, and theologians. Semester students will participate in the presentations by the key weekend program presenters and in the following dialogue process.

Additionally, Master’s candidates are required to complete a Master of Arts’ Project or an Integrative project. The purpose of the Project is to integrate the students’ studies with their creative contribution to a revisioning of our culture and ourselves through a research paper, experimental project, artwork, or combination of these approaches. Students choosing the Integrative Project will present a paper integrating a seminar’s content with the creation spirituality explored in the nine-month program. On-campus housing is available.

Sophia Center Weekend Format

The Sophia Center weekend program allows working adults to attain their Master’s degree, or a Sophia Center Certificate, in two years. Structured around modules of four intensive weekends per semester, as well as the Summer Institute, the weekend program utilizes seminars, focused dialogues with visiting faculty, creative process classes, peer-group reflection, and written and creative responses to explore the Sophia curriculum. Weekend program students have a unique opportunity to experience and reflect upon the lessons of this curriculum in the

context of their daily working lives. On-campus housing is available for weekend students who commute from outside the Bay Area.

Certificate in Culture and Spirituality

Certificate students participate in the same courses as Master’s candidates (both in nine-month residential and two-year Weekend program format); they do not create a final project nor write a major course paper. They receive a credit/no credit in all classes. The Certificate requires 27 units of coursework.

Sabbatical Programs

One-term sabbaticals are offered both fall and spring. Students take 13 units of coursework and experience all the elements of the program. Students receive a credit/no credit grade in all courses and do not write the major course paper. A Sabbatical Certificate is granted upon completion.

Summer Institute

A workshop, occasionally offered on the Holy Names University campus, gives participants an experience of the Sophia Center program. It includes plenary presentations, seminar options, creative process classes, and group rituals, as well as time for integration and reflection. Continuing Education Units (CEU) and academic credit (SPRT 292- 3 units) are available upon request.

FACULTY

The Culture and Spirituality programs include internationally renowned scholars in all topic areas. Please contact the Sophia Center at Holy Names University for a list of Visiting and Core faculty for the program.

CONTACT ADMISSIONS

Holy Names University
Office of Adult and Graduate Admissions
3500 Mountain Boulevard
Oakland, California 94619
(800) 430-1321
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the program, or questions, please contact:

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