

School of Theology and Christian Ministry

CHU3095 The Christian Tradition

3 Units

Summer 2025 | Session 2

Fully Online

June 16 - July 13

Meeting Days: Online Asynchronous

Meeting Times: Online Asynchronous

Meeting Location: Online

Final Exam: (Day/Time): Week 5

Instructor: Dr. Mark Mann

Email: markmann@pointloma.edu

Phone: Zoom, by appointment

Office Location and Hours: Zoom, 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.

General Education Mission

PLNU 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

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 general 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. 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.)

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. (ILO 1) (GELO 1a, 1e, 1c)
2. Explain the characteristic features of Wesleyan theology and the ways in which it embodies the central affirmations of the Christian tradition. (ILO 1) (GELO 2c & 3)
3. Appreciate an ongoing, lifelong commitment to and participation in the Christian tradition and congregational life. (ILO 3) (GELO 3)

General Education Learning Outcomes

Learning: Informed by our Faith in Christ

Students will:

- GELO 1a & 1b: Demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills, both as individuals and in groups;
- GELO 1e: Use quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and logic skills to address questions and solve problems; and
- GELO 1c: Demonstrate the effective and responsible use of information from a variety of sources.

Growing: In a Christ-Centered Faith Community

Students will:

- GELO 3: Examine the complexity of systems in the light of the reconciling work of God in Christ; and
- GELO 2c: Demonstrate a respect for the relationships within and across diverse communities.

Serving: In a Context of Christian Faith

Students will:

- GELO 3: Engage in acts of devotion and works of mercy informed by the Christian scriptures and tradition, rooted in local congregations, and expressed as love of God and neighbor.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

1. Learning, Informed by our Faith in Christ

Students will acquire knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world while developing skills and habits of the mind that foster lifelong learning.

2. Growing, in a Christ-centered Faith Community

Students will develop a deeper and more informed understanding of others as they negotiate complex professional, environmental, and social contexts.

3. Serving, in a Context of Christian Faith

Students will serve locally and/or globally in vocational and social settings.

Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources

Elaine Heath, *Five Means of Grace: Experience God's Love the Wesleyan Way*.

Noll, M. A. (2012). *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, 3rd Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Powell, S. (2012). *A Teacher's Guide to Understanding the Scriptures*. Kansas City, KS: Beacon Hill Press.

You should purchase all of these books because you will be required to read most of each text 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.

Recommended

Nouwen, H. (2002). *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. Chestnut Ridge, NY: The Crossroads Publishing Company.

Note: Students are responsible for having the required textbooks prior to the first day of class. Students are also encouraged to begin reading the books in preparation for the class as soon as possible.

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. All supplemental materials posted on this course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

Course 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 3-unit class delivered over 5 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

CREDIT HOUR DISTRIBUTION	
ASSIGNMENTS	COURSE HOURS
Introductions	1
Adopt a Saint	1
Christian Practice Reflections	42
Readings and Discussions	53
Saint Biography	7
Final Exam	10
Total	114

Course Assignment Descriptions

There is some kind of assignment due almost every day for this course. These assignments include:

1. **Introductions/Passing the Peace:** Since this is an online class, our work together in groups will be of great importance. This will provide you an opportunity to get to know other members of your group right away.
2. **Course Readings and Group Discussions:** Most days you will have assigned readings and will be responsible to respond to a prompt related to the readings for that week. The class will be split into several discussion groups and you will be required read all of your fellow group members' posts and write a thoughtful response to at least two of their initial posts.
3. **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 essay 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. 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 other activities throughout the semester that will require connected and cohesive groups.

4. **Adopt a Saint:** As noted in the course introduction, students will adopt Christian saints who will serve as an entry point for some of our work together as a class. There are three graded assignments related to the saint adoption:

- 1.

- 1.

- A. **Saint Selection:** Each student will adopt a saint and report their saint selection on the appointed discussion board. There is only one saint per person and it is first come first served, so if you wait too long you might not get the saint you want. The professor will provide a pre-approved list of saints, and students might request a non-list saint by contacting the professor directly.
 - B. **Saint Biography:** Each student will write and post a wiki-like biography (600-800 words) about a patron/matron saint of their choosing. Each biography must include:
 - a. The story of the saint's life, including background, key events in the saint's life, etc.;
 - b. A summary of the saint's chief ideas/beliefs;
 - c. An outline of the saint's most significant contributions to the Christian tradition, and
 - d. An assessment of why the individual should (or should not!) be considered a saint.

Students may also include additional items of interest related to the saint, such as pictures, drawings, key writings of the saints, etc. In gathering information about their saints, students may draw upon online resources (except for Wikipedia, which is not a respected source for such information), but they **must** also draw upon **at least two** scholarly texts, such as a book-length biography. All sources will be listed in a bibliography or reference page.

You will also, then, be required to read the wikis provided by your classmates as questions about each saint will be included in the final exam.

5. **Saint Letter:** You will write a letter to your generation from your saint, pretending that you are the saint. This letter will focus on what young persons (either Christians or non-Christians) need to hear today in order for them to approach their lives effectively as members of the Christian tradition. It addresses what they should believe, how it is important for them to act, the kinds of commitments they should make (whether they should marry, have children, what kind of job and hobbies they should have), the kind of attitudes they should have about life and other people, etc. This should be **200-300** words in length and will be graded both for quality of writing and quality of engagement with the saint's perspective. Students should be as imaginative and creative as possible.
6. **Christian Practice Reflections:** Throughout the five weeks of our class, you will be required to participate in some form of historic Christian practice, including attending two churches for worship, participating in a small group, quiet reflection and meditation, etc. You will be required to provide a reflection on each of these experiences, sometimes in discussion with your discussion group. When completed in a discussion format, you will be required to respond to at least two of your classmates' reflections.
7. **Final Exam:** The **final exam** will be a 'take-home' exam with essays covering some of the key topics we have dealt with in class and information drawn from the saint wikis.
8. **Surveys:** You are required to participate in five surveys over the course of our five weeks together, completion of which will contribute to your final grade. (The mid-course survey is not graded.)

Inclusive Language

The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the school urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussion, and in their writings. Thus, terms like "man" or "mankind" or the pronoun "he," should not be used to refer to all humans. Instead "people," "humanity," "humans," and "he or she" better acknowledge women as full persons.

Assessment and Grading

Weighted Grades

This course uses weighted grades. Each assignment category is worth a certain percentage of the total grade (100%) for the course, as specified in the table below:

Course Assignments	
Assignment Category	Percentage of Total Grade
Surveys	10
Saint Assignments	10
Reading Discussions	30
Practice Reflections	35
Final Exam	15
Total	100

You may find all assignments listed at the bottom of this page. You will also find all assignments in the Modules. Within each assignment page, you will find complete instructions, deadlines, and rubrics used for grading. If you have any questions about the assignments, feel free to contact your professor.

Student grades for assignments will be posted in the Canvas gradebook no later than midnight on Tuesday of each week beginning in Week Two of this course. It is important to read the comments posted in the gradebook as these comments are intended to help students improve their work. Final grades will be posted by the due date as posted in the Academic Calendar.

Grade Scale				
Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentage				
A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9	F ≤ 59.9
A- 900-92.9	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	D 63-66.9	
	B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	D- 60-62.9	

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for **one** of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due, including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in as indicated under each assignment in the modules. Late assignments are accepted for **HALF** credit 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 the assignment.

PLNU Spiritual Care

Please be aware that PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, prayer requests, or a desire to meet with the chaplain, you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

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 Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

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.

For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

During the first week of class, you will be asked to submit an Academic Honesty Verification Statement. Submitting the statement is a requirement of this course. By submitting the Academic Honesty Verification Statement, you will be verifying all assignments completed in this course were completed by you. Carefully review the Academic Honesty Statement below.

Statement: "In submitting this form, I am verifying all the assignments in this course will be completed by me and will be my own work."

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). 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 work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

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. Accommodations are not retroactive, so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

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 ensure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars, we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice-free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive

language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available through the [Title IX Office](#). Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, it is required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors via our [Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#).

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources via our [Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy](#).

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements.

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 until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

Students who anticipate being absent for an entire week of a course should contact the instructor in advance for approval and make arrangements to complete the required coursework and/or

alternative assignments assigned at the discretion of the instructor. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the instructor and does not waive attendance requirements.

Refer to [Academic Policies](#) for additional details.

Synchronous Attendance/Participation Definition

For synchronous courses that have specific scheduled meeting times (including in-person, hybrid, and synchronous online courses), absences are counted from the first official meeting of the class, regardless of the date of the student's enrollment. For courses with specific attendance requirements, those requirements are outlined in the course syllabus.

Note: For synchronous courses with an online asynchronous week, refer to the Online Asynchronous Class Attendance policy listed below.

Online Asynchronous Attendance/Participation Definition

Students taking online courses with no specific scheduled meeting times are expected to actively engage throughout each week of the course. Attendance is defined as participating in an academic activity within the online classroom, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging in an online discussion
- Submitting an assignment
- Taking an exam
- Participating in online labs
- Initiating contact with faculty members within the learning management system to discuss course content

Note: Logging into the course does not qualify as participation and will not be counted as meeting the attendance requirement.

Course Modality Definitions

1. Online Courses: These are courses with class meetings where all instruction and interaction are fully online.
 1. Synchronous Courses: At least one class meeting takes place at a designated time.
 2. Asynchronous Courses: All class meetings are asynchronous.
2. Hybrid Courses: These are courses with class meetings that take place both in the classroom and online synchronously and/or asynchronously.
3. In-Person Courses: These are courses that meet in person with the instructor and students in a physical classroom setting. With approval by the area dean, this may include up to 25% of qualified class interactions through a Learning Management System (such as Canvas).

Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online or hybrid environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers, a microphone, or a webcam compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible or allowable) to complete exams online.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

Loma Writing Center

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in 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, polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see the [Loma Writing Center webpage](#) or visit the Loma Writing Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- [Appointment Calendar](#)
 - [Website](#)
 - Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu
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Lomabooks Instructions for Students

Note: For courses using materials available through Lomabooks

This course is part of our course material delivery program, **LomaBooks**. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas.

You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pickup or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials.

For more information about **LomaBooks**, please go to [the LomaBooks site](#).

Assignments-at-a-Glance

The course summary below lists our assignments and their due dates. Click on any assignment to review it.