

**Details.** This is a closed-book test that will take no longer than an hour, and probably less. Its questions may include multiple choice, fill-in-the blank, and matching formats. You supply the pencil; I will supply the Scantron form. I recommend the following strategy as you study:

First, **prioritize the material.** Put lectures at the top; they are the most straightforwardly theological material. Put your books next, then Newbigin presentations we actually got to. You only need to worry about the parts of lecture outlines that I have actually used in lectures. You may perhaps find other lecture outlines helpful in clarifying my comments or other materials, but don't worry about them.

Next, **review lectures and readings**—perhaps in study groups—to gain the following:

- *A sense of what each lecture, chapter or article is for:* not just what information it conveys, but the author's purpose and goals for readers. Ask yourself: How is this chapter or this lecture supposed to change your thinking and even your living?

- *Familiarity with the main lines of argument of each.* You can perceive these through tables of contents, chapter summaries, and my lecture outlines, but it's better to consult your lecture notes and your annotations on readings, since an article's subheadings, a book's table of contents, and my lecture outlines are simplified maps to orient and guide readers through the material. Pay close attention to the important distinctions made between various positions!

- *Understanding of basic terms and concepts and their significance.* Identify the key terms (*e.g.*, docetism, Pelagius, *creatio ex nihilo*, Adoptionism, *imago dei*) involved in the major points in each chapter. If you can define each term and briefly state its significance, you will likely do well on the questions that involve it.

*You can effectively represent all of the above in a memorable form by sketching a one-page graphical representation of each chapter or lecture, as I have done with Newbigin articles.*

- *An appreciation of what matters – what is at stake.* I try to craft test questions according to the importance I attach to major points in the course. For a guide to what I consider important, look at where I have focused assignments and class sections. For a guide to what *an author* considers important, look at how central and how well developed the point is. While many of the details in our course might qualify as “trivia,” many do not. Part of reading perceptively is gaining skill at telling the difference.

- *A sense of the connections among the materials.* Much of education involves the discovery of connections. You can deepen your appreciation of the material by asking why readings are clustered together. Why have I put a set of readings together with a lecture? What's the connection? What work is an image doing to illustrate the point I'm making in a lecture? How is one week's topic connected with the previous week's topic? What connections have I emphasized in class?

I encourage you to **study in groups** (especially your small groups) and distribute these tasks, so long as you pool your *knowledge* rather than your *ignorance*!

### **What am I looking for?**

1. Evidence that you've studied the material closely and understand its important points.
2. Evidence that you are becoming equipped to think theologically and put Christian doctrine to fruitful use – both now, and in your life as a Westmont *graduate*.
3. Evidence that you appreciate how the details fit into “the big picture.”

For now consider item (1) the most important task, then (2), then (3). Over our semester together the weight should shift towards the later items as you learn to locate all those details within the overall practice of Christian theology. Then as time passes and the details fade, the structure with which and around which they are built will remain.