Annual Assessment Report

Program: General Education
Academic Year: 2019-2020
Date of Submission:
Committee Chair: Steve Contakes

I. Response to the previous year PRC's recommendations

• **Item:** The PRC affirms the RS Department's plans to continue discussion of the CUPA assessment results. We look forward to hearing about the closing the loop activities that the department will implement.	Response: In the 2020-2021 academic year, the RS department faculty had fruitful conversations regarding their OT, NT and CD courses. Their recommendations are presented in the current report.
• **Item:** The concerns of the Modern Languages Department about what is required of students in Westmont's GR program obviously have a bearing on the work of the GE Committee. The PRC recommends the committee support the department in bringing a robust conversation about the language requirement to the Senate.	Response: The Modern Language department's six-year report reveals that Westmont language requirement remains the lowest of comparable benchmark liberal arts colleges. The Department is exploring the possibility to switch from the one course requirement to the competency requirement through the second or third semester that will allow students reach higher competency levels. Tatiana Nazarenko discussed the issue with Mary Docter in Fall 2020. Mary presented the concept of competency requirement to the Academic Senate as part of the departmental Action Plan for the next six-year cycle. It is expected that the Senate will review and discuss the Modern Language competency requirement in Spring 2021.
• **Item:** As you have planned, continue to examine and discuss the senior survey with an eye toward steps that can improve the GE curriculum. It would be particularly helpful to address specific student concerns in regards to Common Context and PEA courses.	Response: The GE Committee continues examining and discussing the issues relevant to the senior survey. Some concerns were addressed by the GE Committee's collaboration with the RS department, which offers Common Context courses. The issue of PEA courses will be further examined and, possibly, addressed when we will return to our normal routine interrupted by the pandemic.

	Notes:

II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Learning Outcome	*Students will demonstrate literacy in Christian scripture and Christian doctrine.* This GE SLO is aligned with the CUPA ILO: *Westmont graduates will demonstrate literacy in biblical and orthodox Christian faith.*
Who is in Charge /Involved?	Jana Mayfiled Mullen, the GE Assessment Coordinator for Old Testament, New Testament and Christian Doctrine Assessment; Lisa DeBoer, CUPA Lead Assessment specialist.
Direct Assessment Methods	Biblical Studies faculty in the Religious Studies department, in collaboration with the General Education Committee Assessment Coordinator (Mullen), created a biblical literacy survey that was administered in each RS-001 (Sandy Richter, Bill Nelson) and RS-010 section (Holly Beers, Caryn Reeder) in Fall 2018. The survey consisted of a set of multiple choice questions keyed to the major concepts, figures, events and contexts relevant for understanding the content of their courses. All students, taking OT and NT courses offered by full time faculty (n= 342) participated in this assessment. The assessment questions were written collaboratively by the relevant faculty. The surveys were inserted into Canvas and administered as pre-and post-tests. During the spring 2019 semester, the biblical literacy survey – with added doctrine questions provided by Sameer Yadav and Telford Work – was given to outgoing seniors. The survey consisted of the following sections: Old Testament - 15 questions; New Testament - 15 questions; Christian Doctrine - 20 questions. Additionally, 3 Temperature Taking Questions and 8 Demographics Questions were added to the survey (Attachment A). The senior survey was sent to 291 students; 106 students completed the survey responsibly. Useable responses represent a 34.6% response rate. Incomplete surveys, and surveys showing a response pattern were excluded from analysis. Of 106 responses analyzed four (4.8%) were transfer students. One waived OT. Two waived CD. And one late arrival waived both NT and CD. Those students' answers to those sections of the survey were excluded from analysis for each of those classes. As RS 01 and 10 faculty administered the same blocks of OT and NT questions used for the senior survey as a post-test in their Fall 2018 classes, post-test numbers compared to the Senior Survey numbers allowed us to think about what and how well students retain (some aspects of) their learning after taking OT and NT.

	The survey has value in tracking student retention of factual information from the three RS GE classes. Comparing the results from students who were at the time enrolled in RS 001 and 010 with results from graduating seniors has some advantages towards developing longitudinal data on GE curriculum (Attachment B). The RS department also notes that tracking the same students through their academic careers could lead to a more specific data set on student performance. Faculty employed factual questions to assess the GE learning outcome of biblical and theological literacy, along with questions that were more interpretive or constructive in nature to assess the GE learning outcome of interpretive approaches. Due to the limitations of the survey design, the majority of the questions were concerned with content (testing students' biblical and theological literacy).
Indirect Assessment Methods	The GE Committee conducted a syllabus audit of these courses in the 2019-2020 academic year. One RS faculty member was contacted and asked to update his syllabus for RS-001 to better reflect the GE Common Context learning outcomes. There were also concerns expressed about how he might better adapt his pedagogy to reflect the CUPA findings. The syllabus was updated and posted the class syllabi archive.
Major Findings	It is useful to note particular areas in which the percentages of correct answers either dropped sharply or rose significantly between the survey administered to RS 001 and 010 students and graduating seniors. Since the assessment survey was created by the collaboration of professors teaching different sections of the three GE classes, it is likely that certain questions reflected the vocabulary, focal issues, or concerns addressed primarily by a particular professor. As such, the results for individual questions are less useful in tracking weak areas in the department. Major findings include: 1) Questions which showed strong performance or increased performance tend to reflect "big picture" concerns (more on the interpretive side of our GE learning outcomes) – for instance, reflecting on the location of major biblical themes in the narrative, the meaning of core concepts like "kingdom of God," and similar issues. The stronger performance on these questions than on more specific content-based questions affirms certain departmental strengths. On some questions, however, the weaker performance of students enrolled in RS 001 and 010 suggests that time for reflection and reinforcement of key themes is necessary for student retention of material. We are pleased with the strong showing on these bigger picture questions as a result, though there is of course room for improvement. In particular, we question whether the poorer in-course performance on some big picture questions (than on the senior survey) is a weakness to address, or whether it reflects a normal trajectory of student development over their college careers. This question requires more analysis. 2) Even though the majority of the questions were concerned with content (testing students' biblical and

	theological literacy), the RS faculty are interested in pursuing the development of assessment tools to add to the evidence of the Senior Survey with evidence of student ability to interpret texts and traditions. This was particularly important in the Old Testament and New Testament courses, where an emphasis on factual knowledge can sometimes overshadow biblical interpretation. Faculty in these courses continue to face the challenge of teaching all Westmont students, who come with a broad range of prior biblical knowledge.
Closing the Loop Activities	**Department-wide initiatives:** ● Since students retained more information that was repeated in multiple contexts, professors will emphasize common themes and connections with other classes throughout the curriculum, including reminding students of what they have learned/will learn in the RS GE classes in order to reinforce concepts, texts, and ideas. To support student learning through repetition, RS faculty are intentionally emphasizing common themes and connections, and reminding students of what they have heard (or will learn) in the RS GE courses. This continues beyond the GE classes in, for instance, Helen Rhee's church history classes. ● Recognizing that significant student learning occurs outside the classroom, the faculty who teach the GE classes are actively encouraging (and in some cases incentivizing) students to make use of the weekly tutoring sessions organized by Theresa Covich. ● To help students address the perceived divide between their academic study of the Bible, theology, and church traditions and their personal faith, in Spring 2020 the department piloted two professor-organized Bible studies for majors, minors, and others to provide students with the opportunity to practice interpretation, and connect the academic study of scripture with the life of faith ● In collaboration with the Provost's Office and Registrar, the department is reserving a certain number of seats in each section of RS 001 and 010 for incoming first year students, to ensure an equitable distribution of students in these classes for fall 2020 **Professor-specific developments:** ● Dr. Beers has adapted her lectures to provide more space for student discussion in class. She also has begun incorporating potential exam questions into lectures, giving students practice with answering questions. Finally, she has incorporated readings from women and from Christians outside the United States. ● Dr. Farhadian added an assignment requiring students to write a biography of a missionary from diverse backgrounds in Missiology, to give students the opportunity to connect the theoretical material in the course with real people. ● Dr. Nelson received a professional development grant to address support for student learning in RS 001. ● Dr. Reeder developed a timeline of the biblical narrative (and important contextual historical events) to help students

	put the pieces together; she uses the timeline as a framing device throughout the semester. • Dr. Rhee requires students to visit Catholic and Orthodox churches for several weeks, including conversations with priests and parishioners, to help students better understand these traditions. In order to **strengthen students' interpretive skills**, the department developed a variety of tactics: • Holly Beers reorganized her classes to incorporate more time for students to practice using the tools of biblical interpretation during class periods. She also developed a new assignment requiring students to explore biblical interpretation by women or global voices. • Caryn Reeder created a 'Biblical Story Timeline' to help students put together the pieces of the biblical story (foundational themes, biblical Israel's identity, key events and people), adding related discussions to class sessions and questions to exams to give students the opportunity to reflect on these concerns through the semester. • Telford Work developed a new 'Applied Theology' project which requires students to identify and explore an application of course material, encouraging student creativity and engagement with course material. • Beyond the GE classes, Charlie Farhadian added a biography assignment in Missiology to give students the opportunity to explore particular diverse stories, giving theoretical course material a specific application; and Helen Rhee requires students in Early and Medieval Christianity to attend Orthodox and Catholic churches for three weeks each, interviewing church leaders and laity, to help them understand church history through exploration of modern communities

Collaboration and Communication
The RS faculty collaborated on developing all components of the survey. Following the survey administration, the entire department was engaged in extensive conversation regarding the Senior Survey, the Senior Survey compared to the Fall 2018 post tests, as well as an additional pre-test/post-test comparison. These discussions have resulted in a number of pedagogical improvements. The department regularly informed the GE Committee on the progress of their work.

and

II B. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

Program Learning	1. *Students will be able to distinguish among genres (or sub-genres) of imaginative literature by identifying the defining characteristics, authorial purposes, and thematic implications associated with various literary and dramatic forms.*

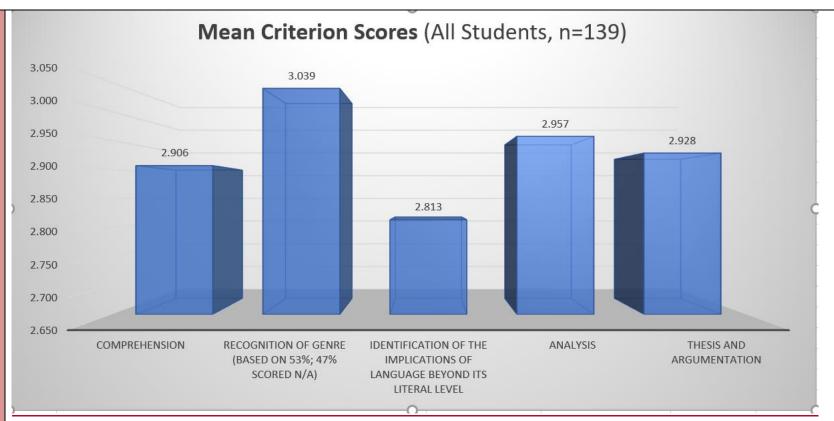| Outcome	2. *Students will be able to analyze imaginative literature to indicate an understanding of language beyond its literal level by offering a close reading that demonstrates at the level of the individual sentence or line not just what the text means but how the text means what it means.*
Who is in Charge /Involved?	Paul Delaney served as the GE Assessment Coordinator. Departments of English, Modern Languages and Theatre Arts participated in assessment and data interpretation.
Direct Assessment Methods	During the Fall 2019 semester, students (n=139) in Reading Imaginative Literature (RIL) General Education (GE) classes were assessed in five areas (Comprehension, Recognition of Genre, Identification of the Implications of Language beyond Its Literal Level, Analysis and Thesis and Argumentation) against an analytical four-level rubric (Attachment C). Forty seven percent of students were not assessed regarding the Genre category. Each student work was assessed by one assessor, the course instructor. This was the first assessment of this GE area since the new GE program came into effect in 2006. Classes participated in assessment included ENG-006WA: Studies in Literature (Paul Delaney); ENG-007H: First-Year Honors Seminar in Literature (Randy VanderMey); ENG-044-1: Studies in World Literature (Carmen McCain); ENG-044-2: Studies in World Literature (Carmen McCain); ENG-060: Writers in Conversation (Kya Mangrum); ENG-134: Ethnicity and Race in American Literature (Kya Mangrum); SP-180: Latin American Women Writers (Dinora Cardoso); TA-001: Great Literature of the Stage(John Blondell).
Indirect Assessment Methods	In Spring 2020, the GE Committee audited eight syllabi collected from the RIL courses offered that semester. All syllabi but one followed the General Education Syllabus template and met all requirements. The Committee was informed that the instructor whose syllabus did not follow the template would not continue teaching at Westmont, and therefore, no action was taken. A minor concern was expressed that some ENG-60 syllabi did not sound inviting to non-English majors. As this course is taught by almost everyone in the department, the Committee asked the English department to address the concern at the departmental level.
Major Findings	The RIL direct assessment study revealed that students generally demonstrated reasonable levels of accomplishment in all areas. One minor concern is that the Average Criteria Score for All Samples (see Charts 1 and 2) shows somewhat weaker performance in Identification of the Implications of Language beyond Its Literal Level. Another potential area for improvement involves students who have put off taking a Reading Imaginative Literature course until their senior year, who scored at the Emerging level in Thesis and Argumentation.

Chart 1: Mean Criterion Scores for the entire sample. On a four-point level RIL rubric, 4 = Highly Developed, 3 = Developed, 2 = Initial, and 1 = Emerging.

Mean Criterion Scores in % (n=139)

Legend: ■ score of 1 ■ score of 2 ■ score of 3 ■ score of 4

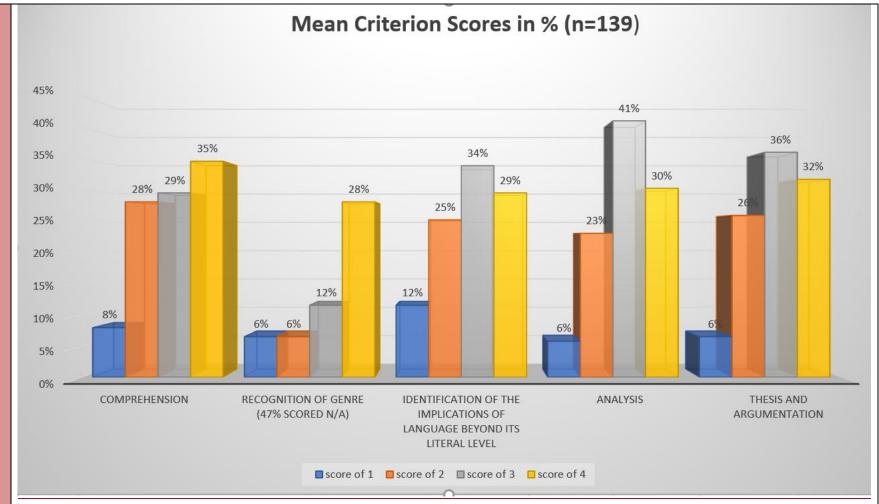| Criterion	score of 1	score of 2	score of 3	score of 4
COMPREHENSION	8%	28%	29%	35%
RECOGNITION OF GENRE (47% SCORED N/A)	6%	6%	12%	28%
IDENTIFICATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF LANGUAGE BEYOND ITS LITERAL LEVEL	12%	25%	34%	29%
ANALYSIS	6%	23%	41%	30%
THESIS AND ARGUMENTATION	6%	26%	36%	32%

Chart 2: Mean Criterion Scores for the entire sample. On a four-point RIL rubric, 4 = Highly Developed, 3= Developed, 2 = Initial, and 1 = Emerging.

The data was disaggregated to determine whether our classes were adequately meeting the needs of varous categories of students. Gender disaggregated data revealed a disparity in performance between male and female students. The two highest levels of attainment were the most numerous for women (n=82) across all five areas. Forty four percent of women scored in the highest level of accomplishment in Comprehension with 23% in the second highest level of accomplishment and 22% in the

emerging category. Twenty one percent of men (n=57) scored the highest level of accomplishment in Comprehension with 39% in level 3 and 37% in level 2; however, in terms of Thesis and Argumentation 72% of men scored in the top two levels of attainment compared to 64% of women. It would be prudent for us to further examine the reasons of these disparities.

The results showed no noticeable differences between the performance of students who self-report as students of color and those who self-report as white. Among the combined number of students who achieved "highly developed" or "developed" status, white students (n=73) had a slight edge in Comprehension but students of color (n=52) maintained a lead in the areas of Genre, Figurative Language, Analysis, and Argumentation.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, students in both upper-division classes, ENG 134 and SP 180, scored higher than students in lower-division students in all categories. Gratifyingly, no students in upper-division classes were reported to be at an initial area of attainment in any of the five areas. Since the majority of RIL courses are lower-division courses it is possible to assume that students in those courses represent the majority this GE area is trying to reach. Even though the level of attainment of some of them is acceptable, we would like to see those students performing at higher levels after completing a RIL course.

Since no major other than English was disaggregated, all students in the study fall into one of three categories:
    English majors
    Students with majors other than English
    Undecided majors

Students with majors other than English had a huge disparity in scores in English classes as opposed to non-English classes. Undecided majors enrolled in English courses scored significantly lower than undeclared majors enrolled in Spanish and Theatre Arts courses. It is possible to suggest that English courses are underperforming relative to other types of RIL courses. However, it is also possible that English faculty applied more rigorous standards in scoring student works. Future rounds of assessment should employ norming to determine more conclusively whether or whether this is simply a consequence of inconsistent application of the assessment rubric

It was somewhat disappointing that eighty-three percent of seniors showed results at the Emerging level of attainment in terms of Argumentation. Further analysis is required to determine why those seniors performed at such a low level. It may be also helpful to see the correlation of the underperforming seniors' scores with their SAT/ACT scores.

The faculty teaching Reading Imaginative Literature courses agreed on two recommendations for the next round of the RIL

assessment. First, it would be helpful to have sample essays that demonstrate each of the levels of attainment. Secondly, it would be helpful to have norming sessions to help ensure that professors doing the assessments were applying criteria in roughly similar ways. A third option to consider would be having more than one assessor weigh in on each student's work. That would multiply the workload because a professor would not just be marking his or her own students but also those of a colleague.

Collaboration and Communication
In a debriefing session to discuss the results, faculty involved in the assessment raised questions about what sort of array of assessment tools might be employed in future years. In addition to the sort of assessment of written work which they relied on this time, perhaps it might be possible to employ different modalities such as having students engage in a dramatic reading of poetry followed by talking about the inflections they made or why they paused when they did. Both Carmen McCain and Kya Mangrum emphasized the importance of students being grounded in the historical context of a piece of literature.

Randy VanderMey questioned whether faculty in English, Spanish, and Theatre Arts all share the same understanding of such concepts as "reading," "imaginative," "literature," "analysis," "comprehension," "genre," figurative language," "thesis or argument," and "mastery." Suggesting that we may be operating with different sets of values, assumptions, policies, parameters, or standards of rigor, he mused that perhaps an assessment of students might be based not on an essay they have written for class but on something like a musician's capacity to "sight read." So a student could be confronted by a new piece of literature, a photo, a film clip, a sonnet. Rather than ask the student to "interpret" the work, the student could be asked what an attentive reader would want to attend to in the given text. What would a careful reader consider when reading this text? How would they go about reading it well? In response to Randy's idea, others suggested that perhaps students could be given a pre-test early in the semester and then again at the end to compare how their awareness of criteria to be addressed had changed. It was proposed that as early as this fall, students in RIL courses be shown different works but be given the same prompt. The consensus that seemed to emerge from this discussion was that faculty teaching RIL courses should choose a text of some kind and ask students early on "What are the factors that an attentive reader would want to consider in interpreting this text?" Then near the end of the semester, students could be asked to apply the same prompt (to the same text? or to a different text?) to see how their awareness of possible factors to consider in literary interpretation may have changed.

In August 2019 faculty teaching RIL courses drafted revised criteria for RIL courses and employed those revised criteria in assessing RIL courses in fall 2019. Those revised criteria specified that 75% of the material students read in a course that receives RIL must be "imagined, invented, fictive." That is, to receive GE credit for RIL, students must be reading literature that is imaginative. That continues to seem fairly obvious. However, the August 2019 revision also put in place a Student Learning Outcome that focused on matters of genre. Nevertheless, several faculty in the study had decided not to assess their students regarding genre even the SLO for this GE area is explicitly aimed at an analysis of genre. Faculty discussed, though they did not resolve, whether, in the future, considerations of genre might be rolled into the analysis category or,

perhaps, into an assessment of student mastery of context. Kya pointed out, for example, that the generic conventions of the slave narrative are intertwined with historical context. She also warned of the dangers of a formalist approach that only engages formalist criteria without consideration of context.

In a sense faculty were road-testing that SLO in the fall by employing "Recognition of Genre" as one of five criteria to be assessed. As it turned out, that was the only criterion that faculty asked to waive. Faculty who were teaching drama courses did not devote much attention to delineating differences among dramatic sub-genres. Faculty teaching prose fiction courses did not engage students in distinguishing among contrasting types of fiction. So of students participating in the fall assessment as many as 54%, with their instructors' blessing, marked the Recognition of Genre criterion as "not applicable." Given that underwhelming response, faculty think it would be best to remove the Student Learning Outcome dealing with genre, restore much of the language deleted from the previous description of the RIL GE category, and return to the Student Learning Outcome they were previously using which focuses on analyzing imaginative literature in ways that demonstrate an understanding of language beyond its literal level. See Appendix D.

III C. Key Questions

Key Question	
Who is in Charge/Involved?	
Direct Assessment Methods	
Indirect Assessment Methods	
Major Findings	
Recommendations	
Collaboration and Communication	

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	
Who was involved in implementation?	
What was decided or addressed?	
How were the recommendations implemented?	
Collaboration and Communication	

IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects

Project	
Who is in Charge /Involved?	
Major Findings	
Action	

Collaboration and Communication

V. **Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)**

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing

VI. Appendices
   A. OT, NT and CD questionnaire
   B. Senior survey and OT/NT results.
   C. RIL Rubric
   D. RIL criteria and SLO

RS GE senior survey/RS post-test questions

Fall 2018

1. In the Gospels in the New Testament, the Sadducees question and critique Jesus's teachings. From your understanding of the Sadducees, what is the best explanation of their rejection of Jesus?

- Jesus did not keep the laws of Moses necessary for getting into heaven.
- Jesus's disciples did not include any Gentiles like the Sadducees.
- The Sadducees thought the messiah would be divine.
- Jesus condemned the temple as a place of corruption.
- I don't know.

2. Why were the books of the New Testament written in Greek?

- From the time of Alexander the Great, Greek was the common language of the Mediterranean.
- Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, was considered a sacred language.
- Scribes were only trained to write in Greek, so other languages could not be used.
- The Romans spoke Latin, so writing in Greek protected the authors from imperial persecution.
- I don't know.

3. Which of the following is true of Paul?

- As a Pharisaic convert to Christianity, Paul insisted that Gentiles should be circumcised.
- Born in Tarsus and educated in Jerusalem, Paul was comfortable with Greek and Jewish cultures.
- Since he was a Diaspora Jew, Paul had to study under Gamaliel to become a priest.
- Though Paul was a disciple of Jesus early in his life, he later persecuted the church.
- I don't know.

4. Jews in Roman Palestine (like Jesus and the disciples) regarded the Samaritans:

- as idolaters, because the Samaritans refused to worship with the Jews
- as historic allies, since the Samaritans helped rebuild the temple in Jerusalem in 515 BCE.
- as polytheists; Samaritans taught the Jews to worship many gods.
- as religious and political rivals who challenged Jewish identity in the land.
- I don't know.

5. Like most people in the Roman Empire, the authors of the New Testament books used scribes:

- because illiteracy rates were very high.
- to write even short documents like letters.

- sometimes, as amanuenses (or ghost writers).
- because it was the custom, even for the literate.
- all of the above.
- I don't know.

6. When the author of the Gospel of Matthew sat down to write a book about Jesus,

- he chose to publish under the name "Matthew" to gain authority for his book.
- he had access to oral tradition in addition to written sources like the Gospel of Mark.
- he had no need of secondary sources because he was an eyewitness to Jesus's ministry.
- he worked mainly at Starbucks to support his coffee habit.
- he simply told what happened in Jesus' life, without bias or interpretation.
- I don't know.

7. Which of the following best represents Jesus's messianic job description in Mark?

- As messiah, Jesus wrests political power away from Rome.
- As messiah, Jesus is called to suffer and die.
- As messiah, Jesus came to be served by all Jews.
- As messiah, Jesus keeps the laws of the Sabbath perfectly.
- I don't know.

8. In comparison with the other Gospels, Luke's gospel is more likely to:

- include stories that highlight Jesus's interaction with women.
- explain the Jewish customs necessary for entry into the temple.
- encourage baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- discourage obedience of the Roman laws and traditions.
- I don't know.

9. The church in Acts:

- incorporated Gentiles into the community without question.
- gathered once a week in local temples for a worship service.
- continued to carry out the ministry and teaching of Jesus.
- quickly gained acceptance from the Jewish and Roman authorities.
- quit growing when the persecutions began in Jerusalem.
- I don't know.

10. Markan priority refers to:

- the assumption that Mark is theologically more significant than the other gospels.
- the theory that Mark was written before Matthew and Luke were composed.
- the Gospel of John's use of Mark instead of Matthew or Luke as sources.
- 2019 CUPA Draft Report Appendices
- Augustine's explanation of Mark's adaptation of Matthew's gospel.
- I don't know.

11. "We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ." In interpreting this text from Paul's letter to the Galatians, it is important to know that:

- Paul's opponents in Galatia thought the return of Christ was imminent.
- According to the teachings of Jesus, Jewish Christians no longer have to keep the law to be saved.
- Paul believed that Moses saves Jews, and Jesus saves Gentiles.
- Paul is arguing against the teaching that Gentiles have to convert to Judaism to follow Jesus.
- I don't know.

12. "Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge." To understand this verse from 1 Peter, it's important to know that the letter was written to Christians who were viewed by their Roman neighbors as:

- Holy, because they worship the Jewish God alone.
- Dangerous threats, because they do not worship Roman gods.
- Respectable, honest, hard-working members of the community.
- Patriotic citizens who protect the emperor by their prayers.
- I don't know.

13. At the Jerusalem Council, James decided that:

- Gentiles must be circumcised in order to become Christians.
- The church should send missionaries to Rome to preach the Gospel.
- The four Gospels should be canonized in the New Testament.
- Gentiles do not have to convert to Judaism in order to follow Jesus.
- I don't know.

14. A slave in the New Testament world (like Rhoda or Onesimus) could expect:

- To be under the absolute authority of the owner.
- To perform only menial household tasks.

- To be married and raise his or her own family.
- To come originally from Africa.
- I don't know.

15. In the New Testament, the "kingdom of God" refers to:

- The political nation-state of Israel.
- The true home of Christians in heaven.
- The rule of God brought to this world by Jesus.
- The Roman Empire.
- I don't know.

16. Put the following biblical characters in their correct chronological order:

- Abraham, Noah, Adam, David, Moses
- Moses, Adam, Noah, Abraham, David
- Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David
- Adam, Moses, Noah, Abraham, David
- I don't know.

17. One would expect to find the narrative of "the fall of humanity" in the Book of …

- Genesis
- Lamentations
- Psalms
- Exodus
- I don't know.

18. In what book of the Bible would you find the Ten Commandments?

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- 1 Kings
- I don't know.

19. Who was the first king of Israel?

- Solomon
- David

- Saul
- Hezekiah
- I don't know.

20. The Temple was built …

- By David in Jerusalem
- By Solomon in Jerusalem
- By Jeremiah in Shiloh
- By Hezekiah in Arad
- I don't know.

21. Israel and Judah were:

- Twin brothers who became rivals and eventually nations
- The two kingdoms of Israel during the divided monarchy
- Two of Jacob's twelve sons who made up the 12 tribes of Israel
- Two names for the same person
- I don't know.

22. The "exile" of Israel is . . .

- The era when Egypt enslaved the Israelites
- The era preceding the monarchy
- The era when Babylon captured the citizenry of Judah
- The era when the Romans drove the Jews out of Palestine
- I don't know.

23. In the Jewish canon, the Old Testament is divided into three sections:

- the Torah (Law); the Writings; the Traditions
- the Torah (Law); the Prophets; the Writings
- the Torah (Law); the Former Prophets; and the Psalms
- the Torah (Law); Wisdom Literature; and the Former Prophets
- I don't know.

24. Which of these prophets confronted Ahab of the Northern Kingdom in the great showdown on Mt. Carmel?

- Hosea

- Amos
- Elijah
- Joel
- I don't know.

25. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by:

- Babylon
- Persia
- Egypt
- Assyria
- I don't know.

26. The Southern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by:

- Babylon
- Persia
- Egypt
- Assyria
- I don't know.

27. In which book would we find the following verse: "Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity!"?

- Proverbs
- Job
- Ecclesiastes
- Psalms
- I don't know.

28. In what book would you expect to find the hymns, liturgies, and responsive readings of ancient Israel?

- Proverbs
- Job
- Ecclesiastes
- Psalms
- I don't know.

29. Abraham was . . .

- Called to build the Ark
- Called to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldees and move to Canaan
- The great lawgiver of Israel
- The paradigmatic king of Israel
- I don't know.

30. Which of these is one of the Ten Commandments?

- Do this in remembrance of me.
- Honor the Sabbath.
- Love one another as I have loved you.
- Love your neighbor as yourself.
- I don't know.

31. Christians came to express God as being one _____ in three _____.

- person (persona); substances (essentiae)
- substance (hypostasis); forms (morphai)
- nature (phusis); entities
- substance (ousia); persons (hypostases)
- I don't know

32. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are best distinguished according to

- the divine attributes possessed by each (mind, word, power)
- their primary roles in salvation (Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer)
- their primacy in "ages" of revelation (OT = Father, NT = Son, Curch = Spirit)
- their relations of origin (source, begottenness, procession)
- I don't know

33. The "incarnation" is the doctrine that the person of Jesus is

- God laying aside his divinity to take on human form for us
- the divine mind of the Son taking up residence in a genuinely human body
- the divine person of the Son taking up our human nature to save it
- an ordinary human person whom the Spirit empowered to save us
- I don't know

34. Roman Catholics believe that in justification we receive Christ's _____ righteousness, while Lutherans believe we receive Christ's _____ righteousness.

- infused; imputed
- alien; infused
- imparted; alien
- alien; imputed
- I don't know

35. Personal sanctification conforms us to the character of Christ, and includes not only virtues that can be shared by non-Christians (e.g., kindness, patience, etc.), but also the theological virtues of _____, which are uniquely given by God's saving grace.

- mercy, faith and love
- faith, mercy and justice
- faith, hope, and love
- justice, mercy, humility
- I don't know

36. Baptism is the Church's outward sign of the inward grace of _____.

- atonement
- justification
- sanctification
- glorification
- I don't know

37. According to Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics, the outward signs of redemption in the church are sacramental in the sense that they are _____.

- necessary instruments for conveying their inward grace
- reminders that points us toward the grace they signify
- ways of experiencing the grace conveyed by faith alone
- none of the above
- I don't know

38. Which of the following people was condemned as a heretic?

- Arius of Alexandria
- Athanasius of Alexandria
- Augustine of Hippo
- Thomas Aquinas
- I don't know

39. Most churches understand Jesus Christ to be one _____ in two _____.

- essence, personalities
- nature, parts
- person, natures
- substance, forms
- I don't know

40. God the Son:

- was the first creation of God the Father
- is inferior only to God the Father
- is the same person as God the Father, only in a different mode or form
- created all things along with God the Father
- I don't know

41. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus:

- became popular among Christians only when the emperor Constantine made   Christianity Rome's official religion
- is displayed among the first disciples
- originated when missionaries like Paul brought the good news to Gentiles
- was part of conventional Jewish expectation of the Messiah
- I don't know

42. The best synonym for "catholic" is:

- diverse
- Roman
- sinless
- universal
- I don't know

43 Augustine taught that we are sinners:

- because humans are sinful by nature
- because we freely choose to disobey God
- because we inherit Adam's guilt
- only in the sense that we do not appreciate our goodness
- I don't know

44. The Holy Spirit:

- is a part of God
- is an appendage of the Father
- is impersonal whereas the Son and Father are personal
- relates to God in ways over which different Christians have long disagreed
- I don't know

For the following questions, choose from these responses:

- I know it's false
- I think it's false
- I am unsure
- I think it's true
- I know it's true

45. God is so beyond our conception that trying to describe God is useless or idolatrous.

46. Before creation there was no God the Son, only God the Father.

47. God made all things in the universe, including sin.

RS GE Senior Survey

The Format

Old Testament	Questions 1-15	15 questions
New Testament	Questions 16-30	15 questions
Christian Doctrine	Questions 31-53	23 questions (20 objective questions)
Temperature Taking	Questions 54-56	3 questions
Demographics	Questions 57-65	8 questions

Methodology

Questions for the three content sections of the survey (OT, NT, CD) were developed by the RS faculty who regularly teach these three classes (Nelson and Richter, Beers and Reeder, Work and Yadav). Students with senior standing were invited to take the survey over the course of four weeks, from Monday, November 12 to Thursday, December 6, 2018. The vast majority of students (106/114) took the survey between the November 12 and 19.

The same Old Testament and New Testament questions were used as part of a pre- and post-course exercise in all RS 01 (144 students) and RS 10 (168 students) sections in the fall. Students in those classes were invited to take the pretest in the first two weeks of the semester, and then retake it in the final weeks of the semester. Because we were particularly interested in gaining a picture of students' grasp of basic bible knowledge rather than knowledge of theology and doctrine, we did not do the pre/post course exercise in RS 20—Christian Doctrine classes.

It's important to note that the audiences for these exercises are different: the pre/post-test audience consisted of students currently taking RS 01 and RS 10 during the Fall of 2018 (thus, generally first and second year students). The Sr. Survey audience consisted of students with senior standing as of Fall 2018.

The Response Pool

The senior survey was sent to 291 students; 114 students responded to the survey, a 39.2% response rate. There were 7 (6.1%) transfer students in the pool of respondents. 6 transfers had one RS class waived. One came to Westmont Spring of 2017 and had two RS classes waived.

106 students completed the survey responsibly. Useable responses represent a **34.6%** response rate. (Incomplete surveys, and surveys showing a response pattern were excluded from analysis.) Of 106 responses analyzed four (**4.8%**) were transfer students. One waived OT. Two waived CD. And one late arrival waived both NT and CD. Those students' answers to those sections of the survey were excluded from analysis for each of those classes.

Christian Doctrine results and survey cumulative results were calculated with 72 complete responses. A formatting problem that we caught early meant that the CD responses for the first 18 respondents yielded garbled data. Additionally, 14 of the remaining 88 respondents had yet to take RS 20, and 2 were transfers who waived the class. Their responses to the CD portion of the survey were excluded from the Christian Doctrine analysis and from the cumulative results.

67.0% (71/106) Respondents were women. **33%** (35/106) were men. Average scores for men and women were the same.

87.7% (93/106) currently identify as Christian. **72.7%** (77/106) Agree or strongly agree that they "have a personally meaningful relationship with the God of the Bible." **66.0%** (70/106) Agree or strongly agree that "Westmont has (on balance) positively contributed to my development as a Christian."

 8.5% (9/106) responded that they don't currently identify as Christians. **3.8%** (4/106) responded "Prefer not to answer" to whether they identify as Christian. (4 of 13 who replied "no" or "prefer not to answer" did, however, in a subsequent question identify themselves with a religious tradition: 1 Non-denominational; 1 Lutheran; 1 Roman Catholic and 1 "Ancient.")

The Results

	Old Testament	New Testament	Doctrine	Total
Students in sample	**105**	**105**	**72**	**72**
% Xian ID	88.5%	88.5%	90.3% (65/72)	90.3% (65/72)
% prefer not to ID	3.8%	3.8%	2.8% (2/72)	2.8% (2/72)
% Non-Xian ID	7.6%	7.6%	6.9% (5/72)	6.9% (5/72)
Average % Correct	**66.4%**	**62.2%**	**47.5%**	**55.9%**
Average # Correct	9.96	9.33	9.04	27.94
St. Deviation	3.25	3.21	4.12	8.66
Ave for X-ian ID	67.3% (10.1/15)	64.6% (9.7/15)	48.4% (9.68/20)	57.2% (28.6/50)
Ave for non X-ian ID	57.3% (8.6/15)	45.1% (6.8/15)	38.9% (7.8/20)	43.3% (21.6/50)

Timing of OT/NT for Students Starting Westmont Fall 2015

Semester	Old Testament		New Testament	
	# Students	**Average Score**	# Students	**Average Score**
F '15	29.52% (31/105)	72.5% (10.87/15)	20.9% (22/105)	59.7% (8.95/15)
S '16	27.62% (29/105)	66.2% (9.93)	27.62% (29/105)	58.7% (8.83)
F '16	8.57% (9/105)	61.48% (9.22)	6.67% (7/105)	62.7% (9.43)
S '17	3.81% (4/105)	68.3% (10.25)	13.33% (14/105)	69.1% (10.7)
***F '17**	4.76% (5/105)	41.3% (6.2)	3.8% (4/105)	81.7% (12.2)
***S '18**	1.90% (2/105)	46.7% (7)	6.67% (7/105)	63.8% (9.57)
	Christian Doctrine			
F '15	0	0		
S '16	1.39% (1/72)	55.0% (11/20)		
F '16	19.44% (14/72)	43.6% (8.7)		
S '17	15.28% (11/72)	42% (8.4)		
***F '17**	13.89% (10/72)	39.5% (7.9)		*Fire disruption*
***S '18**	20.83% (15/72)	55.7% (11.1)		*Mudslides*
Fall '18	8.33% (6/72)	47.5% (9.6)		

* Because the population for this snapshot includes only traditional four-year students who began their college career at Westmont, fall 2015, the percentage/number of column will not add up to 100% or 105/72 students.

Distribution of results by course

Old Testament (105)				New Testament (105)			
Score	% correct	# students	% students	Score	% correct	# students	% students
15	100%	7	6.7	15	100%	2	1.9
14	93.3	9	8.57	14	93.3	7	6.67
13	86.7	11	10.47	13	86.7	15	14.28
12	80.0	14	13.33	12	80.0	8	7.62
11	73.3	11	10.47	11	73.3	11	10.47
10	66.7	10	9.52	10	66.7	7	6.67
9	60.0	6	5.71	9	60.0	10	9.52
8	53.3	8	7.62	8	53.3	14	13.33
7	46.7	8	7.62	7	46.7	6	5.71
6	40.0	10	9.52	6	40.0	15	14.28
5	33.3	6	5.71	5	33.3	3	2.86
4	26.7	4	3.81	4	26.7	5	4.76
3	20.0	1	0.95	3	20.0	1	.95
2	13.3	0	0.00	2	13.3	1	.96
1	6.7	0	0.00	1	6.7	0	

Christian Doctrine (72)			
Score	% correct	# students	% students
20	100	0	0
19	95	1	1.39
18	90	4	5.56
17	85	0	0
16	80	0	0
15	75	3	4.17
14	70	6	8.33
13	65	4	5.56
12	60	4	5.56
11	55	8	11.11
10	50	8	11.11
9	45	5	5.56
8	40	7	9.72
7	35	5	5.56
6	30	5	5.56
5	25	3	4.17
4	20	4	5.56
3	15	3	4.17
2	10	2	2.78
1	5	0	0

Fall in-class post-tests compared to Sr. Survey results

	OT Average % correct	NT Average % correct
Fall post-test average % correct	67.2%	73%
Sr. Survey average % correct	66.4%	62.2%

Results by question: Post-course quiz compared to Sr. Survey

* For the complete wording of each question and the multiple choice possibilities, see Appendix X

Old Testament	Fall Post Tests	Sr. Survey % correct	% change
Q 16 Put the following biblical characters in chronological order	82.6	86.7	4.10
Q 17 One would find the story of the fall of humanity in the book of	86.1	90.5	4.40
Q 18 In what book of the Bible is the Ten Commandments	87.5	85.7	-1.80
Q 19 Who was the first king of Israel	72.2	62.9	-9.30
Q 20 The Temple was built by …	69.4	61.9	-7.50
Q 21 Israel and Judah were…	81.9	73.3	-8.60
Q 22 The exile of Israel is….	26.4	44.8	18.40
Q 23 In the Jewish canon, the OT is divided into three sections:	56.9	60.0	3.10
Q 24 Which of these prophets confronted Ahab on Mt. Carmel	58.3	53.3	-5.00
Q 25 The Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by…	64.6	39.0	-25.60
Q 26 The Southern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by…	53.5	40.0	-13.50
Q 27 In which book would you find "Vanity of vanities…."	72.2	54.3	-17.90
Q 28 In what book would you find hymns and liturgies of Israel	80.6	90.5	9.90
Q 29 Abraham was…	79.7	75.2	-4.50
Q 30 Which of these is one of the Ten Commandments	59.7	78.1	18.40

New Testament	Fall Post Tests	Sr. Survey % correct	% change
Q 1 The Sadducees question and critique Jesus' teachings because…	32.7	31.4	-1.30
Q 2 Why were the books of the NT written in Greek	77.4	78.2	0.80
Q 3 Which of the following is true of Paul…	73.8	64.8	-9.00
Q 4 Jews in Roman Palestine regarded the Samaritans as…	57.1	64.8	7.70
Q 5 The authors of the NT used scribes because…	67.0	65.7	-1.30
Q 6 When the author of *Matthew* sat down to write about Jesus…	55.4	55.2	-0.20
Q 7 Which best represents Jesus' messianic job description in Mark?	77.4	72.4	-5.00
Q 8 In comparison with the other gospels, Luke is more likely to…	70.8	58.1	-12.70
Q 9 The church in Acts…	48.8	59.0	10.20
Q 10 Markan priority refers to…	74.4	62.9	-11.50
Q 11 In interpreting <X> in Galatians, it's important to know…	45.0	59.0	14.00
Q 12 In interpreting <X> in I Peter, it's important to know…	71.4	73.3	1.90
Q 13 At the Jerusalem Council, James decided that…	57.1	54.3	-2.80
Q 14 A slave in the NT world would expect…	83.0	62.9	-20.10
Q 15 In the NT, the "Kingdom of God" refers to…	67.3	72.4	5.10

Christian Doctrine	Sr. Survey % correct
Q 31 Christians came to express God as being one _____ in three _____	62.5
Q 32 The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are best distinguished according to…	44.4
Q 33 The 'Incarnation' is the doctrine that the person of Jesus is….	66.7
Q 34 Terms associated with Roman Catholic vs Lutheran understandings of justification	33.3
Q 35 The three theological virtues	52.8
Q 36 Baptism is the Church's outward sign of the inward grace of…	12.5
Q 37 For Orthodox and Catholics, outward signs of redemption are sacramental in that…	55.6

Q 38 Which of the following was condemned as a heretic…	33.3
Q 39 Most churches understand Christ to be one _____ in two _____.	63.9
Q 40 God the Son is:	41.7
Q 41 Belief in the resurrection of Jesus originated…	66.7
Q 42 The best synonym for "Catholic" is…	66.7
Q 43 Augustine taught that we are sinners….	36.1
Q 44 The Holy Spirit is:	30.6
Q 45 Trying to describe God is useless or idolatrous	46.5
Q 46 Before Creation there was no God the Son, only God the Father.	66.7
Q 47 God made all things in the universe, including sin.	40.3
Q 48 People lack the power to keep themselves from sinning.	47.9
Q 49 Healthy discipleship requires worship, service, prayer, study.	48.6
Q 53 The Great Schism came before the Reformation	35.4

"Range of Belief" questions:

Q 50   At any time, believers could be 'raptured' to heaven while the earth undergoes a seven-year tribulation, after which Jesus will return and establish a millennial kingdom.

I know it's true	11.1%	8/72
I think it's true	12.5%	9/72
I don't know	40.3%	29/72
I think it's false	19.4%	14/72
I know it's false	16.7%	12/72

Q 51   For women to lead the church is biblically appropriate.

I know it's true	41.7%	30/72
I think it's true	25.0%	18/72
I don't know	16.7%	12/72
I think it's false	8.3%	6/72
I know it's false	8.3%	6/72

Q 52   All human beings will eventually be saved.

I know it's true	8.3%	6/72
I think it's true	12.5%	9/72
I don't know	26.4%	19/72
I think it's false	22.2%	16/72
I know it's false	30.6%	22/72

"Temperature Taking" questions:

Q 54   I have a personally meaningful relationship with the God of the Bible.

Strongly agree	49.1%	52/106
Agree	23.6%	25/106
I'm not sure	15.1%	16/106
Disagree	4.7%	5/106
Strongly disagree	7.5%	8/106

Q 55   I can articulate my faith to someone who doesn't share it.
        Strongly agree   28.3%   30/106
        Agree   28.3%   30/106
        I'm not sure   17.0%   18/106
        Disagree   16.0%   17/106
        Strongly disagree   10.4%   11/106

Q 56   Westmont has (on balance) positively contributed to my development as a Christian.
        Strongly agree   38.7%   41/106
        Agree   27.3%   29/106
        I'm not sure   11.3%   12/106
        Disagree   17.0%   18/106
        Strongly disagree   5.7%   6/106

Reading Imaginative Literature Rubric, version 5

Evaluators will assign a zero to any work that does not meet "Initial" (cell one) level performance.

	Highly Developed—4	Developed—3	Emerging—2	Initial—1
Comprehension	Displays self-awareness in the evaluation of possible approaches to the meaning of the text, based on consideration of alternative emphases on the author's management of form, style, voice, reasoning, and context.	Displays subtle sense of the meaning and workings of the text, based on inferences drawn from the author's management of form, style, voice, reasoning, and context.	Conveys some insight into the meaning and workings of the whole text based on understanding of the implications of diction, figurative language, rhetoric, structure, and relation to context.	Grasps general sense of the text well enough to represent it in broad summary or paraphrase. Needs clearer sense of implications of diction, figurative language, rhetorical, structure, and relation to context.
Recognition of Genre	Demonstrates the way a text may simultaneously exploit and subvert the expectations of a given genre or sub-genre. Provides a nuanced examination of the ways in which a text fulfills the characteristics of its genre. Offers meaningful speculation as to the reasons why an author may play with genre characteristics, letting some elements of a text depart from conventional expectations.	Identifies the defining characteristics, authorial purposes, and thematic implications associated with the genre or sub-genre of a text. Conveys some insight into the way the content of a text is shaped by the expectations of the genre or sub-genre in which it is written. Offers some insight into the reasons why some elements of a text may be in tension with those expectations.	Names the ways a text fulfills the characteristics of its genre. Identifies elements of the text which are unexpected given the genre in which it is written. May tend to be judgmental in regarding such unexpected elements as errors rather than playful riffs on a form.	Identifies the genre of a given text but may not recognize the sub-genre in which the author is working or how the content of the text aligns with the genre.
Identification of the implications of language beyond its literal level	Identifies, interprets, and recognizes the possibility for multiple interpretations of one or more images, metaphors, or literary devices in a text. Identifies and makes compelling arguments about changes in an author's use of a literary device in the course of a particular text.	Identifies and interprets one or more images, metaphors, or literary devices in a text. Identifies and makes a somewhat compelling argument about changes in an author's use of a literary device in the course of a particular text.	Identifies a specific image, metaphor, or literary device in a text, and states an interpretation but does not marshal evidence effectively in support of that interpretation.	Identifies a specific image, metaphor, and other literary device in a text, but offers little interpretation that goes beyond paraphrase or summary.
Analysis	Passage is examined in ways that illuminate the text. Analysis is original, insightful, and compelling. The challenge and complexity of the text is enriched and celebrated through the discussion. There are no gaps in reasoning; the reader does not need to assume anything or guess at what might be being implied or suggested. The "So What?" question is answered consistently.	Passage is examined in ways that accurately reflect the text. Analysis is correct, if not particularly original or illuminating. The challenge and complexity of the text is acknowledged. Reader must make a few mental leaps or guess at what might be being implied or suggested at times. The "So What?" question is considered in some cases.	Passage is examined in ways that are generally accurate in their reflection of the text, but may at times misrepresent the work of the author. Analysis is thin; originality and insight are not in evidence. The challenge and complexity of the text comes through weakly, if at all. Points are left undeveloped, or are merely reiterated. Reader must supply much of the analysis. The "So What?" question gets little attention.	Passage is examined in ways that clearly miss the point of the text. Analysis of text is banal, reductive, and fails to live up to the challenge and complexity of the text. Reader is expected to do all the work. The "So What?" question is left unconsidered.
Thesis and Argumentation	Argument is thesis-driven. Thesis is original, specific, and of a scope appropriate to the assigned writing task. The evidence used to support the thesis is taken from a text. This evidence is analyzed in great detail and to great effect. Overall, the argument is not only logical, but also persuasive.	Argument is mostly thesis-driven. Thesis is either original or specific. The scope of the thesis is slightly too narrow or slightly too broad given the assigned writing task. The evidence used to support the thesis is taken from a text, and is analyzed in some detail. Overall, the argument is mostly logical, and often persuasive.	Thesis is neither original nor specific. The scope of the thesis is too narrow or too broad given the assigned writing task. The evidence used to support the thesis is taken from the text itself, but includes little to no textual analysis. Overall, the argument sometimes lapses into illogic, and is only somewhat persuasive.	Thesis is neither original nor specific. The scope of the thesis is too narrow or too broad given the assigned writing task. The evidence used to support the thesis may or may not be taken from the text itself, and includes little to no textual analysis. Overall, the argument very often lapses into illogic, and is mostly unpersuasive.

Reading Imaginative Literature—revised criteria

Certification criterion # 1:

Courses fulfilling the GE category for Reading Imaginative Literature will focus on written works that are imagined, invented, fictive. At least 75% of material assigned in the course (both in terms of titles and page count) will consist of written works of the imagination (i.e., plays, poems, or prose fiction—either novels or short stories) as opposed to literary criticism, critical theory, scholarly writing, textbook readings, or any other form of non-fiction. Courses satisfying this requirement develop students' skills in analyzing and understanding uniquely literary ways of knowing. Such an approach invites students to see how literature reveals things we cannot know except by inference or by metaphor. Students in these courses should recognize how imaginative literature honors the complexity of human experience. Further, by encouraging the practice of compassion by imagining the other, the course involves students in ways of knowing that are inherently ethical.

Interpretive Statement

Courses accepted as fulfilling the General Education category of Reading Imaginative Literature will meet the following criteria in approach, content, and methodology.

Approach: The course will offer an exploration of how literature can inform our lives and deepen our faith. Moving across space (to other places and other cultures) and time (to historical periods other than our own) we will seek to discern what is essentially human from what is particular to the place and time we inhabit. This mode of inquiry requires students to explore literature with the goals of:

- understanding more about how the context in which a text was written helps to determine how it should be read
- increasing respect for the benefits of paying close attention
- learning to notice the interplay of form, style and content
- appreciating presentational as opposed to propositional approaches to truth
- encountering the other with empathy, compassion and love
- articulating and wrestling with the ethical questions implicit in a text
- examining the assumptions we bring to our reading
- discerning issues of social, racial, and economic justice and the abuses of power
- deepening our understanding of what it means to read as people of faith and with increased regard for the significance of story for people of the book.

Content: The focus will be on such imaginative genres as lyric and narrative poetry, prose fiction, creative non-fiction, and drama. The poems, stories, and plays we read will raise some of the enduring questions about what it is like to experience love, to endure loss, to encounter the other, to cope with discrimination, to cling to faith and to entertain doubt—ultimately what it means to be human and have a sense of stewardship for one's life. While we recognize that thoughtful writers can illuminate any human experience, courses fulfilling this requirement will focus on works of significance for their literary artistry rather than their commercial appeal. Specifically excluded are courses that focus on contemporary commercial genres such as baseball fiction, spy thrillers, science fiction, romance novels, pornography, murder mysteries, children's literature, and Westerns. Specifically included are courses focusing on works that require attention to diction (including

sensory and connotative language, simile, and metaphor), image patterns, characterization, character foils, structure, setting, narrative point of view, literary allusion, and literary context. Work that falls within such a capacious category includes drama from Shakespeare to August Wilson, prose fiction from Jane Austen to Toni Morrison to Chinua Achebe, poetry from Gerard Manley Hopkins to Gwendolyn Brooks to Eavan Boland.

Methodology: Courses that satisfy the category of Reading Imaginative Literature will direct attention to the interplay of language and style, will consider the relationship of form and content, and will locate works within a literary tradition. Specifically excluded are approaches that see literature as a utilitarian means to some non-literary end, that would use literature as a quarry for the extraction of nuggets of sociological constructs, psychological symptoms, philosophical precepts, doctrinal truths, or other paraphrasable propositions. Throughout, the course will raise literary questions as to how a poem means as well as what a poem means, how prose fiction complicates our response to a narrative voice as well as what the story reveals of human relationships, how drama offers multiple possibilities for interpretation of dialogue as well as giving timeless expression to the experience of tragedy, of reconciliation, of enduring justice and of enduring injustice.

Certification criterion # 2:

In courses fulfilling the GE category for Reading Imaginative Literature, students will engage in close reading of imaginative texts, analyzing at the level of the individual sentence or line not just *what* the text means but *how* the text means what it means.

Student Learning Outcome

Students will be able to analyze imaginative literature to indicate an understanding of language beyond its literal level by offering a close reading that demonstrates at the level of the individual sentence or line not just *what* the text means but *how* the text means what it means.

Interpretive Statement

Students will analyze the way sentence structure, imagery, diction, and linguistic structure contribute to the meaning of the text. In reading drama, students will analyze the juxtapositions, oppositions, and reversals of individual speeches—with attention to the character's shifting objectives, obstacles, and tactics—while also demonstrating (for Shakespearean verse) what metrical analysis reveals of the character's emotional poise or precariousness. In reading poetry, students will analyze how rhythm, meter, rhyme, line breaks, and poetic structure contribute to the meaning of a passage. In reading prose fiction, students will analyze the way some of the following affect how the passage means what it means: point of view, narrative focus, narrative irony, situational irony, narrative structure, character development, narrative voice, the suspension of disbelief, and other literary devices.