

WESTMONT COLLEGE, AUGUSTINIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Overview: the fourth-year experience:

The vision for the fourth year in the Augustinian Scholars Program will be four-fold: Celebration, Conclusion, Community, and Continuation.

- In “**Celebration**,” we will be recognizing the achievements of our scholars and giving thanks for good gifts, faithfully invested. While the senior capstone course will include elements of this, it will extend to other markers throughout the first year, such as: a final celebratory/commissioning event near graduation (banquet/ dessert/ reception/ ceremony), academic convocation and/or commencement recognition, etc.
- In “**Conclusion**”—a central theme of the capstone seminar—the scholars will be invited to revisit key questions, texts, and ideas from the first-year seminar on Augustine and the Christian intellectual tradition—exploring how their meaning may be extended, enriched, challenged, applied, and shared. This will culminate in an essay contest with prizes awarded in multiple categories and publication of the best essays.
- In “**Community**,” the scholars will be invited to deepen their connections to each other and to enter into a more intentional relationship with a spiritual director or equivalent mentor. Regular meetings with a spiritual director will count toward “alternative chapel” credits, and community activities may include regular meals together and a retreat.
- In “**Continuation**”—another key theme of the capstone seminar—students will be invited to look at what it will mean to be an Augustinian beyond their time at Westmont, exploring and imagining together how ongoing intellectual inquiry and Christian formation may look for life-long seekers of Truth.

The Augustinian Capstone Seminar will be a two-unit seminar meeting in the fall of each year, focusing on the “Conclusion” and “Continuation” themes, above.

**IS-40H: AUGUSTINIAN CAPSTONE SEMINAR
(PILOT TEMPLATE)**

Course Description:

The Augustinian Capstone Seminar is a two-unit seminar taken for one semester during scholars' final academic year. This course provides a conclusion to the Augustinian program, revisiting select questions, texts, and ideas from the Christian intellectual tradition and exploring how their meaning may be extended, enriched, challenged, applied, and shared—particularly in light of the scholars' majors, minors, and global studies. It also invites scholars to look ahead at what it will mean to be an Augustinian beyond their time at Westmont, exploring and imagining together how ongoing intellectual inquiry and Christian formation may look for life-long seekers after Truth.

Course Goals: What to Expect

1. An intellectual conclusion to the scholars' participation in the program. This will look *back* to key themes introduced in the scholar's first year, will look *across* their learning and experiences since that time, and *ahead* to their lives after Westmont.
2. A communal conclusion to the scholars' participation in the program, allowing space for friendship and intellectual fellowship during the senior year.
3. An experiential introduction to spiritual direction or equivalent.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Students will interpret, analyze, and apply select contributions to Christian thought, particularly in relation to callings of learning and service. (*Class discussion, essays*)
- Students will select, engage in, and reflect upon a spiritual direction and/or mentorship relationship (or appropriate alternative). (*Activity logs*)

Course Requirements: A Framework

- I. *Pursuant to Goal 1: Intellectual Conclusion*
 - a. Scholars will re-read and analytically discuss selections from primary and secondary source material from the Augustinian first-year seminar, including (but not limited to) C.S. Lewis' "Learning in Wartime," Augustine's *Confessions* and/or *City of God*, and J.D. Hunters' *To Change the World*, with attention how their meaning may be extended, enriched, challenged, applied, and shared.
 - b. Scholars will read and discuss one new book (or equivalent selections from several works) that invites them to extend, enrich, challenge, or apply their learning in lives of ongoing Christian learning (and service) after Westmont.
 - c. Scholars will write a substantial, polished essay—suitable for publication—centered on the theme: "What I have learned about learning"—including variations such as "global"/ "cross-cultural," "life-long," "faithful"/ "Christian," "liberal arts," "applying," etc. before "learning." All essays will be

entered into an annual contest and winners' essays will have the opportunity to be published in an appropriate forum.

II. Pursuant to Goal 2: A Communal Conclusion:

- a. Scholars will enjoy an opportunity for a retreat together.
- b. Scholars will eat at least one meal a month together.

III. Pursuant to Goal 3: Introduction to Spiritual Direction (in partnership with the Martin Institute)

- a. Scholars will be introduced to the concept of spiritual direction through lecture, reading, and/or discussion.
- b. Scholars will select and engage in regular meetings with a spiritual director or equivalent.