December 11, 2008

GS Area 1 Assessment (lower)
Professor Karen Koenig
Optional comments on assessment process

I chose to assess the final project for my RELS 114 students—a “Theological Interview” project. This project was designed to give the students a chance to take the theological concepts we have read and discussed in class and take them outside the classroom in order to “make them their own.”

The students were evaluated on the quality and sophistication of their questions. We worked on them in class and I graded drafts of each set of questions in order to be sure that they were not posing questions that did not reflect the themes of the course. Over the Thanksgiving break they then interviewed a person of their choice using their own questions. They then wrote a 5-6 page essay evaluating the theology of their subject (based on the responses they received). The final component of the project was a brief class presentation where they shared the most important/salient parts of the interview.

In my view this assignment was very successful in meeting the goals of the GS Area 1 (lower) rubric. Both the composition of the questions and the essay analysis encouraged the students to engage with the concepts in their own words. They had to process the concepts in order to compose the questions and then reflect on the answers they received. I also feel that the exercise accomplished my personal goal of having their new “theological sophistication” be something that they take with them when they leave my classroom. I hope, that in the best cases, the students engaged in a newer, deeper level of theological discussion with people in their families and communities as they completed this project.

I found the rubrics easy to use and the process easy to complete and quite valuable.

Karen Koenig

[Signature]
For this project, which is worth 20% of your grade, you will develop questions and interview someone using your questions. Your project will consist of 3 components:

1. Developing appropriate theological questions based on the issues raised in this course and conducting an interview using these questions (you will want to record this interview if possible). (5% of grade)
2. A 4-5 page essay ANALYZING the responses to your theological questions (10% of grade)
3. A short presentation (5-10 minutes) sharing the results of your interview (5% of grade)

Your questions should be based on themes and issues we have explored in this course. In other words, most of the questions should be ones you could not have formulated or would not have formulated prior to taking this course. They should reflect the theological sophistication you have gained this semester.

Your essay is NOT to be a transcription of the answers. I repeat: your essay is NOT to be a transcription of the answers. Instead you are to use the answers to develop an essay which comments on the overall theology of your subject. You should quote the answers in part, but only as a support for your overall opinion or assessment of your subject's theological beliefs and assumptions.

Your presentation should be planned in advance. You will introduce the subject, tell who he or she is and why you chose him or her. You will then succinctly describe one or two of the most salient points made or most interesting issues discussed in your interview. You will also want to make some general statements about the theology of your subject. Plan and rehearse this portion of your project. Don’t mumble, ramble or go over the allotted time of 10 minutes. Say something interesting, say something important and say it carefully and well.