Program Assessment Report (two-year report)
Department of History
2006-2008
submitted by Marianne Robins

OUTLINE

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History Department 2006-2008 Report (two years)
Submitted by Marianne Robins
October 2008

Work accomplished by the department in the last two years:

- Finalization of outcomes for majors (first draft 2005, final draft, 2008)
- Evaluation of senior seminar papers with a rubric, modified in 2007 (goal I, outcomes 1, 2, 3)
- Evaluation of HIS 121 primary source analysis papers with a rubric (drafted 2008, Goal I, outcome 1a)
- Analysis of HIS 1 papers (goal I, outcomes 1, 2, 3)
- Analysis of pre and post tests in History 10 (goal 2, outcomes 1 & 2)
- Analysis of papers related to the Liberal Arts (goal 3, outcomes 2, 3 and 4)
- Analysis of presentations and final papers in History 198 (goal 3)

Conclusions:

- Articulation of our goals and outcomes: turn our attention to student performance on 2 and 3
- 198 assessment: 2006 assessment led to a modification of the rubric for goal 1, the assignments connected to goal 3 (a final paper was substituted to a short portion of the final presentation)
- 121 assessment: assessment prior to 2008 led to the drafting of a rubric that was sent to the GE committee for classes under the “Thinking Historically” category. It led to a modification of assignments (from short responses to papers devoted to primary source analysis)
- History 1 assessment led to a modification of teaching strategies in this class and reinforced the need for further training of our students in primary source analysis
- History 10 assessment (on goal 2) indicated that:
  - students improve considerably more in the Fall than in the Spring
  - students improve more in geographical literacy than in their chronological literacy
  - the department discussed this and concluded that, if chronological literacy is indeed central to our mission, we might need to change testing strategies in the course. The department will review the list of movements and eras it identified as “core chronological knowledge” (appendix 8) and discuss assessment strategies for the semesters following this Fall.
  - The department is not sure at this point how to address the discrepancy between the Fall and the Spring results.
  - While the test on geographical literacy does give us some indication of this, we need to find ways of assessing what is perhaps the most important aspect of History 10, its Global Perspective. A few questions that can help guide the process: What do we mean/seek to accomplish in cultivating a “global perspective?” What proportions of History 10 should be devoted to each world
area? What kinds of interconnections do we wish to bring to light in teaching History 10? How do we measure competency in this aspect of the course based on the definition we adopt?

- History 10 assessment (on goal 3) indicated that:
  - Each professor adopted a different method for measuring improvement in this area. This accounts for the difficulty in interpreting results. In general, it appears that few students demonstrated an “A” level grasp of the meaning of the Christian Liberal Arts and its relevance to “other areas of life.” Given the lack of clarity among students, several alternative approaches may be in order:
  - We may require a more deliberate and extensive incorporation of the ‘liberal arts’ concept into pedagogy and writing assignments throughout the semester.
  - We may need to create greater uniformity among faculty in their ways of assessing students’ grasp/application of their Christian liberal arts education. Rather than allowing for many soft and varied definitions in the different assignments, we may wish to create a single overarching rubric from which a single assignment is crafted for all classes.

**Other Next Steps**

In addition to the suggestions above, the department needs to start thinking about the areas listed under the program review template. It needs to develop a sustainable plan for assessment of its goals and the review of its program.
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<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>The department wanted to see at least 75% of the students enrolled in History 198 use primary sources that are “reasonably available” in their final project</td>
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INTRODUCTION

This report will review the activities of the History department in assessment and program review over the last two years. The activities listed were completed under the exiting chair, Marianne Robins.

We continue to make significant progress in assessing its teaching effectiveness. We are using a clear grading rubric for our senior seminar, and we reflected on the data this generated in HIS 198—as we planned in the 2006 report. Furthermore, instructors in HIS 198 (Chandra Mallampalli and Alister Chapman) have modified the course content to make it more effective in teaching students how to integrate the major discipline and to consider issues of vocation. We continue to monitor student progress in analyzing primary sources in particular (in HIS 121), and Marianne has developed a rubric for primary source analysis.

Following the recommendation of the PRC in 2007 (see appendix 1), we are currently working on assessing other student learning outcomes. We have expanded our assessment strategies to include a review of the content in HIS 10 (Christian Perspectives on World History). We are also working on clarifying the outcomes for HIS 10 as they relate to the “introduction to the liberal arts” section of the course in particular. The department devoted significant time to conversations on this; the time commitment went far beyond the two department meetings each semester stated in the 2006 report. We also made sure that its part-time faculty were fully included in the conversation, given the role that this faculty has played in teaching the course this last year.

Finally, the department chair started working on collecting data for the six year report due in 2012.

MISSION STATEMENT AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In 2006-2007, the department refined its understanding of the major students learning outcomes listed under “skills”. The criteria for “content” and “virtues” still needed to be clarified. This last year, the department worked more specifically on items 1 and 2 under “content” and on items 1 and 3 under “virtues”. The list of goals reflected the department’s strong dedication to its offerings in World History, but did not account for the actual curriculum of the department. This meant that we needed to modify some of our goals to reflect more accurately our offerings. We intentionally focused on the outcomes that were most commonly agreed upon because one of our department members was gone for the academic year 2007-2008, while another one was gone in the Fall. It did not seem that refining the outcomes with half of the department members present was appropriate.

In July, August and September 2008, the department met to revise and expand the mission statement and the department student learning outcomes. What follows is the result of multiple conversations in the department.

Mission statement

The History Department at Westmont believes that the study of the past is foundational for a
thoughtful and compassionate life. We invite students to examine people, periods, and places that are very different from those they are familiar with, helping them to see how people are shaped by particular contexts. This process enables students to engage people and societies in the present with the sort of humility, empathy, and compassion to which Scripture calls us. The Perspectives on World History course is the core of our program for engaging the whole student body in this way of thinking, while our majors receive more detailed instruction on the practice of history and a deeper and broader understanding of global history. They also develop skills in reading, research, and writing that equip them for a range of careers. We want all our students to be fascinated by the past and to become more curious about the world, past and present.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Historical Skills

1. Reading:
   1. A History graduates should know how to read a primary source historically and critically. More particularly, they should be able to ask basic questions of the source; assess how their own background shapes their interpretation; and draw conclusions about the reliability and usefulness of the source.
   2. Graduates should be able to read books and articles by historians with confidence and competence. More specifically, they should be able to classify a secondary source; summarize it; identify its main thesis or argument; engage in informed criticism; and make a final assessment of its value. These skills are important not only for written assignments, but also for class discussions.

2. Research: To be effective historical researchers, graduates must be able to select and appropriate research topic; locate relevant sources; and determine the character of the existing historiography on their topic.

3. Writing: To write a good history paper, graduates must be able to develop an argument; make use of different forms of historical writing; write in an appropriate manner; and provide the requisite scholarly apparatus.

4. Critical skills: Students will exhibit a balance of healthy skepticism and interpretive confidence in their historical work

2. Historical Content

1. Chronology: Students will develop the ability to place important people, patterns and events in their proper chronological contexts. Understanding distinctions between ancient, medieval, early modern and modern periods while critically assessing such divisions of historical time are part of this skill package. The ability to locate such developments as agricultural and industrial revolutions, print media, empires and “ages” of imperialism, Reformation, Enlightenment, charismatic leaders, and the emergence of modern nation states are vital to a student’s grasp of historical chronology.
2. **Geography:** Through the study of maps and other descriptions of physical space, students will acquire an understanding of the physical world, its principal divisions (continents, territories, and other demarcations of land masses), and their unique characteristics as these have evolved over time. Students also will develop a sense of how geography has influenced the unique characteristics of human societies.

3. **Genres:** Students will understand the different types or approaches to history. This includes both content oriented and theoretical distinctions. Familiarity with important works in political, social, religious and economic history, as examples, acquaints students with wide ranging emphases in history, recognizing the contribution that each approach makes to the field. Exposure to imperialist, “whig,” feminist, post-colonial, Marxist, and/or postmodern approaches to historical writing is vital to understanding the different lenses through which historians examine the past.

### 3. Christian Orientation

1. **Faith and History:** Students will understand the value of historical study for Christians. In particular, they will consider the differences their Christian faith makes for their study of the past.

2. **Virtues:** Within and beyond the classroom, students will cultivate virtues essential to the study of history, including honesty, humility, and empathy.

3. **Christian Vocation:** Students will develop a sense of Christian vocation, drawing connections between their historical study and their responsibilities in the world.

4. **Life-Long Learning:** Students will develop into lovers of learning for the rest of their lives, certainly for their own sake, but also for the benefit of those around them, and ultimately, for the kingdom of God.

While the goals stated are clearly discipline specific, they are connected to several institutional learning goals.

For the connection between the departmental goals and the institutional learning standards, please see the chart provided at the end of this report.
Data and Interpretation

The data for this report is found:

- For the most important documents, in the appendices
- For department meeting notes, on the CD-rom handed out with the report
- For student papers not available electronically, in the department’s office

The CD-rom includes all the electronic documents used for this report (the report itself, the appendices and all scanned student work).

I. Competency in Historical Methodology

- **HIS 198 Fall 2006**
  The result of the Fall 2006 assessment were presented at the poster session in the Spring of 2007. The poster summarizes our method, results and interpretation –see appendix 2. It results from several discussions in the department (December 2006-January 2007 –see department meeting notes).

- **HIS198: Fall 2007**
  1. In the Spring of 2008, Alister Chapman turned in a series of reflections on HIS 198 (see appendix 3)
  2. Dr. Chapman continued to use the rubric to analyze the seminar papers (10 papers). Here are his observations and conclusions:

    “History 198 continues to provide an excellent opportunity for our department to assess our students’ abilities at the end or near the end of their major. In particular, the major research paper in the course requires them to show off their maturing historical skills.

    This autumn, we again used the grading rubric that we had developed last year. Students received not only detailed comments on their work but also a copy of the rubric used in determining their grades. The rubric continues to prove an appropriate tool for assessing learning outcomes. In this report, I will tie my comments to the four fundamental skills specified in our “Skills for History Graduates” document.

    **Reading Primary Sources**

    All of the students in the class were able to locate primary sources germane to their topics and to quote them effectively. This is good. But the students found it difficult to integrate primary source analysis into their papers. Quoting the sources was one thing, but most (8 out of 10) of the students struggled to ask relevant, pointed questions of these sources. When pushed and given the opportunity of a rewrite, more students showed that they could do this. But it does seem to be something that they struggle with, despite concerted efforts to work with them on this in the classroom.

    **Reading Secondary Sources**
All of the students were able to identify a historiographical debate and place their paper’s argument in that context. This was encouraging. Several of the students did this in a rather rudimentary fashion—for example, discussing whether Joe McCarthy’s allegations were valid and coming too easily to a comforting conclusion—but others showed some sophistication. There was a temptation to oversimplify others’ arguments and none made an argument that could be described as novel. But it was heartening to see that the fundamental skills of reading and synthesis were firmly in place.

**Historical Research**

The students’ independent historical research was impressive. In History 198, students select their own topic and have to locate their own source material. Their success in doing this last semester was especially noteworthy given that more than half of them were working on topics with no resident faculty member to help them along. One student fell behind at the beginning of the semester due to personal reasons and struggled to get to grips with her sources, and another worked with too limited a range of sources on his topic, but other than that the class did a fine job of collecting the material that they needed for their papers.

**Writing**

Most students were able to construct a coherent argument and carry it through a lengthy (twenty-five page) paper. Six out of ten students produced an argument that was superior in clarity and sophistication. For the most part, the papers were admirably clear and well-organized, and although some did get lost along the way this was another area of real strength.

**Conclusion**

These results are generally encouraging. They show that we are doing a good job teaching the students the skills that we have identified as core for our major. The major area of concern is the students’ ability to analyze primary documents in the context of their papers. As a department, we will have to discuss how to equip our students to do this better. This will likely involve more instruction in History 1 and History 198 and also more primary source work in the upper division survey courses”.

3. The department met on March 4, 2008 to attribute the Wilt Prize to one of the students. We discussed the strengths and liabilities of the three best papers. Overall, the writing skills of students were strong (organization, argument, style); the use of primary sources seemed was the area that needed most improvement (in some cases because primary sources were difficult to identified, in others because the student had failed to work with them thoroughly). Two students made good use of the option to revise the paper – see department meeting notes for evidence of departmental discussions.

- **Primary Source analysis: HIS 1 and HIS 121**
  In the Spring of 2008, Alister Chapman assessed students’ skills in this area in History 1. Here is the conclusion of his report (the full report is available in appendix 3)
    - In general, the results of this exercise were encouraging. By the end of the semester, students clearly knew what to do when presented with a primary document. Whether they remember that when they come to their upper-division courses is another
matter, but the exposure to numerous primary sources over the semester and the consistent use of the same questions should help.

- What is more worrying is that students still seem to find it difficult to integrate primary source analysis into their papers. Grades for primary source analysis in the final paper in History 1 were much poorer than in the final exam: 3 A’s, 3 B’s, 3 C’s, and 7 D’s. However, once students were given the opportunity to rewrite the papers, there was a significant improvement: of the 13 who took advantage of the rewrite, the grades for primary source analysis were 5 A’s, 5 B’s, 1 C, and 2 D’s. This was after a meeting with me in which I made very specific suggestions on how they could expand on some of the primary documents they had included to provide more analysis. But I need to find a better way to get them to do this the first time round. This is something we talked about at length in class, but they evidently still need more help. That is something to work on when I teach History 1 again this coming Spring.

In the Spring 2007, Marianne Robins developed a grading rubric for primary source analysis (see appendix 4). To assess students’ performance, I used primary source analyses done at home (as part of daily assignments) and during the final exam. The results were disappointing—only one out of 15 students produced a superior analysis and over 75% of students’ work ranked in the “needs help” category. This led me to change the format of the assignment the following Spring.

In the Spring 2008, instead of using daily assignments as the basis for training and evaluation, I assigned a primary source analysis paper (see appendix 4 for a description of the assignment and the rubric). After they completed the assignment, students received the rubric with relevant examples from the text they analyzed. To reinforce the teaching, I used the same rubric to grade the student’s research project that including five primary sources. This increased students’ performance on the final project, and somewhat their ability to link analysis of primary sources with secondary historical sources. Among the surprising findings of this assessment is the fact that students’ major or prior exposure to historical methods did not seem to matter for this exercise (non-majors or new majors did almost as well as more advanced majors). Given the number of students in the class (14), I would not draw too strong of a conclusion from this. It would be interesting to see if the skills gained in this class will be transferred into HIS 198 (5 out of 14 students will take HIS 198 in the Fall; 2 will take it later on since they are new majors).

I would definitely keep the paper as part of the assignments, but lighten the daily load of notes so as to allow for deeper analyses to be turned in at regular, but more spaced out intervals. This should help students read more thoroughly a more limited number of sources. Assigning two students to each source might relieve the load and ensure better performance at the same time. In history 198, we will need to continue emphasizing the connection between primary source analysis and information obtained through secondary sources.

II. Integrating the Major Discipline
History 198 is the capstone course for history majors. In the language of the general education program, it has two purposes: to give students an opportunity to produce and present a significant piece of independent research, and to “integrate the major discipline.” This latter phrase refers to the desire to help students nearing the end of their time at Westmont to think about how history, Christianity, and the liberal arts relate to one another. It focuses upon students’ abilities to see their discipline (in this case, History) whole, to see History in relation to the broader liberal arts, and to see History in relation to Christian faith.

Various new strategies were employed in History 198 in the Fall of 2006 and 2007 to assess student development in this area.

- **HIS 198, Fall 2006**
  
  In 2006, students were required to reflect on this question at the end of their paper presentations (see appendix 5 for a description of the guidelines). Our assessment of these reflections remarked that they tended to be underdeveloped—unsurprisingly given that they made their presentations as they were putting the finishes touches to their research projects. Also, the format did not allow for students to develop serious reflection on this issues and most students limited their comments to a few remarks. Notes on students presentations are included in the CD-rom.

  Chandra Mallampalli’s report on the presentations states:

  Our strategy for assessing our History 198 students’ capacity to integrate the major discipline was to require them to relate their projects to broader themes of the Christian liberal arts. More specifically, students were asked to devote the last 5 minutes of their 15 minute presentations to addressing the following question:

  **In what ways does your research project reflect or relate to the larger aims of a Christian liberal arts college?**

  The 16 students who gave oral presentations reflected varying capacities to address the question in a clear and well-informed manner. Some students forgot to include this in their presentation, and tacked it on after they were prompted to do so during questions. In such instances, it was clear that some students had only a vague idea of what the question entailed. The following general observations can be made about their responses:

  1. **Subjective interpretation:** Some students understood the question to be asking what their topics meant to them personally. Rather than linking the question to the curricular aims of Westmont College, they linked it to their faith journey or their development of their personal academic interests. For instance, one student commented, “It helps me understand who I am and my socialization…Socialization process helps me understand my Christian identity – Christian doctrine and love for cars.” Another student commented, “[It taught me] the ability not to blame, but the importance to seek truth and justice…” Another student commented, “I chose Westmont to get out of environment at home. This project [similarly] helped me [in

  2. **Ethical reflection:** Other students understood the question to be asking them to apply their research project to some issue of ethical importance. One student, for instance responded that her project highlighted “the moral role of leaders… what
should it be?” Another student commented that his project sparked reflection on “what it means to love one’s neighbor” and the human tendency to “demonize” others. A third student stated that her project revealed “how bad a society can be no matter how ideal it can sound.”

3. **Reversion to substantive themes of term paper and their significance:** Rather than speaking directly to the meaning of Christian liberal arts, some students talked about the wider significance of their paper. This, no doubt, could overlap with the wider mission of Westmont College, but usually reflected only a small degree of overlap. One example of a reply that was clearly on the right track was, “What is a civilization? Advancement? I came to see it as almost a nationalism question. What is a race?” Another student posed the question, “How do we understand our political context?”

In sum, students displayed varying degrees of understanding about how their project related to the wider aims of a Christian liberal arts college. Their answers reflected tendencies toward personalizing, moralizing or reversion to the substantive themes of their projects; all of which no doubt are encompassed in the mission of the college, yet fall short of a broader, integrated vision that stood behind the question.

Some suggestions for improving the quality of this aspect of their thinking are as follows:

1. Stating more clearly and explicitly what is meant by the question and what is expected in a response. This could involve further required reading and reflection on the meaning of the Christian Liberal Arts.

2. Asking students to address these questions in the body of their research paper, particularly in the conclusion. This would force them to speak more clearly to the issues at hand and put faculty in a better position to assess their grasp of the Christian liberal arts.

3. Requiring students to submit in writing a separate short essay relating their project to the mission of the Christian liberal arts.

- **HIS 198, Fall 2007**
  Alister Chapman’s report:
  I decided to assign a take-home final, worth 15% of their grade, in which they would be asked to address the question at more length and perhaps more leisure (see prompt in appendix 6). We had a series of readings and discussions over the course of the semester relating to the relationships between Christianity, history, and the liberal arts; in this final assignment, students were required to bring together their thinking on these questions.

  Overall, the students’ performance on this assignment was good if not exceptional. Of the ten students, three received a B+, three a B, two a B-, and one a C+. In many cases the students’ writing seemed tired as much as anything—the final push in a demanding semester, not a whimper but hardly a bang. I found this especially unsurprising given the topic—many students seem to find discussing what amounts to philosophies of education and history either difficult, uninteresting, or both.
Having said that, students did demonstrate a level of maturity in their thinking on these questions that I found encouraging. This was particularly the case on the relationship between Christianity and history, a topic which students will have discussed in most if not all of their history classes here. Indeed, several students were able to provide specific examples of classes, readings, and assignments that had stretched their thinking on the subject (all of the professors in the department were mentioned by name). Every student was able to make several connections between Christianity and history, ranging from the self-understanding, humility, and gratitude history engenders, to the way it helps us to understand and therefore love others, to the need for an appreciation of the complexity of human action and interaction.

Students’ comments on the value of a liberal arts education were, interestingly, frequently similar to their comments on the value of studying history for the Christian. Several wrote of the humility and appreciation for complexity that such an education encourages. We discussed the nature of a liberal arts education less this semester than the relationship between history and Christianity, but an article by Wolterstorff that we read as a class should have provided ample grist for sustained thinking on this question. It seems that even at the end of their time at Westmont, most of our students find it difficult to go beyond fairly bland descriptions of the genre of their education at Westmont. Part of the difficulty here may lie in disagreements among the faculty about what precisely a Christian liberal arts education is.

In conclusion, I was heartened by the students’ ability to write maturely about the value of history to Christians. The challenge in future years will be how to help them to write more convincingly about Christianity and the liberal arts. Only then will this course serve effectively as a capstone to their education and not just to their major.

- Integrating the Major Discipline: the issue of vocation

In April 2007, the history department invited all of our graduating seniors to one of the faculty homes for dessert and an evening of reflection on their vocational plans and concerns. All four full-time history faculty attended along with approximately three-quarters of our graduating seniors. The faculty’s motivation for having such an evening was to provide a fuller occasion than the Senior Breakfast (held during graduation weekend) to hear from our seniors about their hopes and fears concerning the future. Our desire was to create a reasonably safe and affirming environment within which students would feel free to talk honestly about what they had gained from their Westmont education, and specifically their history major, but even more, where they saw themselves going in the immediate and perhaps more distant future. An opportunity was afforded for each of them to speak about their plans post-graduation and all those who were present willingly contributed. There was also a chance for them to ask the faculty questions about their sense of vocation and about other practical matters and here again, many students joined in. Overall, the evening proved successful at giving the faculty greater knowledge of what our graduating seniors appreciated about the department and their plans for the future, gave these seniors a chance to articulate for themselves, their peers, and their faculty their vocational aspirations and quandaries, and gave to both faculty and students a renewed sense of the high regard in which they are held.
by the other. The event also reinforced the department’s sense that we need to continue to develop additional means for assisting students in their life and vocational planning.

To help students develop in this area, Alister Chapman asked students in HIS 198 to take two tests in the Career and Life Planning office (the Strong Interest Inventory and the Myers Briggs). He invited the Director of the Life Planning Office to come and talk to the students and met individually with them to discuss the results of their tests.

**HISTORY 10**

In the Fall of 2006 and the Spring of 2007, the department worked on defining outcomes for History 10 (Christian Perspectives on World History). It worked off of previous collaborative reflections that occurred when the Faculty revised General Education requirements (see Course description and template for HIS 10 –appendix 7. The discussions started in the Fall included adjuncts (Jana Mullen) as well as tenure-track faculty who shared their current practices in the class (see History department meeting notes, December 2006, CD-Rom). In March and April 2007, we worked on the outcomes. In April 2007, we articulated three outcomes for the course:

1. **Knowledge**
   - Acquire a general literacy about the locations, the events, the people and the ideas in world history from 1500-present.
   - Be familiar with main narratives in the field of world history (e.g. modernity, interdependence, globalization) -See details in appendix 8

2. **Global Perspective**
   - Students will be able to describe, with examples, the world’s religious and cultural diversity, and will appreciate the complexity within various world cultures.
   - Students will be able to reflect comparatively on their own culture in a world context
   - Students will be able to articulate a relationship between a global issue and their personal commitment and/or vocational choices

Therefore, students will be able to locate themselves in the community of the living and the dead - See appendix 9 –this is still work in progress

3. **Christian Liberal Arts**
   - Grow in their understanding of the meaning and value of their education in a Christian Liberal Arts college -See appendix 10: we are still struggling to articulate reasonable outcomes for this category. Appendix 10 provides two ways to frame the outcomes and a list of questions we are still working to resolve

In the 2007-2008 academic year, we focused on assessing outcomes 1 and 3 –since outcome 2 needs some work.

**Knowledge**
In the Summer 2007, we put together a short pre- and post-test to assess the progress of our students in geographical and chronological literacy (see appendix 11 for a copy of the test). The test was administered on the first day of class and again in the last week of class. In the Fall, three sections took the test, and in the Spring four sections took the test. Please see the results for each semester on the following page (a list of results for each section and a calculation of average grades are available on the CD Rom).

Overall, here are the striking features of the results:

- students improved their scores in all sections and both semesters. However
  - students scores and improvements were markedly higher in the Fall semester
  - students’ chronological literacy does not improve as much as geographical literacy; in some cases, the improvement is extremely limited.

- In light of these results, there appears to be a need to improve the way we cultivate chronological awareness among our students. Either that or we need to find a more effective tool for measuring exactly what is being achieved in our history courses in terms of knowledge and chronology. It may be the case that chronology may need to be mediated/spelled out as a specific goal in history course syllabi and that faculty need to better explain expectations in this area throughout the course. Alternately, we may need to ask whether the tool we have used to measure chronological knowledge provides an accurate measurement of real growth. Other questions: What degree of parity exists in the way historical knowledge is measured in History 10 exams given by the different faculty? What accounts for varying degree of improvement in the three classes both in Fall and Spring?

- It appears that we need to find ways of compensating for the clear lag in performance during spring semester. Should this entail more rigorous standards to maintain high achievement?
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Christian Liberal Arts

In the Fall 2007, all instructors used specific assignment to assess student progress in their “understanding of the meaning and value of their education in a Christian Liberal Arts college.” Each of us used different tools, and this might be a reason for the difficulty of comparing results. Overall, the department needs to identify more assessable goals so as to reach clearer conclusions.

1. We started with the following observation:
   We claim that we provide a transforming educational experience in that it offers students the chance to “integrate their faith and their education”. Another way of putting it would be: “Christian liberal arts education integrates one’s academic life with other areas of life—work, civic involvement, leisure, and especially spiritual development—into a seamless whole History 10 will contribute to this integration by inviting students to consider the relationship between their life, and particularly their life as Christians and their education.”

2. We ask the following question: what does that mean exactly for students?

   In the 2007 Fall semester, the history department considered the ways in which students express the connection between their life as Christians and their education by reviewing final papers written by over 200 students in History 10. The prompts for this final assignments were different but aimed at the same question. All the prompts are included in appendix 12.

3. The reports from each of the four instructors are available in appendices 13 (Monica Orozco), 14 (Alister Chapman), 15 (Jon Lemmond) and 16 (Marianne Robins).

   What follows are the conclusions from the reports.

**History 10-1 Monica Orozco**

In a very unscientific analysis, I found that the first round (30 of entries were rather superficial. I wrote specific comments on these and returned them. While time-consuming, it resulted in much more thoughtful responses in the subsequent entries. My estimate is that one-third of the 54 students expressed an understanding of the integrative nature of a liberal arts education and provided specific examples of how the knowledge they acquired had influenced them and would continue to influence them.

These journal entries were so thoughtful that I believe they were a factor in raising grades for many students. The journal was worth 15%.

Despite having these questions in advance, many of the responses were superficial.

5 A
16 B’s
Based on my experiences from last semester, I have made several adjustments. I have included more specific prompts in all assignments asking the students to discuss the nature of a Christian liberal arts education, and how they will integrate the knowledge they acquire in their lives outside of academia. I also had a much more structured initial discussion about the liberal arts and a Christian liberal arts education using the resources available.

My sense is that as the result of some changes from fall semester to spring, the students’ responses in discussion and assignment shows that they have tried to integrate what they are learning into their life in some way. My goal in the fall is to integrate more discussions and reading material that specifically addresses various debates about a Christian liberal arts education and to integrate much more discussion. In addition, in order to establish some kind of base proficiency in historical knowledge, I am adjusting my midterm and final exam to include sections testing chronology and specific dates. Previously my test have included long and short essay and map sections. I will also be integrating more quizzes in order to emphasize dates and geography more. I will also limit the essays to short essays, using paper assignments to allow the students to develop their skills in writing longer essays.

**History 10-2 Alister Chapman**

To assess this aspect of the course, I looked at the sections of their final papers in which they dealt with their education. I graded them on their ability to reflect intelligently on the Christian liberal arts, to go beyond mere banalities (“broad… interdisciplinary… preparing for a vocation”) and to “integrate… academic life with other areas of life.” The grades broke down as follows (47 papers):

Many students were clearly able to write convincingly on this topic, and many were able to relate their education to life. In most instances, the students who were able to do this integration spoke about their place in the world as an educated Christian, something which reflects my emphasis in the course. There were a number of students (in the C range) whose comments were on the banal end of the spectrum (though it should be noted that I had more students than usual who typically fell into this grade bracket). What is perhaps most marked, however, is how few students were able to write at an A standard on this topic.

Why? What could be done to help more students to think and communicate well on the nature and purpose of a Christian liberal arts education? One problem this past semester was that I changed the nature of the brief paper on the Christian liberal arts, assigning readings but not requiring separate journal entries on them. The result was that many in the class, by their own admission, completed the assignment with minimal attention to the readings. I need to find a more effective way of helping them to think more carefully on the subject earlier in the semester.

---

1 Quotation taken from our departmental outcomes for History 10.
It also became clear to me that many students hear about the Christian liberal arts a lot during their time at Westmont. I have a disproportionate number of upper-classmen, and they seemed a little jaded when the discussion came up. Recognizing that is helpful; what it does not explain is why they failed to engage with readings that should have stretched their thinking on what is apparently a well-worn topic. I wonder whether part of the difficulty is that Westmont faculty hold divergent positions on what a liberal arts education is (something that was made clear to me in a faculty reading group this semester on Bruce Kimball’s *Orators and Philosophers*), and so the students are getting an uncertain sound.

In sum, I am encouraged that many of our students are able to think critically and creatively about the education they are receiving. I need to work harder on communicating clearly with them on this topic, and providing ways in which students can push their own thinking on it forward.

**HIS 10-3: Jon Lemmond**

In this course I focused on the integration of academic life and other areas (work, civic involvement, spiritual development, etc.) by engaging three particular themes: poverty and economic development, just peacemaking, and gender equality. These three themes were engaged in lectures, the course reader, journal writing and in-class discussions (see appendix for actual assignments). These three themes also functioned as “responsibility tracks.” Every student voluntarily chose one of the three themes for more focused writing and reflection (reading a book on the subject and writing one group paper and one final personal essay).

When assessing integration there are a number of positive elements. First, students often admitted that they now could engage the problem more thoughtfully and practically. Many of them mentioned that they felt both more aware and more empowered to think about, and act on, their responsibility track. This is positive because often I have witnessed that greater awareness and increased action do not necessarily go together – sometimes more knowledge can make a problem feel more overwhelming. In part, I believe this was because they were asked to focus upon a single issue rather the general category of “social responsibility.” Second, many acknowledged that they had been taught only one Christian position relating to their track and now recognized, and even agreed with, an alternative Christian vision. Third, students did an excellent job integrating the class material, their personal histories, and the contemporary issues associated with their track.

There are also a number of elements that could be improved upon. First, students were not asked explicitly to engage how a Christian liberal arts program allows them to better respond to their responsibility track. While the question is implied by the assignment, many focused on the topic from only a personal and historical perspective. Second, due to a failure on my part when introducing each track, poverty and economic development had an excessive amount of students (approx. 75% of the class) which meant that many chose the topic due to the size of the book rather than their interests in the topic. Third, due to the nature of this class in particular (very quiet and mostly freshmen), many students felt like their was a specific political agenda on my part and thus refused to consider other options because they felt manipulated. I exacerbated this feeling by taking certain views and presenting them strongly in class. I did so to force students to talk which, of course, did not work.
In response to this assessment I will:
1. add Chris Hoeckley’s *Liberal Arts Traditions and Christian Higher Education: A Brief Guide* to my reader and ask students to consider the role of the Christian liberal arts and its connection to their responsibility track
2. offer a better introduction to the assignment stressing personal interest so that students pick a topic that they can be excited about
3. be more cognizant of competing viewpoints with respect to each track and more empathic toward other perspectives

**History 10-4 Marianne Robins**

I collected 55 final papers for this assessment. Many of the students listed as sophomores or juniors are transfer students in their first semester at Westmont College. I estimate the number of “first semester” students in the class at 45 (give or take one student)—the class was 80% new to the campus. 29 papers were reviewed closely to identify more precisely students’ understanding of their Christian Liberal Arts education—the papers selected were broadly representative of the grades assigned in the class -A (4), A-(1), B+(8), B(1) B- (7), C+(5) C(3). Students were also broadly representative of their class level. I focused on two aspects of the question:
- What elements did students chose to include? Did they relate those elements to particular features of their lives?
- Did they see their education as transformative? If so, in what ways did they understand their education to be transformative?

Overall, students defined “Christian education” is a variety of ways, ranging from “Christian community” to “presence of role models” and “particular elements of the curriculum”. Typically, they mentioned one of the other of those features, but not all. Perhaps a more thorough examination of the complexity of a Christian education (including possible Christian approaches to education) could be helpful. The range of understanding of what the “Christian life” means is very broad among students (from the exercise of virtue in relationships, studies, to church involvement, and creed)—here again, it might be helpful to offer students an occasion for “classifying” possible answers to this question.

Students were also able to identify and develop some features of a liberal arts education, and do very well at relating the class material to the question. They do well considering the fact that most of them were in their first semester at Westmont.

Overall, this assignment did not specifically ask students to reflect on the transformative aspect of their education. However, their previous paper was more helpful in helping me identify this. I decided to use this assignment to answer this question. Most students reflected on the ways in which knowledge of the world is transformative, in conjunction with a reflection on Christian spirituality. Different students resonated with different spiritual traditions: engagement and activism for some, via negativa for others, but what is interesting is the fact that most students did speak of some sort of change. Can we identify different spiritual traditions at work here?
Overall, my concerns are twofold: students did not account for the complexity of the topic and the vast number of ways it could be addressed—perhaps this is too ambitious of a project at that stage. The great variety of responses is interesting, but not connected in students’ mind to their particular context (theological, confessional…). Perhaps one of our goals could be to let this emerge more clearly—and to present in a more straightforward manner different Christian approaches to life and the Liberal Arts.

Conclusions
It is clear that this assessment encouraged all of us to modify our teaching to be more affective—see all reports. The changes occurred the very next semester for faculty teaching the same course in the Spring 2008.

The department met to discuss the results of this assessment in January 2008 (see meeting notes in appendix 17). We reach conclusions on the goals for the class and articulated revised goals:

- Students will grow in their understanding of the meaning and value of their education in a Christian Liberal Arts college. In particular, they:
  - will be able to identify different understandings of the Christian Liberal Arts—recognize that there are different understandings.
  - will connect more closely their aspirations, their faith, and their life to their education. In this course, this will include:
    - the students’ ability to articulate a relationship between a global issue they encountered in the class and their personal convictions and/or vocational choices.
    - the students’ ability to develop a deep appreciation for the past as a foreign country and to start developing habits of contextual thinking.

NEXT STEPS

Follow up on History 10 assessment

Chronology:
The department acknowledge that this should be a focus of the course. We need to be more attentive to this. The department will review the list of movements and eras it identified as “core chronological knowledge” (appendix 8) and discuss assessment strategies for the semesters following this Fall.

Geography:
We want to continue making this a priority. We will discuss assessment strategies for the semesters following this Fall.
How to address the difference between Fall and Spring? This is not clear; it seems like more of an institutional issue.

Liberal Arts:
In a last meeting before we turned in the report, the department discussed the following:

1. Each professor adopted a different method for measuring improvement in this area. This accounts for the difficulty in interpreting results. In general, it appears that few students demonstrated an “A” level grasp of the meaning of the Christian Liberal Arts and its relevance to “other areas of life.” Given the lack of clarity among students, several alternative approaches may be in order:
   a. We may require a more deliberate and extensive incorporation of the ‘liberal arts’ concept into pedagogy and writing assignments throughout the semester.
   b. We may need to create greater uniformity among faculty in their ways of assessing students’ grasp/application of their Christian liberal arts education. Rather than allowing for many soft and varied definitions in the different assignments, we may wish to create a single overarching rubric from which a single assignment is crafted for all classes.

What is the next step? We agree on what we want to know:
- How well do students know what a Liberal Arts education is?
- How well can they apply this concept to life/faith etc.?

We need to have further departmental conversations on the Liberal Arts; we need figure out a benchmark (for students’ understanding of the Liberal Arts), though we can allow for some variations among us on the ways in which we understand the application of this concept to life.

In meetings this coming semester, the department will need to discuss:
- how it might continue assessment in the skill area of our goals
- how it wants to schedule the assessment of all the goals listed for our program
- the following point for history 10 (from Chandra Mallampalli’s memo): in addition to the recommendations for points 1 and 3 above, we need to find ways of assessing what is perhaps the most important aspect of History 10, its Global Perspective. A few questions that can help guide the process: What do we mean/seek to accomplish in cultivating a “global perspective”? What proportions of History 10 should be devoted to each world area? What kinds of interconnections do we wish to bring to light in teaching History 10? How do we measure competency in this aspect of the course based on the definition we adopt?
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Benchmark

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Appendices

20. Laura Montgomery’s response to our 2006 5-year report
21. Spring 2007 Poster
22. General remarks on History 198
23. History 121: Primary Source Analysis Paper and Rubric
24. History 198, Fall 2006; Presentation Guidelines
25. History 198, Fall 2007: Take-Home Final Guidelines
26. Course Description and Template for HIS 10
27. Departmental Outcomes for HIS 10 –Knowledge, April 2007
29. Departmental Outcomes for HIS 10 –Christian Liberal Arts, April 2007
30. Pre and post-test for HIS 10-F 2007
31. Prompts for HIS 10 assessment
32. Monica Orozco’s report on HIS 10 assessment (Spring 08)
33. Alister Chapman’s report on HIS 10 assessment (Fall 2007)
34. Jon Lemmond’s report on HIS 10 assessment (Fall 2007)
35. Marianne Robins’ report on HIS 10 assessment (Fall 2007)
36. January meeting note (analysis of HIS 10 assessment)
37. Data analysis on Faculty load
38. Department Review charts, 2007-2008
MEMO

To: History Department

From: Laura Montgomery for the Program Review Committee

Date: 19 January 2007

Re: Five year report for program review

Your five year report represents a clear statement of the student learning outcomes related to historical methodology and a comprehensive assessment of a large body of student work in this area in both lower and upper divisional courses. You have carefully noted and documented those areas where students are doing well and where improvement is needed. Your plans to modify course content and teaching strategies are consistent with the results of your evaluation of student work and appear to be feasible. As you note in your report, the department will continue to monitor progress in the History 198 course. In particular, you should track the effect of any particular change in content or pedagogy on students’ performance.

Given that historical methodology is likely only one area of learning that you expect for your majors, the committee would urge you to articulate a complete set of learning outcomes. Furthermore, as you enter your next five year review cycle, the department should develop an overall strategy to evaluate all student outcomes that is feasible and sustainable. For example, you might continue to assess historical methodology in only History 1 and History 198 rather than in multiple courses. You might then identify other courses that represent one or more of the other learning skills you define. This suggestion is not to imply that every outcome needs to be assessed in every course but that the department selects a subset of its course offerings as the basis of a more comprehensive evaluation plan. Clearly any plan must be feasible given the levels of staffing and other faculty duties.

Your report also displays a high degree of collective discussion of your assessment activities. One point to consider is to have an instructor who did not teach a particular course evaluate a representative sample of student work in addition to that done by the one teaching the course. Such activity would not only strengthen the validity of the findings of the professor who taught the course but also provide the opportunity for sharing successful pedagogical strategies and enhance mutual understanding of the criteria for evaluation.

The committee would like to commend the History Department for the excellent work represented in this report. It is a source of inspiration for the levels of excellence to which we aspire as faculty and to which our students are capable of accomplishing.
Appendix 2: Spring 2007 Poster – HIS 198
What I Changed and What I Learned

I taught History 198 for the first time in the autumn of 2007. What follows is a summary of the alterations I made to the course and an analysis of whether they were profitable.

Challenges

History 198 is an odd beast, but a wonderful one if the students grow to know and love it. The course presents three major challenges:

1. Most of the students’ work is solitary. They work on individual projects and creating class identity and camaraderie can therefore be hard.

2. The students have to sustain their efforts on this one project for the entire semester. It is easy for them to become lost, bored, intimidated along the way, or to simply fall behind.

3. Our hope is that in addition to producing a substantial research project, students will engage in a series of discussions about the nature of history and its relationship to Christianity and the liberal arts. There have been frequent complaints, however, that these readings are either dull or a distraction from the central work of the course or both.

Strategies

How did I attempt to address these challenges?

1. Colleagues teaching the course before me have done much to work on creating a sense of supportive community among the students in HIS198. I sought to do likewise, with some success. Much, of course, depends on the pre-existing relationships between the students, and in this class these were good. I also had several students who were good at making encouraging others, which was a great help. Still, there was a palpable sense among the students that they were facing a particular historical mountain with little company or back-up.

2. How to get the students to keep working? A good class spirit obviously helps, but it is unlikely to sustain them in the dark hours of research. I had no miracle drugs to solve this perennial problem, but I did try two things that seemed to help. One was an intimidating annotated bibliography fairly early on in the semester. At ten pages, single-spaced, and requiring thirty to fifty sources, it was a major mountain for them to climb. Having climbed it, however, the rest of the semester did not seem quite so foreboding. It certainly made it harder for them to procrastinate and get into a hole with no exit. My other strategy was to require them to turn in a section of their paper fairly early. This had the effect of forcing them to begin the writing process earlier than they would otherwise have been likely to, and it allowed for me to give them pointers before they had too much time invested in the final product and before it was too late. I then required a final version, with the possibility of a rewrite, rather
than a rough draft and a final version. On the whole, I was very pleased with how these strategies worked. Only one of the students found herself in a hole, and most finished the semester running rather than limping.

3. I have discussed elsewhere the new assignments I used to help students reflect more carefully on the connections between Christianity, history and the liberal arts. Here I simply want to mention one assignment I used to help students connect our discussions on these questions with their research. Instead of asking them to keep reading journals or bring readings questions with them to class, I asked the students to write a paragraph for each reading reflecting on how the issues it raised related to their particular research topics. The result was not a sudden disappearance of grumbling about this aspect of the course, but I do think it helped the students to put the two parts of the course together.

In addition, I required that students do some work with the Office of Life Planning. In Sprint 2007, our department had a discussion about the extent to which we were preparing our graduates effectively for interviews and jobs after college, and concluded that we could be doing more. In view of that, the students in History 198 this autumn had to complete the Strong Interest Inventory, meet with one of the Office of Life Planning staff, and participate in a couple of in-class activities related to skills and values. These seemed to be a great success: I heard students talking fluently about how their training as historians is preparing them for life beyond college in a way that I had not before. I therefore hope that these activities become a staple of the course in future years.

Concluding Reflections

I don’t think that any wheels were reinvented this past semester, nor do I think that any changes were so successful that others should follow the tentative steps made by this junior faculty member (with the possible exception of the work with the Office of Life Planning).

I do think, though, that we could do more to address the challenges inherent in the course. In conclusion, I want to focus on the problem of loneliness. In part, this is what we want—it gives the students a chance to see whether they like the sort of independence and solitude that research requires, and it gives them a remarkable opportunity to grow in self-discipline and therefore confidence.

However, I wonder whether there might also be a place for an equivalent to History 198 centered on a particular faculty member’s own field of research. Here, students would still need to produce a substantial piece of research but they would be doing so on, say, colonial America, or modern France, and they would be doing so with their peers under the supervision of an expert in the field. One of the problems with History 198 as I see it is that often students choose topics where our department is frankly stretched to provide good supervision—with obvious implications for their experience. When asked, several students said that they would have been interested in a more focused course, with a research component that fulfilled the History 198 requirement. Part of the challenge here is, of course, lack of personnel. Both our ability to supervise our students more effectively and to provide more focused research courses would be increased by additional faculty.

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2 See section ** of this report.
Appendix 4: History 121: Primary Source Analysis Paper and Rubric

Short Paper: Primary Source analysis

Syllabus:

The purpose of the paper is to develop your critical, analytical and historical abilities in engaging with primary texts. It should be about 5 pages in length (1500-1700 words), double-spaced with one inch margin and 12 font type. In writing the analysis paper, you need to follow the following instructions: 1) In one or two paragraphs, provide an analytical and integrated summary of the basic and overall content of the text; that is, identify author’s thesis (or theses) or the main issues/points the text is addressing, including a conclusion (if applicable); basically, what is the point of the author/text? 2) In the rest of the paper, interact with the document. Assess the significance of the text in its historical contexts and reflect upon this –see guidelines for primary text analysis.

Other recommendations:

You need to include an introduction that states a clear thesis concerning your findings –the introduction provides a few sentences on the nature of the text itself, but is mostly concerned with the analysis, and explains with your historical conclusions.

Be sure to use the readings in Kay Slocum to guide your analysis; it does not mean that you should copy what you find in Slocum, but that the textbook provides a context for the analysis of this text.

Consider carefully the guidelines provided (“Using historical sources” & “Skills for History Graduates”).

In your conclusion, state clearly what you have learned from the source and what you understand “thinking historically” to mean as a result.

Should you chose to use other sources of information, you need to include a bibliography and to reference any use of the sources with footnotes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Superior Analysis</th>
<th>Good Analysis</th>
<th>Needs help Analysis</th>
<th>Really Needy Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>The author is clearly identified, the information relevant for a deeper understanding of the source, and further evidence is drawn about the author from the text itself (such as issues of voice, understanding of the author's role...) Bernard self-identifies as an educated and somewhat skeptical member of the clergy (a Northerner)</td>
<td>The author is clearly identified and the information is relevant for a better grasp of the text Bernard is part of the clergy. This is significant because it explains the apologetic nature of the text. It also explains his strong defense of the Church property.</td>
<td>Minimal information that is not connected to the text. Bernard is part of the clergy. This is significant because it explains the apologetic nature of the text.</td>
<td>Bernard is part of the clergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>The audience is clearly identified, the information relevant and further evidence is drawn about the audience from the text itself Student raises questions about possible diffusion of the text internationally to promote this itinerary to Santiago de Compostella</td>
<td>The audience is clearly identified and the information is relevant for a better grasp of the text This is intended for the clergy and this is significant because it helps support the local monks of Conques.</td>
<td>Minimal information that is not connected to the text People who can read, probably members of the clergy.</td>
<td>The audience is Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>The genre is clearly and precisely identified, and the implications of the genre on the reliability and content of the source are understood The text works as both hagiography, chronicle and apology. The author emphasizes the reliability of his story.</td>
<td>The genre is clearly and precisely identified and some implications are drawn Hagiography: because Bernard defends the saint, we need to exercise caution in reading this text.</td>
<td>The genre is very broadly identified, but the category remains too broad to be very useful for a deep analysis of the text This is hagiography.</td>
<td>Narrative source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>The structure, the main argument and the intent of the text are identified. The text is set in multiple contexts, all of them relevant for a deeper understanding of the text (for the Miracles, a combination of religious, social, cultural, political and gender history: see specific elements mentioned in class)</td>
<td>The structure and the main argument of the text are identified. The text is set in some elements of context (for the Miracles, religious history: importance of miracles, pilgrimages, physical presence of the holy, apparitions and dreams, role of saints as instruments of God’s justice, importance of</td>
<td>The text is summarized and understood. Some elements are mentioned, but they are restricted in their scope and in their depth (for instance some political elements, but they remain very broad)</td>
<td>The text is not understood at a basic level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader's Assumptions</td>
<td>The reader’s assumptions are stated and there is a developed reflection on their implications for the interpretation of the text and further reflexion on the one’s own assumptions. I don’t believe in saints’ miracles, so I am skeptical about the veracity of this source. However, I will consider the text for what it tells us about 11th c. Christians’ reasons for believing what they believed and reflect critically on my own assumptions about the world.</td>
<td>The reader’s assumptions are stated and there is an element of reflection on their implications for the interpretation of the text. <em>Ex: as a protestant, I don’t believe in miracles, so I am skeptical about the veracity of this source.</em> However, as a historian, I need to consider the perspective of 11th century Christians who took this belief seriously.</td>
<td>As a protestant, I don’t believe in miracles, so I am skeptical about the veracity of this source. I don’t believe in this. It must be false.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: History 198: Paper Presentation Instructions

Paper presentations begin on November 20 and will occupy our final three class sessions. The history faculty will be present for your presentations. Five to six people will present each session. Your presentations MUST FOLLOW THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS:

1. Your paper presentation should be no more than 15 minutes long, plus a maximum of 10 minutes for discussion. Do not read the full text of your paper. You should prepare a condensed outline of your paper, go through it in advance (like a speech for a comm. class) and time yourself. If you exceed your time limit, I will cut your presentation short. We have many people in our class, whose time cannot be sacrificed because someone else has gone overtime. We will begin at 3:15 sharp.

2. The first 10 minutes of your presentation should state your thesis and how you support it throughout your paper. You should make mention of the sources you use to support your claims. This portion of your presentation should come in a highly condensed form. You’ve submitted several drafts of your thesis to me in the various assignments this semester. This time, you need to give us your very best rendition of your thesis and explain how your paper goes about defending it.

3. The concluding five minutes of your presentation should describe the significance of your research project to the larger purposes of a Christian liberal arts education. What human values, scriptural principles and universal questions (relating to all of us) have emerged from your research? How has your education at Westmont equipped you to handle this topic, and how does your research topic reflect the larger aims of your training at Westmont?

Schedule of presenters:

November 20: Bollinger, Chapman, Cunnings, Delgado, Fluitt

November 27: Hayden, McCormick, Long, Murphy, Lynch, Renz

December 4: Burns, Nixon, Roby, Scott, Snyder, Zulim
“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and people.” Luke 2:52

A final assignment with an advent theme. In Luke 2, the twelve year-old Jesus returns from Jerusalem with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth. There, he grows “in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and people.” As you come toward the end of your time at Westmont, I hope that others can say something similar about you (perhaps not the stature bit), and I want you to reflect on that in this paper. How have you grown in wisdom during your time at Westmont? How have you become more of a person upon whom the Lord and other people can look with favor? And in particular, how has your work as a student of history and of the liberal arts contributed to this growth?

So as well as reflecting broadly on your time at Westmont, you should write about:
  o Why should Christians be interested in the past? And in the writing of history? What virtues has the study of history helped you to develop?
  o In what ways has a liberal arts curriculum helped you to grow?
  o Why does history have an important place in a liberal arts curriculum and therefore in the life of an educated person (like you)?
  o What have you learned that mean you will be able to win the “favor” of people after graduation?
  o What have been some of the most significant learning moments during your time as a history major?
  o What, if anything, has hindered your learning and growing?

First, course texts included two anthologies of essays from leading Historians on key methodological, Historiographical, and philosophical/theological issues. These readings formed the basis of the seminar’s discussions each week and provided students with a regular opportunity to converse with peers and faculty on the nature of the discipline and its connections to liberal learning and Christian faith.
Appendix 7: Course Description and Template for HIS 10

- HIS 10 Perspectives on World History (4) **An exploration of world history during the early modern and modern eras.** Students will consider key themes and texts across a range of world cultures and will be encouraged to develop a thoughtful and historical approach to cultural diversity while gaining a narrative understanding of the sweep of world history. The course will expose students to various Christian perspectives within and upon world history, as well as multiple other perspectives on the past.

Here is a list of common features the course will include regardless of who teaches it within our department:

a) geographical breadth, defined as some coverage of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas
b) chronological breadth across primarily the early modern and modern eras
c) explicit efforts to expose students to various Christian perspectives within and upon world history, as well as multiple other perspectives on the past
d) primarily essay examinations
e) exposure to key primary source texts from a range of world cultures
f) critical discussion of interpretive constructs such as “modernization” and “secularization”
g) enhanced opportunities (compared to IS 16 and IS 17) for group discussion and interaction (sections would ideally be limited to 40 students or less)
h) basic world geography literacy
i) content coverage of the following topics: major tenets of world religions; economic and cultural exchanges across borders; patterns of modernization, imperialism, and de-colonization; scientific and technological revolutions; reigning political and economic ideologies; the role of difference (race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion) in shaping world history; the rise of the nation-state and major geo-political shifts and conflicts
Appendix 8: Departmental Outcomes for HIS 10 –Knowledge, April 2007

1. Students will acquire a chronology of world history since 1400. They should be able to place the topics in the list below in rough chronological order. This document does not define particular dates, but the expectation is that students will be tested on their chronological awareness. In particular, they should where to place the historical phenomena listed under point 5 below.

2. Students will gain a working knowledge of world geography. This will include not only the location of empires, nations, and cities, but also an understanding of how maps tell particular stories of the areas they represent. Students should be able to place the following on a world map:

Contemporary Countries/Cities
- Mexico
- China
- Nepal
- Iraq
- Guatemala
- Beijing
- Thailand
- Iran
- Brazil
- Canton
- New Zealand
- Afghanistan
- Peru
- Vietnam
- Israel
- Saint Petersburg
- Argentina
- Japan
- Egypt
- Venice
- Chile
- Indonesia
- Turkey
- France
- Colombia
- India
- D.R. Congo
- Germany
- Venezuela
- Pakistan
- Nigeria
- Poland
- Haiti
- Bangladesh
- South Africa
- Dominican Republic
- Philippines
- Algeria

Historic Empires/Cities
- Mughal
- Ottoman
- Safavid
- Aztec
- Sokoto Caliphate
- Inca
- Tenochtitlan
- Constantinople
- Asante
- Zulu

Physical Geography
- Atlantic Ocean
- Pacific Ocean
- Indian Ocean
- Suez Canal
- Arabian/Persian Gulf
- Sahara Desert
- Mediterranean Sea

3. Students will learn the basic characteristics and beliefs of the major world religions, including Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

4. Students will understand the variety of forces that move and shape history, including economics/trade, ideas, religion, and culture, and have a grasp of the complex ways in which such forces typically interact.

5. Students will understand the following topics, being able to explain both what they are and why they are significant in the world’s history:
   - The Renaissance
   - The Reformations
   - The Qing Empire
   - The Ottoman Empire
   - The Mughal Empire
The Safavid Empire
The Conquest of the Americas and the Colombian Exchange
The Atlantic Slave Trade
The Scientific Revolution
The American Revolution
The French Revolution
The Latin American revolutions
The Enlightenment
Nationalism
Colonialism and Imperialism
Socialism and Communism
Feminism/Gender
The Relationships between China, Japan, and the Western powers in the nineteenth century
Modernity (including the Industrial Revolution) and Non-Western Responses
The Great War
Independence Movements (Gandhi)
Fascism
The Holocaust
The USSR
World War II
Pan-Arabism, Pan-Islamism, and the Modern Middle East
Communist China
The Cold War
Decolonization
The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict
Globalization
Appendix 9: Departmental Outcomes for HIS 10—Global Perspective, April 2007
### Appendix 10: Departmental Outcomes for HIS 10 –Christian Liberal Arts, April 2007

1. Students will understand the distinctive characteristics of a Christian liberal arts education, as well as some of its benefits and shortcomings. [This might include: the interdisciplinary nature of a Liberal Arts education, the understanding of the scholarly, gentlemanly and liberating goals of the Liberal Arts.]

   *It is not clear that we are doing a lot with this in particular…*

   *Do we want to teach what the Christian Liberal Arts are? It seems like that is what the GE document asks us to do.*

   *Do we want to focus on a few aspects of the Christian Liberal Arts? If so, which ones? The Philosophy department has given emphasis to the interdisciplinary aspect of the Liberal arts—what is our emphasis? Is the issue of integration the main one we want to focus on? Given the global nature of the course, is there any wisdom in emphasizing global goals as part of the Christian Liberal Arts goals?*

2. Christian liberal arts education integrates one's academic life with other areas of life—work, civic involvement, leisure, and especially spiritual development—into a seamless whole. History 10 will contribute to this integration by inviting students to consider the relationship between their life, and particularly their life as Christians and their education.

   **Students will begin to understand the relationship between their life, and particularly their life as Christians, and their education**
   - Students will begin to articulate their academic goals in relationship to their identity
   - Students will identify points of intersections between their spiritual development and their liberal arts education
   - Students will relate their place in the world to their responsibility as educated Christians (educating global Christians)

3. **Compassion and humility:**
   - Students will grow in their understanding and practice of *humility* by:
     - Being able to articulate the complexity inherent to the study of world cultures
     - Being able to articulate the limitations of their ability to know
   - Students will show improvement in their ability to understand and empathize with people from other cultures and to negotiate the tension between relativism and cultural arrogance

Another frame—borrowed from the Philosophy department documents

Focus on the interdisciplinary nature of Christian Liberal Arts: Christian liberal arts education fosters a holistic academic vision—an awareness of the overlap and
interconnectedness of different academic domains. History 10 will contribute to this holistic vision by drawing on a range of disciplines in the classroom and making the connections between the disciplines explicit.

Students will…

Focus on skills: Christian liberal arts education is also distinct from more specialized education by developing a wide range of foundational (and therefore broadly transferable) intellectual skills to a high degree. History 10 will contribute to these intellectual skills by strengthening analytic skills, critical reading skills, and argumentative writing skills, among others.
Using brackets, place the following in the correct half-century on the timeline above:

A. Example The Black Death
B. World War I
C. Protestant Reformation
D. Early English Settlement in North America
E. French Revolution
F. Cold War
G. Mongol Conquests
H. Latin American Independence
I. European Colonization of Africa

[A. Black Death]
Using the appropriate numbers, locate the following countries on the map above:
Appendix 12: Prompts for HIS 10-F 2007

HIS 10-1: Monica Orozco (Spring 08)
Journal Entries:
In order to prompt the students to reflect on the material they learned, the assigned readings, and discussions, I asked students to provide six journal entries. The first entry was a self-portrait where they discussed their identity, goals, and hopes for their experience at Westmont. Four additional entries specifically asked them to engage with the material in the course and reflect on how it influenced them and their interaction with others, as well as their understanding of world around them. The final entry required an updated self-portrait reflecting on their experience during the semester and the knowledge they gained.

Exam Question
Students were allowed to chose one of the following questions for the final exam: a) discuss three major historical developments which influence identity formation and then reflect on how learning about these had influenced their view and understanding of their own identity formation, or b) discuss three major historical developments which help them understand a contemporary issue or conflict.

HIS 10-2: Alister Chapman

Paper Prompt
Christianity and Education E-mail. A friend from high school who went to a secular university has sent you an e-mail. In it, she writes about all the evangelistic work that she is doing with a Christian group on campus and expresses a certain amount of bewilderment that you chose to come to a small, Christian liberal arts college. Reply to her e-mail, explaining what a Christian liberal arts college is all about and providing an assessment of what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of that vision. You should engage with Plantinga, Hauerwas, and Wolterstorff. 2 pages.

Exam Question
“Westmont breeds self-absorbed individuals, people eager to be followed but not to serve as Christ did.” Do you agree? Why and/or why not? How might a residential, liberal arts approach mitigate against this? What should be the purpose of a Christian education? Is it possible to be highly educated and deeply devoted?

Relevant Part of Final Paper Prompt
Is your education at Westmont helping you to prepare to live well? If so, how? How might it help you more? Or, to put it another way, what’s the point of a Christian liberal arts education? I will be looking for some careful thinking on how your education at a Christian liberal arts college is—or is not—“equip[ping] you with everything good for doing [God’s] will” (Hebrews 13:21, NIV). What difference does or should being at Westmont make?
HIS 10-3: Jon Lemmond

Discussion One: Reflections on the Christian Liberal Arts – Based upon your readings below, write a personal mission statement that reflects your goals and values as a student in a Christian liberal arts college. In addition, write a commentary on your mission statement where you explain the choices you made and the ways in which you convey your sense of self, your culture (your place in time and space) and your passions and calling as a student. Be sure to engage the readings below in both your mission statement and your commentary. N.B. Feel free to engage the readings in your mission statement using footnotes. You may want to reflect upon the following questions to guide your work: What is a Christian liberal arts education? What is the difference between a Christian education and a secular education? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? How do your authors describe the purpose or goals of Christian education? Which do you prefer? Why?

Discussion Two: Poverty & Economic Development – You have been asked to chair a committee at your church in order to focus on poverty in the local community. To begin the process, the pastor has asked you to address the congregation with a Biblical vision of poverty and wealth and the responsibility of Christians to meet the needs of the poor. As you prepare your mini-sermon you may want to reflect on the following questions: Who are the poor? Why are people poor (or rich)? Are the poor those whom God has not blessed? What specific actions could your church take? N.B. Be sure to engage your readings but don’t be afraid to be critical - “critical” means a complex engagement with the arguments, both seriously and analytically, utilizing knowledge gained in this course in order to provide a thoughtful critique (challenge or support) of what you have read. If you find factual information about poverty in the Santa Barbara area and include it in your discussion you will receive extra-credit. Be sure to cite your source.

Discussion Three: Just Peacemaking – You are a Christian minister who has been asked to be a part of an advisory group for the U.N. Security Council whose chief aim is to set down an definition of “torture” to be applied within the international community and for the International Court of Justice. Each member of the group has decided to set forth a definition before creating a group consensus. Define the word torture. [NOTE: Don’t use the internet or a dictionary in this exercise; rather, wrestle with the problem and seek to fashion your own definition based upon your readings and your own critical thinking. Be sure to include how your religious perspective impacts your own understanding.] After creating your definition answer the following four questions (at least one paragraph each). Is torture ever justified? Can torture be an aspect of “just war”? What makes torture “unjust” or “immoral?” Finally, what difficulties as a Christian did you face in creating your definition?

Preliminary Reflection: 1) Read carefully the documents below, and take them into account in the writing process. When you use an idea or phrase that comes from one of the documents be sure to cite it in a footnote; 2) Be sure to consider the following questions: what theological presuppositions are at work in your definition? How does your experience of violence (or lack thereof) impact your definition? What might be the challenges of writing as a member of the United States?

Discussion Four: Gender & Equality – You are a Christian in post-World War II France who has just witnessed a number of women shamed by receiving the femme tondues (see article below). You have been asked to offer intercessory prayer in your church on Sunday and have decided to focus your prayer on gender reconciliation, which of course includes both men and women. Write out
your prayer (at least one page in length). Be sure to work primarily with the readings below and use footnotes to cite and to engage the scholarly material which may or may not be pertinent in an actual prayer. Finally, provide a brief explanation for your prayer. What issues seem pertinent to you for providing gender reconciliation? Finally, would you consider yourself a Christian feminist? Why or why not? Be sure to consider how to define “feminism.”

**Discussion Five: Fear & Hope for the Future** – Finish the statement: “The most significant challenge ahead in international relations is . . .” Why is that the biggest challenge? What is the least significant challenge? Why? Finally, how do these writings relate to the current conflict in Iraq?

**HIS 10-4: Marianne Robins**

**Relevant parts of the prompt for the final paper:**
In a 5-7 page essay (1600 words), you need to use the previous assignments and significant parts of the material studied in the course to answer the following question:

Given your place in the global world, how might your education help you be a better disciple of Christ “for a time such as this” —or, if you do not identify yourself as a Christian, a responsible person in this day and age?

**Here are the “previous assignments”**

**Self-Portrait**
In this initial assignment you need to explain who you are, and to reflect on the ways in which your portrait does display individual traits, as well as the cultural, religious, gender, and social characteristics that makes you part of broader communities. As you think about who you are and what communities you belong to, you need to convey visually a sense of your calling as a student -3 pages

**Christian Liberal Arts**
Given the points made your readings, what does it mean for you to get a Christian Liberal Arts education? (3 pages maximum)
- Westmont College, “What do We Want from our Graduates”

**Christ and Nation**
Characterize the relationship between your national identity and your identity as a Christian. To what extent are the two compatible or incompatible? -3 pages
Turn in, along with this paper, your notes on the first three questions (the paper needs to be typed, the notes do not).
Broken Faces
Write two five-lines poems: one about World War One, and one about the current conflict in Iraq.
Explain why you included what you did in each poem (one page), and what you intended to communicate.
Turn in, along with this work, your notes on the following preliminary reflection.
Prompt for the paper “global citizen”
Consider Michael T. Klare’s and Hauerwas 267-284, 391-401 & 425-433 (25-36, 137-147 & 181-193). Given the nature of the new “global schisms”, what can you, as an individual Christian citizen contribute, even in small ways, to building a more peaceful world?
Appendix 13: Monica Orozco’s report for HIS 10-SP 2008

In order to assess how students defined and understood a Christian liberal arts education they were required to address this topic in their journal entries. The following was the prompt they were given in the syllabus:

You will be asked to keep a journal in which you record your reflections on a Christian liberal arts education, how learning world history has had an impact on you, and how you will integrate this knowledge into your goals in life. Your first entry should be a self-portrait of who you are at this point in your life. You can use this initial “snap shot” to refer back to and reflect. You should have a minimum of 6 total entries, 3 entries are due by the first turn-in date. Your last entry should be an updated self-portrait of who you are, how you what changes may have occurred as a result of your educational experiences, and how these experiences and new knowledge will influence how you interact with the world and those around you. In addition, address how your understanding of a Christian liberal arts education has or has not changed.

The majority of initial journal entries exhibited very little awareness of what a liberal arts education entails, except for the few upperclassmen in the class. In general the students said they knew Westmont was a Christian liberal arts college, but unsure of how to define it. About 10-15% stated some sort of definition that included statements that it meant a diverse curriculum, and broad understanding of many subjects. Of this group most saw that the purpose of this education was to become a better person or to leave Westmont as a well-rounded person.

In the final journal entries many more students professed to have an understanding of a Christian liberal arts education to varying degrees. My very unscientific quantifying of these responses was that about 30% had an excellent or very good understanding, around 50% had some understanding, and the remaining 20% had none or very little understanding. Here are some of the comments from these entries:

A Christian liberal arts education means:
“using knowledge for change”; “analyzing from a context of faith and relating faith to our understanding”; “integrating knowledge to understand the world”; cultivating an open world view rooted in faith”; “being actively engaged in studies”; “a broad curriculum in order to become well-rounded”; “use of knowledge for God”; “integration with other classes”; “questioning assumed beliefs and events”; “integrating faith and learning, acquiring a better breadth and depth in order to become a functioning member of society”; “a Christian oriented understanding”; learning about Christian faith in a global perspective; “gaining a deeper understanding of the world and our place in it”; “looking at history and Christianity’s role in shaping the world we live in”; “being introduced to different way of thinking within disciplines and integrating that into my life.”

My sense is that as the result of some changes from fall semester to spring, the students’ responses in discussion and assignment shows that they have tried to integrate what they are learning into their life in some way. My goal in the fall is to integrate more discussions and reading material that specifically addresses various debates about a Christian liberal arts education and to integrate much more discussion. In addition, in order to establish some kind of base proficiency in historical knowledge, I am adjusting my midterm and final exam to include sections testing chronology and specific dates. Previously my test have included long and short essay and map sections. I will also be integrating more quizzes in order to emphasize dates and geography more. I will also limit the essays to short essays, using paper assignments to allow the students to develop their skills in writing longer essays.

Appendix 14: Alister Chapman’s report for HIS 10-F 2007
History Report, p. 51

In my section of History 10 in the autumn of 2007, I had several readings and class discussions devoted to the nature of a Christian liberal arts education. I required students to write a short paper early in the semester to spur their thinking on the subject, provided an (optional) essay question on the mid-term relating to it, and then in their final paper I asked them to reflect on how their education at Westmont was equipping them for life and service after college (see appendix 11). To assess this aspect of the course, I looked at the sections of their final papers in which they dealt with their education. I graded them on their ability to reflect intelligently on the Christian liberal arts, to go beyond mere banalities (“broad… interdisciplinary… preparing for a vocation”) and to “integrate… academic life with other areas of life.” The grades broke down as follows (47 papers):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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Many students were clearly able to write convincingly on this topic, and many were able to relate their education to life. In most instances, the students who were able to do this integration spoke about their place in the world as an educated Christian, something which reflects my emphasis in the course. There were a number of students (in the C range) whose comments were on the banal end of the spectrum (though it should be noted that I had more students than usual who typically fell into this grade bracket). What is perhaps most marked, however, is how few students were able to write at an A standard on this topic.

Why? What could be done to help more students to think and communicate well on the nature and purpose of a Christian liberal arts education? One problem this past semester was that I changed the nature of the brief paper on the Christian liberal arts, assigning readings but not requiring separate journal entries on them. The result was that many in the class, by their own admission, completed the assignment with minimal attention to the readings. I need to find a more effective way of helping them to think more carefully on the subject earlier in the semester.

It also became clear to me that many students hear about the Christian liberal arts a lot during their time at Westmont. I have a disproportionate number of upper-classmen, and they seemed a little jaded when the discussion came up. Recognizing that is helpful; what it does not explain is why they failed to engage with readings that should have stretched their thinking on what is apparently a well-worn topic. I wonder whether part of the difficulty is that Westmont faculty hold divergent positions on what a liberal arts education is (something that was made clear to me in a faculty reading group this semester on Bruce Kimball’s *Orators and Philosophers*), and so the students are getting an uncertain sound.

In sum, I am encouraged that many of our students are able to think critically and creatively about the education they are receiving. I need to work harder on communicating clearly with them on this topic, and providing ways in which students can push their own thinking on it forward.
Appendix 15: Jon Lemmond’s for HIS 10-F 2007

In this course I focused on the integration of academic life and other areas (work, civic involvement, spiritual development, etc.) by engaging three particular themes: poverty and economic development, just peacemaking, and gender equality. These three themes were engaged in lectures, the course reader, journal writing and in-class discussions (see appendix for actual assignments). These three themes also functioned as “responsibility tracks.” Every student voluntarily chose one of the three themes for more focused writing and reflection (reading a book on the subject and writing one group paper and one final personal essay). In the final essay each student was directed to:

1) detail your place, both personally and historically, with respect to the problem. Why does your social/cultural/geographic location matter? How might it influence the ways in which you perceive your responsibility track?

2) analyze your responsibilities addressing the problem as a Christian and member of the human community – What problems associated with your track seem particularly pertinent to you? How does your faith affect your personal understanding of your responsibility to the problem and others?

3) offer tangible and practical educational goals (both academic and internship oriented) from a liberal arts perspective to help prepare you intellectually and pragmatically for engaging these responsibilities. In other words, how can you as a student, with all the privileges and constraints associated with that role, best prepare to tackle the problem you have read about and engage the responsibilities you have put forth?

Grade Breakdown:

A+ 3
A 1
A- 12
B+ 11
B 14
B- 9
C+ 2
C 2

Ways in which students wrote about integrating their responsibility track with other areas of their lives:

1. spoke of taking classes found in other disciplines where their theme is addressed (e.g. taking World Poverty and Economic Development-poverty track) or where they might receive training
2. described a greater understanding of the problem (from confusion to understanding, or from a negative perspective to a positive perspective)
3. spoke of wanting to attend an off-campus program that relates to their track
4. discussed material from a lecture, or readings, from another class which they connected to their track (e.g. a student used Dr. Sider’s lecture on *Piers Plowman* to articulate what it means to be a student)

5. applying what they have learned about in their dorm life (e.g. student decided to engage issues surrounding female bodily image and low self esteem by covering up all the mirrors in the hall, bathroom, and personal ones in rooms).

6. desired to join a current student ministry

7. considered creating a new student ministry

8. helped them focus on a possible career choice

When assessing integration there are a number of positive elements. First, students often admitted that they now could engage the problem more thoughtfully and practically. Many of them mentioned that they felt both more aware and more empowered to think about, and act on, their responsibility track. This is positive because often I have witnessed that greater awareness and increased action do not necessarily go together – sometimes more knowledge can make a problem feel more overwhelming. In part, I believe this was because they were asked to focus upon a single issue rather the general category of “social responsibility.” Second, many acknowledged that they had been taught only one Christian position relating to their track and now recognized, and even agreed with, an alternative Christian vision. Third, students did an excellent job integrating the class material, their personal histories, and the contemporary issues associated with their track.

There are also a number of elements that could be improved upon. First, students were not asked explicitly to engage how a Christian liberal arts program allows them to better respond to their responsibility track. While the question is implied by the assignment, many focused on the topic from only a personal and historical perspective. Second, due to a failure on my part when introducing each track, poverty and economic development had an excessive amount of students (approx. 75% of the class) which meant that many chose the topic due to the size of the book rather than their interests in the topic. Third, due to the nature of this class in particular (very quiet and mostly freshmen), many students felt like their was a specific political agenda on my part and thus refused to consider other options because they felt manipulated. I exacerbated this feeling by taking certain views and presenting them strongly in class. I did so to force students to talk which, of course, did not work.

In response to this assessment I will:

4. add Chris Hoeckley’s *Liberal Arts Traditions and Christian Higher Education: A Brief Guide* to my reader and ask students to consider the role of the Christian liberal arts and its connection to their responsibility track

5. offer a better introduction to the assignment stressing personal interest so that students pick a topic that they can be excited about

6. be more cognizant of competing view points with respect to each track and more empathic toward other perspectives
Appendix 16: Marianne Robins’ report for HIS 10-F 2007

Grade distribution

55 essays were turned in. The grades were distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Count (first sem.)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample

Many of the students listed as sophomores or juniors are transfer students in their first semester at Westmont College. I estimate the number of “first semester” students in the class at 45 (give or take one student)—the class was 80% new to the campus.

What do students understand “Christian Liberal Arts Education” to mean?

In this section, 29 papers were reviewed closely to identify more precisely students’ understanding of their Christian Liberal Arts education—the papers selected were broadly representative of the grades assigned in the class -A (4), A- (1), B+ (8), B (1) B- (7), C+ (5) C (3)

Students were also broadly representative of their class level

- What elements did students chose to include? Did they relate those elements to particular features of their lives?
- Did they see their education as transformative? If so, in what ways did they understand their education to be transformative?

Christian Liberal Arts Education

- Christian:
  - a Christian community of peers (6)
  - professors who exemplify Christian behavior (in their patience…) (3)
  - exposure to the Bible and Doctrine (learning more about basic Christian truths) (15 mention this and 2 mention the Chapel program)
  - reading Compassion (emphasis on compassion and love as Christian virtues). Most students mention the book

- interdisciplinary (15): students have wide-ranging views on what this means (some papers simply mention this without explaining why this might be important, others relate it to Weil’s argument, while others have a complex view of the ways in which the complementarities of disciplines can broaden their worldview)
  - availability of different disciplines
  - exposure to different disciplines
  - lack of specialization
  - relationships between disciplines
• An Education that provides students with broadly applicable skills (6)—mentioned critical skills and communication skills in particular.

• All papers but one considered some of the material presented in class (on World history) and underlined the following elements in particular:
  o Global (15)
    • knowledge of different cultures
    • understanding of the world globally—and one’s place in it
  o Poverty, imperialism (11)
  o War (14)
  o gender (6)

What connections do students identify between their education and their “life as a Christian”?

• Compassion, loving your neighbor—often expressed in the terms of Compassion, but also “leading a life that benefits others”:
  o understanding the issues so as to extend compassion to others (in financial support, attention, ministry) global
  o loving one’s neighbor here and now (paying attention) Compassion

• Being better students
  o being more focused and diligent Compassion
  o being a good steward of the resources one has received global

• Political activism
  o ranges from basic “writing to your congressman” to devoting one’s life to writing as a journalist on these issues global

• Church involvement (very rarely mentioned)

• Being an example to others (as an educated Christian and a moral person)

• Prayer Weil

• Sacrifice Silence

• Being a more knowledgeable about the Christian faith (doctrine…) GE

• Ministry (understanding cultures so as to be a better witness in different context) Lawino, imperialism, Silence

• Reflection on the idea of discipleship (Silence)

• Stewardship of resources (for instance in consumption patterns) Slavery, lectures

• Self-control, morality, discipline (students’ life)

• Vocation (for instance in working with children with disabilities or as a counselor, working as a lawyer)

In what ways is this education transformative?

• Self-knowledge
  o Level 2: examination of preconceived notions
  o level 1: elements of one’s background (descriptive understanding)
  o spiritual evolution: from self-fulfillment and success to service and compassion
Overall, this assignment did not specifically ask students to reflect on the transformative aspect of their education. However, their previous paper was more helpful in helping me identify this. I decided to use this assignment to answer this question

**Global Citizens**

number of essays: 22 out of 23

grades:
- A 2
- A- 6
- B+ 3
- B 1
- B- 5
- C+ 1
- C 1
- C- 1

Elements of change –these are the words used by the students:

1. Connection between the student and the rest of the world (interconnectedness) understanding oneself as a “global citizen” rather than simply as an American understanding my place in the global schisms (true of most papers, either directly or indirectly) i.e. “realizing how connected I am to the lives of people in other communities…” “I must find a broader definition in my relation to the entire world, and my obligation to the world’s people” “I cannot define myself simply in MY historical, cultural, or social background…”

2. Identify and question one’s preconceived judgments:
   - identified as tolerance and understanding “why people act the way they do”, understanding their point of view so as to be able to communicate in an imaginative, non-violent manner (5)
   - in particular the ways in which faith and nation “do not always agree” (2)
   - willingness to accept that I am not always right

3. Greater sense of responsibility and possibility of impact by getting a better sense of current issues and their historical origins, or of other religions and cultures (study of sociology and anthropology for instance), or of global issues, (14) –or by being called to speak (emerging from silence), by voting without making “blind choices”, reducing one's lack of ability for tolerance

4. Need to be in community and to listen to others, and show compassion in daily interactions, and broadly speaking treat other people with respect and love (not retaliation, i.e. following more closely Christ’s commands (7)

5. Creating peace at a personal level by respecting the Sabbath, surrendering one’s will to God’s, practicing the via negative (being a vessel of peace in a frantic world) –in part, this comes with realizing that one cannot take on the suffering of the world (3)

6. Asking questions about traditional authorities (government, media, parents)

7. Being more “confused” but finding it to be a good thing (3) –my image of myself is more “blurry”

8. Moral transformation: patience (as opposed to seeking immediate results), love (as opposed to judgment), humility (as opposed in pride in one’s achievements or self-righteousness)
9. Realizing one’s possible impact on the world as an educated person who can then teach others in a variety of ways
10. Different versions on “via activa”: giving on alms, restricting one’s consumption, being an agent if reconciliation in the world (particularly with regards to racial divisions)

Two papers did not address the part of the question that dealt with change
Two papers did so marginally
“I am simultaneously learning and practicing, loving the people around me to the best of my abilities, and learning how to do this better”

Analysis
How knowledge of the world is transformative, in conjunction with a reflection on Christian spirituality.
Different students resonated with different spiritual traditions: engagement and activism for some, via negativa for others, but what is interesting is the fact that most students did speak of some sort of change.
Can we identify different spiritual traditions at work here?
Appendix 17: January 2008 discussion on HIS 10 assessment –meeting notes

January Meetings on HIS 10 –a few notes
1. History 10 –Liberal arts discussion

*Alister.*
How to move students beyond the trite of the Liberal Arts –interdisciplinary. Also the fact that students were all beyond their first year.
Kimball’s book: Liberal arts is a very vague concept so faculty have different visions of the Liberal Arts, so students get different views
How do we push students’ thinking on?
How do we avoid them being jaded on the topic?

*Marianne:* report (see handout)

*Monica.*
Looked at two assignments: final exam
A lot of superficial answers
Final journal entries with updated portraits
A lot of reflection and integration

*Jon:* assignments were more focused (gender, poverty, just peacemaking)

Monica’s presentation (see handout)
Rick asked about the breakdown between A and B –most did B. We need to reinforce the connections between the discussion between the Christian Liberal Arts and the content of the class.

Jon’s presentation (see handout): he added that he needs a stronger grading rubric (because the papers are so personal, it is hard to grade them “harshly”). He added one assessment tool—a vision statement on the Liberal Arts that students will need to revise at the end of the semester.

We discussed the goals (below): Rick asked about the “global” element of the course—it might be contrary to the goals of historians who are careful not to instrumentalize the study of the past. We need to help students refine a view of their education. How then do we address students’ “boredom”—not because they know too much, but because they are confused about it. We had a great conversation about this.

Why we did this:
- Communicate with one another about the goals, strategies and challenges of the “introduction to the Christian Liberal Arts” aspect of the course
- Clarify our goals and assessment strategies
  - goals
• Students will grow in their **understanding of the meaning and value of their education** in a Christian Liberal Arts college. In particular, they:
  o will be able to identify different understandings of the Christian Liberal Arts—recognize that there are different understandings.
  o will connect more closely their aspirations, their faith, and their life to their education. In this course, this will include:
    • the students’ ability to articulate a relationship between a global issue they encountered in the class and their personal convictions and/or vocational choices.
    • the students’ ability to develop a deep appreciation for the past as a foreign country and to start developing habits of contextual thinking.
## HISTORY MULTI-YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN

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### Questions:
Given the goals we want to list, how will we assess them, particularly in 08-09? What is our long-term plan?