Overview
Christian liberal arts education is an uncommon but important approach to higher education. Although all courses at Westmont are part of a Christian liberal arts education, and Common Context courses specifically address the nature and purpose of Christian liberal arts education, no other courses have the leisure to do so in depth. This course will offer students an opportunity for sustained reflection on the purpose and design of their own education and set that education in the context of the broader historical development and current features of higher education in America. Moreover it will equip students to speak articulately about liberal arts education to those considering college who may be unfamiliar with it.

Goals
After completing this course students will:
1. be able to speak and write articulately about the goals, methods, and context of their Christian liberal arts education, including the rationale for the design of the Westmont curriculum;
2. be familiar with the historical development of colleges and universities, with the different forms of higher education in America today, and with the distinctive characteristics of liberal arts education;
3. understand the intersections of the Christian faith and higher education, in particular liberal arts education;
4. understand the importance of liberal arts education to career preparation and to other life goals;
5. be familiar with the college recruitment process and with cultural dynamics affecting whether and where students from various backgrounds attend college;
6. be more aware of the experience of underrepresented populations with higher education, with respect to both access and success.

Assignments
Each student will read a brief selection (article or book chapter) for each class and share their questions and reflections on that text prior to class on an online forum. 11 @ 5% = 55%

Each student will select one text from a list of historical, philosophical, and sociological studies of higher education and will write a five-page review of the text to be compiled into a resource for faculty, administrators, and students wishing to learn more about higher education. 10%

Students will work in teams of three with a faculty member and the Westmont admissions staff to host formal presentations about the liberal arts for one of five visiting Cal-SOAP junior high groups. These presentations will last approximately 30 minutes, and together ambassadors and faculty members will present the option of a liberal arts education as opposed to other educational approaches. The dates for the Cal-SOAP visits are: Jan 29, Feb 12, Feb 26, Mar 4, Apr 8. 10%

Each student will complete a final exam covering the content of the class sessions and readings described below. 10%

Each student will serve as a tutor/mentor for elementary, junior high, or high school students for eight to fifteen hours per week, through the Cal-SOAP program. Tutor/mentors will facilitate the academic success of the students with whom they are working as well as offering encouragement and guidance in preparing for and choosing a college. They will share with the class what they are learning about the college preparation process from their encounters with those whom they are mentoring in a five-minute oral presentation and a three-page reflection paper. 10% (SS section only. Non SS students’ grades will be calculated without this component.)

Each student will be required to attend ten supplementary academic events offered on campus or in the Santa Barbara community (e.g. Erasmus lectures, Tuesdays with Morals, Conversation on the Liberal Arts, faculty candidate lectures, Reel Talk). 5%
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Jan 9</td>
<td><em>How did I get here?</em> Your journey to a Christian liberal arts college</td>
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| Jan 16 | *What am I doing here?* Your academic goals and Westmont’s goals for you | “What is Westmont?”  
“Philosophy of Education”  
“What do we want for our Graduates?”  
“Six Learning Standards”  
“The Purpose of General Education”  
*Why do I have to take this Course?* |
| Jan 30 | Special Session: *What’s Math got to do with it?* (or English? or RS?...) Faculty members discuss how their fields complement each other in a holistic Christian liberal arts education. |
| Feb 6  | What is higher education for? Research, career preparation, student formation | Exiles from Eden, Chapter 1 “The Academic Vocation”  
*Liberal Arts Traditions and Christian Higher Education* |
| Feb 13 | Liberal arts education and the liberal arts college                    | *Christian Liberal Arts*, Chapters 1 – 3  
*Before you Choose a College, Choose an Education* |
| Feb 20 | Higher education and the Christian faith                               | Engaging God’s World Preface, Chapters 1 – 2 (to page 40)  
*Christian Liberal Arts*, Chapter 4 |
| Feb 27 | College recruitment, admissions, and financial aid                     | The Little College Handbook                                             |
| Mar 5  | Why is ethnic diversity important in higher education?                 | *Does Diversity Make a Difference?*                                   |
| Mar 12 | Social class and the college experience                                | *Choosing Colleges*, Chapters 2 – 3                                    |
| Mar 26 | Gender and the college experience                                      | “At Colleges, Women are Leaving Men in the Dust”                       |
| Apr 2  | Field trip: UCSB, SBCC, CSU Channel Islands                            | college catalogs                                                        |
| Apr 9  | Field trip: UCLA, Occidental, APU                                     | college catalogs                                                        |
| Apr 16 | Liberal Arts education and work                                       | “Why Work?”  
“Bearing Nourishing Fruit”                                                |
| Apr 23 | Revisiting your academic goals                                        |                                                                        |