Summary – Common Contexts – Biblical and Theological Canons

Christian Doctrine

2004

For each new course above, please comment on
   a. the ways the course through its syllabus or instruction has (not) helped you understand the goals of the GE
   b. the ways in which the course has (not) contributed to these goals.

2. RS020
   a. This course syllabus had a description of the GE program taken directly from the Westmont College Catalog 2004-2005. Then the professor described his personal goals and tasks.
   b. This course taught me how to see God and the world in relation to God and the world. Also, how to live in light of what Christians believe to be true about God and the world.

5. RS020B
   Christian Doctrine increased my knowledge of the basic tenants of the Christian faith. It has contributed to the goals of GE by changing how I view the rest of my courses and helping me see things in light of how they affect God’s kingdom.

9. RS 020
   Christian Doctrine certainly contributed to the goals of the GE, but I did not find that the class helped me to understand the goals of the GE. The goals were never discussed in the class, but reading about those goals and looking back at what I learned in the class, I can see how the goals of the GE were met. I have emerged from that class a better writer and thinker and a stronger Christian. Christian Doctrine gave me a better understanding of the doctrine of the trinity, the church, and Jesus Christ, to name a few, and many other key aspects of the Christian faith. I also found that as the class progressed I began to see how the things I was learning in Christian Doctrine carried over into my other classes and my daily life.
13. RS020C  Studying at Westmont, this comprehensive course on Christian Doctrine was central to helping me understand the GE program at a Christian college. The course challenged me to view my education through the lens of my belief system, and to integrate that into avenues of daily living. Not only did this Christian perspective influence my religious views and traditions, but it permeated all other avenues of learning. As Christ is central in our lives, so He should remain central in our education, and at a Christian college, it is crucial that God remain central in every realm of learning. This class has both allowed and challenged me to view all areas of education in light of the transcending paradigm of Christianity.

16. RS020  Christian Doctrine certainly contributed to the goals of the GE, but I did not find that the class helped me to understand the goals of the GE. The goals were never discussed in the class, but reading about those goals and looking back at what I learned in the class, I can see how the goals of the GE were met. I have emerged from that class a better writer and thinker and a stronger Christian. Christian Doctrine gave me a better understanding of the doctrine of the trinity, the church, and Jesus Christ, to name a few, and many other key aspects of the Christian faith. I also found that as the class progressed I began to see how the things I was learning in Christian Doctrine carried over into my other classes and my daily life.

18. RS020  Christian Doctrine was an interesting class. I felt that I learned a lot about other religions more than Christianity. I really enjoyed learning about other religions because I think it is important to understand other people and their cultures, but I think in a Christian Doctrine class, we should have concentrated more on the subject of Christianity. I felt that the lectures seemed scattered and I didn’t really understand why we were learning that for that particular day. I enjoyed the class, but it seemed that sometimes I would go and the time was not successfully us.

Spring 2005

RS020
a. This course definitely made me realize why it is important to study Christian Doctrine as part of my general education. It has answered many faith related questions that I had and helped me become a stronger Christian.

b. The course contributed to the goals of general education because it has helped me to become a stronger Christian.

RS020A
This class was a huge let-down. Well, that’s actually slightly inaccurate. It has a reputation of being ridiculously easy. I was unaware, however, that Westmont would allow ridiculously easy to also mean shallow (in terms of how deeply the content was covered). I have noticed that the College seems to think it’s okay that students are faced with a choice between an extremely difficult professor and also an extremely easy one. The word on the street is, “If you have the time and your grades don’t affect whether or not you stay at Westmont, take Telford. If you need to keep your GPA up and are taking a lot of other classes take Whiteman.” What a shame, Westmont!

We, as students of the world and of God, should not have to choose between a scholarship and an education. While I do not propose that the professors should leave their extremes and settle upon mediocrity, I do wonder if there is not some sort of “happy medium” in which the workload in one class is reduced but the lecturing in the other is improved. If Westmont is serious about its GE program, serious about its mission statement for that matter, then the excuse “It’s a GE. Of course it won’t be that in-depth,” simply should not suffice. That is what kids think. But at the same time, a legitimate fear of crazy amounts of work should not cause kids to take the easier road and thereby be less educated because the professor only skims the surface

RS020B
The course has been very instrumental in how I view other religions as well as my own faith. I think it is essential for this course to be in the GE requirements because it is so helpful to let us learn about other cultures’ religions, other religions on our culture, and our own. It helps us to confirm and become more and more convicted in our faith, because asking doctrinal questions leads to a realization of further truth.
RS020C
The Westmont Catalog as ensuring “that a student’s major program will be supported by the skills, the breadth of knowledge, the strategies of inquiry, and the practices that will enable them to mature in wisdom throughout their lives and to apply their learning effectively in the world around them.” Telford Work’s Christian Doctrine course does a marvelous job of achieving these goals. The skills are universal, deeply engrained, and thoroughly developed. Although the class is large, group discussions are a significant portion of the class. Eight required papers and four extra credit papers allow ample opportunity to develop writing skills in a very, very effective manner about topics of genuine interest to the students. The professor strongly encourages participation in discussion. All students are required to meet with the professor at office hours at least once. The professor holds optional discussion sessions in the DC. The material is foundational and life changing, allowing students to take their faith to a deeper level while integrating other aspects of their lives into their faith. Students can learn to think in new ways about God, themselves, and society. The material is a framework for future learning.
Not all courses could demand the level of effort of this particular course, yet from experience I hold this course as a model of an effective GE class.

RS 020A
As I wrote, Christian Doctrine gives me a better understanding on the New and Old Testaments and completes my basic Christian education nicely. Unfortunately, we do not always go into enough detail in class on certain topics for full understanding.

RS020C
Introduction to the Christian Doctrine helped me to understand the goals of the GE through the way the course was taught and Telford Work’s online syllabus. The syllabus clearly laid out the course schedule and how as a class we would try to understand various doctrines of Christianity.
RS020A

Introduction to Christian Doctrine has primarily focused on the faith portion of General Education. What has made the course here more useful than a course at another school is being able to discuss relevant, hard questions while maintaining Christian integrity. In understanding Christianity and personal faith more deeply, discussions led by the professor brought new insight into the beliefs in which I call my own.

RS020B

a. Dr. Whiteman carefully outlined in his syllabus the course description with regard to the class as a GE requirement.

b. Dr. Whiteman covered a variety of areas regarding the doctrine of Christianity and definitely fulfilled the goals of the GE requirement as far as giving students a better understanding of doctrine.

RS 020

Introduction to Christian Doctrine was a great, although challenging, general education course because it was a new kind of environment in which I was able to critically examine what I fundamentally believe, why I believe it, and what my life should look like because of my faith. I think it was important to take this course my first year because the course really gave me a foundation for my faith, and made me feel as though I have a good grasp on what believing means. The class also helped me feel as though I can actually formulate my own opinions about certain issues of the church, and engage in intellectual and meaningful conversation about what the life of a Christian should look like. This course will be really helpful and important as I continue to take other classes which will engage in faith conversations and relate to my learning as a Christian.

Fall 2005

13. RS020W

“This course contributes to Westmont’s General Education curriculum in serving the school’s vision of Christian liberal arts collegiate education. It focuses on the substance,
logic, and integrity of Christian belief (including its dependence on the Holy Scriptures of the Church), the ethical (that is, practical) form the faith takes in Christian community, and the historical shape of Christian tradition. Far from constricting out picture of life, these foci bring all things into perspective. Jesus Christ is the Word of all creation and the one true embodiment and Lord of humanity. His human nature comprehends all human endeavor that is not compromised by sin. His indwelling Spirit sanctifies and empowers faithful human life in its entirety. His Church is gifted and commanded to participate in him and in holy and virtuous fellowship in all that it does. So Christian doctrine properly describes and governs every truly human enterprise. You will see that our course readings and lectures respect this quality of theology in diverse and sometimes surprising ways — wrestling boldly and faithfully with the insights of modern and postmodern philosophy (particularly in the helpful and unhelpful ways they frame Christian categories), the natural sciences (particularly in the forms and implications of the doctrine of creation), the behavioral sciences (particularly in the doctrines of Church and salvation), art and literature (particularly in the ways they have creatively appropriated and communicated the good news), history (particularly in its storytelling about the missions and failings of the Church in the world), and communication (particularly in the course's demands for critical thinking, clear expression, and teamwork). As Jesus of Nazareth is the definitive revelation of both God's character, the form and goal of all creation, and our atonement for all that falls short of the glory of God, no good or evil thing is beyond the scope of Christian doctrine.” (quoted from the syllabus, written by Telford Work, available on his website.)

b. This course met the requirements of general education more than sufficiently. I am pleased that it is a required course.