Introduction to Gateway: The School of the Cross

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“Why do I have to take this class?”

“I’m going to be a…”

“What will I need this class for?”
“Why are you asking the question?”
Thinking “Worldview-ishly”

“A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.”

Thinking “Worldview-ishly”

- "A worldview consists of our beliefs and assumptions about how the world fits together.”
  - Steve Wilkens: *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics*

- A **worldview** is the shape, structure, pattern, orientation, or blueprint of your soul – by which you make sense of the world and your experience of it. It is your basic beliefs, assumptions, and commitments that constitute the shape of your soul.
Worldviews and Purpose

- At the heart of everyone’s worldview are basic beliefs and assumptions about meaning and purpose.
- This is because human beings are *purposive* beings – we are wired for *meaning*.
Why Cats Don’t Think About Gateway

- **YOU:** “Why do I have to take this class? I’m going to be a . . . What will need this class for?”
- **ME (rhetorically):** “Why are you asking this question?”
- **ME:** “. . . because you have a worldview and you think *purposively*.”
What’s the purpose of education?

- The question “Why do I have to take this class?” presupposes (i.e., it assumes) two things about higher education.
  1. Higher education is primarily about training for a career.
     - One goes to college so that one can get a better job, have a better future, and make more $$.
  2. Higher education is a consumer-driven enterprise.
     - The customer is king, and after all, “I’m payin’ for it!”
What’s the purpose of education?

- Higher education *does* prepare you for your career, but that’s not what it’s *primarily* about.

- You *are* paying for higher education, but it’s not like ordering an extra value meal.
So . . . what am I paying for?
Marathon Training!
College as Marathon Training

- Going to college is like training for a marathon . . .
- You have paid to train with some of the best intellectual athletes in the world – think of the faculty as world-class marathoners.
- They CAN make you a better intellectual athlete, BUT . . . YOU **have to run**!
  - (This is why it’s not like McDonald’s.)
- Sometimes a trainer will say things like: “Eat this!” or “Do this 50 times.” You’ll probably wonder why?
- But IF you do it, you’ll end up a world-class athlete.
An Important Qualification

- In athletics you (almost) NEVER question the coach/trainer.
- BUT – in college you do, in fact you should, ask “why?”
- Asking why in a university setting is one of the hallmarks of a liberal arts education.
  - Not because it makes you into “a liberal” – but it might 😊
  - But because it sets your understanding free
So . . . *Why* must I take this class?
“Drum Roll, Please . . .”

- You are taking this course (indeed, all of the core courses at Union!) NOT because of what it/they will do *for* you . . .
- **BUT** because of what it/they will do *to you*.
- This class (and the rest of your core courses) are, like the athlete training analogy, designed to make you into a someone who possesses a set of abilities unique to your training.
College Life and Calling

- The aim of that training at Union is to equip you for your calling or vocation in life.
- “Vocation” comes from the Latin word “vocare” meaning “to call”
  - Discovering one’s calling is partly a matter of discerning answers to three of life’s most basic questions.
    - Who am I?
    - Why am I here?
    - Where am I going?
Two Traditions of Learning

- **The School of Athens**
  - Liberal Arts tradition
    - “Know Thyself”
    - Goal of education is human understanding
    - Knowledge of . . .
      - oneself,
      - the world, and
      - one’s relationship to the world and to others
  - The University

- **The School of Jerusalem**
  - Theological tradition
    - Knowledge of God
    - Deuteronomy 6:4-5
      - “Love the Lord your God…”
    - Proverbs 9:10
      - “The fear of the Lord…”
    - John 17:3
      - “... that you may know God…”
  - The Seminary
Athens: The “Horizontal” School

Human Culture

• Anthropology
• Literature & Language
• Art & Architecture
• Music
• History & Politics
• Philosophy
• Technology
• Economics

Natural World

• Mathematics
• Biology
• Chemistry
• Physics
• Astronomy
• Psychology
• Sociology
• Medicine & Health

Truths about ourselves and the world in which we live that we explore and come to understand by God-given means of cognition (reason, senses, and imagination).
Jerusalem: The “Vertical” School

Divine Nature (God)

Truths about God, ourselves, this life, and the next that we explore and come to understand by means of Divine revelation (Scripture), the work of the Holy Spirit, and the life and ministry of the Church.

Human Nature
Christ-Centered Higher Education: The School of the Cross
Christ-Centered Higher Education: The School of the Cross

Two “Great” Traditions

- The two great traditions of learning begin with a summons to *discover* oneself in the process of pursuing either “horizontal” or “vertical” knowledge for *my own sake*.

- The pursuit of knowledge becomes a backdrop against which I stand out more clearly.

School of the Cross

- Christ-centered higher education begins with the a summons to *die* to oneself in the process of pursuing knowledge for the sake of conformity to the likeness of Jesus Christ.

- I become a backdrop against which the person and purposes of Jesus Christ stand out more clearly.
What will a Union education do to me?

- Christ-centered higher education stretches you to the point where you . . .
  - are drawn out of your self,
  - get over your self, and
  - get beyond your self.

- Every aspect of Christ-centered higher education, whether “horizontal” or “vertical”, whether in classrooms or residence halls, whether on GO trips or in student life, aims at conforming you to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
Cross-Centered Higher Education

- Mystery of the Gospel – the “Good News.”
  - It is in dying to oneself that one truly begins to live.
    - Matthew 10:39 – “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”
    - John 12:24-25 – “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”
    - Philippians 1:21 – “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”
    - Galatians 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”
Calling and World Changing

- **YOU cannot** change the world.
- But – Christ **can** change your world and ultimately the world **through you**.
- Your **calling** (vocation) is the vehicle through which Christ will use you to make a difference in the world.
  - Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
- Finding your vocation (what God has prepared for you to do) is a matter of dying to self.