

Course Syllabus

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CHU 395, CHRISTIAN TRADITION

COURSE SYLLABUS, SPRING 2018

Thursdays, 1:00-3:30 pm, MidCity Church of the Nazarene

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES: After taking this course, students will be able to:

- 1 Explain the intellectual integrity, rich diversity, and coherence of the Christian tradition in its historical development.
- 2 Explain the characteristic features of Wesleyan theology and the ways in which it embodies the central affirmations of the Christian tradition.
- 3 Appreciate an ongoing, lifelong commitment to and participation in the Christian tradition and congregational life.

FURTHER EXPLANATION OF COURSE OBJECTIVES & WHY THIS COURSE MATTERS

You have chosen to attend a university that is self-consciously and unapologetically Christian and which, as stated in the PLNU Core Values, seeks to foster an “intentionally Christian community” that is faithful to its “Nazarene heritage and a Wesleyan theological perspective.” This course is intended to fulfill this aspect of the PLNU mission by introducing you both to the larger, more generally Christian tradition as well as the specifically Nazarene/Wesleyan heritage of PLNU.

If you are a Christian, this course provides an opportunity to develop a deeper appreciation for your own faith tradition. You will be given a rough sketch of the history of world Christianity and an introduction to many of the key teachings and practices of the historic Church, and therefore find opportunities for your own faith as a Christian to be challenged, deepened, and enriched.

If you are not a Christian, or have serious questions about Christianity, this course will provide an opportunity for you to have many of your questions answered, or, at the very least, will give you a better understanding of the largest religious movement in the world (with over two billion adherents) and one of the most significant social forces in the world today. My hope also is that you will walk away from this course with a deeper appreciation for Christian faith and life and perhaps even find yourself led to become a vital and active participant in and contributor to this tradition.

Any religious or faith tradition is a *living* tradition, comprised of the *collective beliefs, practices, and personal commitments of all the faithful across time and space*. Therefore, to engage deeply with the Christian tradition,

you will be expected to do so at all three levels—intellectual, practical, and personal. So, first, we will look at the core beliefs held by all Christians as well as the distinct beliefs of different Christian groups/denominations. Second, we will learn about and experience various Christian practices, some of which may seem strange to you because they are not part of your own community traditions, but are nevertheless widely practiced throughout the Christian church. And, finally, this class will become personal not only through the practices you will engage in, but also through the adoption of a patron/matron ‘saint’ who will serve as a kind of entry point and guide for some of your work (both intellectually and spiritually) throughout the semester. Understood broadly, saints are those persons whom the Church has affirmed as the best examples of what it means to *be* Christian and therefore most effectively illuminate what the Christian tradition aspires to be and, therefore, perhaps, what Christianity most essentially *is*. But there is also great diversity among the saints—indeed, there is disagreement among different Christians concerning what constitutes a saint, and therefore the lives of saints also provide a window into the profound diversity of the Christian tradition. (See below, under *Course Assignments*, to understand how your saint will shape and guide your work during the semester.)

INTERACTION WITH PROFESSOR/OFFICE HOURS: There are various ways that you might interact with me:

- We may talk before or after class;
- You may email me (markmann@pointloma.edu);
- You may meet with me in my office (Smee 208) or by arrangement.

COURSE READINGS

Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, 3rd Edition.

Samuel Powell, *A Teacher's Guide to Understanding the Scriptures*.

Gregory Boyle, *Barking at the Choir*.

You should purchase all of these books because you will be required to read most of each for the class. They are available at the PLNU bookstore or at various online stores. Additional required and optional readings will be made available on each week's reading and discussion page in CANVAS.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

A. Introductions: Since this class only meets once per week, our work together in groups will be of great importance, as is getting to know each other right away.

B. Course Readings and Group Discussions: Each week you will have assigned readings and will be responsible to answer a prompt related to the readings for that week. The class will be split into several discussion groups, so you will also need to read the responses of those in your groups. Typically you will be required both to provide a reflection and respond to at least two other posts of classmates. **Initial posts are due each Tuesday by 11:59 pm and responses are due by 1:30 pm the next day (Wednesday) and are worth 20 points each.**

C. Religious/Spiritual Autobiography: You will write a brief essay that outlines your church background and experience, including what church(es) you grew up in (if any), what you learned about the relationship of your church to the overall history of Christianity, how this background has shaped your relationship to God, and the theological convictions you have developed as a member of your church(es). This should be 300-400 words in length. It will be graded for clarity of writing, grammar,

spelling, etc. Just to be clear, I am not looking for any particular answers. Each of your religious and spiritual stories will be unique. The point is that you openly and honestly reflect on your own journey so that you develop a greater sense of awareness about your own understanding of what it means to be Christian and can begin to locate yourself within or in relation to the various streams of the larger Christian movement.

If you have no church background, plan to meet with me in person so that we can talk about how you might approach this assignment. This assignment will be completed within the small groups that will also function as discussion groups throughout the semester. So, a secondary purpose of this assignment is that others (including me!) get to know you better as we forge open and honest dialogue as a class community. Each of you will be responsible to provide a hospitable response to every other member of your group. (Hospitality is a willingness to be kind, humble, and generous to each other even when there is disagreement—even sharp disagreement.)

Please note: If for some reason you feel uncomfortable sharing your own story with others, please talk to me personally. My hope is that everyone will be able to share something significant about themselves with the rest of their group while also being able to maintain a sense of safe boundaries. The basic point is for group members to get to know others in their group as there will be a lot of other activities throughout the semester that will require connected and cohesive groups.

D. Christian Practice Reflections: Most weeks during the semester, you will be required to participate in some form of historic Christian practice, including attending two churches for worship, participating in a small group, fasting, *lectio divina* (contemplative reading of scripture), quiet reflection and meditation, etc. You will be required to provide a reflection on each of these experiences, typically in discussion with your group. Each week the instructions will be slightly different, but all of these are **due on Thursdays by 11:59 pm and are worth 50 points each.**

E. Final Exam: The **final exam** will be a ‘take-home’ exam distributed the last of class and **due by the beginning of the official exam time.**

Assignment	Possible Points
Introductions	20
Weekly Readings and Discussions (13x20 points each)	260
Christian Practice Reflections (12x50 each)	600
Religious Autobiography	100
Final Exam	150
Total	1130

POINTS TO GRADE: The points-to-grade correlation is as follows:

A = >93%

A- = 90-93%

B+ = 87-90%

B = 83-87%

B- = 80-83%

C+ = 77-80%

C = 73-77%

C- = 70-73%

D+ = 67-70%

D = 63-67%

D- = 60-73%

F = below 60%

CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION: In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a **three unit** class delivered over **fourteen weeks**. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their course work. The overall time expectations for this course are shown below and weekly expectations are found in the introduction to each week.

EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS

Options for extra credit may become available as the semester progresses. Click this [LINK](#) for opportunities, instructions and deadlines.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I maintain a strict and inflexible attendance policy for this class. If you arrive late you will be listed as tardy. More than fifteen minutes late for a class is counted as an absence. Two tardies will count as an absence.

PLNU maintains a fairly tough stance concerning attendance: “any student whose number of absences in a class, for any reason, exceeds the equivalent of one and one half weeks of class may be de-enrolled from the class with a failing grade.” This means two classes, four tardies or any combination thereof. Be forewarned!

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in as indicated under each assignment in the modules. Late assignments are not accepted unless already approved by the professor, so if there are any issues you know about that may prevent you from completing an assignment in a timely manner, be sure to discuss it with me well before the due date! My recommendation is that you plan **NOT** to wait until the last minute to turn in assignment

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The PLNU catalog states, “Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one’s own when in reality they are the results of another person’s creativity and effort. Such acts include plagiarism, copying of class assignments, and copying or other fraudulent behavior on examinations.”

Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to administrators and will result in a zero on the assignment and potential failure and/or de-enrollment from the course. The safest way to avoid plagiarism is ALWAYS to give credit to your sources, and if you have any questions about when you need to give a source credit, err on the side of doing so. I am also more than happy to give you further instruction on how and when it is appropriate to cite a source.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The PLNU School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the department urges students, faculty and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions and especially in their writings.

SPECIAL NEEDS

At PLNU students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual learning needs of the student. This policy assists the University in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

PLNU encourages the use of technology for learning, communication, and collaboration. In this course, we will rely on E-class for accessing course materials, submitting assignments, and collaborating in discussion boards and blogs. You'll want to make sure you are comfortable with these tools, so take advantage of our computer Lab Techs to answer questions and help you with any technology issues. You may also call the Help Desk at x2222.

I do not allow the use of computers or tablets in class, unless a student has special needs. Please let me know if that is the case for you.

FERPA

The university may disclose education records to college officials with legitimate educational interests. A college official is a person employed by the university; a member of the Board of Trustees; or an individual serving on a committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committees. PLNU also includes among college officials a student appointed to an official committee or assisting another official in performing tasks. A college official has a legitimate educational interest if the information aids the official in fulfilling professional functions.

Essentially, this means that if a parent or family member calls me and asks about how you are doing in class, I am legally not allowed to discuss your work with them. The best ways of including your parents in the general progress of your academic life is to grant them access to the portal and to talk to them regularly. For a full presentation of the University's policy on FERPA consult the catalog: <http://catalog.pointloma.edu/>.

Course Summary:

Date

Details

Date	Details	
Thu Jan 11, 2018	 Passing the Peace: Introductions (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251823)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Jan 16, 2018	 Week 2 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251827)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Jan 18, 2018	 Religious/Spiritual Autobiography (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251837)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Jan 23, 2018	 Week 3 Reading and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251821)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Jan 25, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: MidCity Pilgrimage (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/254002)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Jan 30, 2018	 Week 4 Reading and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251816)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 1, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Fasting (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251824)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 6, 2018	 Week 5 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251829)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 13, 2018	 Week 6 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251830)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 15, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Praying the Rosary (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251825)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 20, 2018	 Week 7 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251831)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 22, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Church Visit #1 (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251844)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 27, 2018	 Week 8 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251832)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 1, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Spiritual Reading and Journal Part 1 (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/254004)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 13, 2018	 Week 9 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251833)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	due by
Thu Mar 15, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Wesleyan Class Meeting (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251843)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 20, 2018	 Week 10 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251834)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 22, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Sabbath (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251835)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 27, 2018	 Week 11 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251819)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 29, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Scripture/Lectio Divina (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251826)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 3, 2018	 Week 12 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251820)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 5, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Church Visit #2 (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251838)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 10, 2018	 Week 13 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251828)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 12, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: God's Presence in Creation (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251839)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 17, 2018	 Week 14 Readings and Discussion (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251818)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 19, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Works of Mercy (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251836)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 26, 2018	 Christian Practice Reflection: Spiritual Reading and Journal Part 2 (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/253272)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Apr 27, 2018	 Extra Credit Assignments (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251845)	due by 11:59pm
Fri May 4, 2018	 Final Exam (https://canvas.pointloma.edu/courses/37438/assignments/251846)	due by 10:30am