

## Philosophy Department Six-Year Report—2023

### A. Introduction

1. [Mission](#). The mission of Westmont’s Department of Philosophy is to enable students to cultivate the knowledge, skills, and virtues of Christian philosophers—that is, to enable students to be lovers of wisdom in every sense.

2. [Program Learning Outcomes](#). As a result of what they have learned in their philosophy program, graduates in philosophy will be able to do the following:

- Knowledge: "Students will demonstrate knowledge of important philosophical positions, concepts, arguments, and themes."
- Skills: "Students will be able to construct structurally solid arguments and to critique faulty ones appropriately."
- Virtues: "Students will demonstrate both enthusiasm for rational inquiry and awareness of the limits of rational inquiry."

### 3. Key Questions

- *Key Question #1*: “What strategies should we implement to recruit and retain more philosophy majors and minors?”
- *Key Question #2*: “What kind of theoretical and practical capstone experience/course should we require of our graduating senior majors?”
- *Key Question #3*: “How can we broaden our major by adding new upper-division courses and/or by collaborating with other departments on cross-listing courses and/or developing interdisciplinary majors?”
- *Key Question #4*: “How can we improve our essay-assessment processes so as to improve inter-grader reliability, communication with students, and the efficiency and effectiveness of our evaluative efforts?”

### 4. PRC’s Recommendations & Our Follow-ups

- *2019*
  - *Recommendation 1*: “Due to small sample sizes, compile data over several years and assess it once or twice within a six-year cycle.”
  - *Response 1*: We have begun to do this. For instance, our spring 2019 assessment of our Skills PLO has given us an opportunity to compare results with our 2012 assessment of this PLO (see Appendix C of our 2019 annual report). And the spring 2023 assessment of our Knowledge PLO has allowed us to compare results with our 2017 assessment of this PLO (see below).
  - *Recommendation 2*: “Refocus the department’s attention on using its existing general education teaching as a platform for thoughtful (major and minor) recruitment.”;
  - *Response 2*: We have been redoubling our efforts to present our 15-minute Philosophy Major Recruitment PowerPoint presentation to every one of our Philosophical Perspectives courses at strategic times during the semester. We have also tried to be more consistent about sending recruitment emails to promising students after they have completed the course.

- *Recommendation 3*: “Utilize the Augustinian Scholars Program to present the beauties of philosophy to especially competent and eager students.”
- *Response 3*: Jim, Ed, and Mark have co-taught 1st-year Augustinian Scholars seminars. We have tried to use the courses as a platform for ongoing promotion of our program, encouraging Augustinians to consider majoring or minoring in philosophy (or at least to take more philosophy classes). David has also been a guest speaker in some ASP seminars. A number of Augustinian Scholars have chosen to major or minor in philosophy since the start of that program.
- *Recommendation 4*: “Consider advertising/marketing that Philosophy graduates exceed national standards in critical thinking skills.”
- *Response 4*: Our major (and minor) recruitment PowerPoint presentation contains slides indicating that philosophy majors get the top scores in the GRE verbal reasoning and analytical writing sections and also the top scores on the LSAT.
- 2020
  - *Recommendation 1*: “Collect the PLO data over several years to gather a larger sample size before drawing conclusions.”
  - *Response 1*: We have been in the process of doing this since receiving a similar recommendation from the PRC in 2018 (see above).
  - *Recommendation 2*: “Make sure students are introduced to the Philosophy Major Skills Rubric prior to assigning the essay.”
  - *Response 2*: We have been working on making it our standard practice to show our students the rubrics we plan to use to assess their essays in advance.
  - *Recommendation 3*: “Continue the valuable discussions on the Philosophy capstone course.”
  - *Response 3*: We consulted with Tatiana about “high-impact” learning activities we are considering including in our Philosophy Senior Seminar course. And we have continued to discuss possible changes to our majors’ capstone experience. For now, we have chosen to stick with Senior Seminar as a 4-unit major requirement. Each of us will continue to revise this course to make it more balanced between theory and practice as we take turns teaching it each year. Mark’s recent focus on moral character development is an example of such a revision (his version of the course was previously quite abstract and theoretical). And Jim’s version of the course has focused on both writing to philosophical audiences and writing to lay Christian audiences about knowing God. Finally, David has been introducing a variety of “philosophy of life” practices in his version of the course, which focuses on free will and moral responsibility.
- 2021
  - *Recommendation 1*: “Develop a more specific timeline/trajectory for how we will address the PRC’s recommendations.”
  - *Response 1*: We now aspire to devote time at each of our department meetings for discussing departmental assessment results, issues, and plans—including attention to the PRC’s recommendations.
  - *Recommendation 2*: “Reflect on how the assessment rubric was integrated into courses with an eye to how the assignment and its evaluation could be better aligned across sections.”

- *Response 2:* At our meeting on 9/7/21, we discussed the wording and use of our Virtues PLO rubric in light of how Taylor had used it to evaluate student essays in his spring 2021 Senior Seminar course (see below for that assessment). We agreed we would make it a practice to put assessment rubrics in our course syllabi from now on and to go over them with our students at the beginning of the course and right before each assignment to which they apply—to make sure our students understand them and have them in mind when they do the assignments. And we agreed we would change the wording on the Virtues PLO rubric so that it would be easier to use it across our three sections of Philosophy Senior Seminar (PHI 195), since we use different essay prompts. We agreed to continue to monitor our collective use of our rubrics going forward to see whether further revisions are necessary. Also, our primary assessment focus in the 2021-2022 academic year was on our Key Question concerning our evaluation of student essays (see below). So, we continued to discuss our rubrics as part of that ongoing conversation (which included our evaluating the same essays for the purpose of inter-grader reliability).
- 2022
  - *Recommendation 1:* “Keep up the good collaborating in your department on these issues and using assessment to improve student learning.”
  - *Response 1:* We met a number of times during the 2021-2022 academic year to discuss our assessment activities, pedagogical plans to improve our students’ learning, and ways we can continue to collaborate to further the mission of our department in specific ways.
  - *Recommendation 2:* “Regarding your Key Question #4, we’d encourage you to use your department meeting time (outlined in your response to previous PRC recommendations) when you’ll be discussing assessment to tackle the question of inter-grader reliability, which might lead to more confident and efficient grading.”
  - *Response 2:* See comments on Key Question #4 below in the “Student Learning” section.
  - *Recommendation 3:* “We’re looking forward to seeing the major findings about Key Question #4 next year.”
  - *Response 3:* See comments on Key Question #4 below in the “Student Learning” section.

## B. Student Assessment & Program Review

### 1. Student Learning

- *Knowledge Program Learning Outcome:*
  - In the spring of 2023, Mark spearheaded the assessment of our Knowledge PLO in his Philosophy Senior Seminar course. He chose the second essay the eight students wrote for the course (which represents  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their overall course grade). The students chose one prompt from a list of nine Mark provided (see Appendix 4). The prompts invited them to think critically about an aspect of a book they had read together (Michael Walzer’s *Just and Unjust Wars*).

- Mark used our Knowledge PLO rubric to evaluate the essays (see Appendix 4). The average score was 3.375 out of 4 on “Knowledge of Philosophical terms & concepts,” 3.375 out of 4 on “Knowledge of Important thinkers, issues, positions, problems, arguments,” 4 out of 4 on “Historical and Cultural Context,” and 3.375 out of 4 on “Knowledge of Assigned readings.” Also, 100% of the class were judged “Developed” or better on two aspects of this PLO, and 87.5% were judged “Developed” or better on the fourth aspect, so we have more than met our benchmark. Only two of the papers allowed for assessment on the third aspect, so this does not allow for meaningful evaluation in terms of a percentage of the class reaching the “Developed” benchmark.
- We judge this to be a positive result, however, and shows an improvement over 2017. Moreover, since the course numbers are still small—only eight students were enrolled in the course— we know that these results are not statistically meaningful. To get meaningful results, we will have to aggregate results from other courses or with the same course over several years. We will discuss these results as a department at the beginning of the fall 2023 semester.
- *Skills Program Learning Outcome:*
  - In the spring of 2019, Jim based the assessment of our Skills PLO on his evaluation of student essays submitted at the end of the Philosophy Senior Seminar he taught that semester. There were three students in the class. Each of them submitted a collection of four essays at the end of the semester. Each of these four essays was a revision of an essay the student had written earlier in the semester. The prompts for each of these four essays are in Appendix 4, which accompanies this report. Appendix 4 also contains the Philosophy Major Skills Rubric, which Jim used to assess the essays.
  - After reading the revised essays in the end-of-semester essay collection, Jim assigned each student a score in each of the three areas of evaluation on the skills rubric (argument understanding, argument construction, and argument evaluation). A chart indicating the scores for each student in each category is contained in Appendix 3. In sum, on a scale of 0-3, in which 3 is Excellent, 2 is Good, 1 is Fair, and 0 is Poor, the average score in each category is as follows: Understanding — 2.33; Construction — 2.54; Evaluation — 1.96.
  - The score in the Understanding category was affected, to some extent, by the fact that Jim did not give the students a copy of the rubric in advance of their completing the assignment. As a result, the students were not aware that they could not get a rating of Excellent (score of 3) in this area unless they explicitly indicated the logical structure and type of the arguments they discussed. Since doing so is not a typical feature of a standard philosophical essay, the students had no way of knowing that they should include this information —through no fault of their own (We will be sure to give the students a copy of the rubric in the future when we use it again to assess student learning relative to our skills PLO.). As a result, it isn’t clear whether the understanding score is a true reflection of the students’ abilities in that area.
  - Our benchmark for our skills PLO is that each of our students is at least 80% proficient in each of the three skill areas. That benchmark was met by the class as a whole in the argument construction area (85%), but only by two of the three

students considered individually (83% in the case of one student and 100% in the case of the other). Collectively, the class fell below the benchmark in the understanding area (78%) and also in the evaluation area (65%). But one student scored above 80% in one of these areas (92% in understanding).

- The pedagogical take-away is that, in addition to providing the rubric to the students in advance, we need to work harder and smarter on preparing our students to evaluate arguments well. Appendix 3 also contains the results of our 2012 Skills PLO assessment (which was also administered to a Philosophy Senior Seminar class—with four students). In the future, we plan to (1) give our majors a copy of the Skills PLO rubric early in their course of study and (2) develop more argument evaluation exercises for our upper-division courses.
- *Virtues Program Learning Outcome:*
  - Jim gave the ten students in his spring 2021 PHI 195 (Philosophy Senior Seminar) course the following essay prompt: “You have been hired by Richard Swinburne to be his personal philosophical assistant. A critic of his has just published a criticism of one of the arguments he makes in *Is There a God?* (in which he lays out his overall argument for the claim that theism is probable). Swinburne has asked you to write a 1250-word essay in which you (1) state and explain the argument the critic has criticized, (2) state and explain the critic's objection to that argument, and (3) defend the argument (from a Swinburnian Christian standpoint) from the critic's objection. In writing this essay, keep in mind that you are writing for an academic/professional philosophical audience consisting in philosophy professors and students. Accordingly, as you write it, engage with the concepts and language valued in the discipline of philosophy.”
  - Jim used our Philosophy Major Virtues Rubric (see Appendix 4) to evaluate the students' performance on their essays relative to the two virtues described in the PLO. And he used the following numbering system to tabulate their scores: Highly Developed—1; Developed—2; Emerging—3; Initial—4. (See Appendix 3 for a table displaying the individual students' results.) Our benchmark for this PLO is “at least 80% proficient.” By “proficient” we mean either highly developed or developed.
  - When the results are considered in terms of average score, our students are collectively proficient in the “Enthusiasm” virtue (average score 2—Developed) and not quite collectively proficient in the “Awareness” virtue (average score 2.5—between Emerging and Developed). But when considered in terms of number and percentage of students, we fall short of our benchmark in both virtue areas: Percentage proficient in Enthusiasm virtue: 70%; Percentage proficient in Awareness virtue: 40%.
  - We agreed to do the following going forward with respect to our Virtues PLO assessment: (1) Evaluate the first PHI 195 student essay before putting the rubric in the syllabus and another PHI 195 essay after providing the rubric in advance (we assign four essays in this course)—to compare the results; (2) Change the wording on the rubric in various places to make it more usable across sections of PHI 195; and (3) Continue to model these virtues for our students, proactively observe whether the students exhibit them in conversation as well as in their

written work, and initiate more conversations with our students to encourage self-evaluation and deliberate cultivation of the virtues.

- We talked about whether our benchmark (80% proficient) is arbitrary or should be thought of as a range rather than a threshold. We agreed that even if it is somewhat arbitrary, it is a useful goal and helps to facilitate our conversation and efforts to improve our instruction. We'll keep an eye on it going forward to see if it might be too high. We'll also engage in inter-grader reliability evaluation of the same essays so we can make sure that our individual judgments are in line with those of our colleagues.
- And we will pay special attention to the virtue that consists in awareness of the limits of rational inquiry since our students didn't manifest that virtue as strongly as they did the enthusiasm for rational inquiry virtue. We also had a really fruitful discussion about how to interpret the language we have used for these two virtues and what language to use in our rubric to facilitate measurement of student improvement in these virtues. We now jointly have a much better idea than we did previously about how to understand and employ the rubric. We continued to use and discuss this rubric as we discussed our key question about essay grading (see below).
- *Philosophical Reflections General Education Learning Outcome:*
  - David and Mark used different assessment methods in their PHI 6 courses during the spring 2020 semester for the purpose of assessing their students' learning relative to the Philosophical Reflections GELO (Jim didn't teach a section of PHI 6 that spring).
  - David asked his students to respond to the following prompt: "Consider your major or, if you have not chosen a major, a discipline that you are considering as a major. Describe in 3-4 sentences one way in which the metaphysical, epistemological, or ethical issues discussed in this class have affected the way you understand an issue in your discipline (or the discipline as a whole)."
  - Mark embedded his assessment questions in a course essay assignment (see Appendix 4 for details). Here is the general prompt he used for this assignment (which includes the assessment questions): "Write an essay of ca 3-4 pages (on one of the questions or topics listed in Appendix 4). Make the best answer you can, but your answer must also include a discussion of the following two points: a) Is this primarily an issue of metaphysics, epistemology or axiology (or some combination) of these? b) How can other disciplines or majors studied at Westmont shed light on this problem? Explain."
  - See Appendix 4 for the new rubric we developed and used for this assessment. The rubric is a product of philosophy department conversations the previous year. Jim took our ideas and wrote a draft. Then we discussed the draft and revised it on the basis of our discussion. We developed the rubric ourselves because (1) we had been instructed to do so in a memo sent to us by the PRC in response to one of our annual reports and (2) there was no other rubric available for the purpose of assessing student learning relative to the Philosophical Reflections GELO. No one else has used the rubric, but we would be happy to share it with Jesse Covington for his use in PO 30 and with the Augustinian Scholars instructors team for their use in IS 10H.

- David reported that 31 of 39 students responded. Of these, 20 scored "highly developed," 7 scored "developed," and 4 scored "emerging." Mark reported that 39 of 39 students responded. Of these, 1 scored "highly developed," 11 scored "developed," 23 scored "emerging," and 4 scored "initial." Combining these results yields the following: HD: 30%, D: 25%, E: 39%, I: 6%. Our benchmark for this assessment is "At least 80% proficient." If "proficient" means "either highly developed or developed," then our 55% (HD+D) result falls short. But if we take David's and Mark's results separately, David's class met the benchmark (at 87%) even though Mark's class did not (at 31%).
- Clearly, we will need to discuss this discrepancy in our upcoming conversations about our assessment of this GELO. The rubric was applied separately by Mark and David. We did not work together as a department to read and evaluate the student work. And there was no effort on our part to norm the individual instructors use of the rubric. So, the lower scores assigned to Mark's students don't necessarily represent a deficiency in those sections. Jim suspects the difference in scores between Mark's class and David's class were due to a combination of the different assessment instruments they used and their different interpretations of the evaluation categories. Our failure to work together on this assessment is due to some extent to the disruption caused by the COVID pandemic. In the future, we'll plan to use the same assignment and to work together on reading and evaluating the student's written work on that assignment.
- *Reasoning Abstractly General Education Learning Outcome:*
  - In the fall semester of 2021, Jim assigned two argumentative essays to the thirteen students in his Christian Apologetics (RS 103) course. This is one of the courses the philosophy department offers which students can take to get Reasoning Abstractly GE credit. Appendix 4 contains the instructions/prompt for the two essays and the rubric Jim used to evaluate the essays together with the scores.
  - In terms of percentages, 58% of the essays demonstrate high proficiency, 23% demonstrate proficiency, 15% some proficiency, and 4% no (or limited) proficiency. Our benchmark for this GELO is that 80% of our students will be at least proficient. Since 81% in this case were either proficient or highly proficient, we reached our benchmark this time around.
  - As a department, we discussed the following two questions that concern the Reasoning Abstractly rubric: (1) how to distinguish reliably between a few minor errors and errors that are substantial or many in borderline cases and (2) whether the rubric should include something about degree of originality and complexity of valid arguments.
  - In answer to question (1), we decided that, generally speaking, a "minor" error would be an error of communication or inadvertence (such as a typo or omitted word). An example would be the omission of the word 'not' (which would result in the argument being invalid) when the student seemed clearly to have intended to include it. On the other hand, a "substantial" error would be an error of logic that seems clearly to be a result of insufficient understanding. We realize that graders will need to exercise some discernment to distinguish between these sorts of cases. Finally, when an error that would be minor on its own is repeated a sufficient number of times, we would evaluate the work as manifesting "Some

Proficiency” rather than “Proficiency,” since multiple errors suggest a deficiency of comprehension rather than a merely accidental oversight preventing adequate communication of something the student otherwise understands adequately. And drawing the line here will also require the grader to exercise discernment.

- In answer to question (2), after some discussion, we decided that, for Reasoning Abstractly assessment purposes, we would not revise the rubric to include something about the degree of originality or complexity of the students’ arguments. Though our overall evaluation of the students’ work could be based in part on these things, the Reasoning Abstractly assessment, given the wording of the SLO, should focus only on the *validity* of the proof, argument, or line of reasoning constructed.
- *Key Question #1: “What strategies should we implement to recruit and retain more philosophy majors and minors?”*
  - We have been redoubling our efforts to present our 15-minute Philosophy Major Recruitment PowerPoint presentation to every one of our Philosophical Perspectives courses at strategic times during the semester. We have also tried to be more consistent about sending recruitment emails to promising students after they have completed the course. Jim, Ed, and Mark have co-taught 1st-year Augustinian Scholars seminars. We have tried to use the courses as a platform for ongoing promotion of our program, encouraging Augustinians to consider majoring or minoring in philosophy (or at least to take more philosophy classes). David has also been a guest speaker in some ASP seminars. A number of majors and a few minors have been Augustinian Scholars. Our major (and minor) recruitment PowerPoint presentation contains slides that document that philosophy majors get the top scores in the GRE verbal reasoning and analytical writing sections and also the top scores on the LSAT.
- *Key Question #2: “What kind of theoretical and practical capstone experience/course should we require of our graduating senior majors?”*
  - Both the alumni surveys we administered for our last six-year report and this six-year report included a question about Philosophy Senior Seminar as the capstone experience in our major. Feedback from our alumni on both surveys indicated that a capstone experience that blends the theoretical and practical may be better than one that emphasizes only one of these categories (see below).
  - In our philosophy department meeting discussions of this key question, we did a lot of brainstorming. The ideas we came up with included the following: (1) a focus on alternative vocations suitable for philosophy majors; (2) an investigation into a number of ways in which philosophical learning can be applied in different contexts in life; (3) an emphasis on philosophy as the pursuit of (practical) wisdom; (4) a study of ways in which philosophy can contribute to living well; (5) an internship-based seminar; (6) an independent project such as a senior honors project (in which the student chooses a topic with a practical or applied component).
  - We are not yet ready to settle on a particular recommendation. Instead, we want to continue to do research on high-impact learning experiences of the sort that combine theoretical and practical components and that would be suitable for a philosophy major capstone experience. Tatiana has provided us with a number of

resources to assist us in this ongoing investigation. We want to see what the evidence indicates about the best learning experiences.

- *Key Question #3: “How can we broaden our major by adding new upper-division courses and/or by collaborating with other departments on cross-listing courses and/or developing interdisciplinary majors?”*
  - Our conversations have been focused primarily on the possibility of adding new courses to our major curriculum to broaden and enrich the major and to make our major appealing to a broader range of students. Our splitting of three of our courses into two courses each (“Ancient & Medieval Philosophy” into “Ancient Philosophy” and “Medieval Philosophy,” “Modern & Contemporary Philosophy” into “Modern Philosophy” and “19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy,” and “Critical Reasoning & Logic” into “Critical Reasoning & Logic” and “Formal Logic”) was already a step in this direction (as was Jim’s development of the new course “Intellectual Virtue & Civil Discourse” and Ed Song’s introduction of the new courses “Justice & Public Policy” and “Philosophy of Race”).
  - These conversations about broadening the major have made us aware of the limits of a small three-person department. As a result, we have focused more attention on cross-listing courses with philosophical content already being taught by professors in other departments (e.g., Sameer Yadav’s course “Divine Hiddenness” and Lisa DeBoer’s course “Theory & Criticism in the Arts”). But, though we appreciate the ways in which these cross-listed courses have broadened our major offerings, we have found that they can have a tendency to draw students away from our own philosophy department courses—at least for the time being, before more students become attracted to philosophy coursework.
  - So, one of our topics of conversation this coming year will be the possibility of working with other departments to develop interdisciplinary majors that incorporate philosophy courses. We hope such a move will be beneficial to all the departments involved by attracting more students to some of the courses we offer.
  - Finally, we will discuss the possibility of reintroducing tracks to the philosophy major (e.g., pre-law, pre-med, pre-seminary, etc.). This change would potentially broaden our major by the addition of some courses from other disciplines and also attract more students to the philosophy major.
  - Ed has worked with the Economics & Business and Political Science departments to formulate a proposal for a PPE (Philosophy, Politics, & Economics) major. He presented this proposal to the Academic Senate in the spring of 2023 and has revised it in light of feedback he received from senators. He will continue to work toward the approval of this proposal throughout the summer of 2023 and the 2023–2024 academic year—with the support of our department.
- *Key Question #4: “How can we improve our essay-assessment processes so as to improve inter-grader reliability, communication with students, and the efficiency and effectiveness of our evaluative efforts?”*
  - In past department meetings, the three of us have each expressed a desire to improve the process by means of which we grade philosophical essays (which are the primary instrument of evaluation in our discipline). We were eager to learn from each other and from other sources about better ways to communicate our assessments to our students. And each of us has felt burdened by the amount of

time we spend grading essays and also by the lack of confidence we sometimes feel about our evaluative judgments of them.

- The three of us took turns (at three different meetings) giving the other two the prompt (and rubric, if it existed) of one of our essay assignments with three anonymous student essays. And we compared our assessments of each. We found that we generally agreed on which essay was best, which was second best, and which was worst (we agreed on the ordinality of the essays). However, we did not always agree about the specific percentage or letter grade to assign to each essay (we disagreed on the cardinality of our assessments of the essays). We also discovered that one of us employs a generally somewhat narrower range of grades (not as high and not as low) as the other two.
- On the basis of our discussions (see below) about these major findings, we are confident that our inter-grader reliability is generally high (much better than we originally feared it might be), so we decided that we don't need to make any changes to our individual essay grading practices. But we are also glad that the conversations we had made us more aware of our individual tendencies that might account for our differences, and we will keep these tendencies in mind as we engage in our individual essay grading going forward. So, we think the conversations will likely lead to even greater reliability as a result of our heightened awareness about our individual practices.
- After discussion and on reflection, we decided that the differences in specific percentage or letter grade assignments are not extreme but within an acceptable range. And we determined that these differences can be explained to some extent in terms of the different grading systems we use (two of us use percentages and one uses letter grades). Moreover, we found that when we had initial disagreements, we generally came to agree with each other after subsequent reflection and further discussion. We decided that this exercise was illuminating and helpful and that we had answered the questions we originally had about our collective essay-grading practices.

2. Alumni Reflections. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Jim sent our 28 philosophy alums from the years 2017–2022 an email invitation to complete an alumni survey. The survey asks them to state their gender, ethnicity/race, and graduation year and contains a number of questions for them to answer about their Westmont education in general and their experience as a philosophy major in particular. In order to maximize the response rate, Jim emailed them reminders on April 8<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup>. Twelve alums ended up completing the survey, for a response rate of 43%.

The respondents included eight males and four females. As for ethnicity/race, nine identified as white, one as Asian, one as Latina, and one as multi-ethnic. And there was at least one respondent from each graduation year (2017: 2; 2018: 4; 2019: 1; 2020: 1; 2021: 3; and 2022: 1).

The following summarizes the respondents' answers to 10 of the questions concerning their experience with the philosophy department:

1. How effective was the teaching in the Philosophy Department overall? (11 alums said "very effective" and 1 said "somewhat effective.")

2. How would you say your Westmont experience in the Philosophy Department prepared you for your life, relative to your peers with whom you interact in your life today? (7 alums said “a lot better,” 4 alums said “somewhat better,” and 1 alum said “neither better nor worse.”)
3. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve [the Philosophy Knowledge Learning Outcome](#)?\* (5 alums said “to a very high degree” and 7 alums said “to a somewhat high degree.”)
4. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont? (5 alums said “very important,” 6 alums said “somewhat important,” and 1 alum said “neither important nor unimportant.”)
5. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve [the Philosophy Skills Learning Outcome](#)?\* (9 alums said “to a very high degree” and 3 alums said “to a somewhat high degree.”)
6. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont? (9 alums said “very important” and 3 alums said “somewhat important.”)
7. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve [the Philosophy Virtues Learning Outcome](#)?\* (9 alums said “to a very high degree” and 3 alums said “to a somewhat high degree.”)
8. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont? (9 alums said “very important,” 1 alum said “somewhat important,” and 2 alums said “neither important nor unimportant.”)
9. How did your study of philosophy at Westmont affect your attitude to the Christian faith? (4 alums said it “improved their attitude substantially,” 4 alums said it “improved their attitude somewhat,” 2 alums said it “neither improved nor worsened their attitude,” 1 alum said it “worsened their attitude somewhat,” and 1 alum said it “worsened their attitude substantially.”)
10. Do you think Philosophy Senior Seminar should be more practicum-oriented and lifestyle-oriented (as opposed to being primarily theoretically-oriented and academically-oriented)? (7 alums said “yes,” 3 alums said “no,” and 2 alums didn’t answer this question.)

(\*See the full statement of each program learning outcome on page 1 of this report.)

*Commentary:* It’s interesting that eleven alums rated our teaching “very effective” and only seven rated their experience with us as having provided them with a preparation for life a lot better than their current peers received (four rated their experience as having provided them with a preparation for life “somewhat” better than their current peers received and one said it was “neither better nor worse”). This discrepancy between alums’ perception of the effectiveness of our teaching and their perception of the importance of what we taught them may be explained to some extent by looking at their responses to the questions about our individual PLOs. All the respondents indicated that we enabled them to achieve our Skills outcome either “to a very high degree” (nine) or “to a somewhat high degree” (three) and that this outcome is either “very important” (nine) or “somewhat important” (three) for life after Westmont. This match suggests that we are doing well equipping our majors with skills they perceive to be important for their lives. There is almost the same match when it comes to our Virtues outcome (but for some

reason, two students indicated that it is “neither important nor unimportant” for life after Westmont). But fewer students judged that we enabled them to achieve our Knowledge outcome “to a very high degree” (five) and more that we enabled them to achieve this outcome only “to a somewhat high degree” (seven)—and these numbers were nearly matched in their judgments about the importance of this outcome for life after Westmont (five indicating “very important,” six choosing “somewhat important,” and one opting for “neither important nor unimportant”). What all of this suggests is that our students value the skills and virtues we are teaching them more than the philosophical knowledge we are offering them—and that the degree of the effectiveness of our teaching in each of the three areas is correlated with the degree to which the students value the outcome in each area. But even if our students don’t value the Knowledge outcome as much as the others, it would be good for us to focus on improving the effectiveness of our teaching for our students’ achievement of that outcome.

Here are the two short-answer questions included in the survey together with responses:

11. What was most valuable to you about your learning in the Philosophy Department?

- “Having the opportunity to engage with fundamental existential questions, and refine my ability to evaluate and argue about those questions - and concepts more generally - in a more structured, scrutinizing manner.”
- “Despite the discovery of our astounding intellectual achievements, I found that I had also finally encountered the limits of man, and learned that they are not only good, but freeing. They taught me to wonder at the beautiful mystery of what we cannot understand and will never truly know, that only in acknowledging the limits of reason (and the futility of chasing total certainty): only in becoming an ‘ordinary mystic,’ may I ever become wise. I guess Socrates truly was the greatest of us all.”
- “The freedom to ask questions and the ability to be comfortable in the uncomfortable when I didn’t have answers. There was a lot of beauty, for me, in the nuances of everything we learned about.”
- “Primarily three or four lessons. First, I learned how to construct logically valid / cogent arguments and to identify faulty arguments, a lesson which I still use today. Second, it provided me with a familiarity of various philosophical arguments, positions, and currents with which I still engage, albeit in a different field (mostly history, but also theology). Third, I learned (outside of the classroom but in the context of Westmont & philosophy) the limits of rationality, particularly in regards to the role of a thinker's past experiences in deeply shaping if not determining whether or not she deems certain premises to be true or at least likely when evaluating valid arguments. Lastly and relatedly, I learned that some of the most impactful learning happens outside the formal classroom, or at least apart from lecture, in the course of discussion with one's peers.”
- “The program gave me the opportunity to weigh particular ideas or worldviews against others. Also, it provided an environment for improving my logical reasoning skills.”
- “It taught me to think logically, critically and objectively and ask meaningful questions.”

- “I appreciated most the effort and involvement of professors in their classes - they very much were passionate and cared about what they were teaching, which encouraged my own passion for the subject.”
- “The ability to bring a rational perspective on an issue by means of incorporating values of multiple different viewpoints and uniting their benefits.”

*Commentary:* Almost all of these comments have to do with one or another of our student learning outcomes. For instance, our Knowledge SLO includes “fundamental existential questions,” “familiarity with arguments, positions, and currents,” and an opportunity to “weigh particular ideas or worldviews against others.” And our Skills SLO includes the “ability to evaluate and argue,” “construct logically valid / cogent arguments and to identify faulty arguments,” and “improving my logical reasoning skills.” Finally, our Virtues SLO includes “acknowledging the limits of reason,” “the freedom to ask questions and the ability to be comfortable in the uncomfortable when I didn’t have answers,” and “passion for the subject.” These comments provide evidence that our students generally value the instruction we are providing them relative to each of our three SLOs.

## 12. What improvements would you suggest for the philosophy program?

- “More opportunities to comparatively engage with schools of thought which developed around the globe, though I recognize that can be difficult to do given a finite number of class hours available and a broad field of material to cover.”
- “I loved the philosophy program. I loved my professors, my peers, and the ways they brought me into the rich company of the great minds of history. I will always be grateful for the content of what I learned, but even more than that, I will forever treasure the way we were taught to learn, and to love learning. It is with great pleasure that I can now look at my four years at Westmont not, in hindsight, as the last four years of my studenthood, but rather more properly the first four of many years to come. The only reason I answered ‘yes’ to the last question is not because I think the theoretical-orientation of the Senior Seminar was bad (in fact, it was as rich an enlightening a class as any I have taken), but rather because I think we could profit greatly from a mix of that good theoretical knowledge with advice for its practical instantiation, for it seems to me that though orthopraxy surely must come from orthodoxy, the latter is meaningless without its fulfillment in the former. And so yes, you have given us the gift of orthodoxy from which we might hopefully build our lives hereafter, but I wish that we had also received just a little more of a synthetic send-off in our final year. Please know, however, that this wish comes not from the belief that you need to start practicing what you preach, but rather from my conviction that you already have so much to share with us from your experience of practicing exactly what you preach! I just want to make sure that you feel the freedom to mentor us even as you teach us; I admit that the difference may be subtle and sometimes difficult to balance in the classroom, but I think it is an important one to consider nonetheless. And do not let your admirable humility stop you from offering whatever ‘subjective’ truth you may have learned! It was you, after all, who taught me that the objective must be discovered from the perspective of the subjective, and that often it is the subjective which first suggests the objective rather than vice versa.

- But I should get off my philosophical high horse and digress; I suspect most of you have already considered what I am saying in far greater depth than I have. What I mostly want to impress upon whoever reads this, after all, is that above all else I am unutterably thankful for my time as a student at Westmont, and whatever improvements may or may not be made, you have left me with the deep love of wisdom in my heart, and with the accompanying desire to embody whatever sophia I may have gained with phronesis in the years to come. I cannot think of a greater gift to receive from your alma mater. May our philosophy department continue to cultivate knowledge of the knowable, but only in light of its wonder at the unknowable. Thanks for all you already do towards that end. Much love”
- “Give your students more atheist philosophers alongside the Christian ones.”
  - “An increase to the diversity of thought and demographics of the scholars studied.”
  - “Given the importance role of experience in evaluating and constructing arguments, I think the department should create the opportunities for students to encounter Christ personally and develop / practice faith. Additionally, arrogance and self-conceit can be pretty rampant in the academy, and I think perhaps among young philosophy students (at least it was in me!), and so creating opportunities to practice humility by learning from those with whom we disagree or through practical service. I thought that Westmont's philosophy program did me an invaluable service by providing me a theoretical foundation by offering the Metaphysics, Ethics, and Epistemology courses, as well as the historical overviews, so I would say those ought to be kept as required or encouraged. Before I graduated, the curriculum had changed so that I didn't have to take as many historical philosophy courses, which I now partly wish I had taken, although it would have precluded my double major, so I'm not sure whether I would say to make historical overviews required, but I would definitely encourage them. Beyond the basics mentioned above, I would try to help guide people into the branch of philosophy about which they're most passionate, but I thought that you did that for me. I remember feeling like I loved the practicality / embodiedness of ancient Greek philosophy– they were lifestyles as much as rational belief systems– and I would have loved to think about how to construct a practical / embodied philosophy in an analogous way for contemporary life. I didn't think that the philosophy department made the connection between theory and practicality that I was looking for.”
  - “The day-to-day assignments should be more rigorous. Students should be required to demonstrate more understanding of the primary sources. This can then be balanced with students giving personal commentary/opinion on what they have read.”
  - “I would have appreciated a class focusing on non-western philosophy. I feel like I learned nothing about it except for vague generalities.”
  - “Establishing and supporting more concrete outcome goals that incorporate the skills that we end up practicing in the philosophy department. Specifically, I know my writing skills improved dramatically throughout the major, but perhaps it could have been even better if the clarity of our writing was critiqued more than it was. Essays were our main form of examination, and I believe that a more robust feedback/revision system could heighten our success throughout the major.”

*Commentary:* These alumni suggestions for improving our program seem to fall into the following three general areas: diversity, practicality, and standards. Diversity. Four alums made suggestions in the diversity area. These suggestions include drawing more from a wider range of philosophical traditions around the globe (especially non-Western philosophies), incorporating more diverse philosophies and philosophers in our curriculum, and supplementing theistic philosophers and philosophies with atheistic ones. Practicality. Two alums focused on suggestions concerning the application of philosophical theory to their lives. These applications include making the Philosophy Senior Seminar more focused on practical wisdom, providing students with more opportunities to grow in their faith in Christ and to cultivate virtues, offering more opportunities for service learning, and emphasizing more the extent to which a philosophy can be a way of life (rather than just a way of thinking). Standards. Two alums recommended raising our standards and holding students accountable to these higher standards. One alum would like to see us assign more primary source readings (which are more difficult to understand) and require our students to demonstrate their understanding of them. Another alum thinks we should provide more robust feedback on student essays so as to help them achieve a higher standard of clarity in their written work.

3. Curriculum Review: At the time of the department's previous six-year review, it had just completed a number of substantial changes aimed at broadening its upper division course offerings. These included splitting each of the historical courses and the logic course in two, resulting in four new historical courses

- Ancient Philosophy (PHI-004), taught by Dr. Vander Laan
- Medieval Philosophy (PHI-005), taught by Dr. Vander Laan
- Modern Philosophy (PHI-), taught by Dr. Taylor
- 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy (PHI-), taught by Dr. Taylor

and two new (or largely expanded) logic courses.

- Formal Logic (PHI-108), taught by Dr. Vander Laan
- Critical Reasoning and Logic (PHI-012), taught by Dr. Vander Laan

The department noted the way in which the goal of broadening its course offerings competes to some extent with the goal of avoiding low enrollments in upper division courses. The latter has been a goal of the institution in order to make efficient use of its faculty resources, and on rare occasions low enrollments have resulted in the cancellation of an upper division course.

Two new courses had also been added to the catalog.

- Intellectual Virtue and Civil Discourse (PHI-015), taught by Dr. Taylor
- Justice and Public Policy (PHI-137), taught by Dr. Song

The latter course has been part of the Westmont Downtown program and thus has only been available to students who register for that program, and not to all philosophy majors.

Since that time, the department has added two other new courses:

- Christian Perspectives on Conflict and Peacemaking (PHI-007), taught by Dr. Hoekley
- Philosophy of Race (PHI-138), taught by Dr. Song

Christian Perspectives on Conflict and Peacemaking is a component of Westmont in Northern Europe, an off-campus program.

The department also expanded the curricular options for its majors by cross-listing one existing course and one new Religious Studies course as Philosophy Department courses.

- Theory and Criticism in the Arts (ART-131/PHI-131), taught by Dr. DeBoer
- Divine Hiddenness (RS-139/PHI-150), taught by Dr. Yadav

One other change made during the review period was the renaming of PHI-133 (from Political and Legal Philosophy to Political Philosophy) to better reflect the scope that it has had in practice.

- *Extrdepartmental teaching and service*
  - While the number of courses the department lists in the college catalog has increased in recent years, the number of courses it regularly offers has been affected by the extrdepartmental teaching and service commitments of its faculty.
  - Shortly after the previous review, Dr. Taylor began teaching regularly in the college's Augustinian Scholars program, thus reducing his annual departmental load by one course. The program's Faith Seeking Understanding course is not a Department of Philosophy course, though it does satisfy the Philosophical Reflections General Education requirement and within the philosophy major serves as a substitute for Philosophical Perspectives. The course also serves the department to some degree to provide an introduction to the discipline of philosophy, though it is normally team taught with at most one philosopher and is not principally philosophical in its methods.
  - Dr. Nelson has also begun teaching periodically in the Augustinian Scholars program. In addition, he is the director of Westmont's Dallas Willard Research Center, and this role also decreases his departmental teaching load by one course annually. He has also continued to have a one-course teaching reduction in virtue of his holding the Monroe Chair of Philosophy.
  - Dr. Taylor began teaching Nursing and Human Flourishing (PHI-200) in Westmont's new post-baccalaureate Nursing Program in 2018. Since he teaches this course each semester, it has, in effect, replaced two sections of Philosophical Perspectives in his annual teaching load. To continue offering an adequate number of sections of Philosophical Perspectives each semester, the department has taken up the slack with the help of adjunct instructors.
  - The primary effect of the extrdepartmental commitments noted here is that some of the courses that the department offered regularly until recently are not currently taught on a regular basis. These courses are:
    - Intellectual Virtue and Civil Discourse (PHI-015), taught by Dr. Taylor
    - Contemporary Moral Problems (PHI-113), taught by Dr. Nelson
    - Philosophy of Language (PHI-135), taught by Dr. Taylor
- *Anticipated changes*
  - In the immediate future, the department expects to change its offerings due to the departure of two faculty members and the anticipated approval of a new major program.

- Dr. Hoeckley plans to leave Westmont after the fall 2023 semester. Since Dr. Hoeckley has been the sole instructor for Christian Perspectives on Conflict and Peacemaking (PHI-007), and because Dr. Hoeckley has been a principal instigator of the Westmont in Northern Europe program of which the course is a part, it is not anticipated that the course will be offered after 2023.
- Dr. Yadav will not teach Westmont courses in the 2023-24 academic year and is not expected to return. One curricular effect of this is that there are currently no plans to offer Divine Hiddenness (RS-139/PHI-150), for which Dr. Yadav has been the only instructor. Another potential effect is that fewer upper division Religious Studies courses that often appeal to philosophy students, such as Jesus and the Meanings of Life (RS-131), will be taught. This may result in increased demand for upper division philosophy courses that deal with theological topics, such as Philosophical Theology (PHI/RS-130) and Philosophy of Religion (PHI/RS-163).
- Finally, a proposal for a new Philosophy, Politics, and Economics major has been prepared by Dr. Song and submitted to the Academic Senate. All the optional and required philosophy courses for the new major already exist, so the major would not require new philosophy courses to be developed. If the major is approved and proves to be attractive to students, the department can reasonably expect to see an increase in the number of students enrolled in the philosophy courses that belong to it:
  - Ethics (PHI-104), required
  - Contemporary Moral Problems (PHI-113)
  - Political Philosophy (PHI-133)
  - Justice and Public Policy (PHI-137)
  - Philosophy of Race (PHI-138)
- *Conclusions:* In this section we draw some brief conclusions from the foregoing observations regarding curriculum breadth, upper division enrollment, and the department's effectiveness at carrying out its mission.
  - Curriculum breadth: All things considered, the department will enter its next review cycle with a net gain of seven listed courses, at least five of which it expects to be offered on a consistent basis. The department still does not list every course that is typical among peer institutions. For example, it does not list a Philosophy of Science course or a Philosophy of Mind course. Nonetheless, it has made substantial improvements over the last two review cycles, and the curriculum no longer stands in conspicuous need of expansion.
  - Upper division enrollments
    - The previous six-year report noted a trend of declining numbers of philosophy graduates. Since that time the trend has reversed. (See the Sustainability and Adaptability section below for details.) In the same period, upper division enrollments have not been problematic.
    - Though this section has noted a variety of factors that have affected and will affect the number of students that take each upper division philosophy course, the faculty's recent experience does not suggest that this is an area in special need of intervention. Occasional low enrollments are to be

expected at an institution of Westmont's size, but in any event, during the review period there have not been any enrollments of zero, which would require the instructor to fulfill his contract with some other activity, nor of one or two. As the trend of increasing numbers of graduates would suggest, upper division philosophy classes have in general had a growing number of students, and this has been conducive to an effective and energetic pedagogical environment.

- Missional effectiveness
  1. Has the expanded curriculum been effective?

An earlier section of this report, [the section on PLO assessment results], addresses in detail the department's success at enabling students to develop philosophical knowledge, skills, and virtues. Here we simply note that the curriculum continues to be a fruitful tool for carrying out that mission, and that it is now suited to do so even more effectively than it previously did.

The department's goal of providing students with a broader range of philosophical topics has clearly been met. The department now offers four historical courses rather than two, and this allows instructors to treat each time period in significantly greater detail than was previously feasible. Similarly, the division of the logic class into two classes has allowed instructors to teach both formal and informal logic in significantly greater detail. Formal Logic now includes predicate logic with relations and identity as well as an overview of the most important results of metatheory. Critical Reasoning and Logic now includes substantial treatment of bias, abductive reasoning, and probabilistic reasoning, including Bayes' Theorem. As noted, students have demonstrated that they have acquired the knowledge and skills taught in the expanded curriculum, so we have good reason to believe that our students acquiring a deeper mastery of the discipline than they were previously.

2. Does the department offer enough courses at each level?

We can treat this as a curricular question ("Are enough courses offered at each level to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and virtues appropriate to a philosophy major?") or a logistical question ("Are enough courses offered at each level to allow students to fulfill their major and general education requirements in four years?"). The curricular question has, in effect, been answered above, so here we will address the logistical question.

On the face of it, the answer is yes. Students continue to complete their majors and their degrees (indeed, at greater rates than they did in the previous review cycle), and in most cases they do so without any salient scheduling difficulties. Since logistics have not appeared to be a problem area in the past and the department has expanded its curriculum since then, this is to be expected.

However, it may be worth noting that Formal Logic is currently the only required major course that is taught biennially. (The historical courses are also biennial, but the major only requires that students take two of the four. In contrast, Formal Logic is an individual course that is required for all majors.) Though philosophy majors appear to have been able to take the course during a normal, four-year matriculation, some have not in fact done so until the spring semester of their senior year. This timing may not have served them well. Formal Logic is a prerequisite for a number of upper division courses, so postponing it may have precluded a number of scheduling options for some students. In at least one case, taking the course as a senior seemed to be a way of avoiding a challenging course as long as possible, with the result that there was little time to address poor performance.

Because most students seeking a philosophy major have not found the biennial schedule to be problematic, it seems reasonable to continue the current schedule while intentionally advising sophomore and junior philosophy majors to take Formal Logic at their earliest opportunity.

3. Should the Senior Seminar be taught as a practicum?

The department has for some time considered this question. Though there is significant evidence that practicums often provide significant educational benefits, and they are often dubbed “high-impact” courses. However, much of this evidence appears in fields that are more closely related to specific occupations. A practicum in such cases might resemble an internship in the related occupation. Though the academic field of philosophy does have important relationships with certain occupations (e.g., the practice of law), it is not very clear what kind of practicum might serve all philosophy majors and reap the reported benefits that practicums provide. For those students considering graduate training in philosophy, the practice of the profession bears a strong resemblance to the reading, writing, and discussing that is typical of undergraduate courses, and so a practicum that consisted the activities typical of the profession would not differ much from most upper-division seminar courses.

The department wants its Senior Seminar to have a powerful impact on graduating seniors, and it wants its curriculum to have a practical effect on students’ lives. This is reflected, for example, in the department’s Virtue learning outcome and in its participation in recent efforts to treat philosophy as a way of life. However, it is not entirely clear that a practicum would serve students better than, say, focused analysis of an important book or two in the field. Thus, the department does not have any definite plans to revamp the Senior Seminar but continues to consider ways to make it an effective and exceptional capstone course.

4. Program Sustainability and Adaptability: Will the Philosophy Department exist in ten years, and will the program thrive? The noteworthy factors that are relevant to those questions include

the historical mission of Westmont, student recruitment efforts, nationwide demographic trends, institutional deployment of the department’s faculty, and staffing changes (including two anticipated retirements) among the philosophy instructors.

- *The Historical Mission of Westmont*
  - In short, the program is secure if Westmont adheres to its historical mission. The college places the liberal arts at the core of its mission, and the discipline of philosophy has historically been a core element of the liberal arts and of the Christian liberal arts in particular.
  - On the other hand, it is worth observing that a growing number of liberal arts colleges have decreased the size of their philosophy departments or even eliminated them in the face of severe financial pressures. In such circumstances some institutions eliminate faculty positions in departments that attract fewer majors, at the expense of those programs. Westmont has, so far, escaped the worst consequences of the economic downturns and demographic trends that have made it more difficult to keep liberal arts colleges financially viable. If, however, it were to encounter a harsher economic climate, there could be tension between its historical mission and the kinds of cuts that could be perceived to be economically necessary.
  - The task of keeping Westmont true to its mission lies primarily in the hands of the college administration and the Board of Trustees, but the Department of Philosophy may play an indirect role in the college’s decision-making process by making a case, implicitly or explicitly, for the value of the philosophy major and its importance for the college’s mission.
- *Nationwide demographic trends*
  - Among the other external circumstances that could affect the viability of the philosophy program in the years to come is the projected decrease in the number of high school graduates in the United States. For example, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) projects a likely 11-year downward trend from 2026 to 2037. Such a national decrease could affect Westmont’s financial situation, creating some of the pressures mentioned in the paragraphs above.
  - It is also possible that such a decrease could affect which majors college students would be likely to pursue, though it is less clear what this effect would be.
- *Student recruitment*
  - The previous six-year report noted a declining number of philosophy graduates. The low point came near the end of the last report cycle and the trend has since reversed.
  - This chart shows the number of philosophy graduates over the last two cycles.\*

2011	8
2012	4
2013	5
2014	6
2015	5
2016	1

2017	3
2018	5
2019	3
2020	5
2021	9
2022	3
2023	8

(\*See Appendix 9 for a chart that compares Westmont graduation numbers with those of some peer institutions.)

- In the most recent cycle, there was a 45% increase in the number of philosophy graduates. As one would expect, there is still significant variability from year to year, but the overall trend is clearly one of growth.
- The department attributes some of this change to its deliberate efforts to recruit promising students to the philosophy major or minor. Dr. Ed Song has created a PowerPoint presentation that highlights some of the concrete benefits of majoring or minoring in philosophy, such as cultivating the skills that consistently produce the top scores on the LSAT. Dr. Song has occasionally visited sections of Philosophical Perspectives to make the pitch, and a number of students have specifically cited it as one of the reasons they decided to pursue a major or minor. Some members of the department have made a direct appeal to students who show promise or interest in the discipline. Further, some members of the department have had opportunity to make a case for majoring in philosophy in their Augustinian seminars. Anecdotally, an appreciable number of Augustinian scholars, who do not normally take Philosophical Perspectives and so are not introduced to the discipline there, have decided to pursue a philosophy major. So it seems that these recruiting efforts are bearing some fruit.
- *Institutional Deployment of the Philosophy Faculty*
  - The capacity of the Department of Philosophy to carry out its mission with excellence in the years ahead will depend in part on the teaching loads and other duties that the college assigns to the philosophy faculty. In this past review cycle, some members of the department have taken on teaching or administrative duties other than the usual teaching schedule.
  - For a long time, Dr. Taylor has taught Christian Apologetics on an annual basis. The class attracts some philosophy students but is listed as a Religious Studies Department course, not a Philosophy Department course. In recent years Dr. Taylor has also co-taught one of the courses in the Augustinian program each semester. In addition, he has taught Nursing for Human Flourishing in the Westmont Nursing Program each semester. As a result, he has taught two fewer sections of Philosophical Perspectives and two fewer upper division classes each year. Often the historical courses, Modern Philosophy and 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy, have been assigned to adjunct instructors.
  - Sometime after we submitted our last six-year report, Dr. Nelson began serving as the Director of the Dallas Willard Research Center at Westmont's Martin

Institute. This work fulfills part of his contract, and so Dr. Nelson has been teaching one fewer upper-division course each year.

- To the extent that the college will call on members of the department to serve in such roles in the years to come, additional faculty, either adjunct or full time, will be needed to offer the range of philosophy courses that the department has offered in the past.
- *Staffing changes*
  - There have been some recent staffing changes that will affect how the department carries out its program, and several other changes are anticipated.
  - First, philosopher Dr. Steven Porter has begun serving as Executive Director of the Martin Institute. His presence broadens the community of philosophers at Westmont as well as the range of its expertise. However, he retains his position as an affiliate Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation at Biola University, and it is not anticipated that he will take on any teaching duties at Westmont.
  - Second, Dr. Chris Hoeckley, Director of the Gaede Institute for the Liberal Arts, has indicated that he will be leaving Westmont after the fall semester of 2023. Dr. Hoeckley has frequently taught one of the courses satisfying the Philosophical Reflections GE category (PHI-007, Philosophical Perspectives on Conflict and Peacemaking), and so the college will need an additional section of Philosophical Perspectives or an equivalent in order to allow students to fulfill the GE requirement at the same rate.
  - Third, Dr. Taylor has estimated that he will retire in the spring of 2026, and Dr. Nelson has estimated that he will retire in the spring of 2028. So, it is very likely that the department will need to conduct at least two faculty searches before the next review cycle is complete. It is worth noting that the college is not permitted to make use of PhilJobs (formerly Jobs for Philosophers) due to its anti-discrimination policy (which it deems the college to violate), and so any search the department conducts will probably need to find or create search methods that it has not used in the past.
  - Finally, the teaching schedules of Dr. Ed Song, Director of the Westmont Downtown Program, and Dr. Stephen Zylstra, who consistently serves as an adjunct instructor in addition to team-teaching with biologist Amanda Sparkman and teaching courses at the University of California Santa Barbara, continue to be arranged on a somewhat *ad hoc* basis. The flexibility of their schedules could potentially help the department address shortfalls in the department's offerings, though other demands on their time could also pull them away from such a role. Thus, there is some uncertainty in the degree to which they will help the department offer its curriculum.
  - Together these changes indicate a major shift in the staffing of Westmont's philosophy program is to be expected in the coming review cycle. At least half of those currently involved in teaching on the department's behalf will no longer be present at Westmont when the cycle is complete. This appears to be the single largest factor affecting whether the department will successfully carry out its mission in the years to come.
- *Conclusions*

- As noted, some of the factors described above, such as the administration of the college and nationwide demographic trends, are largely outside the control of the department. The department's role in addressing such factors will primarily involve advocacy and contingency planning.
- On the other hand, student recruitment, faculty deployment, and department staffing will all have a significant effect on the department's success in carrying out its mission, and the department does have some control over these factors. Thus it appears that some of the most effective efforts the department can make include:
  - making use of Dr. Song's recruitment pitch more consistently
  - implementing additional recruitment and retainment strategies
  - securing consistent staffing for both lower-division and upper-division courses
  - preparing for and conducting robust searches for a number of full-time faculty positions

## 5. Contribution to Diversity

- *Background:* This appears to be a new addition to the 6 Year Report format since last time (2017), so we are not able to make any comparisons with previous reports. In this section, we will consider the different but closely related issues of Equity and Inclusion, along with Diversity.
- *Data*
  - *2021 Departmental Grades Report:* The data set for Philosophy comprises over 215 grades for all sections of 2020-21 PHI-006 "Philosophical Perspectives", which satisfies the "Philosophical Reflections on Truth and Value" GE requirement. The larger data set comprises over 4103 grades for sixty-two classes across twenty-one different departments, mainly for lower-level courses.
    - Philosophy compared with other departments: The overall GPA for PHI-006 in 20-21 was **3.18**. The overall GPA for all courses across departments in 20-21 was **3.107**. That is, the average grade for these PHI-006 classes was slightly higher than the college-wide average but this difference (0.073) is too small to be significant. (NB: it was noted that these grades were for classes during the pandemic, i.e., an "abnormal school year", and are therefore difficult to generalize from.)
    - Race: For AWU ("Asian, White, or Unknown") students, the GPA for PHI-006 was **3.224** – somewhat higher than the overall average. For HABH ("Hawaiian, American/Alaskan Native, Black or Hispanic/Latino"): the GPA was **3.008** – somewhat lower than the overall average. According to the "Philosophy Grades Report – Summer 2021", this means that, "the GPA of HABH students ... was lower than that of AWU students .... However, the difference between the two groups (0.216) is not statistically significant." (NB: There are more

- fine-grained ways of disaggregating the data (e.g., for “Black” or “Native American” individually), but the numbers of students in those groups would be too small to be significant.)
- Gender: for female students, the GPA for PHI-006 was **3.195** – slightly higher than the overall average (3.18). For male students, the GPA was **3.157** – slightly lower than the overall average. According to the “Philosophy Grades Report – Summer 2021”, this means that the GPA of male students ... was lower than that of female students. “However, the difference (0.038) is not significant.”
  - Generation in Higher Education: the GPA for NOT-First Gen students in PHI-006: the GPA was **3.205** – slightly higher than the overall average. For “First Gen” students, the GPA was **3.032** – slightly lower than the overall average. According to the “Philosophy Grades Report – Summer 2021”, this means that the GPA of First Gen students was lower than that of NOT First Gen students. “However, the difference (0.24) is not statistically significant.”
- *2022 Departmental Grades Report*: The data set comprises over 246 grades for all sections of 2021-22 PHI-006 “Philosophical Perspectives”, which satisfies the “Philosophical Reflections on Truth and Value” GE requirement. The larger data set comprises over 4037 grades for sixty-nine classes across twenty-five different departments, mainly for lower-level courses.
- Philosophy compared with other departments: The overall GPA for PHI-006 in 21-22 was **3.159**. The overall GPA for all courses in 21-22 was **3.062**. That is, the average grade for these PHI-006 classes was slightly higher than the college-wide average but this difference (0.097) is too small to be significant. (NB: it was noted in according to the “Departmental Grades Report – Summer 2022”, “... assigned grades were a bit lower in 2021-22 [than in 2020-21]” and that, “While this change was statistically significant, practically speaking it may be small” and “related to a number of things including the return to in-person instruction during the 2021-22 school year.”)
  - Race: For AWU students, the GPA for PHI-006 was **3.234** – somewhat higher than the overall average. For HABH students, the GPA was **3.005** – somewhat lower than the overall average. Once again, according to the “Philosophy Grades Report – Summer 2022”: “the GPA of HABH students ... was lower than that of AWU students .... But not statistically significant.”
  - Gender: For female students in PHI-006, the GPA was **3.288** – higher than the overall average. For male students, the GPA was **2.954** – lower than the overall average. That is, “...the GPA for males and females *differed significantly* ..., a finding that was *not* present in the 2020-21 data set. The difference between the GPAs was 0.334 and was larger than the difference in the 2020-21 set (0.334 v 0.038). This could

indicate males struggled more than females in their return to in-person instruction.”

- Generation in higher education: for NOT-First Gen students in PHI-006, the GPA was **3.240** – higher than the overall average (3.159). For First Gen students, the GPA was **2.815** –lower than the overall average. That is, the GPA of First Gen differed significantly from the GPA of their non-first generation classmates ( $p = 0.0034$ ). The difference between GPAs of the groups (0.425) was larger than the difference found in the 2020-21 data set (0.425 v 0.173). This could indicate first generation students struggled more in their return to in-person instruction than their non-first generation peers.”

○ *Summary:*

- Philosophy compared with other departments: in both years, the GPA for PHI-006 was a low B+, therefore **slightly higher** than the GPA across all courses in other departments, but in both years, the difference was less than one third of a grade (i.e., a +/- ).
- Race: in keeping with the results for all courses, in PHI-006 the GPA of HABH students was **lower** than that of AWU students, though the difference was smaller (0.229 v 0.359) and (0.229 v 0.520).
- Gender: in keeping with the results for all courses, in PHI-006 the GPA of male students was **lower** than that of female students, though here the difference between philosophy and other courses was smaller in 20-21 (0.038 v 0.079) but larger in 21-22 (0.334 v 0.164).
- Generation: in keeping with the results for all courses, in PHI-006 the GPA of First Gen students was **lower** than that of non-First Gen students, though the difference was in both cases smaller (0.173 v 0.393) and (0.425 v 0.494).
- Overall: in keeping with the results for all courses, the GPA in PHI-006 was in both years **lower** than average for the following groups: HABH students, male students, and First Generation students, though in all but one case, it was a difference of a third of a grade (+/-) or less.

- *Conclusions:* Given the above data, we do not find any serious inequities or disparities in philosophy grades along race, gender, or generation lines. We would not expect perfect uniformity of performance across all groups *a priori*. But where there are differences in philosophy grades across such groups, they are small. Even if differences in grades were thought to be problematic, philosophy grades don't raise any *special* problems, compared to other departments. On the contrary, they raise fewer or smaller problems.

- *Equity:* By “equity”, we mean something like “fairness” or “equal treatment of equals”. Given this definition, the Philosophy Department at Westmont aspires to treat all its students equitably in all relevant respects, including grading, classroom teaching, and other support. No students should be treated differently simply in virtue of the group(s) they belong to.

- *Grading*: as noted above, we do not find strong evidence of any serious disparities along race, gender or generation lines in philosophy grades. Where there are differences in grades between groups, they are in keeping with college-wide trends, though noticeably *smaller*. Moreover, where there are differences in grades between groups, there is no strong reason to suppose that, by itself, this reflects inequitable treatment by the philosophy department. Differences in grades reflect differences in performance, which may be affected by numerous factors, including differences in high school background, incoming AP credits, choice of major, level of interest/motivation, diet, sleep, exercise, just as much as inequitable application of common grading standards.
- *Implicit bias*: notwithstanding the low level of differences in philosophy grades between various groups, we acknowledge the possibility of implicit (i.e., subconscious and unintentional) bias in the application of common grading standards. To reduce the chance of implicit bias in subjective/discretionary grading (e.g., on essays), philosophy professors may choose to require anonymized submission of essays. This is routinely required in, e.g., some sections of PHI-006 and in all sections of PHI-104 and PHI-133.
- *Teaching*: we believe that all philosophy students *are in fact* offered the same teaching in the same classes, regardless of which group(s) they belong to. Any Westmont student may register for any section of any philosophy class that they choose (subject to availability and satisfaction of prerequisites). No classroom teaching (or associated activities) in any Westmont philosophy class is divided along lines of race, gender, or generation. Except for students with documented accommodations from the Disability Services Office, the requirements, activities, and course content are the same for all students in each Westmont philosophy class. Clear and substantial inequities in grades might be considered evidence of inequities in teaching, but (as noted above) we find no strong evidence of such inequities along race, gender, or generation lines.
  - Grades are not the only possible evidence of inequitable teaching, however. Persistent patterns of complaints in the results of course evaluation questionnaires and alumni surveys might also constitute evidence.
  - Alumni survey: we find no persistent patterns of complaints suggestive of inequitable teaching from a majority of respondents to our alumni surveys.
  - If worries about inequitable teaching remained, we believe that one effective way of addressing them would be to incorporate some of the ideas of “transparency in learning and teaching” and “problem-centered learning” from sources such as the following: [TILT Higher Ed Examples and Resources](#)
- *Other Support*: we believe that all philosophy students should be offered the same support (beyond classroom teaching) for the same classes, regardless of which group(s) they belong to. This includes, e.g., office hours, consultations,

e.g., on paper rewrites, CARES system reports, and writing Center referrals. We also believe that all students *are in fact* offered the same Other Supports as other students regardless of which group(s) they belong to. No evidence to the contrary has surfaced, in either course evaluation questionnaires or in Alumni Survey responses. Some of these supports, e.g., office hours are insufficiently exploited by our students *generally*, and so we need to do a better job of informing students about them, but this is a general point about improving take-up of support by all philosophy students and not a matter of equity *per se*.

- *Diversity & Inclusiveness*: [See Appendices 10 – 11.] Out of four full-time professors and two adjuncts, five are white and one is Asian; all are male; three were Not-First Gen, and three were First Gen. The faculty of Westmont’s philosophy department is not very diverse in race and gender, but there is not much they can do to increase diversity in the faculty, short of stepping down. That said, at least two senior members of the department – Jim Taylor and Mark Nelson – anticipate retiring before the next 7-year report (in 2030), so there may be opportunities to increase the diversity of the department before long. Given this composition of the current faculty, therefore, concern for Diversity & Inclusiveness amounts to concern for the composition/background of Philosophy majors; course offerings; course content, e.g., syllabi; and selection of outside speakers.
  - Diversity and the composition/background of philosophy majors according to race and gender. (No information on Generation in Higher Education was collected.)
    - Race: during the period Jan 2017 – May 2023, there were at total of 35 majors. Of these, 26 (74.2%) identified as White, 3 (8.57%) identified as Hispanic/Latino; 2 (5.7%) identified as Asian; 2 (5.7%) identified as Unknown); 1 (2.86%) identified as Black/African American; 1 (2.86%) identified as Two or More.
    - Gender: during the same period, there were at total of 35 majors. Of these, 24 (68.57%) were male, and 11 (31.43%) were female.
    - Compared with college-wide data on race/ethnicity & gender. (Information from Westmont’s director of research, planning and implementation, Dr. Tim Loomer, 07/10/2023. The data comes from Fall enrollment numbers, which is why 2023 data is not available):

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT</b>						
White, non-Hispanic	52.2%	53.7%	53.8%	54.6%	57.9%	61.8%
Hispanic/Latino	23.1%	20.3%	20.1%	19.5%	17.9%	17.4%
Race and/or ethnicity unknown	7.0%	8.0%	9.4%	7.5%	6.1%	2.8%
Two or more races, non-Hispanic	6.7%	6.6%	5.6%	6.1%	5.6%	6.2%
Asian, non-Hispanic	6.9%	7.0%	7.1%	7.6%	8.2%	7.0%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	2.0%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.5%	2.0%

Nonresident aliens	1.7%	1.9%	1.6%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	0.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
<b>NON-WHITE (ALL CATEGORIES EXCEPT WHITE)</b>	47.8%	46.3%	46.2%	45.4%	42.1%	38.2%
<b>DELTA FROM PRIOR YEAR</b>	3.24%	0.22%	0.90%	3.20%	4.00%	0.30%

<b>ALL STUDENTS TOTAL (Reporting IPEDS Data)</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Male	511	494	530	487	490	501
Female	789	783	795	742	753	792
<b>% FEMALE</b>	60.7%	61.3%	60.0%	60.4%	60.6%	61.3%

- In sum, philosophy majors at Westmont were predominantly white during this period. This is hardly surprising, since Westmont has a predominantly white student body, but it skews even *more* white than one might expect given the stats about Westmont’s student body. Philosophy majors were also predominantly male during this period. In one way, this is more surprising than the results about races, because Westmont has a predominantly female student body (a ratio of approximately 60/40, almost the reverse of the ratio of men to women in the major). In another way, however, this is not so surprising in that it closely tracks patterns at other institutions. Even in the APA, the membership was 72.8% male and 25.9% female during the same period. [See APA Document “Demographic Statistics on the APA Membership, FY2018 to FY2020”: [Microsoft Word – FY2016 Demographic Statistics Report-Final \(ymaws.com\)](#) (accessed 7/7/2023).]
- Diversity and course offerings: as a matter of “Diversity and Inclusiveness” (if not equity), it would be desirable for the philosophy department at Westmont to be attractive to students from a wide range of backgrounds. It would be undesirable if some students who might otherwise be interested to take philosophy courses felt that philosophy was “not for people like them”, on grounds of race or gender. Furthermore, one thing that might put off potential philosophy students is the perception that philosophy course offerings at Westmont have an exclusively male and European & North American focus. (Anecdotally, more than once, we have had queries from Asian and Asian-American students about whether Westmont ever offers courses in Asian philosophy, and queries from women students about courses in feminist philosophy.)

- *Our response:* We wish we were able to offer a wider range of philosophy courses. In a small department like ours, we are forced to prioritize offerings in “core” areas such as Ethics, Metaphysics, Epistemology and History of Philosophy. This leaves few slots for courses such as “Asian Philosophy”, “Feminist Philosophy” or “African Philosophy”. Moreover, two practical limitations also work against our adding whole new courses in these areas. The most obvious limitation is expertise: none of the three FT philosophy staff and three PT staff have expertise in these areas. This is not an insuperable barrier, of course. If we *had* to add such a course, one or more members of staff could probably study up on such an area, and (with the help of a suitable anthology!) gain a level of familiarity (if not expertise) with the new topic sufficient at least for an introductory undergraduate course in these areas. A less obvious, but more pressing limitation concerns enrollment: because we have few majors, enrollments in many upper-level philosophy classes are perilously low. According to college policy, classes enrolling fewer than five students have to be cancelled or else offered as independent studies. For 2023, enrollments in some upper-level philosophy classes is as follows: PHI-103 (Ancient) = 13, PHI-104 (Ethics) = 6, PHI-107 (Modern) = 6, PHI-175 (Metaphysics) = 2. This means that every additional elective in philosophy is in effect competing with every other elective in philosophy. Adding philosophy electives would (we anticipate) tend to exacerbate this. That said, we are still open to adding strategically-chosen electives. Most pertinent to matters of Diversity and Inclusion, Ed Song has plans to offer PHI-138 “Philosophy of Race”. We are hoping that this will attract enough students from outside the philosophy major that it will not draw too many students away from electives in other core areas of philosophy, though we think that a little competition with these other courses may still be worth it.
- *Diversity and Course content:* as noted above, one thing that might put off potential philosophy students is if they perceive that the content of philosophy courses at Westmont have an exclusively male and/or European & North American focus. Moreover, we have some evidence that this would be of interest to our actual majors: for example. [[See Appendix 8.] On Question 12 of the Alumni Questionnaire (“What improvements would you suggest for the philosophy program?”) four out of twelve respondents made suggestions in the diversity area: “These suggestions included drawing more from a wider range of philosophical traditions around the globe (especially non-Western philosophies), incorporating more diverse philosophies and philosophers in our curriculum, and supplement theistic philosophers and philosophies with atheistic ones.” Another respondent said, “I worry about Westmont’s lack of inclusivity. Students who are diverse (racially or in their identities) suffered when I was a student and I haven’t seen much improvement since I graduated. Students in the majority also are not prepared to approach others of different backgrounds with grace or understanding.” This was in response to the question why she wouldn’t be likely to recommend Westmont to a prospective student.” Even if we are severely

constrained in increasing our *course offerings*, we could consider changing the *coverage* or focus of our existing courses, to include topics or authors of special interest to women or non-white students.

- *Our response:* we have for some years been working to do just this, especially in respect of adding coverage of women's voices and issues in our already existing courses. For example: in some sections of PHI-006, the syllabus has been revised to include units on feminist ethics and feminist epistemology. In PHI-104 Ethics, the syllabus has been revised to include work by women writers such as: Brenda Almond, Ruth Benedict, Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Mary Midgley, Christine Korsgaard, Ursula LeGuin, Onora O'Neill, and Margaret Watkins. In the syllabus for PHI-170 Epistemology includes a text by a woman epistemologist (Jennifer Nagel's *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*). Also, the syllabi of several sections of PHI-195 Senior Seminar have been planned to include major works by or about leading women philosophers such as Iris Murdoch (2017), David Brooks (on Frances Perkins and Dorothy Day), and Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung (2020), and Eleonore Stump (2023). We have also for some years been working to increase coverage of non-white voices and issues in our already existing courses. This has proven harder to do, because ours is a broadly analytic department and it is harder to find work by philosophers of color suitable for undergraduate level core courses such as: epistemology and metaphysics. Likewise, in recent years, the syllabi of several sections of PHI-195 Senior Seminar have been planned so as to include major works by or about black thinkers such as Anthony Appia (2017), and Martin Luther King, Jr. and David Brooks (on A.P. Randolph and B. Rustin) (2020). In sum, there is probably more that we can do to include more work by women and persons of color, but we have made a start. Finally, we do *not* have plans to include more work by atheistic philosophers!
- *Diversity and other departmental initiatives:* since our FT staff in philosophy are almost all white males, if we are going to expose our students to more women and philosophers of color in person, we will have to bring in speakers from the outside. Most years, we have applied to the Provost's Office for support an Erasmus Lecture in the philosophy department. (Erasmus Lectures are sponsored annually by the Provost's Office to bring notable speakers to campus in the Humanities.) Under the auspices of the Erasmus program, we have brought to campus leading philosophers such as Nicholas Wolterstorff, Peter Millican, and Trenton Merricks, but we have had an informal policy of making sure to bring leading women in philosophy and/or philosophers of color at least every other year, including Rebecca Chan (2019) and Eleanor Mason, (2023). Similarly, we have made several SCP Small Department Visiting Speaker Grant applications to bring leading Christian women philosophers to campus, including, e.g., Kyla Ebels-Duggan (2019) and Frances Howard-Synder (2024).
- *Diversity and recruitment:* We are already to pay attention to matters of race and gender in our recruitment efforts, including: increasing the representation of

women and persons of color in the alumni bio-sketches on the Philosophy Department webpage, and (where possible) increasing the visibility of women and persons of color at Student Preview Days and Accepted Students Days by regularly having women and/or non-white majors represent the Philosophy Department at these events.

## 6. Additional Analysis

- *General Education*: this topic does not require significant additional analysis, as we are not SOLELY responsible for the Philosophical Reflections on the “Philosophical Reflections on Reality, Knowledge, and Value” Common Contexts requirement or the “Reasoning Abstractly” Common Inquiries requirement.
- *Finances*: this topic does not require significant additional analysis. (We have frequently requested an increase in resources, but mostly we do not get one, and we do not expect this to change in the foreseeable future. And we have been ending the year in the black.)
- *Faculty*: quality, load, forthcoming retirements and desirable expertise of future hires. [See also the related discussion of this in the section on “Sustainability”]: this is a topic to which we will have to give careful attention in the next few years. As noted, we anticipate that, before the next 7-year report is due, two of the FT members of the philosophy department will retire (Taylor, ca 2026 and Nelson, ca 2028), and at least one PT member of the department will have resigned (Hoeckley, 2023). This represents both a challenge and an opportunity: a challenge in that we *may* need to conduct two searches for replacements. (We say “may” here because we currently have two PT philosophers (Song, Zylstra) married to FT faculty members in other departments who might be able to move to permanent FT status without a full-blown search. Any full-blown search will take lots of time and resources and will be hampered somewhat by the fact that Westmont is barred from advertising job openings in the APA’s “Jobs for Philosophers” website, because our requirement that applicants sign our Community Life Statement contravenes the APA’s policy on Non-discrimination. That said, it is still very much a buyer’s market in philosophy, and we could expect a fair number of qualified applicants. These impending retirements could also opportunities to increase the diversity of the department in terms of race or gender, and to fill in gaps in our course offerings and/or shift the focus or orientation of our department. We will of course want to maintain our present good level of coverage of our core areas (Metaphysics, Epistemology, Axiology) and the history of philosophy. But we may also wish to increase our capacity in some other areas of philosophy, e.g., (philosophy of law, philosophy of science, non-Western philosophy, philosophy of mind). We will not be able to determine which areas we can/should add until closer to that time, as it will depend at least partly on the interests of colleagues and students in the department at that time.
- *Advising*: this topic does not require significant additional analysis. (Compared to the rest of the college, we enjoy a light advising load, and face no special challenges regarding advising.)

- *Facilities*: this topic does not require significant additional analysis. We have the same complaints as everyone else about, say, certain unpopular teaching rooms, such as Clark T, but generally our facilities are adequate. Fellow residents in Porter Center have made a case over the years for the desirability of a deck on the back side of our building which could be used for advising meetings and/or small classes, but this is not reckoned a high priority.
- *Interaction with other departments*: this topic may require some additional analysis immediately: our relations with other departments are good, but we do not routinely have much occasion for major interactions. One exception to this, however, could be our participation in a new PPE major. If the major is approved, most of the teaching and courses would be shared by the Departments of Economics, Philosophy and Political Science. We would then anticipate having to cooperate with these departments on matters of course provision, staffing, scheduling and possibly even on course content. But all of this is contingent on the approval of the PPE proposal in coming years.
- *Integration of faith and learning in your program*: this topic may require some additional analysis. On the one hand, we are a key area for faith & learning integration in Westmont's Christian liberal arts curriculum. It is something we do all day long every day. On the other hand, it would not do to be complacent about it, by assuming we had nothing left to learn about it.
- *Collaboration with the departmental library liaison*: our library department library liaison is Lauren Bedoy. We have a good working relationship with her, but our needs are few, and rarely extend beyond buying this book or cancelling that journal.
- *Student/faculty research opportunities*: opportunities for student/faculty research in philosophy are much rarer than they are in, say, the natural, social or behavioral sciences, and there has been little to no demand for them in the past six years.

### C. Conclusions and Vision for the Future

- *Items we want to bring to the attention of Academic Senate*
  - Since two of us (Nelson and Taylor) are planning to retire before the end of the next seven-year review cycle, sometime during that period, our department will be asking Senate to approve searches to fill those two positions.
  - And depending on the outcomes of those searches, we may also be coming to Senate with proposals for new courses (if any of our new hires should want to teach new courses that we decide would be good options for our majors and minors).
- *What we have learned and what we plan to do as a result*
  - *Assessment Practices*: We have learned that our assessment practices are generally effective in giving us valuable results for our consideration and action. We are pleased with our PLOs, rubrics, and assessment instruments. And we have benefited from our discussions of the results. We have also found that our essay grading evaluations are generally consistent. And we have no reason to think our evaluations are subject to implicit bias. Going forward, we will be more careful to make sure that all our students have the relevant rubrics in advance, that we

accumulate more and more data over time with successive administrations of assessment instruments in order to gradually increase our sample sizes, that we continue regularly to have the sorts of program review conversations that we have found so helpful during the last six years, that we periodically check to make sure that are maintaining inter-grader reliability in our essay grading, and that use a method of anonymous essay submission (to minimize the possibility of implicit bias).

- *Student Learning*: We are generally pleased with the outcomes our students have demonstrated with respect to our three PLOs. And our alumni feedback confirms that our former majors consider that our contributions to their learning in these three areas were both effective and valuable. Going forward, given what our alums reported, we plan to enhance our instruction aimed at our knowledge PLO and at the aspect of our Virtues PLO that concerns awareness of the limits of rational inquiry.
- *Curriculum*: Though we have had a strong program for many years, we consider our course offerings to have improved during the last six years after we broadened our curriculum by adding additional courses. And because we think our Philosophy Senior Seminar course provides a valuable learning experience for our senior majors, we have decided to keep the course the way it is, for the most part. We are also pleased with the various ways we have incorporated more diversity (racial, gender, and global) in a number of our courses. And we are happy that the PPE proposal is moving forward. Future plans in this area are to stop broadening the curriculum for the time being (until our upper-division enrollments increase, at least), to work on showing more connections between the theoretical and practical in Senior Seminar (in response to alumni feedback), and to look for more ways to diversify our existing courses. We are also anticipating potential curricular adjustments down the road after our retirement-replacement hires. But we don't expect at this point that the PPE program, if approved, will require any new courses or other changes to our curriculum.
- *Staffing*: We are glad to have had three full-time philosophy professors in our department with three resident adjuncts for a number of years. The six of us have areas of specialization that complement each other, and we have all gotten along quite well. This staff has met our teaching needs for the most part, with an occasional need to hire another adjunct when some of our resident adjuncts haven't been available. But going forward, the department will need to adjust to the loss of Chris Hoeckley (who will be leaving the college at the end of this calendar year) and eventually, to the retirements of Taylor and Nelson. These departures will create both challenges (to find adequate replacements) but also opportunities (to search for women and faculty of color). We will also need to find ways to adjust to changes in the teaching responsibilities of some of our faculty (e.g., Taylor teaching in the Augustinian Scholars program and nursing program each semester).

- *Major/Minor Recruitment and Retention:* We are happy that our earlier decline in numbers of majors and minors has recently been reversed. And we are pleased with the number of Augustinian Scholars who have decided to major or minor in philosophy. And for the most part, students who have chosen to major or minor in philosophy recently have stuck with their plans. We assume that our proactive efforts to recruit majors and minors have been part of the reason our numbers have increased. Going forward we will continue to employ the same sorts of recruitment strategies. And we'll attempt to supplement them with additional endeavors—such as to use our philosophy club activities as a means of attracting more students and making more efforts to follow up with students who have expressed an interest in philosophy. We are also hoping that, if the PPE major proposal is approved, it won't result in our losing majors and minors but instead in more students being drawn to our courses. In addition, we will continue to make special efforts to attract women and students of color to our program.
- *Sustainability:* We are glad that the number of our majors and minors has increased during a period of time in which the humanities have been on the decline in our society. And our program has been benefited rather than harmed by movement toward more pre-professional programs at Westmont, since one of the required courses in the nursing program is a philosophy course: Nursing for Human Flourishing (which Taylor teaches every semester). Still, we realize that we will need to continue to be vigilant and proactive as the college continues to face revenue challenges due to the devaluing of the liberal arts in general (and humanities in particular) and to the enrollment cliff, which will make it harder for institutions of higher learning to compete for students. We will also seek to be flexible with our curriculum as we bring on new hires who may have different areas of specialization and competence—and as we continue to monitor the needs and desires of our students.
- *What Key Questions will we explore during the next 7-year cycle?*
  - *Key Question #1:* “What strategies should we implement to recruit and retain more philosophy majors and minors, and how can we implement these strategies in such a way as to recruit and retain more women students so as to achieve a better gender balance?”
  - *Key Question #2:* “How should we manage the staffing in our department in light of (i) our participation in other programs (Augustinian, Nursing, Willard Center, Religious Studies) and (ii) two upcoming retirements (Jim and Mark)?
  - *Key Question #3:* “In what ways should we revise our curriculum to facilitate philosophy major and minor recruitment and retention, available staff expertise, and collaboration with other programs (e.g., cross-listed courses and a possible new PPE major)?

## D. Appendices

### 1. Previous PRC Recommendations

- 2019
  - *Recommendation 1*: “Due to small sample sizes, compile data over several years and assess it once or twice within a six-year cycle.”
  - *Recommendation 2*: “Refocus the department’s attention on using its existing general education teaching as a platform for thoughtful (major and minor) recruitment.”
  - *Recommendation 3*: “Utilize the Augustinian Scholars Program to present the beauties of philosophy to especially competent and eager students.”
  - *Recommendation 4*: “Consider advertising/marketing that Philosophy graduates exceed national standards in critical thinking skills.”
- 2020
  - *Recommendation 1*: “Collect the PLO data over several years to gather a larger sample size before drawing conclusions.”
  - *Recommendation 2*: “Make sure students are introduced to the Philosophy Major Skills Rubric prior to assigning the essay.”
  - *Recommendation 3*: “Continue the valuable discussions on the Philosophy capstone course.”
- 2021
  - *Recommendation 1*: “Develop a more specific timeline/trajectory for how we will address the PRC’s recommendations.”
  - *Recommendation 2*: “Reflect on how the assessment rubric was integrated into courses with an eye to how the assignment and its evaluation could be better aligned across sections.”
- 2022
  - *Recommendation 1*: “Keep up the good collaborating in your department on these issues and using assessment to improve student learning.”
  - *Recommendation 2*: “Regarding your Key Question #4, we’d encourage you to use your department meeting time (outlined in your response to previous PRC recommendations) when you’ll be discussing assessment to tackle the question of inter-grader reliability, which might lead to more confident and efficient grading.”
  - *Recommendation 3*: “We’re looking forward to seeing the major findings about Key Question #4 next year.”

### 2. The Link to the Departmental Program Review Site

Found [here](#).

### 3. PLO Assessment Results—Then (2017) and Now (2023)

#### 2017

Knowledge	Highly Developed	Developed	Emerging
Terms & Concepts	40%	27%	33%
Issues & Positions	40%	27%	33%
Historical & Cultural	N/A	N/A	N/A
Assigned Readings	N/A	N/A	N/A

#### 2023

Knowledge	Highly Developed	Developed	Emerging
Terms & Concepts	37.5%	62.5%	0%
Issues & Positions	50%	37.5%	12.5%
Historical & Cultural	N/A (25%)	N/A	N/A
Assigned Readings	50%	37.5%	12.5%

#### 2017

Skills	Highly Developed	Developed	Emerging
Understanding	50%	50%	0%
Construction	75%	25%	0%
Evaluation	50%	25%	25%

#### 2023

Skills	Highly Developed	Developed	Emerging
Understanding	33%	67%	0%
Construction	50%	50%	0%
Evaluation	0%	83%	17%

#### 2017

Virtues	Highly Developed	Developed	Emerging
Enthusiasm for inquiry	25%	37.5%	37.5%
Awareness of limits	25%	37.5%	37.5%

#### 2023

Virtues	Highly Developed	Developed	Emerging
Enthusiasm for inquiry	30%	40%	30%
Awareness of limits	20%	20%	60%

4. Rubrics and assessment instruments for every PLO

**Philosophy Major Knowledge Assessment Rubric**

	<b>Highly Developed</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Initial</b>
Knowledge of relevant philosophical terms and concepts	Student consistently uses relevant terms & concepts expertly, including high-level ones.	Student consistently uses standard relevant terms & concepts correctly.	Student sometimes uses standard relevant terms & concepts correctly, but sometimes fails to use relevant ones, or does so incorrectly.	Student consistently fails to use standard relevant terms & concepts, or does so incorrectly.
Knowledge of important thinkers, issues, positions, problems, arguments	Student refers to thinkers, issues, positions (that are relevant to their prompt) and does so precisely and expertly.	Student refers to thinkers, issues, positions (that are relevant to their prompt) and does so correctly.	Student refers to some relevant thinkers, issues, positions, but sometimes fails to refer to some important ones, or does so incorrectly.	Student mostly fails to refer to relevant important thinkers, issues, positions, or does so incorrectly.
(where relevant) Knowledge of historical and cultural context of thinkers, issues, positions, problems, arguments	Student correctly explains the historical and cultural context of thinkers, issues, positions, problems or arguments relevant to their prompt, and does so lucidly and insightfully.	Student correctly explains the historical and cultural context of thinkers, issues, positions, problems or arguments, where this is relevant to their prompt.	Student explains some of the historical and cultural context of thinkers, issues, positions, problems or arguments relevant to their prompt, but explanation is occasionally incomplete, shallow or incorrect.	Student generally fails to explain the historical and cultural context of thinkers, issues, positions, problems or arguments relevant to their prompt, or explanation is mostly incomplete, shallow or incorrect.
Knowledge of assigned readings: <i>both</i> general gist <i>and</i> details	Student correctly presents and/or explains relevant material from assigned readings ( <i>both</i> general gist <i>and</i> particular details) and does so fully and deeply.	Student correctly presents and/or explains relevant material from assigned readings ( <i>both</i> general gist <i>and</i> particular details).	Student presents and/or explains relevant material from assigned readings: but this presentation is occasionally incomplete, shallow or incorrect.	Student generally fails to present and/or explain relevant material from assigned readings, or presentation is mostly incomplete, shallow or incorrect.

**Philosophy Major Skills Rubric**

	<b>Initial</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Highly Developed</b>
<b>understanding</b>	The student fails to notice or offer pertinent arguments; misidentifies conclusions; confuses premises and conclusions.	The student presents arguments with some errors, or with dubious relevance; vaguely or inaccurately indicates the line of reasoning; fails to note their significance.	The student presents arguments accurately; indicates the line of reasoning; describes what a given conclusion does and does not entail.	The student presents arguments precisely, clearly, and thoroughly; notes their significance; indicates their logical structure and type (e.g., inference to best explanation); identifies implicit premises; indicates what motivates crucial premises.
<b>construction</b>	The student fails to present arguments, or presents arguments that are invalid or weak; have implausible premises; reach irrelevant conclusions; are unoriginal.	The student leaves arguments implicit, or presents arguments that have doubtful validity or strength; have implausible premises; are unoriginal.	The student presents arguments that are valid or strong; have plausible or widely held premises; reach relevant conclusions.	The student creates arguments that are valid or strong; have plausible premises; reach substantive and significant conclusions; advance the discussion.
<b>evaluation</b>	The student objects to conclusions without evaluating arguments for them; fails to consider objections.	The student objects to conclusions without evaluating arguments for them; criticizes arguments imprecisely or superficially; rarely considers objections.	The student identifies and explains invalid and weak inferences, implausible assumptions, implausible consequences; considers and responds to objections.	The student clearly identifies and explains invalid and weak inferences, implausible assumptions, implausible consequences; considers and effectively responds to objections.

**Philosophy Major Virtue Rubric**

	<b>Highly Developed</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Initial</b>
<b>Enthusiasm for rational enquiry</b>	The student takes the argument in the prompt seriously and evaluates it fairly and insightfully. The student gives a full, complex or sustained argument for their own position. The student does not miss any opportunities to apply relevant philosophical theories, principles or arguments, and applies them in sophisticated ways	The student takes the argument in the prompt seriously and evaluates it fairly. The student gives a satisfactory argument for their own position. The student takes up some opportunities to apply relevant philosophical theories, principles or arguments and does so well.	The student does not take the argument in the prompt seriously or else does not evaluate it fairly or insightfully. The student gives an argument for their own position, but it is weak or incomplete in places. The student takes up some obvious opportunities to apply relevant philosophical theories, principles or arguments, but does so in a way that is sometimes quick or shallow or mechanical.	The student does not understand the prompt or engage with it. The student gives no arguments or gives only shallow, inaccurate or confused ones. The student misses even obvious opportunities to apply relevant philosophical theories, principles or arguments.
<b>Awareness of limits of rational enquiry</b>	In addressing the prompt, the student makes a strong, complete and insightful case as to whether: some topic resists analysis or a particular analysis is inadequate; or on some topic, logical argumentation breaks down or yields weak, insignificant or incomplete outcomes; or some important aspects of reality are not adequately accounted for by standard theories; or their own views may be fallible, partial or unfounded.	In addressing the prompt, the student makes a case as to whether: some topic resists analysis or a particular analysis is inadequate; or on some topic, logical argumentation breaks down or yields weak, insignificant or incomplete outcomes; or some important aspects of reality are not adequately accounted for by standard theories; or their own views may be fallible, partial or unfounded.	In addressing the prompt, the student discusses the idea that: some topic resists analysis or a particular analysis is inadequate; or on some topic, logical argumentation breaks down or yields weak, insignificant or incomplete outcomes; or some important aspects of reality are not adequately accounted for by standard theories; or their own views may be fallible, partial or unfounded, but they do not make a strong, complete or insightful case to this effect.	In addressing the prompt, the student shows no awareness that: some topic resists analysis or a particular analysis is inadequate; or on some topic, logical argumentation breaks down or yields weak, insignificant or incomplete outcomes; or some important aspects of reality are not adequately accounted for by standard theories; or their own views may be fallible, partial or unfounded.

WESTMONT COLLEGE  
Philosophy Department  
PHI-195-1, Spring 2023  
Knowledge PLO Assessment Instrument

Writing Assignment #2 – Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*

**Guidelines:**

- Approximately 2000-3000 words, with accurate word-count at top of first page
- Reproduce full prompt at beginning of essay
- You may also give your essay a title if you wish
- Typed, double-spaced.
- With page numbers
- Stapled and with name on back of back page only
- **Essay Due Date:** April 21, 2023

**Prompts:**

1. What moral justification, if any, can be given for a policy of non-combatant immunity?
2. Discuss and critically assess Walzer's rejection of "realism" about war.
3. Can it be coherently maintained that moral considerations should constrain our behavior in many spheres of activity, but not in warfare?
4. Discuss and critically assess Walzer's theory of aggression.
5. Can a person be a Christian *and* hold in good faith that individuals have a right to use lethal force in self-defense? How can this possibly be reconciled with the Sermon on the Mount?
6. "Walzer's philosophical methodology inevitably leads to a pernicious sort of moral relativism." Explain and critically assess this claim.
7. Explain what Walzer means by "Naked Soldiers" (chapter 9). Why might some people think it is wrong to kill them? Explain and assess Walzer's view on the point.
8. "Just War Theory is to be rejected because it simply ties the hands of the morally good party in a conflict by preventing them from doing things that the other, morally bad party will do." Discuss.
9. Your choice of some other topic of substance connected to the main ideas of Walzer's book, to be worked out with Prof. Nelson at least three weeks in advance of the due date.

**WESTMONT COLLEGE**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHI-195: Senior Seminar**  
**Spring 2023**  
**Knowledge PLO Assessment Instrument (Cont.)**

**Criteria for Evaluation of Writing Assignment # 2:**

Key: “+” = excellent, “□+” = good, “□” = OK, “□-” = needs work, “-” = poor, “X” = failure

A good paper will (where relevant):

1. Answer the whole question or prompt
  
- 2. Exhibit knowledge and/or correct understanding of relevant philosophical positions, concepts, arguments, themes, particular philosophers’ views, historical context, or contents of particular texts**
  
3. Provide clear, well-argued critical assessment or summing up (where called for)
  
4. Be factually correct (in so far as it makes factual claims);
  
5. Cover relevant material the author could reasonably be expected to know;
  
6. Make intelligent use of quoted material where relevant;
  
7. Give arguments (where relevant)
  
8. Exhibit some independent grasp of the subject and some personal engagement.
  
9. Be generally free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling;
  
10. Be clear and organized, and have an overall unity and direction;
  
11. Makes significant effort to expand, develop or improve on first essay.

Other comments:

**Philosophy Senior Seminar Essay Prompts**  
**Jim Taylor**  
**Spring Semester 2019**  
**Skills PLO Assessment Instrument**

Essay #1: Swinburne & Philosophy of Religion

You have been hired by Richard Swinburne to be his personal philosophical assistant. A critic of his has just published a criticism of one of the arguments he makes in *Is There a God?* (in which he lays out his overall argument for the claim that theism is probable). Swinburne has asked you to write a 1250-word essay in which you (1) state and explain the argument the critic has criticized, (2) state and explain the critic's objection to that argument, and (3) defend the argument (from a Swinburne-ian Christian standpoint) from the critic's objection.

In writing this essay, keep in mind that you are writing for an academic/professional philosophical audience consisting in philosophy professors and students. Accordingly, as you write it, engage with the concepts and language valued in the discipline of philosophy.

Essay #2: Evans & Christian Apologetics

The pastor of your church, knowing that you majored in philosophy in college, has asked you to write a 1250-word letter to members of your church who are troubled by the New Atheists' claim that Christian faith is irrational. Fortunately, you still have a copy of Evans' *Why Christian Faith Still Makes Sense: A Response to Contemporary Challenges*. Your pastor agrees that your letter should contain a general summary of the argument of this book, a summary which should cover what the New Atheists are saying, the role of natural theology, the nature and value of natural signs for God, and criteria for recognizing God's self-revelation (in other words, all the major themes of the book!).

In writing your letter, keep in mind that it should be clear, organized, and focused and that your explanations should be accessible to a wide audience and your arguments both cogent and encouraging to troubled Christians—some of whom may feel that they are in danger of losing their faith. Feel free to come up with examples and illustrations that you think would be helpful to this population. And remember that you should engage with concepts and language understandable and valued in the church. Be attentive to an audience with a range of education and experiences.

Essay #3: Moser on Method in Philosophy of Religion

The Society for Philosophy of Religion has recently become divided over the approach taken by the philosopher Paul K. Moser to philosophical questions about God's existence. Non-theistic members of the society argue that belief in God is reasonable only if it is based on adequate philosophical arguments for God's existence (which they think don't exist). Some theistic members of the society agree (but think that there *are* adequate philosophical arguments for God's existence). The other theistic members of the society don't agree with this evidentialist constraint on reasonable theistic belief. Instead, they agree with Moser that natural theology is both inadequate and unnecessary as a rational support for belief in God. They affirm Moser's

view that experiential evidence of God's existence based on direct encounters with God is both necessary and sufficient for reasonable theistic belief.

Since you are an expert on Moser's religious epistemology, the president of the society has asked you to write an essay of at least 1200 words in which you provide a clear, thorough, and yet concise explanation of both (1) Moser's positive religious epistemological theory and his argument for it and (2) Moser's case against natural theology. The president also wants you to include a third section in your essay in which you (3) critically examine both Moser's case for experientialism and against evidentialism. Of course, the president is expecting both cogent arguments and evidence of good independent thinking in this third section.

#### Essay #4: Taylor on Knowing God Personally

The pastor of your church, knowing that you read my book *Knowing God Through Spiritual Practices: A Pilgrimage for the Soul*, has asked you to write a 1200-word summary of the book for your fellow parishioners. The pastor tells you that some of these congregants are skeptical about knowing God, some are satisfied with their current knowledge of God, and some are neither skeptical nor satisfied, but eager to grow in their knowledge of God. In light of this diversity, your pastor wants you to address the following three questions: (1) What is the nature, value, and possibility of knowing God?; (2) How can knowledge *about* God provide a basis for recognizing signs of God's presence and activity in one's life (and how can one recognize those signs on this basis?); and (3) How can both individual and communal practices enable Christians to grow in their knowledge of God? In the process of writing your summary, be sure to address Christian understanding, Christian practices, and Christian affections.

In writing your summary, keep in mind that it should be clear, organized, focused, and accessible to a wide audience. Feel free to come up with examples and illustrations that you think would be helpful to this population. And remember that you should engage with concepts and language understandable and valued in the church. Be attentive to an audience with a range of education and experiences.

**Philosophy Senior Seminar Essay Prompts**  
**Jim Taylor**  
**Spring Semester 2021**  
**Virtues PLO Assessment Instrument**

Jim gave the ten students in PHI 195 the following essay prompt:

“You have been hired by Richard Swinburne to be his personal philosophical assistant. A critic of his has just published a criticism of one of the arguments he makes in *Is There a God?* (in which he lays out his overall argument for the claim that theism is probable). Swinburne has asked you to write a 1250-word essay in which you (1) state and explain the argument the critic has criticized, (2) state and explain the critic's objection to that argument, and (3) defend the argument (from a Swinburnian Christian standpoint) from the critic's objection.

In writing this essay, keep in mind that you are writing for an academic/professional philosophical audience consisting in philosophy professors and students. Accordingly, as you write it, engage with the concepts and language valued in the discipline of philosophy.”

5. Reports on closing the loop activities for every PLO

We have decided to do the following with each of our three PLOs going forward:

- Assess each PLO more frequently in Philosophy Senior Seminar (PHI 195) so that we can have a larger sample size on which to base our conclusions and decisions;
- Give all three PLO rubrics to each philosophy major. And going forward, give all three rubrics to students when they declare a philosophy major;
- Include the rubric that will be used in a course in the syllabus and go over it at the beginning of the course and then again right before any assignments that are based on it.

And we have decided to do the following with respect to each particular PLO going forward:

- Knowledge PLO: Focus more than we have in the past on knowledge of historical and cultural context;
- Skills PLO: Be sure that every section of PHI 6 has a logic component and that we review the basics at the beginning of each additional philosophy course (except PHI 12 and PHI 108, which are logic courses themselves);
- Virtues PLO: Revise the wording of the rubric to make it more usable across different sections of PHI 195. And continue to model these virtues for our students, proactively observe whether the students exhibit them in conversation as well as in their written work, and initiate more conversations with our students to encourage self-evaluation and deliberate cultivation of the virtues. We will also strive to point out when the philosophers we are discussing either exhibit or fail to exhibit the virtues.

6. [Link to our Curriculum Map](#)  
Found [here](#).

7. [Link to our PLO Alignment Chart](#)  
Found [here](#).

8. [Alumni Survey](#)

## Philosophy Department Alumni Survey 2023

- *Results*

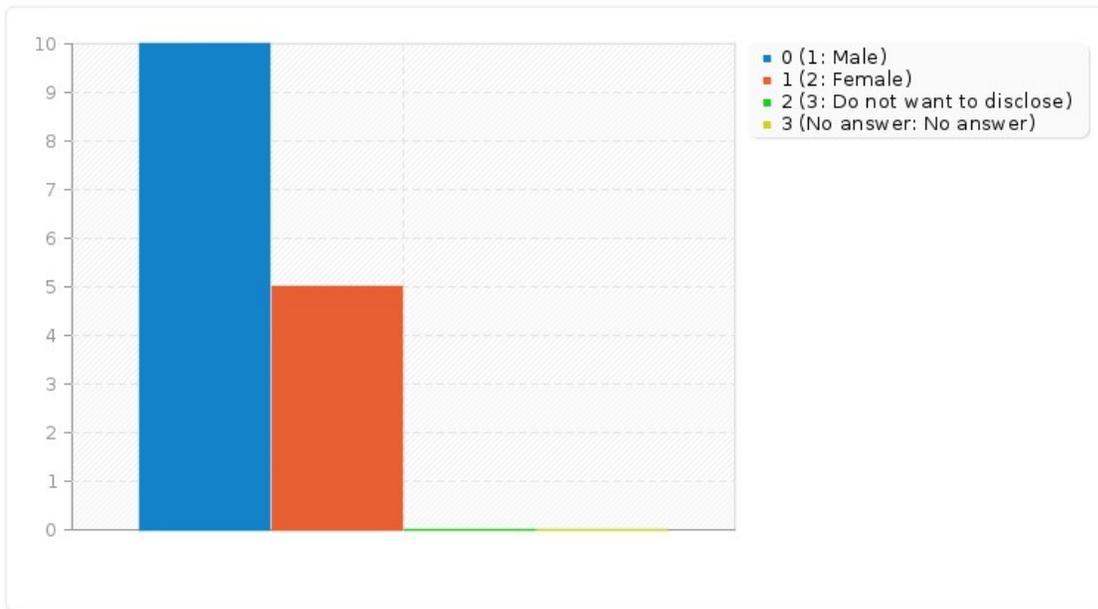
Survey 962912

Number of records in this query:	16
Total records in survey:	16
Percentage of total:	100.00%

### Summary for You1 Gender

Answer	Count	Percentage
Male (1)	10	66.67%
Female (2)	5	33.33%
Do not want to disclose (3)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

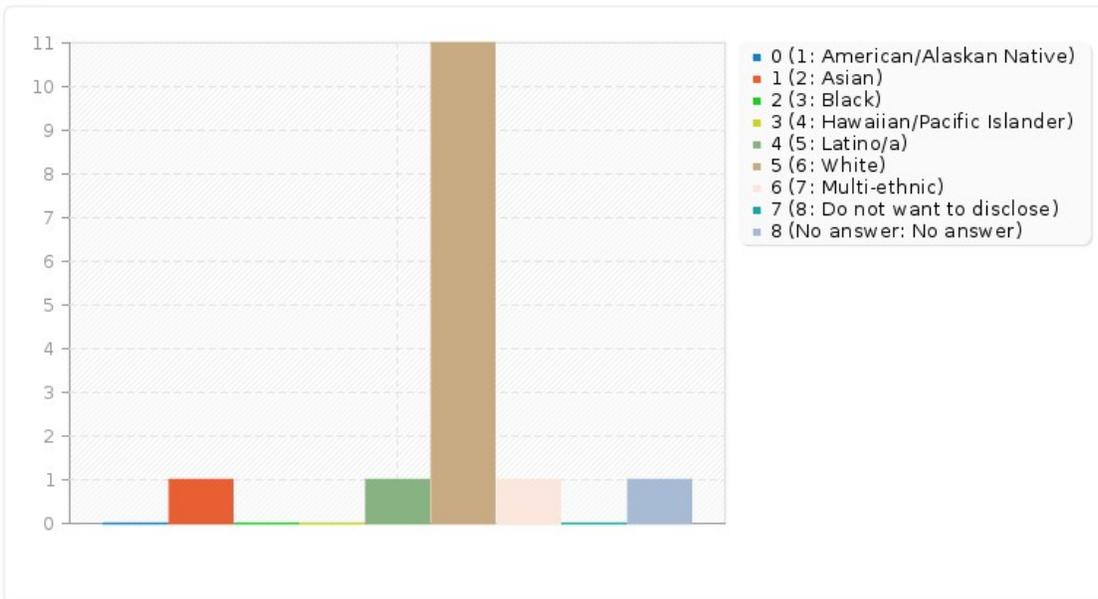
### Summary for You1 Gender



### Summary for You2 Ethnicity/race

Answer	Count	Percentage
American/Alaskan Native (1)	0	0.00%
Asian (2)	1	6.67%
Black (3)	0	0.00%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (4)	0	0.00%
Latino/a (5)	1	6.67%
White (6)	11	73.33%
Multi-ethnic (7)	1	6.67%
Do not want to disclose (8)	0	0.00%
No answer	1	6.67%

### Summary for You2 Ethnicity/race



### Summary for You3

What year did you graduate?

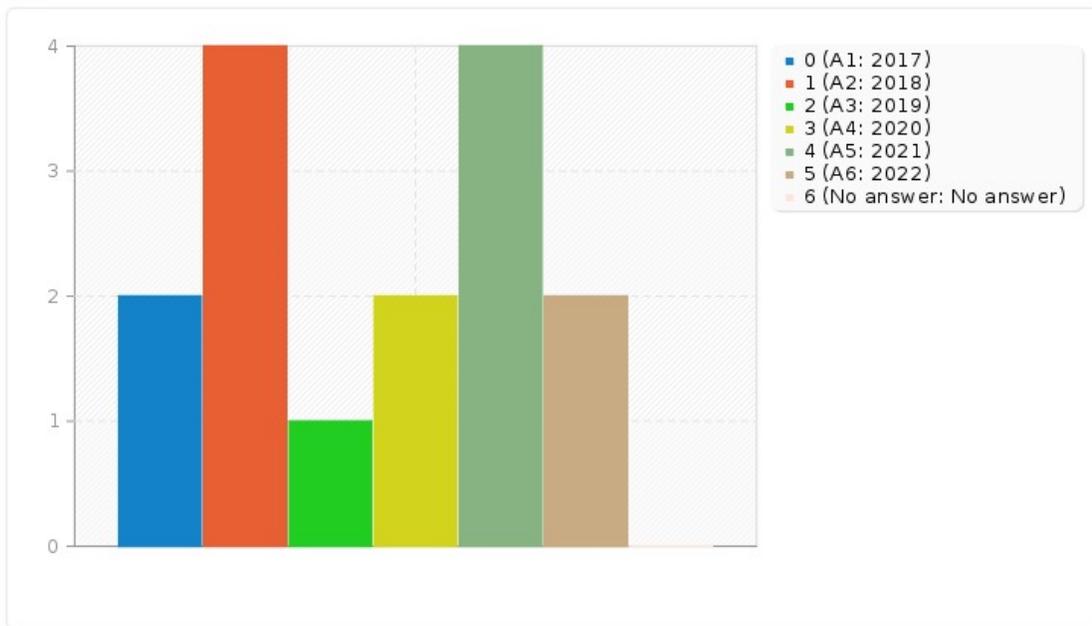
Answer	Count	Percentage
2017 (A1)	2	13.33%
2018 (A2)	4	26.67%
2019 (A3)	1	6.67%
2020 (A4)	2	13.33%
2021 (A5)	4	26.67%
2022 (A6)	2	13.33%
No	0	0.00%

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### Summary for You

What year did you graduate?

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**Summary for West1**  
Questions about your overall Westmont education  
Did you complete a second major or minor at Westmont?

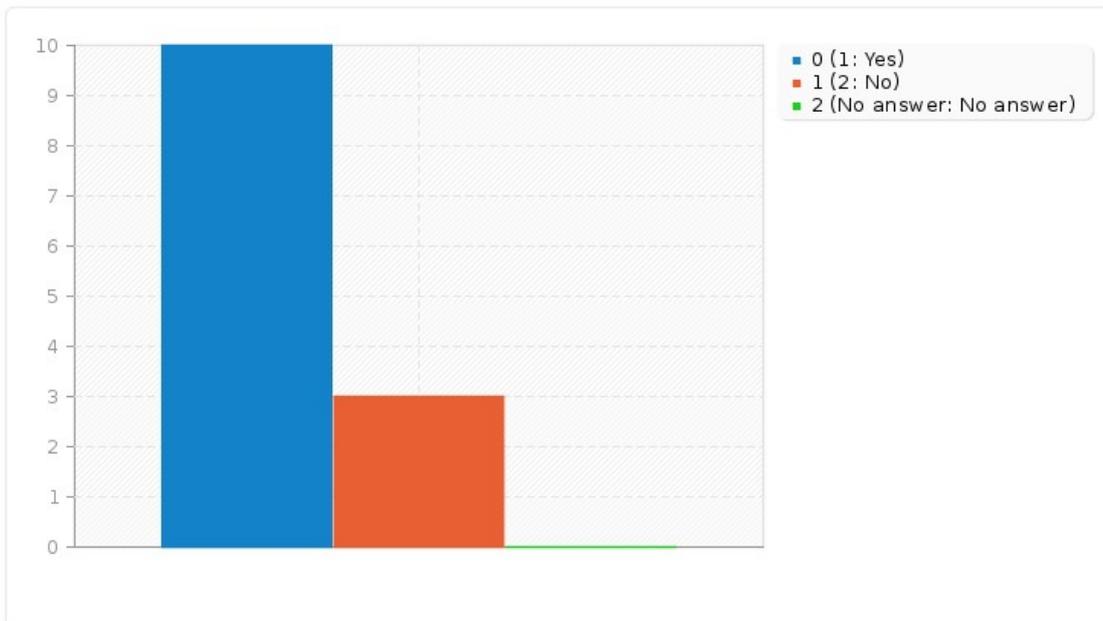
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Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (1)	10	76.92%
No (2)	3	23.08%
No answer	0	0.00%

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**Summary for West1**  
Questions about your overall Westmont education  
Did you complete a second major or minor at Westmont?

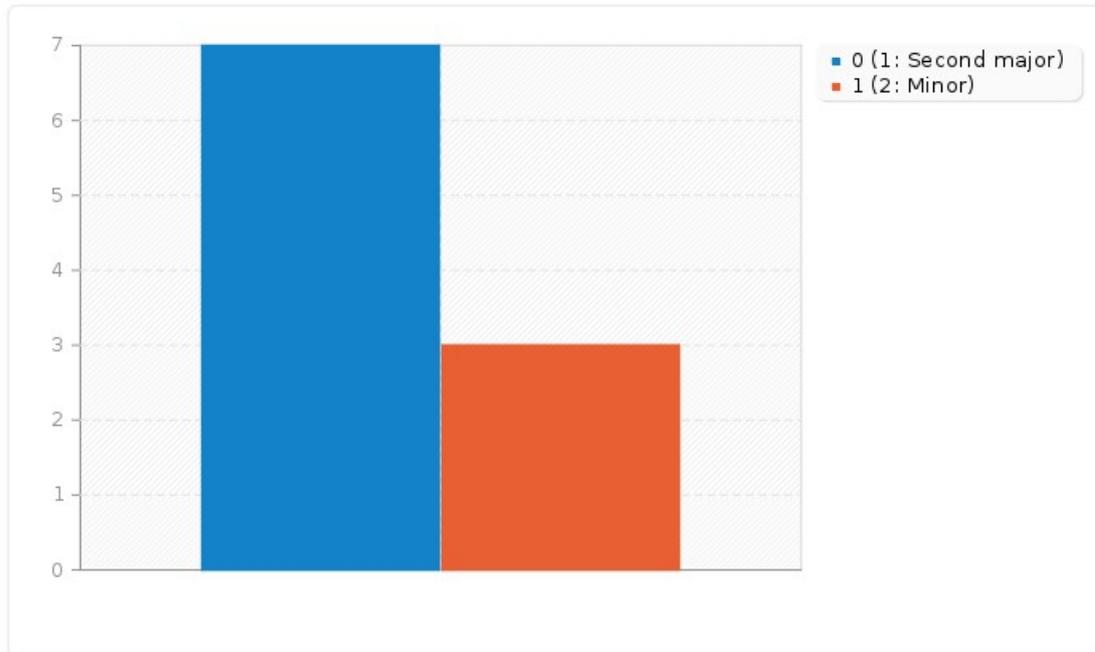
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**Summary for West1a**  
If yes, what was your second major or minor in?

<b>Second major</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>70.00%</b>
Minor	3	30.00%
<b>ID</b>	<b>Response</b>	
11	Economics & Business	
14	Sociology	
16	Political Science (International Security & Development track)	
19	Engineering Physics	
21	Art History	
23	Chemistry	
24	Engineering Physics	
10	English & Political Science	
12	business	
13	English	

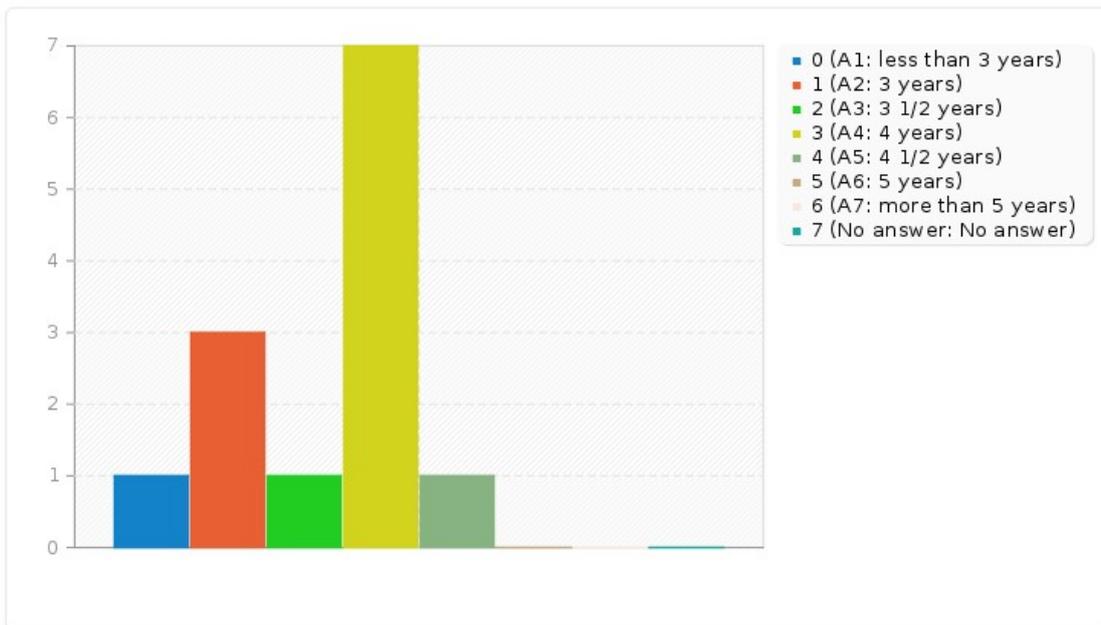
**Summary for West1a**  
If yes, what was your second major or minor in?



**Summary for West2**  
How many years did it take to complete your Westmont degree?

Answer	Count	Percentage
less than 3 years (A1)	1	7.69%
3 years (A2)	3	23.08%
3 1/2 years (A3)	1	7.69%
4 years (A4)	7	53.85%
4 1/2 years (A5)	1	7.69%
5 years (A6)	0	0.00%
more than 5 years (A7)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

**Summary for West2**  
How many years did it take to complete your Westmont degree?



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### Summary for West3

Have you pursued, or are you pursuing further degree(s) since completing your Westmont degree?

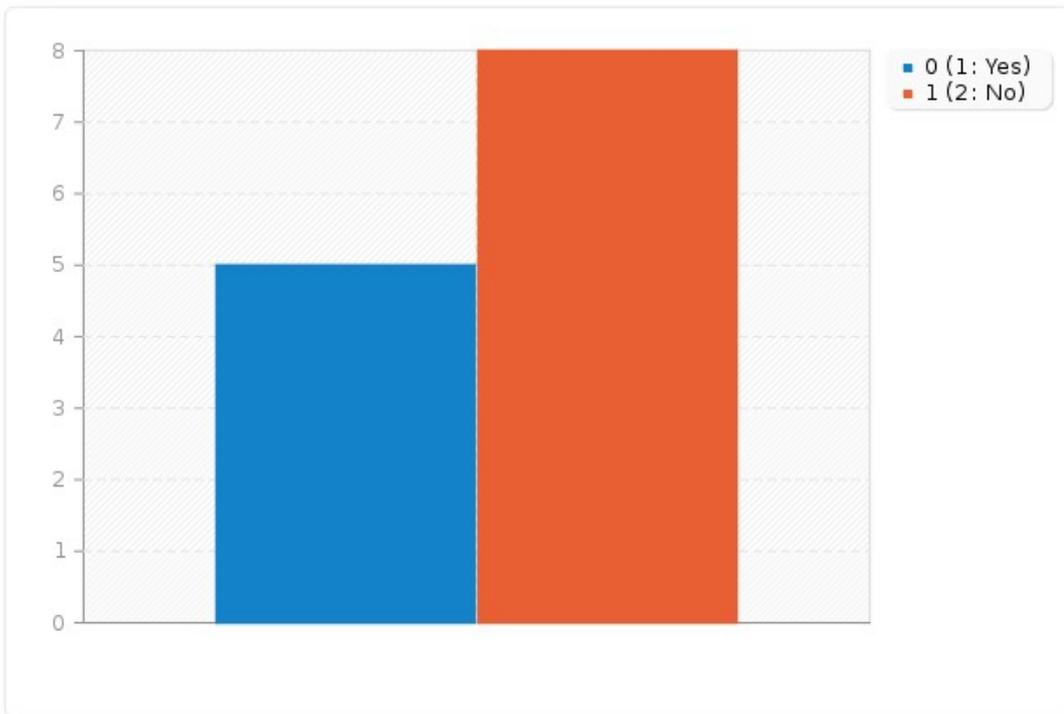
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Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (1)	5	38.46%
No (2)	8	61.54%

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### Summary for West3

Have you pursued, or are you pursuing further degree(s) since completing your Westmont degree?

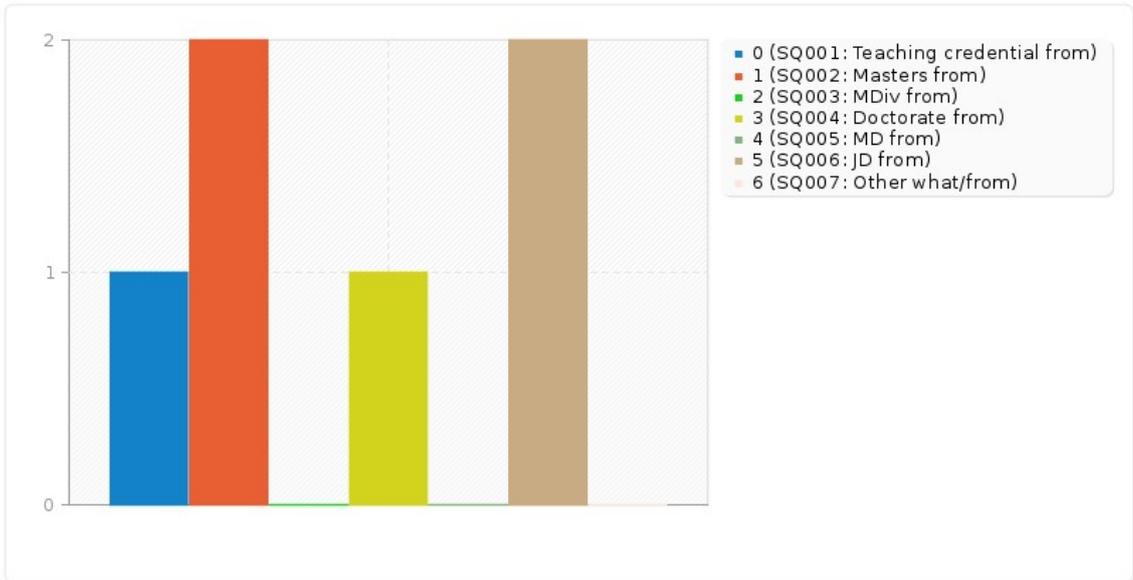


**Summary for West3a**  
For each, please tell us from what school/university?

Teaching credential from	1	20.00%
Masters from	2	40.00%
MDiv from	0	0.00%
Doctorate from	1	20.00%
MD from	0	0.00%
JD from	2	40.00%
Other what/from	0	0.00%

ID	Response
13	Cal State LA
16	Princeton Theological Seminary
18	University of Oxford
16	Boston University School of Theology
10	UCLA School of Law
14	UC Hastings

**Summary for West3a**  
For each, please tell us from what school/university?



### Summary for West3b

When did you, or when do you anticipate, receiving your degree?

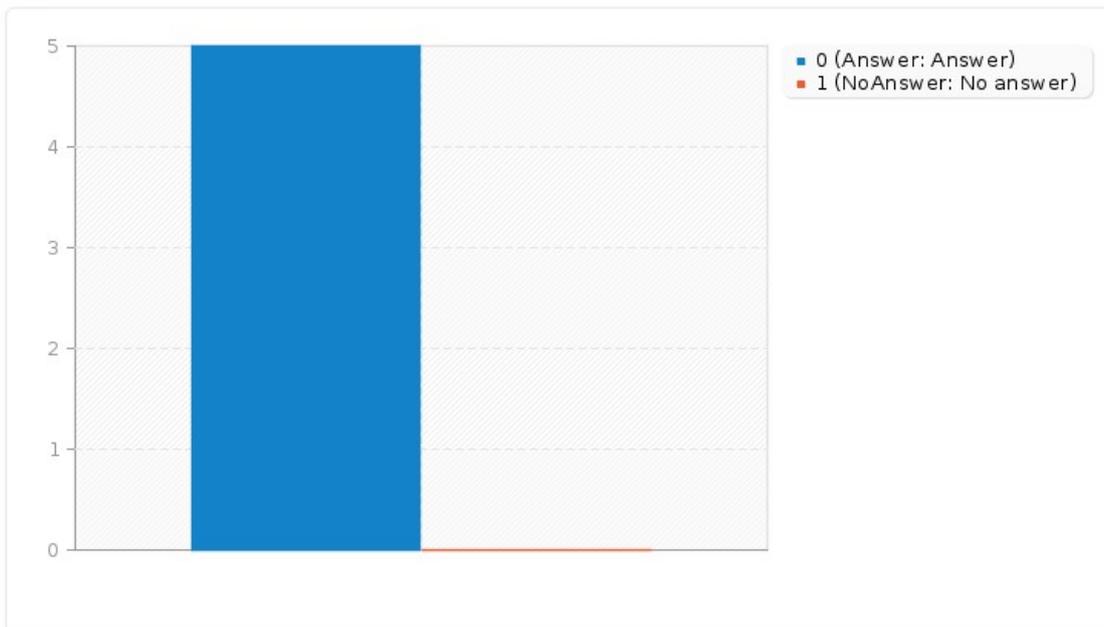
Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	5	100.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

ID	Response
10	Received May 2020
13	2025/2026
14	2021
16	MA in Theological Studies, May 2022; PhD in Mission History, expected May 2027.
18	2019

### Summary for West3b

When did you, or when do you anticipate, receiving your degree?



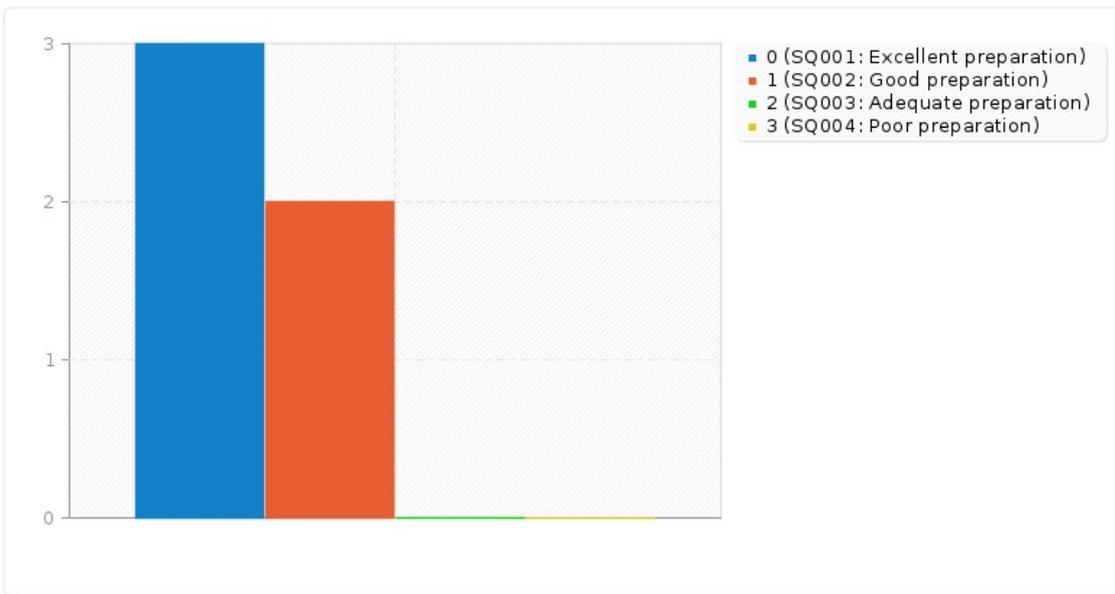
### Summary for West3c

If you pursued further education, how well did Westmont prepare you?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Excellent preparation (SQ001)	3	60.00%
Good preparation (SQ002)	2	40.00%
Adequate preparation (SQ003)	0	0.00%
Poor preparation (SQ004)	0	0.00%

### Summary for West3c

If you pursued further education, how well did Westmont prepare you?



## Summary for West4

### What was your first job out of college?

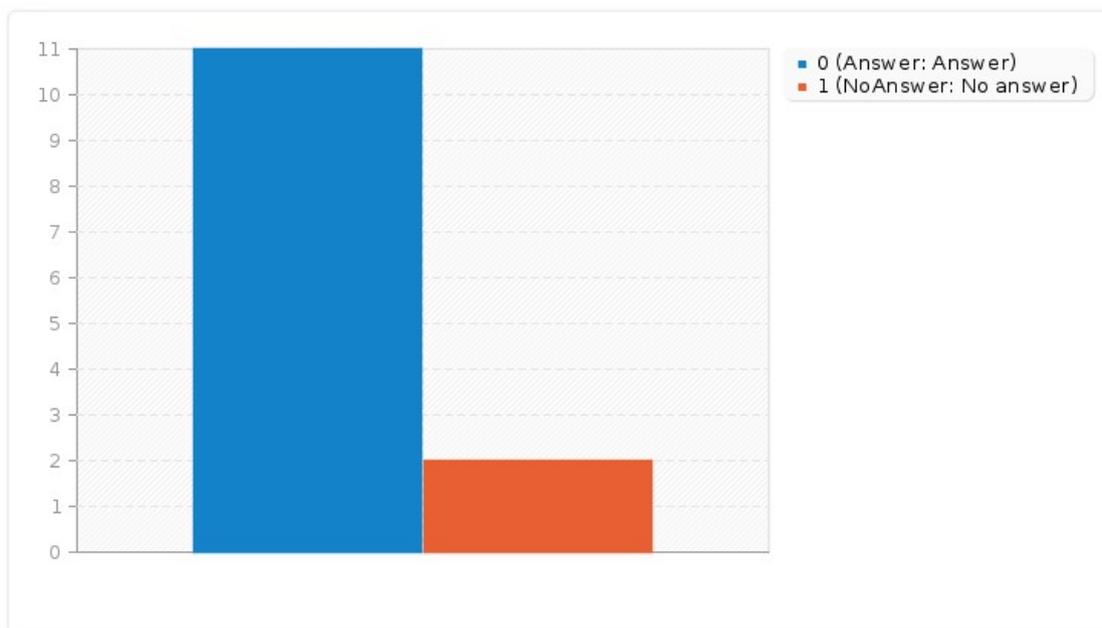
Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	11	84.62%
No answer	2	15.38%

ID	Response
11	Technical Account Manager
10	I proceeded straight to law school; following that, I had a fellowship position providing eviction defense assistance to tenants through a legal aid foundation.
12	Intern at StoryBrand Marketing in Nashville.
13	High School Instructional Aide
16	Box office associate at Music Academy of the West.
17	s
19	Tennis Coach
20	I was an Amazon Assoicate in Camarillo for a year while I obtained a GIS and Geospatial certificate from UCLA Extension in Los Angeles. I then worked for the City of Maple Grove Public Works in Minnesota as a seasonal GIS Technician. I still am continuing to look for a fulltime job in this area.
21	Receptionist & Administrator at LinkedIn
23	Biology Lab Coordinator at Westmont College
24	Wholesale warehouse lead

## Summary for West4

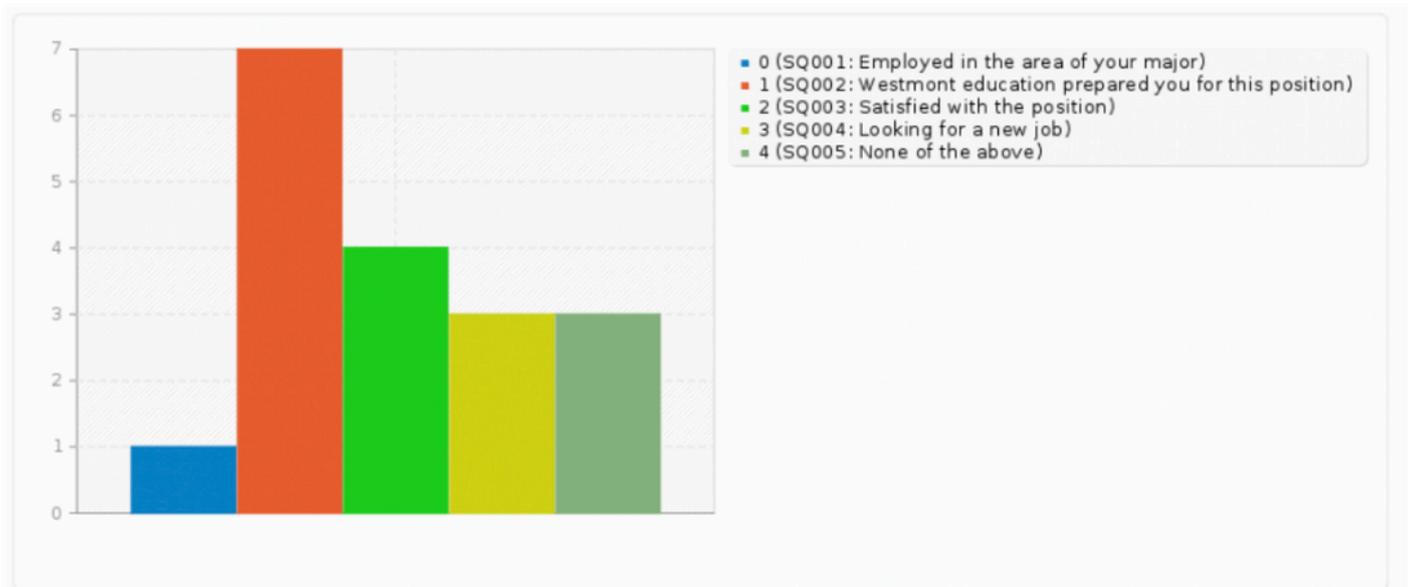
### What was your first job out of college?



Summary for West5  
Related to your first job after college

Answer	Count	Percentage
Employed in the area of your major (SQ001)	1	7.69%
Westmont education prepared you for this position (SQ002)	7	53.85%
Satisfied with the position (SQ003)	4	30.77%
Looking for a new job (SQ004)	3	23.08%
None of the above (SQ005)	3	23.08%

Summary for West5  
Related to your first job after college



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**Summary for West6**  
 How long did it take you after graduation (or graduate school) to find your first professional job?

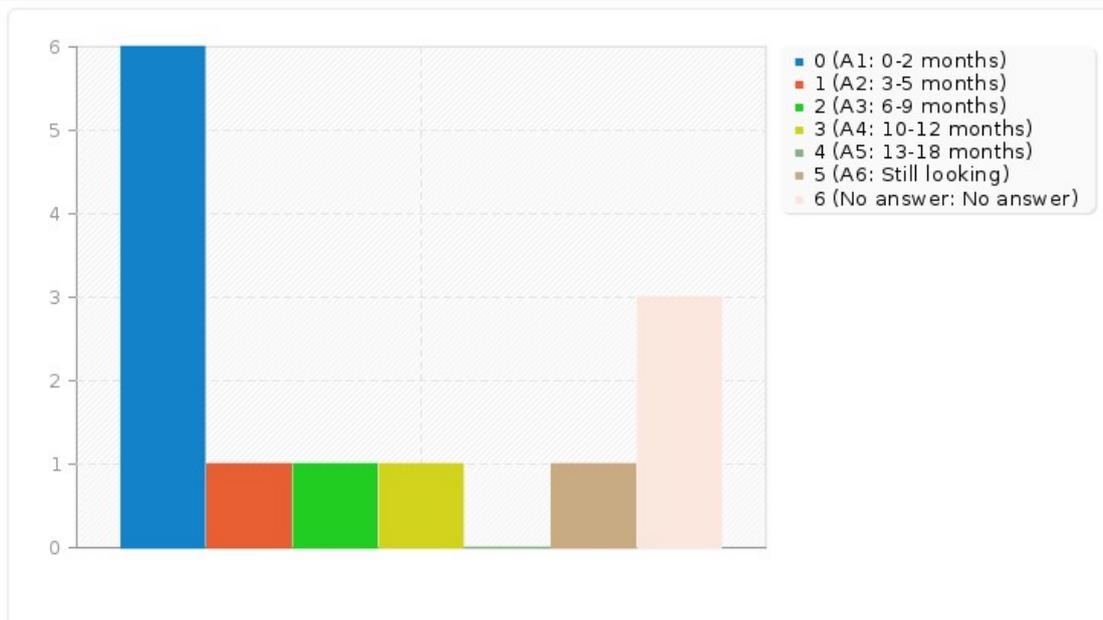
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Answer	Count	Percentage
0-2 months (A1)	6	46.15%
3-5 months (A2)	1	7.69%
6-9 months (A3)	1	7.69%
10-12 months (A4)	1	7.69%
13-18 months (A5)	0	0.00%
Still looking (A6)	1	7.69%
No answer	3	23.08%

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**Summary for West6**  
 How long did it take you after graduation (or graduate school) to find your first professional job?

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## Summary for West7

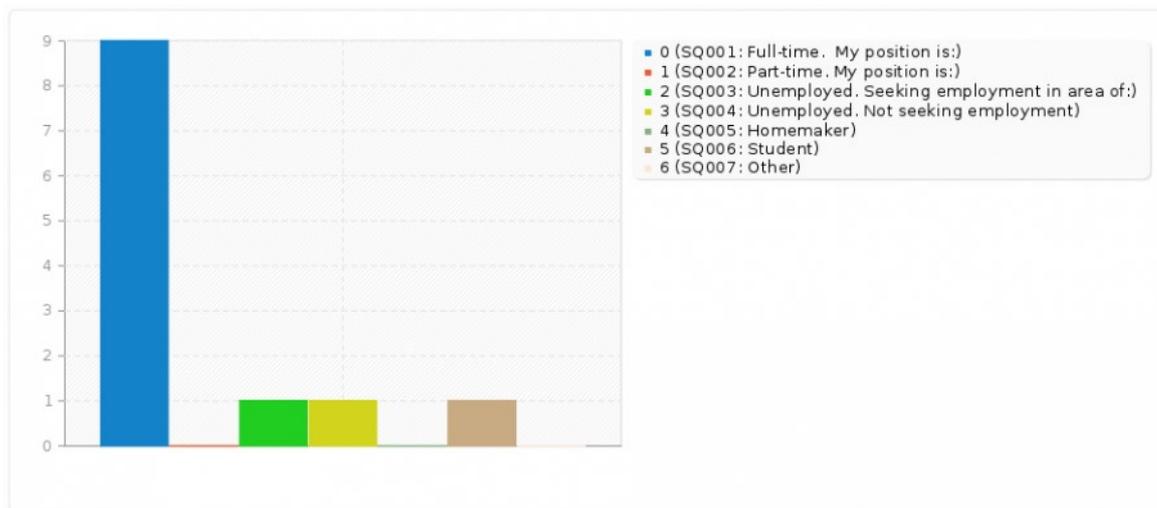
### What is your current employment status?

<b>Full-time. My position is:</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>69.23%</b>
Part-time. My position is:	0	0.00%
Unemployed. Seeking employment in area of:	1	7.69%
Unemployed. Not seeking employment	1	7.69%
Homemaker	0	0.00%
Student	1	7.69%
Other	0	0.00%

ID	Response
11	Product Instructor
10	Enforcement Analyst with the California Coastal Commission
13	High School Instructional Aide
14	Attorney
18	Software Engineer
19	Head Tennis Coach
21	Marketing Assistant
23	Biology Lab Coordinator at Westmont College
24	Systems Engineer
20	GIS and Geospatial Technology
12	I am a volunteer at a Monastic gathering place in France.
16	In my doctoral program now.

## Summary for West7

### What is your current employment status?



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### Summary for West8

How important have the Liberal Arts elements (General Education, Writing, Critical Thinking) of your Westmont education been to your career?

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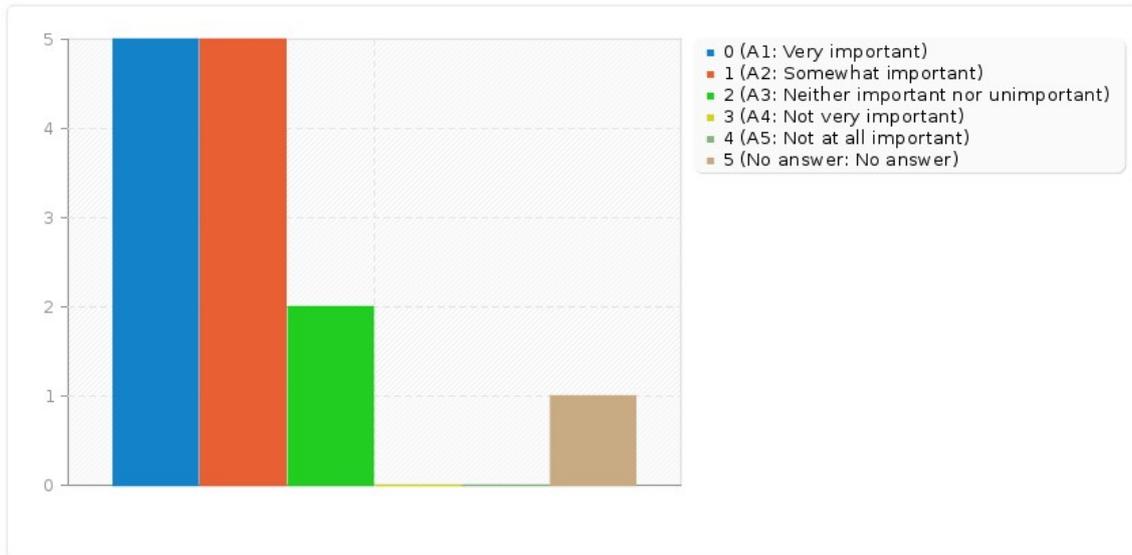
Answer	Count	Percentage
Very important (A1)	5	38.46%
Somewhat important (A2)	5	38.46%
Neither important nor unimportant (A3)	2	15.38%
Not very important (A4)	0	0.00%
Not at all important (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	1	7.69%

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### Summary for West8

How important have the Liberal Arts elements (General Education, Writing, Critical Thinking) of your Westmont education been to your career?

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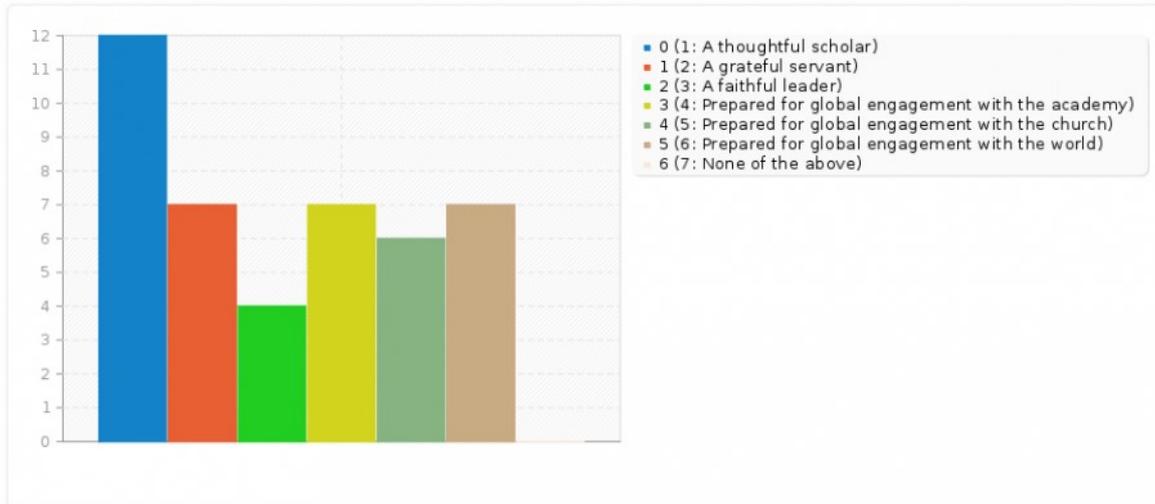
### Summary for West9

The College mission statement is: Westmont College is an undergraduate, residential, Christian, liberal arts community serving God’s kingdom by cultivating thoughtful scholars, grateful servants and faithful leaders for global engagement with the academy, church and world. When you graduated from Westmont, would you have described yourself as (mark all that apply)

Answer	Count	Percentage
A thoughtful scholar (1)	12	92.31%
A grateful servant (2)	7	53.85%
A faithful leader (3)	4	30.77%
Prepared for global engagement with the academy (4)	7	53.85%
Prepared for global engagement with the church (5)	6	46.15%
Prepared for global engagement with the world (6)	7	53.85%
None of the above (7)	0	0.00%

### Summary for West9

The College mission statement is: Westmont College is an undergraduate, residential, Christian, liberal arts community serving God’s kingdom by cultivating thoughtful scholars, grateful servants and faithful leaders for global engagement with the academy, church and world. When you graduated from Westmont, would you have described yourself as (mark all that apply)



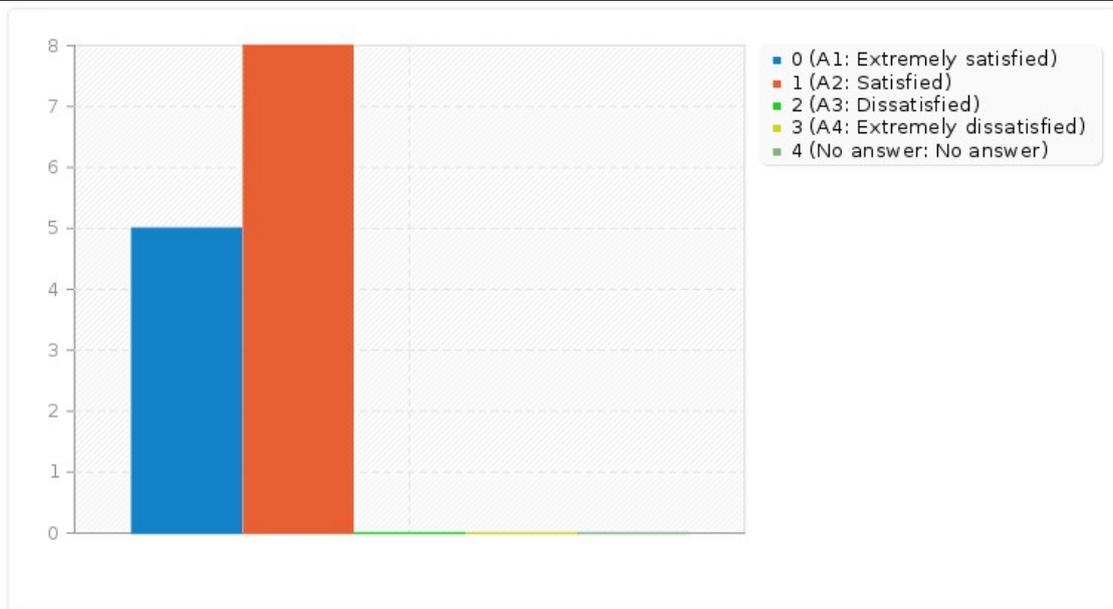
### Summary for West10

Overall, how satisfied were you with the education you received at Westmont?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Extremely satisfied (A1)	5	38.46%
Satisfied (A2)	8	61.54%
Dissatisfied (A3)	0	0.00%
Extremely dissatisfied (A4)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

### Summary for West10

Overall, how satisfied were you with the education you received at Westmont?



### Summary for Phill

Questions specific to your experience in the Philosophy Department    How effective was the teaching in the Philosophy Department overall?

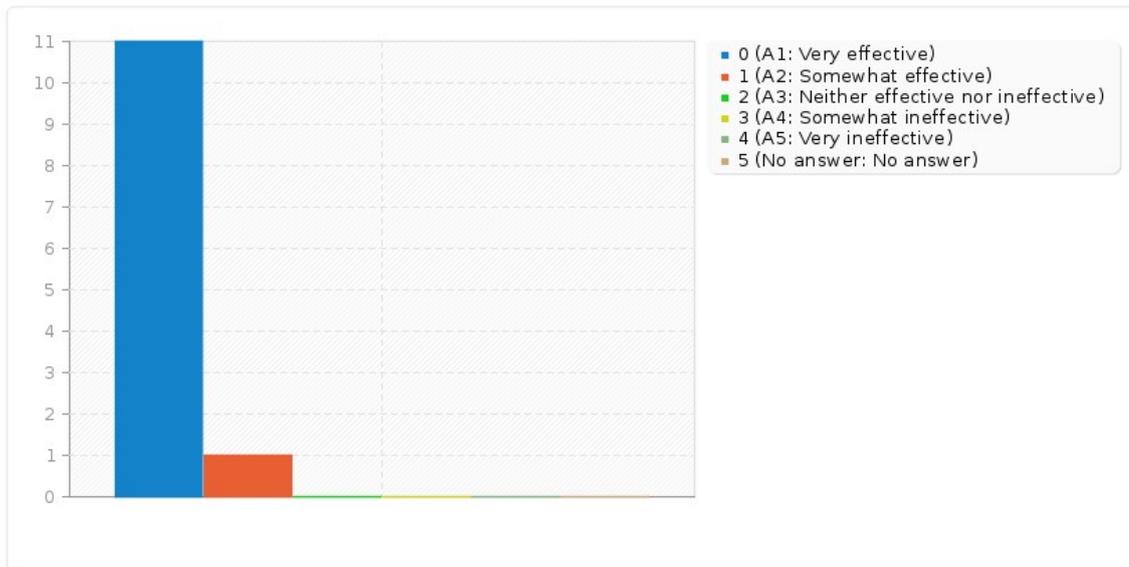
Answer	Count	Percentage
Very effective (A1)	11	91.67%
Somewhat effective (A2)	1	8.33%
Neither effective nor ineffective (A3)	0	0.00%
Somewhat ineffective (A4)	0	0.00%
Very ineffective (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

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## Summary for Phil

Questions specific to your experience in the Philosophy Department    How effective was the teaching in the Philosophy Department overall?

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## Summary for Phil2

How would you say your Westmont experience in the Philosophy Department prepared you for your life, relative to your peers with whom you interact in your life today?

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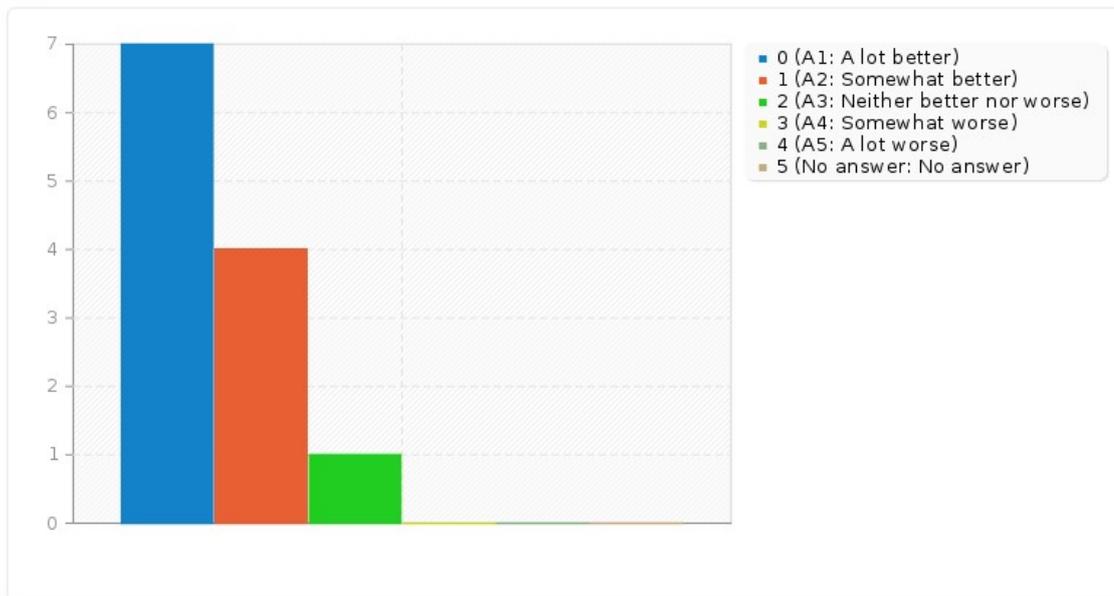
Answer	Count	Percentage
A lot better (A1)	7	58.33%
Somewhat better (A2)	4	33.33%
Neither better nor worse (A3)	1	8.33%
Somewhat worse (A4)	0	0.00%
A lot worse (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

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## Summary for Phil2

How would you say your Westmont experience in the Philosophy Department prepared you for your life, relative to your peers with whom you interact in your life today?

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### Summary for Phil3

The following set of questions ask you to consider the learning outcomes for the philosophy major, how successfully you achieved these outcomes, and how important they are for your life. Knowledge Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of important philosophical positions, concepts, arguments, and themes. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve this outcome?

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Answer	Count	Percentage
To a very high degree (A1)	5	41.67%
To a somewhat high degree (A2)	7	58.33%
To neither a high nor low degree (A3)	0	0.00%
To a somewhat low degree (A4)	0	0.00%
To a very low degree (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

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### Summary for Phil3

The following set of questions ask you to consider the learning outcomes for the philosophy major, how successfully you achieved these outcomes, and how important they are for your life. Knowledge Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of important philosophical positions, concepts, arguments, and themes. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve this outcome?

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### Summary for Phil4

Knowledge Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of important philosophical positions, concepts, arguments, and themes. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont?

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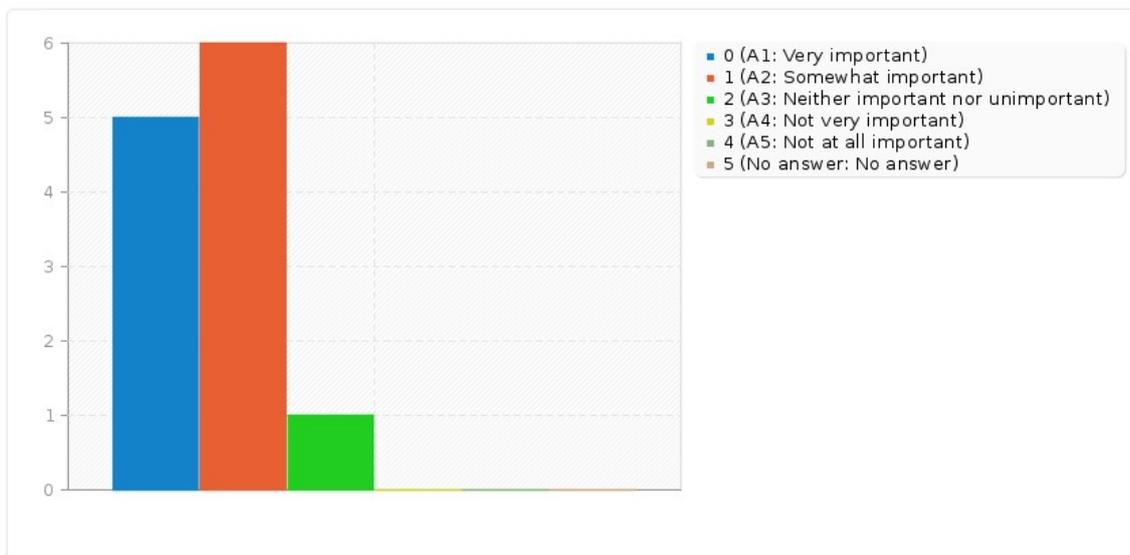
Answer	Count	Percentage
Very important (A1)	5	41.67%
Somewhat important (A2)	6	50.00%
Neither important nor unimportant (A3)	1	8.33%
Not very important (A4)	0	0.00%
Not at all important (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

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### Summary for Phil4

Knowledge Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of important philosophical positions, concepts, arguments, and themes. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont?

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### Summary for Phil5

Skills Learning Outcome: Students will be able to construct structurally solid arguments and to critique faulty ones appropriately. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve this outcome?

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Answer	Count	Percentage
To a very high degree (A1)	9	75.00%
To a somewhat high degree (A2)	3	25.00%
To neither a high nor low degree (A3)	0	0.00%
To a somewhat low degree (A4)	0	0.00%
To a very low degree (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

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### Summary for Phil5

Skills Learning Outcome: Students will be able to construct structurally solid arguments and to critique faulty ones appropriately. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve this outcome?

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### Summary for Phil6

Skills Learning Outcome: Students will be able to construct structurally solid arguments and to critique faulty ones appropriately. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont?

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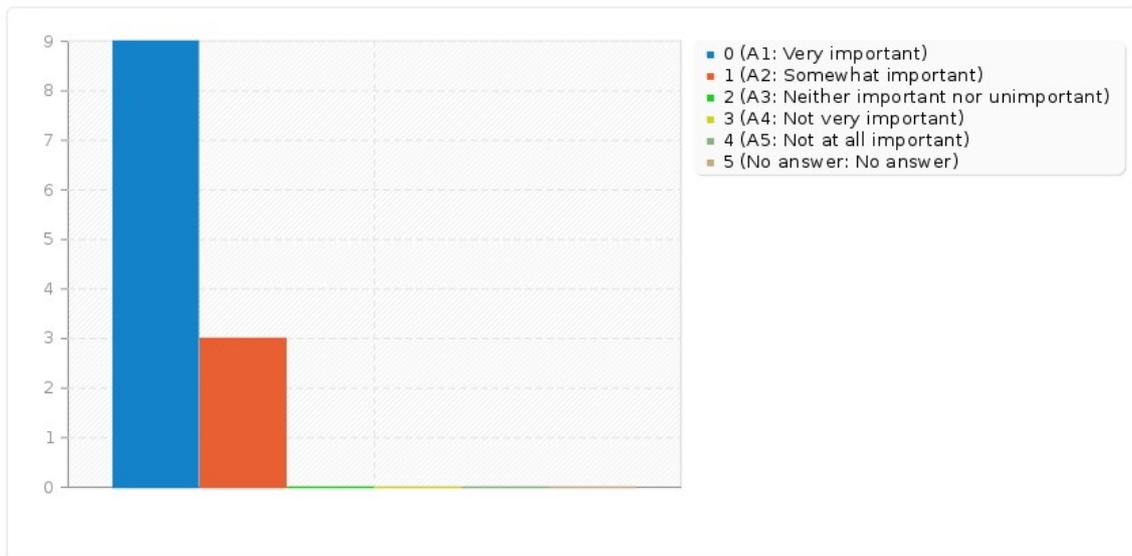
Answer	Count	Percentage
Very important (A1)	9	75.00%
Somewhat important (A2)	3	25.00%
Neither important nor unimportant (A3)	0	0.00%
Not very important (A4)	0	0.00%
Not at all important (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

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### Summary for Phil6

Skills Learning Outcome: Students will be able to construct structurally solid arguments and to critique faulty ones appropriately. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont?

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### Summary for Phil7

Virtues Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate both enthusiasm for rational inquiry and awareness of the limits of rational inquiry. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve this outcome?

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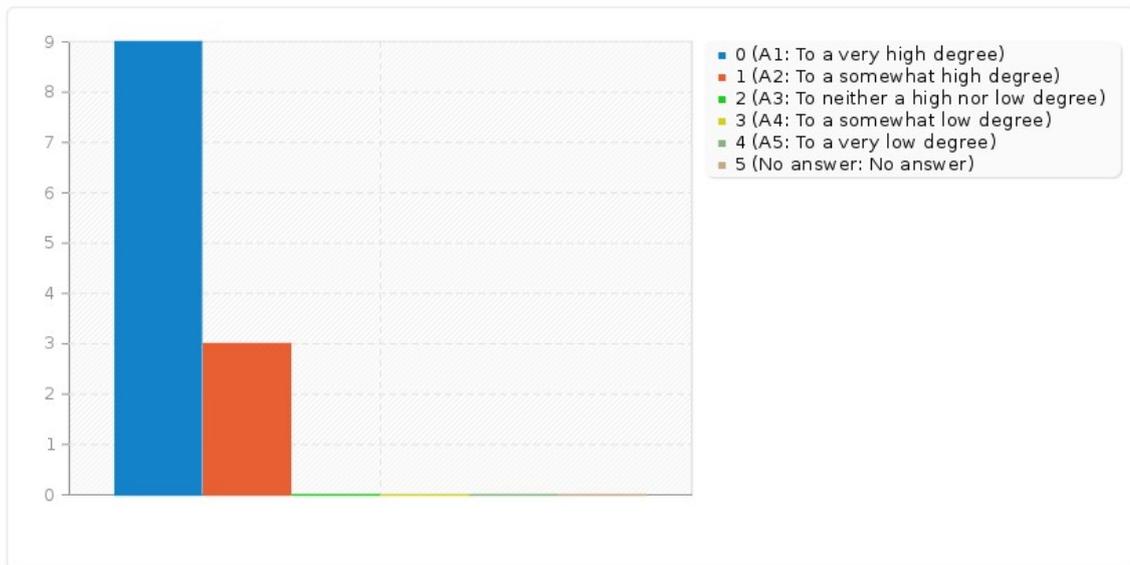
Answer	Count	Percentage
To a very high degree (A1)	9	75.00%
To a somewhat high degree (A2)	3	25.00%
To neither a high nor low degree (A3)	0	0.00%
To a somewhat low degree (A4)	0	0.00%
To a very low degree (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

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### Summary for Phil7

Virtues Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate both enthusiasm for rational inquiry and awareness of the limits of rational inquiry. To what degree did your Westmont philosophy education enable you to achieve this outcome?

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### Summary for Phil8

Virtues Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate both enthusiasm for rational inquiry and awareness of the limits of rational inquiry. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont?

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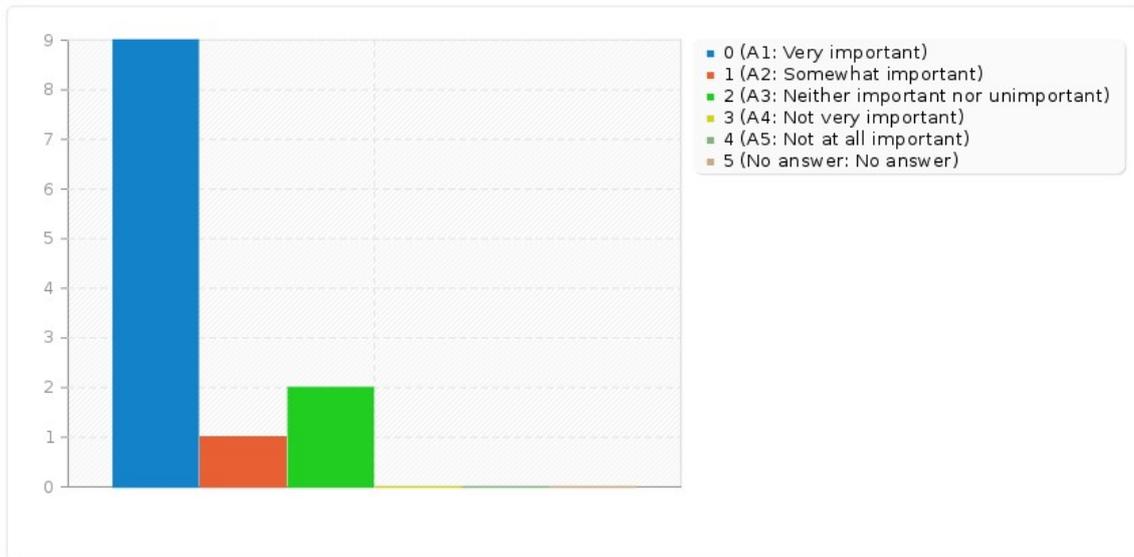
Answer	Count	Percentage
Very important (A1)	9	75.00%
Somewhat important (A2)	1	8.33%
Neither important nor unimportant (A3)	2	16.67%
Not very important (A4)	0	0.00%
Not at all important (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

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### Summary for Phil8

Virtues Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate both enthusiasm for rational inquiry and awareness of the limits of rational inquiry. How important is this outcome for your life after Westmont?

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## Summary for Phil9

How did your study of philosophy at Westmont affect your attitude to the Christian faith?

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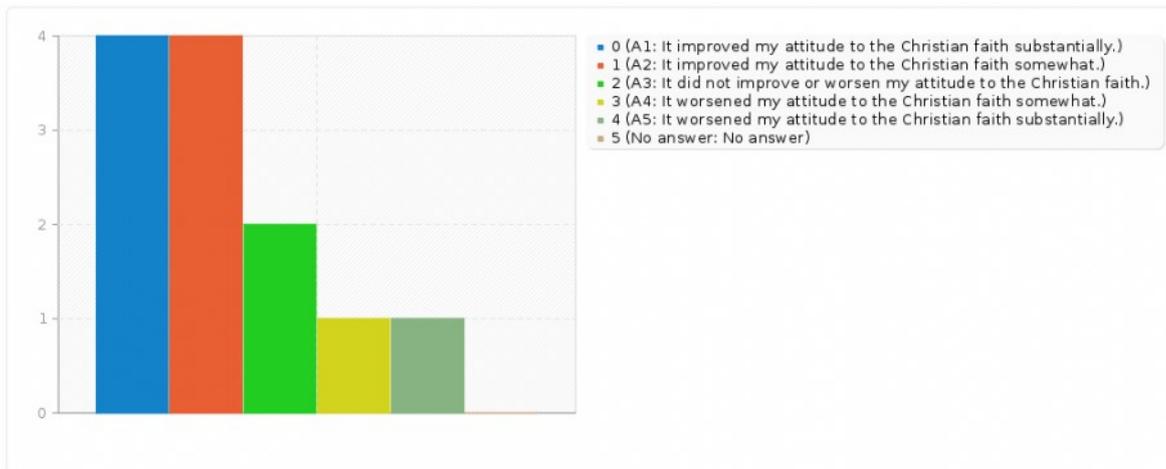
Answer	Count	Percentage
It improved my attitude to the Christian faith substantially. (A1)	4	33.33%
It improved my attitude to the Christian faith somewhat. (A2)	4	33.33%
It did not improve or worsen my attitude to the Christian faith. (A3)	2	16.67%
It worsened my attitude to the Christian faith somewhat. (A4)	1	8.33%
It worsened my attitude to the Christian faith substantially. (A5)	1	8.33%
No answer	0	0.00%

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## Summary for Phil9

How did your study of philosophy at Westmont affect your attitude to the Christian faith?

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## Summary for Phil10

What was most valuable to you about your learning in the Philosophy Department?

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Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	8	66.67%
No answer	4	33.33%

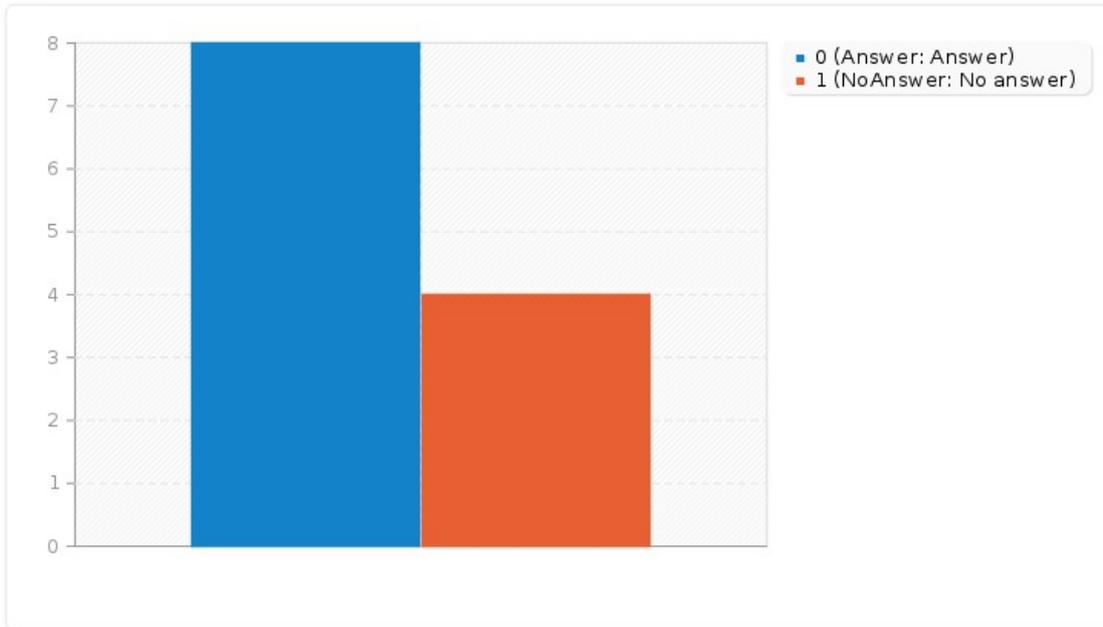
ID	Response
10	Having the opportunity to engage with fundamental existential questions, and refine my ability to evaluate and argue about those questions - and concepts more generally - in a more structured, scrutinizing manner.
12	Despite the discovery of our astounding intellectual achievements, I found that I had also finally encountered the limits of man, and learned that they are not only good, but freeing. They taught me to wonder at the beautiful mystery of what we cannot understand and will never truly know, that only in acknowledging the limits of reason (and the futility of chasing total certainty): only in becoming an "ordinary mystic," may I ever become wise. I guess Socrates truly was the greatest of us all.
13	The freedom to ask questions and the ability to be comfortable in the uncomfortable when I didn't have answers. There was a lot of beauty, for me, in the nuances of everything we learned about.
16	Primarily three or four lessons. First, I learned how to construct logically valid / cogent arguments and to identify faulty arguments, a lesson which I still use today. Second, it provided me with a familiarity of various philosophical arguments, positions, and currents with which I still engage, albeit in a different field (mostly history, but also theology). Third, I learned (outside of the classroom but in the context of Westmont & philosophy) the limits of rationality, particularly in regards to the role of a thinker's past experiences in deeply shaping if not determining whether or not she deems certain premises to be true or at least likely when evaluating valid arguments. Lastly and relatedly, I learned that some of the most impactful learning happens outside the formal classroom, or at least apart from lecture, in the course of discussion with one's peers.
19	The program gave me the opportunity to weigh particular ideas or worldviews against others. Also, it provided an environment for improving my logical reasoning skills.
20	It taught me to think logically, critically and objectively and ask meaningful questions.
21	I appreciated most the effort and involvement of professors in their classes - they very much were passionate and cared about what they were teaching, which encouraged my own passion for the subject.
24	The ability to bring a rational perspective on an issue by means of incorporating values of multiple different viewpoints and uniting their benefits.

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## Summary for Phil10

What was most valuable to you about your learning in the Philosophy Department?

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### Summary for Phil11

Do you think Philosophy Senior Seminar should be more practicum-oriented and lifestyle-oriented (as opposed to being primarily theoretically-oriented and academically-oriented)?

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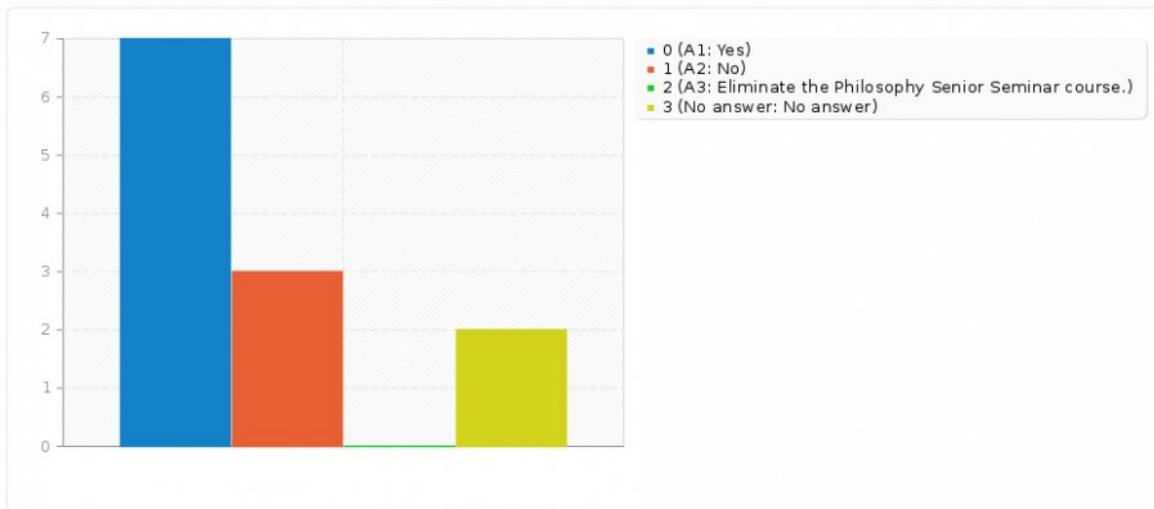
Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (A1)	7	58.33%
No (A2)	3	25.00%
Eliminate the Philosophy Senior Seminar course. (A3)	0	0.00%
No answer	2	16.67%

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### Summary for Phil11

Do you think Philosophy Senior Seminar should be more practicum-oriented and lifestyle-oriented (as opposed to being primarily theoretically-oriented and academically-oriented)?

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## Summary for Phil12

### What improvements would you suggest for the philosophy program?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	8	66.67%
No answer	4	33.33%

ID	Response
10	More opportunities to comparatively engage with schools of thought which developed around the globe, though I recognize that can be difficult to do given a finite number of class hours available and a broad field of material to cover.
12	I loved the philosophy program. I loved my professors, my peers, and the ways they brought me into the rich company of the great minds of history. I will always be grateful for the content of what I learned, but even more than that, I will forever treasure the way we were taught to learn, and to love learning. It is with great pleasure that I can now look at my four years at Westmont not, in hindsight, as the last four years of my "studenthood," but rather more properly the first four of many years to come. The only reason I answered "yes" to the last question is not because I think the theoretical-orientation of the Senior Seminar was bad (in fact, it was as rich an enlightening a class as any I have taken), but rather because I think we could profit greatly from a mix of that good theoretical knowledge with advice for its practical instantiation, for it seems to me that though orthopraxy surely must come from orthodoxy, the latter is meaningless without its fulfillment in the former. And so yes, you have given us the gift of orthodoxy from which we might hopefully build our lives hereafter, but I wish that we had also received just a little more of a synthetic send-off in our final year. Please know, however, that this wish comes not from the belief that you need to start practicing what you preach, but rather from my conviction that you already have so much to share with us from your experience of practicing exactly what you preach! I just want to make sure that you feel the freedom to mentor us even as you teach us; I admit that the difference may be subtle and sometimes difficult to ballance in the classroom, but I think it is an important one to consider nonetheless. And do not let your admirable humility stop you from offering whatever "subjective" truth you may have learned! It was you, after all, who taught me that the objective must be discovered from the perspective of the subjective, and that often it is the subjective which first suggests the objective rather than vice versa. But I should get off my philosophical high horse and digress; I suspect most of you have already considered what I am saying in far greater depth than I have. What I mostly want to impress upon whoever reads this, after all, is that above all else I am unutterably thankful for my time as a student at Westmont, and whatever improvements may or may not be made, you have left me with the deep love of wisdom in my heart, and with the accompanying desire to embody whatever sophia I may have gained with phronesis in the years to come. I cannot think of a greater gift to receive from your alma mater. May our philosophy department continue to cultivate knowledge of the knowable, but only in light of its wonder at the unknowable. Thanks for all you already do towards that end. Much love
13	Give your students more atheist philosophers alongside the Christian ones
14	An increase to the diversity of thought and demographics of the scholars studied.
16	Given the importance role of experience in evaluating and constructing arguments, I think the department should create the opportunities for students to encounter Christ personally and develop / practice faith. Additionally, arrogance and self-conceit can be pretty rampant in the academy, and I think perhaps among young philosophy students (at least it was in me!), and so creating opportunities to practice humility by learning from those with whom we disagree or through practical service.  I thought that Westmont's philosophy program did me an invaluable service by providing me a theoretical foundation by offering the Metaphysics, Ethics, and Epistemology courses, as well as the historical overviews, so I would say those ought to be kept as required or encouraged. Before I graduated, the curriculum had changed so that I didn't have to take as many historical philosophy courses, which I now partly wish I had taken, although it would have precluded my double major, so I'm not sure whether I would say to make historical overviews required, but I would definitely encourage them.  Beyond the basics mentioned above, I would try to help guide people into the branch of

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philosophy about which they're most passionate, but I thought that you did that for me. I remember feeling like I loved the practicality / embodiedness of ancient Greek philosophy– they were lifestyles as much as rational belief systems– and I would had loved to think about how to construct a practical / embodied philosophy in an analogous way for contemporary life. I didn't think that the philosophy department made the connexion between theory and practicality that I was looking for.

19 The day-to-day assignments should be more rigorous. Students should be required to demonstrate more understanding of the primary sources. This can then be balanced with students giving personal commentary/opinion on what they have read.

21 I would have appreciated a class focusing on non-western philosophy. I feel like I learned nothing about it except for vague generalities.

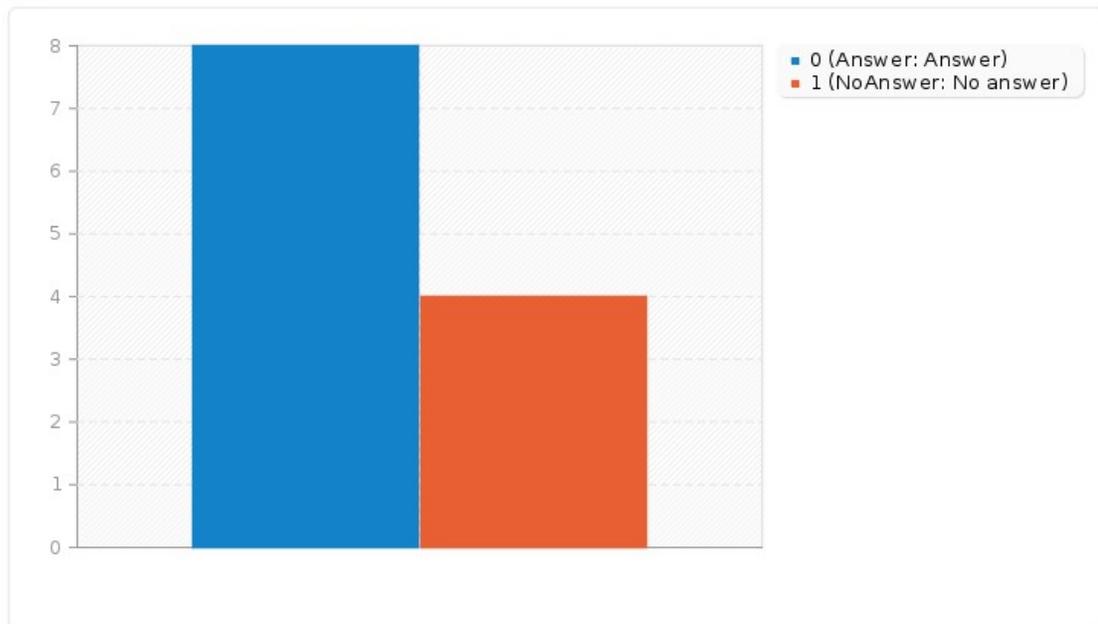
24 Establishing and supporting more concrete outcome goals that incorporate the skills that we end up practicing in the philosophy department. Specifically, I know my writing skills improved dramatically throughout the major, but perhaps it could have been even better if the clarity of our writing was critiqued more than it was. Essays were our main form of examination, and I believe that a more robust feedback/revision system could heighten our success throughout the major.

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## Summary for Phil12

What improvements would you suggest for the philosophy program?

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### Summary for Phil13

If a family member, friend, or business acquaintance asked you to recommend an educational institution, how likely would you recommend Westmont?

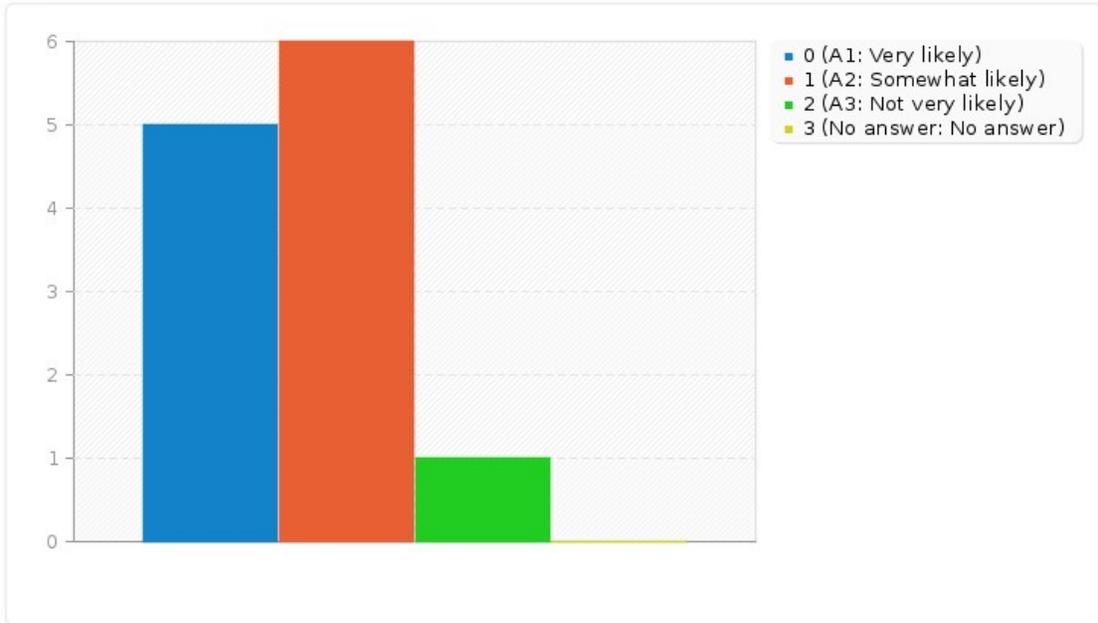
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Answer	Count	Percentage
Very likely (A1)	5	41.67%
Somewhat likely (A2)	6	50.00%
Not very likely (A3)	1	8.33%
No answer	0	0.00%

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### Summary for Phil13

If a family member, friend, or business acquaintance asked you to recommend an educational institution, how likely would you recommend Westmont?



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### Summary for Phil13a

A follow-up question for those who said “not very likely”: Why would you hesitate to recommend Westmont?

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Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	1	100.00%
No answer	0	0.00%

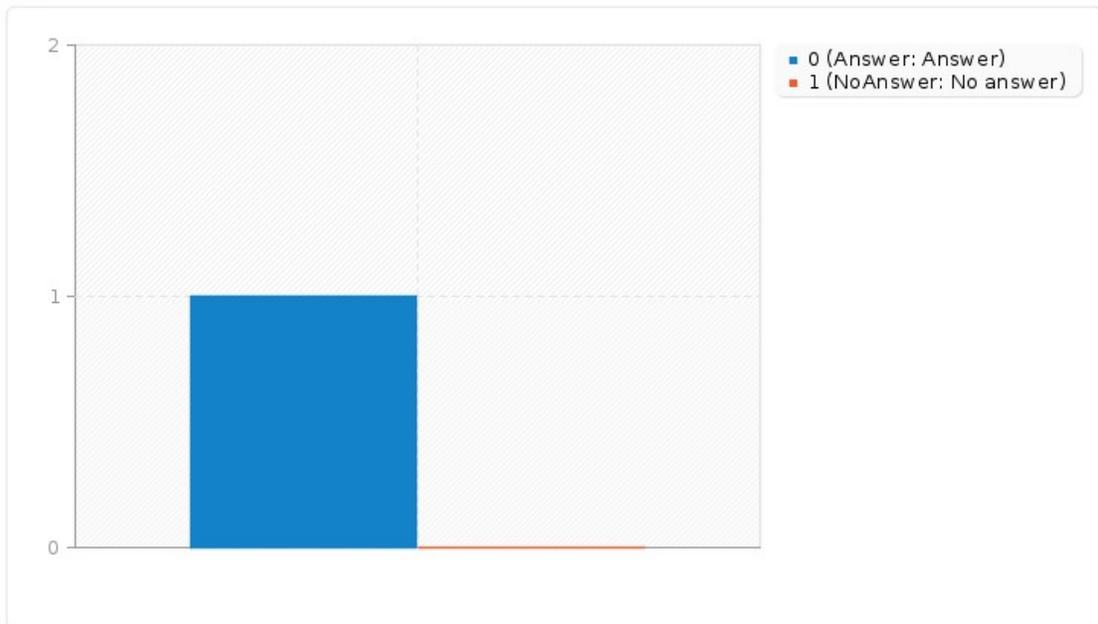
ID	Response
11	I worry about Westmont’s lack of inclusivity. Students who are diverse (racially or in their identities) suffered when I was a student and I haven’t seen much improvement since I graduated. Students in the majority also are not prepared to approach others of different backgrounds with grace or understanding.

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### Summary for Phil13a

A follow-up question for those who said “not very likely”: Why would you hesitate to recommend Westmont?

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## 9. Peer Institution Comparison

	1	2	3	4*	5	6	7	8	9	10
2017		18		?	N/A	?	7	3	25	N/A
2018	13	7	5	?	N/A	23	3	5	23	N/A
2019	9	9	4	?	N/A	12	6	3	20	N/A
2020	12	16	3	?	N/A	14	5	5	19	N/A
2021	11	19	5	?	N/A	19	5	9	12	N/A
2022	10	21	2	?	N/A	13	3	3	24	N/A
2023	13	?	3	1	N/A	8+	8	8	15	N/A
Avg.	11.33	15	3.67	1	N/A	14.8	5.28	5.14	19.71	N/A

### Institution (Fall 2022 undergraduate enrollment)

1. Calvin (2,960)
2. Claremont McKenna (1,386)
3. Gordon (1638.80)
4. Houghton (813)
5. Occidental (1,942)
6. Pepperdine (3,300—3,500)
7. Pomona (1663.85)
8. Westmont (1,293)
9. Wheaton (1,667)
10. Whittier (1,131)

N/A = Data not available.

\*The Houghton rep (Benjamin Lipscomb) indicated that they had only one grad in 2023 and that they would be switching to a philosophy and politics major in the future.

## 10. Faculty Race/Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown and Analysis

White	Non-white	Male	Female
5	1	6	0

Analysis: We need to diversify our departmental faculty by hiring at least one female and at least one person of color going forward.

## 11. Student Race/Ethnicity and Gender Breakdown and Analysis

Race/Ethnicity	Female	Male	Grand Total
Asian	1	1	2
Black or African Am.	1	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	1	2	3

Two or more	0	1	1
Unknown	0	2	2
White	8	18	26
<b>Grand Total</b>	11	24	35

Analysis: We should strive to have a race/ethnicity and gender profile that more closely reflects the percentage of women and students of color in the college as a whole.

## 12. Review of Library Holding

### **Library Section for Philosophy Department Six Year Report Prepared by Lauren Bedoy, June 2023**

The library and the philosophy department have collaborated well during the past six years.

Mary Logue was the library liaison from 2017 – 2019 and Lauren Bedoy was liaison from 2019 to the present. While no library instruction has been requested for classes, the liaisons have worked effectively with philosophy faculty on building the library collection for philosophy, with both electronic and print resources. Below are charts and lists to demonstrate what has been purchased for this department.

#### Print and Electronic Expenditures

Year	Print Total Amount	Online Journals & Databases Total Amount
2022 – 2023	428.11	20222.43
2021 – 2022	93.44	19063.49
2020 – 2021	0	16401.89
2019 – 2020	1769.32	16446.89
2018 – 2019	1526.86	5203.01
2017 – 2018	741.29	6897.72

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## Standing Orders

Leibniz 2019-2020

Merleau-Ponty 2019-2020

### Journals

American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY - ONLINE /FOR INSTITUTIONS/

ETHICS - IL - ONLINE

Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers

JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY /SURFACE MAIL/ /FOR INSTITUTIONS/

MIND - ENGLAND - ONLINE /FOR US CANADA/

Pacific Philosophical Quarterly

Philosophers Magazine

Philosophia Christi

PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY - ONLINE /FOR US CANADA/ /FOR INSTITUTIONS/

Philosophical Review

Philosophy

Philosophy Compass

Royal Institute of Philosophy Package

Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement

Think - England

### Databases

Philosopher's Index

PhilPapers

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13. Internships Report

(not applicable)

14. Budget Analysis

(not applicable: no request for additional funding)

15. Items to be Considered for Action Plan and Key Questions

- *Items to be considered for our next Action Plan*
  - *Curriculum/program*: We will need to plan for the possibility that the PPE major proposal will be approved and think ahead about its potential impact on our program, enrollments, and teaching assignments.
  - *Initiatives to improve teaching and learning*: We will need to discuss ways to enhance our teaching in order to improve student achievement in meeting (a) our Knowledge Program Learning Outcome and (b) the “limitations on rational inquiry” component of our Virtue Program Learning Outcome.
  - *Possible adjustment in faculty priorities or responsibilities*: Because of the changes in faculty involvements described above, we will need to discuss ways to cover sections of PHI 6 and our Modern Philosophy and 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy courses that make use of adjunct instructors (with a priority placed on Ed Song and Stephen Zylstra).
  - *Learning outcomes that the department will assess in the subsequent years*: We plan to focus on the same learning outcomes in the next seven years that we assessed during the last six-year period. But we will work hard to make sure that rubrics are provided to our students in advance and that we continue to accumulate data for larger sample sizes.
  - *Reallocation or acquisition of resources that would be necessary or helpful in the pursuit of these goals*: None.
  - *Other important changes*: We will need to prepare for searches to replace two professors who plan to retire in the next seven-year cycle. And we will continue to look for more effective ways to recruit and retain philosophy majors and minors.
- *Key Questions we will explore during the next seven-year cycle*:
  - *Key Question #1*: “What strategies should we implement to recruit and retain more philosophy majors and minors, and how can we implement these strategies in such a way as to recruit and retain more women students so as to achieve a better gender balance?”
  - *Key Question #2*: “How should we manage the staffing in our department in light of (i) our participation in other programs (Augustinian, Nursing, Willard Center, Religious Studies) and (ii) two upcoming retirements (Jim and Mark)?”
  - *Key Question #3*: “In what ways should we revise our curriculum to *facilitate* philosophy major and minor recruitment and retention, available staff expertise, and collaboration with other programs (e.g., cross-listed courses and a possible new PPE major)?”



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# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

## E. Attendance/Preparation/Participation/Decorum (10%)

Students should be well-prepared for class. Good attendance and active participation are necessary in order to understand complex materials, and build the skills of dialectical engagement and critical thinking. More generally, we will be discussing personal and demanding topics, which we can only meaningfully engage by trying to inculcate a culture of respect and empathy.

## F. Weekly Memos (10%)

The weekly memos are ~150 word writing assignment due at the end of each week. While each memo will be directed by a specific prompt in general they are meant to provide a space for students to reflect in personal ways on how they are responding to the material and the discussion.

## G. Papers (15% and 25%)

There are two papers. The first is very short (i.e. 3-4 pages) and primarily focuses on carefully reconstructing and clearly explicating an argument. The second is longer (i.e. 5-7 pages) and gives students the opportunity to explain an argument and offer their own analysis or evaluation. Papers will be turned in on Canvas. Students are responsible for keeping their own copy of papers.

## H. Midterm and Final Exam (40%)

The midterm and final exam will both be short answer examinations that focus on demonstrating a mastery and understanding of the material we cover. They are each worth 20% of the final grade.

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A+: 96.66-100	B+: 86.66-89.99	C+: 76.66-79.99	D+: 66.660-69.99
A: 93.33-96.65	B: 83.33-86.65	C: 73.33-76.65	D: 63.33-66.65
A-: 90.00-93.32	B-: 80.00-83.32	C-: 70.00-73.32	D-:60.00-63.32

# OTHER COURSE POLICIES

**Late Work:** Late work will penalized ten points per day (with a 5PM cutoff. E.g. A 85 paper turned in at 6PM on the day after the papers are due will receive a 65.) Extensions may be granted if they are requested at least one week before an assignment is due. Exams cannot be made up unless there is an unforeseen and unavoidable major crisis.

**Appeals:** If you believe a grade is incorrect, you have two weeks from the time the grade is posted to discuss the grade in-person with me. After two weeks have passed, the grade becomes

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final. Similarly, students have two weeks from the date of administration to complete all make-up assignments before the grade becomes a zero.

**Academic Integrity:** Policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Any student who violates the principles of academic integrity will fail the assignment, and possibly the course. It is your responsibility to read and be familiar with Westmont's Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.westmont.edu/officeprovost/academic-program/academic-integrity-policy>

In case you are not sure, here are instances in which you would be in violation of the principle of academic integrity:

- You cheat on an exam
- You copy a classmate's work or allow your classmate to copy your work.
- You fail to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an idea, or a turn of phrase, whether intentionally or unintentionally
- You submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors
- You seek or obtain help on any work that calls for independent work (including take home exams, homework, and problems to be solved)
- You purchase documents or papers and then present them as your own. Should you violate the principle of academic integrity, you will fail the assignment and the course. See the student handbook for the full college policy.

*Any students who are suspected of violating the principles of academic integrity will be held accountable for their actions and are eligible for a failing grade in the assignment and/or course.*

**Accessibility and Accommodations:** Students who choose to disclose a disability are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as early as possible in the semester to discuss possible accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by the ODS. Accommodations are designed to minimize the impact of a disability and ensure equal access to programs for all students with disabilities. Please contact [ods@westmont.edu](mailto:ods@westmont.edu) or visit the website for more information <https://www.westmont.edu/disability-services-welcome>. ODS is located upstairs in Voskuyl Library 310, 311A.

**Wellness:** If you become ill, experience stress or anxiety, have family issues that need to be addressed, have difficulty navigating your classes, or any other issue comes up in the term, I encourage you to seek assistance and to take good care of yourself. This could, for instance, mean contacting CAPS— <https://www.westmont.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>

**Looking for some writing help?** The writing center is a creative, collaborative space where you can improve in writing skill and confidence. Peer tutors serve as friendly “test readers” for your projects, helping you develop and revise your writing before submitting it to professors,

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employers, and others. During the Spring 2021 semester, Writers' Corner tutors will meet with you online using video conferencing and other tools. We encourage you to meet with a tutor at least 48 hours before your writing deadline. Be ready to share your assignment prompt and your latest draft, no matter how rough. All tutorials are free of charge. Make an appointment at <https://westmont.mywconline.com>; tutorials resume on Wednesday, January 20. Please make use of this great resource!

## SAMPLE READINGS AND TOPICS

### I. Getting Started

- James Baldwin's 1986 National Press Club Speech and Q&A
- W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," from *The Souls of Black Folk*
- George Yancy, 'Walking While Black in the White Gaze', *New York Times*, 1 September, 2013.
- Frantz Fanon, "The Lived Experience of the Black Man," *Black Skin, White Masks*
- Patricia Williams, "The Emperor's New Clothes," in her *Seeing a Color Blind Future: The Paradox of Race* • Tommy Shelby, "Modes of Blackness," in *We Who are Dark* • Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, pp. 1-40.
- Lawrence Blum, "Race: A Brief History with Moral Implications," in his *I'm Not a Racist...But*.
- Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Our America: A Hispanic History of the United States*, pp. 284-319
- Jorge Gracia, "The Nature of Ethnicity with Special Reference to Hispanic/Latino Identity"
- George Yancey, "Dear White America"
- George Yancey, "The Ugly Truth of Being a Black Professor in America," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

### J. The History of Philosophical Reflection on Race

- Kant, "Of the Different Human Races"
- Hegel, "Anthropology"
- W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races"
- Thomas A. McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development*, 42-68

### K. The Metaphysics of Race

- George W. Stocking, Jr., "The Turn-of-the-Century Concept of Race," in *Modernism/Modernity* 1 (1):416.
- Michael Bamshad and Steve Olsen, "Does Race Exist?" *Scientific American* December 2003.
- Ned Block, "How Heritability Misleads about Race"
- K. Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race."
- Paul C. Taylor, "Appiah's uncompleted argument: W.E.B. Du Bois and the reality of race." *Social Theory & Practice* 26 (2000): 103-128.
- Quayshawn Spencer, "Are Folk Races Like Dingoes, Dimes or Dodos?"

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- Sally Haslanger, ‘Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?’ in *Nous*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Mar. 2000), pp. 31-55.
  - Sally Haslanger, “A Social Constructionist Analysis of Race”
  - K. Anthony Appiah, “Race, Culture, and Identity”
  - Ron Mallon, “Passing, Traveling, and Reality: Social Construction and the Metaphysics of Race.” *Nous*, 38 (2004): 644-673.
  - Ian Tattersall and Rob DeSalle, *Race: Debunking a scientific myth*. TAMU (2011): 130- 143.
  - Joshua M. Glasgow, “On the New Biology of Race,” *Journal of Philosophy* 100, no. 9 (2003): 456–74.
  - David Ludwig, “How Race Travels: Relating Local and Global Ontologies of Race,” *Philosophical Studies* 176 (2019).

#### L. Race, Ethnicity and Knowledge

- Charles Mills, “White Ignorance,” in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, pp. 13-35
- Linda Martín Alcoff, “Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types,” in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, pp. 39-58
- Miranda Fricker, “Hermeneutical Injustice,” *Epistemic Injustice: Power & the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 147-175.
- Patricia Hill Collins, “Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology”
- Thomas, Nagel, “Truth,” in *The Last Word*
- Richard Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought*

#### M. Racism

- K. Anthony Appiah, “Racisms” in *In My Father’s House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*
- J.L.A. Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” *Journal of Social Philosophy*. 27: 5-45.
- Tommie Shelby, ‘Is Racism in the ‘Heart’?’, *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33(3): 411-420.
- Charles Mills, “‘Heart’ Attack: A Critique of Jorge Garcia’s Volitional Conception of Racism’,” *The Journal of Ethics* 7(1): 29-62.
- Joshua Glasgow, “Racism as Disrespect,” *Ethics*. 120: 64–93.
- Lawrence Blum, “Racism: What it is and what it isn’t,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 21 (2002): 203-218.
- Achille Mbembe, “The Subject of Race,” *Critique of Black Reason*
- Gertrude Ezorsky, “Overt and Institutional Racism,” in *Racism and Justice: The Case for Affirmative Action*.
- Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression, in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

#### N. Race and Incarceration

- Alexander, Michelle, “Introduction,” *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.
- Adolf Reed, “Racial Disparity and Policing.”
- Elizabeth Hinton, “Mass Incarceration”
- Brandon Vaidyanathan, “Systemic Racial Bias in the Criminal Justice System Is Not a Myth”

#### O. Seeing Race v. Being Color-Blind

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- Paul Taylor, *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*
  - Time Wise, *Between Barack and a Hard Place*
  - Patricia Williams, *Seeing a Color-Blind Future*

#### P. Racial Identity

- Ian Hacking, “Making Up People,” in Heller, Sosna and Wellbery’s (ed.) *Reconstructing Individualism*, Stanford: Stanford University Press (2006): 222-236.
- Charles Mills, “What are you really?” in *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*, Ithaca: Cornell (1998): 41-66.
- Linda Martín Alcoff, “Is Latina/o a Racial Identity?”
- Jorge Garcia, “Is Being Hispanic an Identity?” *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 27: 29–43.
- Yen Le Espiritu, “Ethnicity and Panethnicity,” *Asian American Panethnicity*
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” [nationalseedproject.org/whiteprivilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack](http://nationalseedproject.org/whiteprivilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack) (the article appears below the ‘Notes for Facilitators’ section).
- Linda Martín Alcoff. “What Should White People Do?”, *Hypatia* 13(2009): 6-26.
- Lawrence Blum. “‘White privilege’: A mild critique’, *Theory in Research and Education* 6(2008): 309-21.
- Ta-Nehesi Coates, “White Privilege” *The Atlantic*, April 2012. <http://www.theatlantic.com/personal/archive/2012/04/white-privilege/256478/>
- Gina Crosley-Corcoran, “Explaining white privilege to a broke white person” <http://thefeministbreeder.com/explaining-white-privilege-broke-white-person/>

#### Q. Reparations

- Ronald Takaki, “Toward ‘the Stony Mountains’: From Removal to Reservation,” *A Different Mirror*.
- David Lyons, “The New Indian Claims and Original Rights to Land.”
- John Conyers, “H.R. 40: Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act, up to sect. 4”
- Ta-Nehesi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic*
- Bernard Boxill, “A Lockean Argument for Black Reparations”
- Janna Thompson, “Historical Injustice and Reparation: Justifying Claims of Descendants”
- Leif Wenar, “Reparations for the Future’, *Journal of Social Philosophy* 37(2006): 396-405.

#### R. Affirmative Action

- *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*
- Louis Pojman, “The Case Against Affirmative Action”
- Ronald Dworkin, “Why Bakke has no Case”
- T. M. Scanlon, *Why Does Inequality Matter?* Ch. 5, “Substantive Opportunity”

#### S. The Idea of Multiculturalism

- Bhiku Parekh, “Equality in a Multicultural Society,” from *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (2000).

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- Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in Amy Gutmann’s (ed.), *Multiculturalism*: 25-44.
  - Brian Barry, “The Dynamics of Identity: Assimilation, Acculturation, and Difference,” from *Culture and Equality*, pp. 63-81
  - Jeremy Waldron, “Multiculturalism and M $\acute{e}$ lange,” from Robert Fullinwider (ed.), *Public Education in a Multicultural Society*.
  - K. Anthony Appiah, “Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction” in Gutman(ed.), *Multiculturalism*.

**Theological Resources:**

- Mark Charles & Soong-Chan Rah, *Unsettling Truths: the Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*
- Esau McCauley, *Reading While Black*
- Brenda Salter McNeil, *The Heart of Racial Justice*
- Soong-Chan Rah, *Prophetic Lament* (2015)
- Jemar Tisby, *How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey toward Racial Justice*
- Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Journey Toward Justice*
- N.T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus*
- George Yancey, *Beyond Racial Division*