

	School of Theology & Christian Ministry
	Theology 3005: Christian Faith & the Natural Sciences
3 units	
Fall 2023	

Meeting days: T-Th	Instructor: Michael Lodahl, Ph.D
Meeting times: 3-4:15 p.m.	Phone: 858 405 3184
Meeting location: Taylor 106	Email: mlodahl@pointloma.edu
	Office location and hours: by appointment

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Foundational Explorations Mission

Loma provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalogue description: This course explores central Christian convictions, e.g., the doctrines of creation, providence, the incarnation and the resurrection of the body, in careful and respectful dialogue with the natural sciences, especially cosmology and biological evolution.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to

- Interpret relevant biblical texts carefully and responsibly;
- Analyze the critical elements in the Christian doctrine of creation; and
- Appraise the significance of scientific discoveries, concepts, and theories for Christian theology

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Cordero Maskiewicz, April; Estes, Douglas; and Work, Telford. *What About Evolution?*

Greenwood, Kyle. *Scripture and Cosmology: Reading the Bible Between the Ancient World and Modern Science*

Strawn, Brad D. and Brown, Warren S. *Enhancing Christian Life: How Extended Cognition Augments Religious Community*

Wood, Todd Charles and Falk, Darrel R. *The Fool and the Heretic: How Two Scientists Moved beyond Labels to a Christian Dialogue about Creation and Evolution*

Yong, Amos. *The Bible, Disability, and the Church: A New Vision of the People of God*

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- 1) Regular, faithful attendance to class and active participation in class discussions based on faithful reading of the assigned material. Students should be prepared to be quizzed on the assigned reading on any given day of class.
- 2) Four brief (*minimum* of 800 words per paper) reflection papers during the semester as scheduled. These papers will give you the opportunity to reflect upon any idea, concept, or controversy encountered in class reading or during class discussion. These papers should demonstrate active engagement with the pertinent reading and your own thinking in

relationship / response to the material. In each paper the student should strive to bring the ideas of the natural sciences as discussed in the assigned reading and in class into creative conversation with pertinent ideas / doctrines of the Christian faith. It is expected that there will be at least one quotation from the assigned reading, properly annotated. These papers should be college-level examples of good grammar, spelling, punctuation, and reflection.

For these papers, I will provide a brief list of prompts that you may choose from, or simply use as a general guide. Do not feel constrained by these prompts. You may want to go in a different direction for your paper(s).

I will work on a detailed rubric for grading these papers, but for now the general breakdown for grading your paper will be as follows:

Content / Concepts / Clarity 50%

Organization / Effective Usage of Paragraphs / Flow 15%

Proper Spelling 15%

Proper Grammar / Punctuation / Capitalization Use 20%

- **The PLNU School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the full equality and dignity of all people. Recognizing that human beings have often used language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women and other marginalized peoples, the department strongly urges students, faculty and staff to avoid sexist, racist, or otherwise exclusionary language in public discourse, in classroom discussions and especially in their writings.**

- *I strongly encourage you to avail yourself of the Loma Writing Center:*

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center. Getting feedback during the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments,

see <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center> or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

GRADE CALCULATION:

Determined on the basis of attendance / participation (28%) and four reflection papers (18% each, 72% total).

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Final letter grades will be based on the following:

A	B	C	D	F
A 94-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 60
A- 90-93	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

In final computation of semester grade, I will round up from .5 to the next point.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. 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. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that

particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice.

COURSE CALENDAR

Aug 29 – Introduction to the course: The Wesleyan Quadrilateral & different ways of knowing

Aug 31 – Karen Strand Winslow essay, “The Earth is Not a Planet”; M. Lodahl, Notes on Genesis.

Sept 5 – *Fool & Heretic*, 9-52

Sept 7 – *F&H*, 53-80

Sept 12 – *F&H*, 80-127

Sept 14 – *F&H*, 129-166

Sept 19 – *F&H*, 169-196

Sept 21 – *Scripture & Cosmology*, Preface, Acknowledgements, 17-29 (Chapter 1)

Sept 24 – First reflection paper due Sunday night, midnight

Sept 26 – *S&C*, 33-69

Sept 28 – S&C, 69-102

Oct 3 – S&C, 103-158

Oct 5 – S&C, 159-185

Oct 10 – S&C, 189-221

Oct 12 – *What about Evolution?* Introduction, Chapter 1 (1-36)

Oct 17 – *WE?* 37-65

Oct 19 – *WE?* 66-102

Oct 22 – Second reflection paper due Sunday night, midnight

Oct 24 – *The Bible, Disability, and the Church*, Preface, Introduction (1-16)

Oct 26 – *B,D&C*, 17-48

Oct 31 – *B,D&C*, 49-81

Nov 2 – *B,D&C*, 82-117

Nov 7 – *B,D&C*, 118-147

Nov 9 – *Enhancing Christian Life*, Acknowledgements, Prologue, Chapter 1 (1-21)

Nov 12 – Third reflection paper due Sunday night, midnight

Nov 14 – *ECL*, 22-49

Nov 16 – *ECL*, 49-72

Nov 21 - Thanksgiving Break

Nov 23 – Thanksgiving Break

Nov 28 – No assigned reading for today. Hope you enjoyed Thanksgiving! Catching up.

Nov 30 – *ECL*, 73-106

Dec 5 – *ECL*, 106-127

Dec 7 – *ECL*, 128-156

Dec 14 – Final exam time, 4:30-7 p.m. Required attendance for class questionnaire.

Dec 15 – Fourth reflection paper due Friday night, midnight