

## **General Education Requirement:**

### **Justice, Reconciliation and Diversity on Biblical and Theological Grounds**

The gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims reconciliation in him with God the Father and peace with one another across a range of human differences. Evangelical Christian faith embraces the kingdom's loving justice, celebrates fellowship in the Holy Spirit, and offers these gifts in turn to all people.

As Westmont's statement on Biblical and Theological Foundations of Diversity articulates, the kingdom's righteousness and reconciliation draw together a diverse fellowship of all people. Jesus's earthly ministry proclaimed good news to the poor and liberty to captives — first for Israel and then to all — in ways that affirmed the dignity and value of all persons. Jesus called his followers to love one another as he loved us, to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to love our enemies with our Father's perfect love. His atoning death at the cross conclusively demonstrated the Father's initiative in seeking justice and reconciliation for every kind of person.

Courses in the Justice, Reconciliation and Diversity general education requirement explore God's desire and call for people to satisfy the demands of love in a broken world. Sin has set all people — men and women, insiders and outsiders, families, tribes, races, and nations — against one another. Their differences often serve as a pretext for mistreatment. By contrast, God's mission in Jesus Christ should shape how Christians understand their call to work in the world, in the church, and in civil society. It guides how Christians should act and relate to others, bear witness, and engage wider cultures. Investigating issues of justice, reconciliation and diversity is crucial for the mission of a Christian scholarly community serving the kingdom by engaging the academy, church, and world.

These GE courses equip students to understand the world and work in it effectively in light of Christ's love of justice. It illuminates Christ's mission to reconcile all people to himself in the context of our fallen human nature and the challenges inherent in appreciating human diversity. Indeed, these courses highlight God's special concern for all people, since all humans bear God's image. Because God called us to appreciate all those who bear His image, he has directly commanded us to honor individuals who come from every nation, tribe, people, and language (Revelation 9, NIV). We consider it essential to help our students understand and embrace the diversity of God's creation. These courses encourage all to repent, forgive and grow in patience, grace and mercy. They guide us in our pursuit of truth and justice, in fostering just systems, and in cultivating joyful and loving relationships.

The courses will equip students to recognize personal, interpersonal, communal, institutional, and systemic expressions of sin and righteousness, rebellion and authority, brokenness and wholeness, and justice and injustice. They will use disciplinary frameworks that illuminate political, social, economic, religious, linguistic and cultural practices that foster an understanding of justice, while relying on biblical and theological precepts to interpret and navigate these concepts.

The courses will foster an awareness that injustices and remedies occur within the context of a particular time and place, and often amidst complex differences in power and culpability. Thus, parties can have different responsibilities in acting justly, seeking forgiveness, working toward healing, and repairing wrongs.

The general education requirements will emphasize that Christian communities are called to cherish the diversity of God's creation. They will lead students to reflect on how Christ embodied justice and

reconciliation for all people. They will help students see their responsibility to promote justice and reconciliation in their own communities, including the learning community of the course itself.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will analyze issues of justice and injustice involving race and racism in the United States in biblically and theologically grounded ways.
2. Students will identify Christian responsibilities to pursue justice and reconciliation in diverse relationships, practices, and structures according to the character of God's loving reign expressed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.