

New  **movie night** (posted 27 Mar 2012)

New  **remaining weeks** (posted 17 Apr 2012)

It is not so very important for a person to learn facts. For that he does not really need a college. He can learn them from books. The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks.

(Albert Einstein, 1921, in response to Thomas Edison's opinion that a college education is useless)

Without education we are in a horrible and deadly danger of taking educated people seriously.

(G. K. Chesterton)

In much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase in sorrow.

(Ecclesiastes 1.18)

Health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.

(Anonymous)

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

(William Butler Yeats)

You must unlearn what you have learned.

(Yoda [*Star Wars V: Empire Strikes Back*])

The unexamined life is not worth living.

(Socrates [*Plato, Apology, 38a*])

ΕΝ ΟΙΔΑ ΟΤΙ ΟΥΔΕΝ ΟΙΔΑ.

("Εν οἶδα ὅτι οὐδὲν οἶδα.")

(Socrates)

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Westminster College

REL 601: Religion Capstone

Spring Semester • 2012

Welcome!

Welcome back to campus and to Religion 601: Religion Capstone. This course is designed to provide Religion (i.e., World Religions or Christian Traditions) and Christian Education majors with a chance to reflect on the significant questions that have been raised, researched, and discussed during the past seven semesters, particularly those that lie at the heart of the study of religion at Westminster. You will think critically about the experience of having taken all the religion courses

thus far. You will read, think, write, and speak critically not only about religion, but about the study of religion and about how all the courses you've taken have influenced your thinking. More specifically, our aim for this semester's synthetic analysis or analytic synthesis will be:

- to articulate how the themes and issues covered in Inquiry have related to what you have learned in your subsequent coursework
- to articulate the interplay between the liberal arts curriculum and the major courses
- to articulate what have become for you the most significant questions or issues as they have been raised and informed by your courses
- to articulate how you see the integration of (or interplay between) academic learning and your beliefs and practices

Achieving these goals will require hard work on your part, which will bring many challenging, enlightening, exciting, frustrating, and rewarding experiences.

Accessibility Statement:

Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Corey Shaw, Director of Disability Support Services: 209 Thompson-Clark Hall; 724-946-7192; shawcj@westminster.edu.

Caveat

This course is designed so that anyone, religious or not, who does the required work can attain the goals mentioned above. This course is not designed to persuade you to a particular faith or religious point of view. Nor is it intended to build up or disparage existing faith, although your diligent efforts can lead to a deeper appreciation of it. Students who consider themselves to be followers of any religion, or no religion at all, are all welcome on this semester journey to think critically through their training in Religion and Christian Education.

Requirements and evaluation for the course

Evaluation For my criteria for evaluation of assignments go to [Evaluation](#) and read the information carefully.

If you have any questions regarding any assignment, please ask in class or make an [appointment](#) to see me.

Assigned readings Assigned readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned. Keeping notes on the readings is highly recommended. Occasionally I may assign additional readings, but these will ordinarily be short.

You must come to class prepared to submit 2–3 pages of brief summaries of the main points or arguments of the readings and your critical reflections on them (e.g., critical insights or questions). These should demonstrate your ability (1) to grasp and organize the essential or significant ideas proposed by the readings and (2) your ability to articulate your understanding in a concise, coherent way.

What you write may be collected and will provide the questions and comments for our class discussion. The primary focus throughout the course will be on cultivating the ability to analyze questions and arguments as well as to synthesize (or relate) that analysis with other questions and issues.

The quality of these weekly papers will constitute a significant part of your participation grade.

Leading discussion Classes will be conducted as seminars. I will present some materials, but you will lead the class discussion of the assigned reading(s).

You're expected to have read the text(s) thoroughly and be able to share the penetrating questions or issues you dealt with in your reading, preparation, or even further research. NB: you don't necessarily have to understand everything before class, but you should demonstrate that you prepared (beyond just the assigned text[s]) and that you can discern, and are familiar with, the major issues in the text(s). Remember that questions are more valuable than answers. You should include or suggest challenges, discoveries, insights, questions, etc. for class discussion. See my [Evaluation](#) page under [Presentations](#) for evaluation criteria (ignore "Communication Skills" section of the [evaluation sheet](#)).

You should prepare for each class as if you will lead the discussion; everyone is expected to do the preparatory work.

Each of you will lead a discussion at least once during the semester. When you will be asked to lead the discussion, only the muses know. If you are not prepared to do so for some reason, let me know before the class starts, so that I will not call on you.

Capstone portfolio You will submit a Capstone portfolio, organized ordinarily by semesters, containing papers and projects you produced at Westminster that have been most significant for your liberal arts journey and for your major. In that portfolio, the Capstone research paper (and project, if appropriate) will be included as the culmination of your academic development, reflection, and work.

1. a **table of contents** that outlines a reasonable progression or the interconnections among your various academic opera, i.e., papers, presentations, and projects that indicate what academic or intellectual challenges you faced, what insights or questions you gained, how you have matured intellectually and spiritually, etc.
2. **annotations** of your table of contents that briefly reflect on the significance of the contents

NB: If you wish, you may submit an **annotated table of contents** that combines the first two parts.

3. a **narrative overview** (3–4 pages) for the entire portfolio which will reflect (1) on the curriculum represented by the contents and also (2) on how such a curriculum has prepared you for life after college, no matter what the immediate future holds for you (e.g., further studies, work, travel)
4. Capstone research paper (and project, if appropriate)

An electronic portfolio would be preferred.

You will do a **PowerPoint presentation** of your portfolio in class (ca. 30 minutes) and respond to questions and critique (see schedule below).

Christian Education majors:

In addition to the Capstone portfolio, you will submit a Christian Education Practicum Portfolio, organized ordinarily by semesters, that can be given to potential employers to demonstrate what you have accomplished at Westminster. The sections bolded in blue are required for each practicum semester of work. Other elements are to be included as appropriate to the contract requirements.

1. **The internship proposal**
2. **The internship contract**
3. Reviews of book and journal article (NB: You should include a review of any books or articles assigned by your internship supervisor.)
4. Curriculum analysis
5. Internship journal
6. **Materials produced** (e.g., curriculum, lesson plans, publicity, CDs, DVDs)
7. **Capstone project: research paper (see below)**
8. **Presentation materials**
9. **Evaluations**

For specific instructions from the Christian Education professor, Prof. Beverly Cushman, [click here](#) (also R-drive).

If possible, please submit an electronic version of the Christian Education Practicum Portfolio, or as much of it as you can in electronic form.

Capstone research paper

You will submit a Capstone research paper. You must make an [appointment as early as possible](#) to discuss your plans with me for approval so that you may begin your work, especially if you wish to submit something other than or in addition to the research paper that is significant for your training in Christian Education or Religion (or for your future plans).

Your research paper (Religion majors: 15–20 pages; Christian Education majors: 12–15 pages) will address one or several aims of the course (see above). You may focus your research on a particular theme or issue of your choice while drawing on all your college training and on your own experience of studying religion at Westminster.

To encourage and aid your self-reflection, professors in the department may visit the class to offer their own responses to some of the core questions, sharing their experiences in graduate institutions where they were trained, as well as in the professional or religious (or both) contexts in which they have taught.

- You must submit a paper proposal in one file that includes:
 - a thoughtful and clear articulation of your research interest, which can be a person (e.g., John Knox)—the more detailed, narrower, and specific the research interest, the better
 - a preliminary bibliography that includes at least 10 secondary sources

(besides course textbooks and reference books) you found to be promising for your paper, including 5 periodical (journal) articles (newspapers and magazines are acceptable if appropriate for your paper)

Electronic sources count only if you provide evidence that they are scholarly sources. Use the [Chicago Manual of Style](#) (or [Turabian](#)) for footnotes and the bibliography.

Submit your proposal **as early as possible** in the semester, so that it can be approved for you to begin work. Make an [appointment as early as you can](#) to bring a **hard copy of your proposal** for discussion and approval.

- You are strongly encouraged to make further appointments for feedback on your progress.
- The paper should represent original work (i.e., your own thoughts), not a mere digest of other people's opinions. Your own reading and re-reading of the relevant texts, as well as review of other materials, are fundamental to the task. I want to know what *you* discover in *your* engagement with the text(s)—a "text" can be written works, art works, music, plays, movies, interview, research results, poll data etc.—whether or not you agree with the authors or the opinions presented in class, including mine.

Focus on honing your ability (1) to **argue** for your opinions and conclusions persuasively and (2) to support them with **evidence** from texts (especially primary sources) and other relevant sources.

- Your final bibliography (**NB: not works cited**) must contain at least 8 sources used in your paper, including 4 periodical (journal) articles.

Electronic sources count only if you provide evidence that they are scholarly sources.

Use the [Chicago Manual of Style](#) (or [Turabian](#)) for footnotes (or endnotes) and the bibliography. Learn the automatic footnote (and endnote) function of your word processor.

- Follow all the instructions given on my [Evaluation](#) page under [Written assignments](#).

Terms Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for learning significant terms covered in our texts or in class (~~see the "terms" file on the R drive~~). You will be responsible for the definitions. Use (1) the course texts, e.g., glossary, index, (2) the resources listed in [Resources to consider](#) below, or (3) any other appropriate sources of information. The terms may constitute a part of any quiz or exam.

Exams & Quizzes There may be short (pop) quizzes covering the materials in the course, including the reading assignments and terms we will have covered by the time of the exam. The quiz scores will affect the evaluation of your participation. See my [Evaluation](#) page under [Quizzes and examinations](#).

Grades Grades will be assigned as fairly as possible. See my [Evaluation](#) page under [Grades](#) for more information. The final grade for the course will consist of the following:

- research paper 40%
- Capstone portfolio 20%

Participation is a significant part of

for CE:
Capstone portfolio (10%)
CE practicum portfolio (10%)

this course.
See my [Evaluation](#) page under
[Participation](#)
for more information and instructions.

- leading discussion 20%
- participation 20%

NB: If you have any questions about how you're doing in the course, please make an [appointment](#) to see me.

Required books

- Naugle, David K. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002.

Recommended books (* = highly recommended)

- * Achtemeier, Paul. *Inspiration and Authority: Nature and Function of Christian Scripture*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.
- Allen, Diogenes. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1985.
- _____ and Eric O Springsted, eds. *Primary Readings in Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.
- Berger, Peter L. *Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*.
- Brown, Raymond. *Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine*. Wipf & Stock, 2002.
- Buckley, William F. *God and Man at Yale: The Superstitions of "Academic Freedom"*
- Dewey, John. *A Common Faith*.
- Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*.
- Fitzgerald, Timothy. *The Ideology of Religious Studies*.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*.
- James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.
- Lewis, C. S. *Surprised by Joy*.
- McCutcheon, Russell T., ed. *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*. London: Cassell, 1999.
- Migliore, Daniel. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.
- Pals, Daniel L. *Seven Theories of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- * Percy, Walker. *Lost in the Cosmos: The Last Self-Help Book*. New York: Picador, 1983.
- * _____. *Signposts in a Strange Land*. New York: Picador, 1991.
- Thielicke, Helmut. *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*.
- Twiss, Sumner B. and Walter H. Conser Jr., ed. *Experience of the Sacred: Readings in the Phenomenology of Religion*. Hanover: Brown University Press, 1992.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *Religion in the Making*.
- * Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1979. (See my [Resources](#) page under [Miscellaneous](#) for the first edition of [Strunk](#).)

Resources to consider

[Resources](#) page for McGill, AV, & Web resources

R-drive: course folder and the "Religion" folder

Keeping in touch

During the semester check your e-mail regularly for messages regarding course matters (e.g., changes in the syllabus). Also visit this page for updates to the syllabus, as well as my [homepage](#) for other information and resources related to the course. Please feel free to make an [appointment](#) any time about *any* course matters.

Tips from former students

For some practical advice from former students, see the [tips](#) page.

One last word . . .

Regardless of how demanding all of this is, I promise to be as fair as possible. I recognize that you'll be very busy this semester pursuing various obligations and passions. I understand. I have my passions too, e.g., my [wonderful family](#), music, philosophy, nature, mountain biking, fixing things, food. But I'm also very passionate about education, both yours and mine—I don't just mean the business of acquiring knowledge, but more importantly the total development of honorable human beings. I don't require you to share my excitement about all the things we'll cover, but I do expect you to complete the requirements for the course. To help you do that as well as you can, I will make myself available outside the class time and the office hours. I'll be more than glad to help you when you're struggling with an assignment. Or if you have *any* questions, concerns, complaints, and even compliments, I will do my best to take the time to listen and offer my response. Keep in mind that I'm here to help you learn. So, again, welcome to Religion 601: Religion Capstone!

Course Schedule

W 1510–1810

McGill 202

Date	Assigned readings	Project / texts	Class / topics
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• = required
> = recommended
+ = read in the library (do not check out)

bold = primary text(s) for discussion
red bold = important date
highlight = my.westminster

Week 1 Jan 18 W	•Course syllabus (including Evaluation link; review requirements, expectations & criteria for grading—ask Qs, if you have	•Keep (& update) copies of all relevant Web pages • Reminder: bring your Qs & Cs to	• Optical conditioning • Optical Illusions •General orientation •Inquiry redux •Worldview
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any)
•Fisher: [Effective Learning](#)

each class (see [Participation](#))
>[Perception quiz](#)
>[Calendar](#)

Week 2
Jan 25 W

•Inquiry: caves, blind men, and naked emperors
•Naugle: quotations, Foreword, Preface, Prologue
•[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[How to Ace College](#)
>[Tips for writing papers](#)
>[Do you know how to think?](#) (a self-exam)

•Worldview
•[Context & perspective](#)

Week 3
Feb 1 W

•Naugle: ch. 1
>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

>[Interesting: Redaction & hermeneutics](#) (funny & instructive)

•Worldview

Week 4
Feb 8 W

•Naugle: ch. 2
>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

•**Feb 8: Last day for proposal submission** (Turnitin.com)

•Worldview

Week 5
Feb 15 W

•Naugle: ch. 3
•Gadamer: [Philosophical Hermeneutics: "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem"](#) or click [here](#)

•Worldview

or click [here](#) **New!**

>Gadamer:

[Philosophical Hermeneutics: Editor's Introduction](#)

New!

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB:** helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

Week 6

•Naugle: ch. 4

•Worldview

Feb 22 W

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB:** helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

Week 7

•Naugle: ch. 5

•Worldview

Feb 29 W

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB:** helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

**Mar 3–11
(break)**

Week 8

•Naugle: ch. 6

•Worldview

Mar 14 W

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB:** helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

Week 9

•Naugle: ch. 7

•Worldview

Mar 21 W

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

Week 10

•Naugle: ch. 8

•Worldview

Mar 28 W

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

Week 11

•Naugle: ch. 9

Meet in OM 211 from this class on 

•Portfolio presentation: **Allison**

Apr 4 W

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

Apr 5–9
(break)

Week 12

•Naugle: ch. 10

•Portfolio presentation: **Mack**

Apr 11 W

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

>[Tips for writing papers](#)

Week 13

•Naugle: ch. 11, Epilogue, Appendix A
•Naugle: ["Clashing Civilizations, Culture Wars, and the Academy: The Illuminating Role of](#)

•**Apr 30: Last day for paper submission** (Turnitin.com)
•Portfolio presentation: **Myers**

Apr 18 W

["Worldview"](#) 

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)


**NB: Apr 25:
Undergraduate
Research
Symposium**

Movie night with the Nas 7:47 PM-ish

Apr 27 F Feel free to bring DVDs or VHSs of movies you think your classmates should see. for directions [click here](#)

Week 14

May 2 W

•Naugle: "[Clashing Civilizations, Culture Wars, and the Academy: The Illuminating Role of 'Worldview'](#)" 

•Gabler: "[On the Proper Distinction between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Specific Objectives of Each](#)"


(Scottish Journal of Theology 33 [1980]: 133–58)

•Meyer: "[Faith and History Revisited](#)"




>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB**: helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

•**May 4: Last day for portfolio submission**

(R-drive or e-mail; if not possible, then hard copy) 

•**May 4: Last day for CE practicum portfolio submission**

(R-drive or e-mail; if not possible, then hard copy) 

•Portfolio presentation: **Smith**

Final week

May 8 T
11:30–14:00

•Gadamer: [Philosophical Hermeneutics](#): "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem"; "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutics"; [On the Problem of Self-Understanding](#); "Man

•Portfolio presentation: **Stevwing**
•Final thoughts

and Language" New!

>[Reading & thinking critically](#) (**NB:** helpful for reading texts & writing research paper)

Have a great summer!

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