

WESTMONT



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

June 2009

Dear Prospective Liberal Studies Major,

On behalf of the Department of Education, I want to welcome you to Westmont! I hope you'll experience a wonderful sense of peace and joy in coming days as you prepare to join us here on campus.

I'm writing to you now because at some point in your conversations with Westmont, you've indicated an interest in pursuing a Liberal Studies Major (pre-Elementary Education).

(If you're receiving this and you're more interested in getting a teaching credential for the **secondary** level, you should pursue a major in the subject you're most likely to want to teach, and disregard the rest of this letter. And if you're not sure whether you want to teach in the first place, or what level or subject—that's ok too. Part of being at a liberal arts college is the opportunity to explore a number of different areas.)

I'm writing to prospective Liberal Studies majors now because your program of study is a bit unique, and I want to offer some specific guidance in choosing your first semester classes.

One of the first decisions you will face as a Liberal Studies major, or prospective Liberal Studies, is whether

- (a) you wish to complete **ONLY** the Liberal Studies major in four years, and do your teaching credential as a **FIFTH** year; or
- (b) you wish to complete both the Liberal Studies major **AND** your teaching credential in four years. This is what the majority of Liberal Studies majors do. To do this, though, you'll need to be fairly focused right from the beginning on completing required classes, and take relatively few electives.

Even if you're not sure whether you want to do the four- or five-year plan (or not sure you want to go into elementary education at all) it's normally easier to **START OUT AS IF** you want to do the "Fast-Track" Liberal Studies plan (major and credential in four years), and then switch **OUT** later; than it is to start out "unsure" and then later try to switch **IN**.

Accordingly, we recommend a selection from the following classes for the fall of your first year:

- RS 20: Christian Doctrine or RS 10: New Testament (or conceivably RS 1: Old Testament)
- ENG 2: Composition (This may or may not be a requirement for you. See catalog)
- ENG 6: Studies in Literature (or ENG 44: Studies in World Literature)
- HIS 9: World Civilizations to 1750 I* and/or HIS 7: US History to 1877
- LS 12: Introduction to Life Sciences
- PHS: Introduction to the Physical Sciences
- A course in Spanish, especially for those who already have some background in the language and who may wish to complete the Spanish concentration within the Liberal Studies major. (The particular level of Spanish course you enroll in will depend on the results of your placement test). Continuing with another language besides Spanish is also appropriate.
- PHI 6: Philosophical Perspectives (sometimes a difficult course first semester if you're not used to thinking abstractly)
- ART 180: Art for Children**
- MU 184: Music for Children**

**Note that this is a case where Liberal Studies majors fulfill Westmont's General Education Requirements differently than students in other majors.*

***While first year students do not normally take courses numbered 100 or above, you may be eligible for both of these courses, space permitting.*

Keep in mind that a normal course load is four, four-unit classes. Some first-year students prefer to start off with a reduced load the first semester (3 four-unit classes), especially if you're on an athletic team this fall, are working in a part-time job, or anticipate other challenges in adjusting to college.

In addition to 3-4 of the courses above, you will normally take a 1-unit Physical Education course, for a total of 13-17 units.

All prospective Liberal Studies students will meet one-on-one with an advisor from the Education Department during Orientation on Friday, August 28. At that time, you will have an opportunity to confirm your fall schedule or make necessary last-minute adjustments.

We look forward to seeing you on campus shortly!

Blessings,



Andrew Mullen, Ph.D., Chair
Department of Education, and Coordinator, Liberal Studies Program