

# **Proposal for a Certificate in Theological Leadership**

by the Religious Studies Department, September 2022

## **Introduction**

The Christian church today has a deep need for leaders who are characterized by wisdom. True biblical wisdom entails not only knowledge of the Triune God and our relationship with him, but also an ability to understand the culture as well as the human heart, both our own and those of others. Thus, Westmont College is developing a Certificate in Theological Leadership, a post-baccalaureate-level program designed to inculcate wisdom in Christian leaders to enable them to serve more effectively in church and society.

The proposed program consists of eight courses to be taught by several Westmont personnel, as indicated below, in Westmont's new Downtown building. Students who complete the program will be biblically and theologically competent as well as historically aware, able to read the Bible well but also the culture and the soul. Furthermore, courses will be taught with a global perspective to equip students to lead in churches whose members are drawn from all the nations of the world.

In order to appeal to the widest possible audience, the program will emphasize:

- **Affordability:** Ample need-based scholarships will be provided to qualified students.
- **Convenience:** Courses will be taught in a hybrid format blending in-person and online elements in order to enable students from beyond the Santa Barbara area to participate.
- **Scheduling:** The program sequence will be spread out over two years in order to enable working adults to participate.

For some students, this certificate program would be a terminal program equipping them to be more effective leaders in their current setting. We anticipate, however, that many students who complete this certificate will want to continue on at a seminary. Therefore, the college will develop partnerships with several seminaries that would grant credit for some or all of these courses upon admission to the institution.

## **The following courses are planned:**

1. Old Testament Survey (Dr. Sandra Richter)
2. New Testament Survey (Dr. Holly Beers)
3. The Drama of Doctrine (Dr. Telford Work)
4. History of World Christianity (Dr. Helen Rhee)
5. Soul Care: Reading Ourselves and Others (Dr. Gary Moon)
6. Theological Ethics: Christian Perspectives on Contemporary Issues (Dr. Telford Work)
7. Culture and Theology: Thinking Missionally (Dr. Charles Farhadian)
8. Theological Principles of Leadership (Dr. Gayle Beebe)

## **The program meets the following criteria for Westmont certificate programs established by Academic Senate:**

### **1. Consistency with the mission and contribution to the overall health of the institution**

Westmont College seeks to cultivate "thoughtful scholars, grateful servants, and faithful leaders for global engagement with the academy, church, and world." While the certificate program will not be residential and undergraduate, it is consistent with other Westmont initiatives that have extended the mission of the college, such as the Certificate in Analytics and Program Evaluation that was approved by the faculty in November 2019 and the accelerated Bachelor's in Nursing program that was launched in fall 2021. In particular, the program will "cultivate faithful leaders for engagement with the church and the world."

Moreover, the Theological Leadership program would contribute to the overall health of the institution in several ways, such as:

- Strengthen the department's and the college's relationship with supporting churches
- Provide additional opportunity for teaching and exposure for Westmont's Religious Studies faculty
- Develop new partnerships with seminaries
- Attract members of the community to Westmont's new Downtown facility
- Generate additional revenue for the college

## **2. Reflecting and drawing upon the liberal arts commitment of the College**

The Theological Leadership program will reflect Westmont's liberal arts commitment in the following ways:

- The courses by nature of their content will require students to engage in critical and creative thinking, which are two core qualities of the liberal arts.
- Many courses involve interdisciplinary study by drawing on two or more disciplines in the exploration of the content. Examples include Theological Ethics, Culture and Theology, Soul Care, and Theological Principles of Leadership.
- In his book, *The Evidence Liberal Arts Needs*, Robert Detweiler identifies a context of "relational learning" as a key feature of the liberal arts. The Theological Leadership program will create a strong sense of academic community by employing a cohort model. That is, the program will consist of cohorts of no more than twenty-five students who will take the sequence of courses together. Moreover, the program will include community-forming events such as a course-ending spiritual retreat in the Soul Care course.

## **3. Engage students in exploring the relationship of Christian thought and practice to the subjects**

The subject of the certificate program itself lies in the areas of Christian thought and practice.

## **4. Have the academic rigor of upper-division curricula**

The courses will be taught at the post-baccalaureate/early-seminary level, or in other words, slightly above that of an upper-division undergraduate course.

## **5. One to three distinct learning outcomes per course and a means of measuring students' achievements**

The course learning outcomes are below. The means of measurement are identified in the course syllabi, which are included in a separate document.

### **Old Testament**

- 1) Demonstrate literacy in the great narrative of the of the Old Testament by identifying key people, places, events, passages and dates.
- 2) Describe in broad outline the cultural, historical, and geographical context in which the OT was written.
- 3) Begin to interpret the OT as ancient literature and as Scripture with reference to major theological themes, genre, compositional features, and the major theories of scholarship.
- 4) Relate the teaching of the Old Testament to other courses and disciplines, and most importantly, to one's own faith and context.

### **New Testament**

- 1) articulate *both* relevant knowledge of the social and cultural background of the first-century societies in which the Christian movement originated and developed, *and* basic content of the New Testament books, especially relevant themes and/or passages with important theological or historical issues;
- 2) explain how the three main New Testament genres (narrative, epistle, apocalypse) communicate theologically;
- 3) describe and critically evaluate several key academic and theological issues in New Testament studies (e.g., Paul and the Torah; the NT and women; the OT in the NT; hermeneutical perspectives);
- 4) demonstrate the skills of reading contextually *and* interpreting in communities such as the classroom and the academy;
- 5) articulate ways in which the New Testament writers (as committed followers of Jesus) contextualized Jesus for their ancient contexts, and demonstrate the skill of contextualizing Jesus for our context(s) today.

### **Drama of Doctrine**

- 1) Identify central doctrines of Christian faith and forces shaping the history of global Christianity.
- 2) Identify key voices, rival approaches, and persistent theological issues in the church's history.
- 3) Apply skills of theological analysis, discussion, and presentation.

### **History of World Christianity**

- 1) Articulate a fundamental thematic knowledge of breath, depth, and vitality of Christianity in written works, including its relation to the theology and practice of the contemporary church
- 2) Utilize the critical methods of biblical and historical interpretation and contextual thinking
- 3) Apply a nuanced understanding of the "core" Christian messages and practices and the particular and diverse socio-cultural elements of Christian experience and expression

### **Soul Care**

- 1) Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the relevance of their spiritual life to personal flourishing and ministry practices by completion of the Foundational Pillars paper
- 2) Use specific spiritual practices such as awareness, re-visioning spiritual realities, intentionality, practical discernment and classic spiritual disciplines in both devotional life and ministry practice

### **Theological Ethics**

- 1) Demonstrate understanding of the basics of classical and contemporary normative ethical theories, both secular and Christian
- 2) Identify contemporary ethical issues, the arguments for the various positions on these issues, and evaluate them from a Christian perspective
- 3) Demonstrate the critical reasoning skills necessary to carefully thinking through contemporary ethical questions from a Christian perspective
- 4) Engage ethical challenges from positions of Christian practice and leadership

### **Culture and Theology**

- 1) identify and explain missional themes in the Bible
- 2) articulate the dynamic relationship between gospel and culture
- 3) analyze ways that the gospel revitalizes peoples and cultures

**Theological Principles of Leadership**

- 1) Describe the nature and function of leadership and administration within the local church.
- 2) Describe, analyze, assess, and identify various processes, styles and facets of leadership and administration in order to enhance the effectiveness and growth of the church.
- 3) Explain the unique calling of Christian leadership.
- 4) Demonstrate competency by articulating general understanding and applying specific skills in learning and managing a Christian organization.

**6. An assessment plan**

**Theological Leadership Program Learning Outcomes**

**Overview:**

Westmont College is developing a Certificate in Theological Leadership, a post-baccalaureate-level program designed to inculcate wisdom in Christian leaders to enable them to serve more effectively in church and society. The proposed program consists of eight courses to be taught by Westmont faculty in Westmont’s new Downtown building. Students who complete the program will be biblically and theologically competent as well as historically aware, able to read the Bible well but also the culture and the soul. Furthermore, courses will be taught with a global perspective to equip the student to be able to lead in churches whose members are drawn from nations around the world.

**Program Learning Outcomes:**

1. Biblical and theological grounding: Students will be able to articulate biblical and theological concepts and interpret Scripture using sound hermeneutical principles.
2. Self-knowledge and emotional intelligence: Students will be able to explain key principles in ethical leadership and demonstrate an awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.
3. Grounding in global Christianity: Students will be able to explain global dimensions of Christianity and the relationship of culture to theology.

**Assessment Rubric:** Program Learning Outcomes will be assessed in the following courses:

PLO	Old Testament Survey	New Testament Survey	Drama of Doctrine	World Christianity	Soul Care	Theological Ethics	Culture and Theology	Principles of Leadership
#1	X	X	X	X				
#2					X	X		X
#3				X		X	X	X

**Graduate Survey:** In addition, in order to determine the extent to which students are able to apply their knowledge to real-world leadership situations, we will survey graduates of the program within six to twelve months of their graduation and ask questions such as,

- 1) To what extent have you applied biblical, theological, and historical understanding gained from the program in a church or professional setting? Please provide one or more supporting examples.
- 2) Please provide one or more supporting examples of situations in which you have been able to apply self-knowledge and ethical decision-making skills gained from the program.
- 3) To what extent has the program equipped you appreciate global Christianity and to apply theologically-grounded leadership concepts and practices in diverse settings? Please provide one or more supporting examples.

Student responses will be analyzed and used to modify program activities accordingly.

**Preliminary budget**

Gross revenue per cohort: \$250,000

\$1,250 (cost per course) X 25 (students per course) X 8 (number of courses): \$250,000

Cost per cohort: \$60,000

Instructional costs (\$5,000 stipend X 8 courses): \$40,000

Indirect costs (administrative, facilities, overhead): \$20,000

**Net revenue per cohort: \$190,000**