

**Point Loma Nazarene University  
School of Theology & Christian Ministry  
Spring Semester 2025**

*Point Loma Nazarene University 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 becomes an expression of faith.  
Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community  
where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

**Course:** Theology 2050. Introduction to Christian Theology.  
T-Th, 3-4:15 p.m., Wesley Center seminar room.

**Professor:** Dr. Michael Lodahl. Office – Smee 206  
Office phone 849-2331, cell (858) 405-3184.

**Texts:** Fischer, Kathleen and Hart, Thomas. *Christian Foundations:  
An*

*Introduction to Faith in Our Time*

Gaines, Timothy. *Walking the Theological Life:*

*Discovering Method for Theology in the Lives of  
Biblical Characters*

Heidt, Mari Rapela. *A Guide for Writing about Theology and  
Religion*

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian  
Theology*

Selected primary sources.

**Objectives:** 1) To introduce students, especially (but not only) theology  
majors, to the root convictions, methodologies and pressing  
concerns of classical and contemporary Christian theological  
reflection;

2) To explore the crucial doctrines of Christian faith in their complex and rich interrelations, and in relation to Christian life, practice and ministry. Doctrines to be explored in their interrelationships with one another include: divine revelation in the history of the people Israel and particularly in Jesus Christ; scriptural testimony and authority; Scripture in relation to tradition, reason and experience; the nature and attributes of God the Creator and Sustainer of all things; human beings in the image of God; human sin and divine grace; divine predestination and human agency / responsibility; Christology; ecclesiology; pneumatology; sacramental theology and eschatology;

3) To develop an understanding and appreciation for the distinctive emphases and contributions of the Wesleyan-Arminian theological tradition, particularly in regard to the doctrine of entire sanctification; and

4) To become more effective communicators of theological ideas through reading and writing good theological prose.

### **Course Learning Outcomes:**

Students will be able to

- 1) explain the importance of theological reflection for the life and ministry of the Christian church;
- 2) distinguish among the various sub-disciplines of theology and their corresponding emphases and rationales;
- 3) describe the deep interconnections among the doctrines of Christian faith – especially God, creation, Christology, humanity, and sin; and
- 4) appreciate the rich historical heritage of theological reflection, especially as received and enriched by the Wesleyan theological tradition;
- 5) demonstrate growth and improvement in writing skills pertinent to academic theological studies.

### **Course Requirements:**

- 1) Faithful attendance to class (or Zoom sessions) and reading of assigned materials. Typically, each class session will be 'worth' 5 attendance / participation points, though that may vary depending upon quizzes. You will be held responsible for the assigned reading each day you step into the classroom. On many if not all days, a brief quiz or other form of accountability will be administered that addresses main points in the reading for the day. *It is your responsibility to stay current in the reading.* (CLOs 1-4)
- 2) Close attention to Mari Rapela Heidt's *A Guide for Writing about Theology and Religion*. You will be held accountable for reading and internalizing Heidt's very helpful book by sending to your professor, via e-mail attachment, a reading report for each chapter as specified in this syllabus's Course Calendar. In that report, you will inform the professor regarding the number of pages you read carefully, and then will list a minimum of three important points or suggestions you learned from the specified chapter. (CLO 5)
- 3) Spiritual autobiography paper, 5-6 pages in length, that introduces your life, significant experiences, sense of calling, particular interests, etc., to your professor. I invite and encourage you to be yourself in this paper. I hope you will feel free also to mention or discuss any theological / spiritual issue or question that is troubling you. This paper is for the purposes of my getting to know you better – and also to give you an early indication of possible opportunities for improvement in your writing. **This paper is due no later than midnight, January 25.** (CLO 1)
- 4) A reflection paper, 5-6 pages in length, on the interrelationship between the doctrine of God the Creator and the doctrines implied in theological anthropology. This paper will incorporate Scripture, class lectures and discussions, as well as the relevant reading from assigned texts. (CLOs 2, 3, 5) **This paper is due no later than midnight, March 29.**
- 5) Research term paper, 9-10 pages (not counting the *title page*, which is required, with a suitable and at least minimally creative title), with a minimum of 12 bibliographical resources (books and journal articles) and 300 pages of reading. ***You are required also to utilize the help of a careful and reliable proofreader, and to list the proofreader's name on your title page.*** This paper will address a particular doctrine, theologian, or theological controversy that is relevant to the subject material of the present course. ***All term paper topics are to receive***

*approval from the professor and papers should be written (and will be evaluated) on the basis of Heidt's excellent instructions. This paper is due no later than midnight, May 3. (CLOs 3, 4, 5)*

- 6) One final examination, comprehensive in nature, brief replies and essays. (CLOs 1-3)

### **Course Grade:**

Your grade will be calculated on the basis of attendance / participation, including quizzes and responses to Heidt's book (26%); spiritual autobiography paper (12%); paper on the doctrines of God and humanity (theological anthropology) (16%); research term paper (26%); and final exam (20%).

### **On Attendance**

Each class day attendance is worth 5 quiz points; quizzes will vary in point total, roughly anywhere between another 5 and 15 points on any given day. Extra-credit points are added to the attendance / participation / quizzes category.

### **On Punctuality**

On any writing assignment, if it is **handed in during the day past the midnight due date, said paper will receive a 5% drop in grade; in the second day past the midnight due date, paper will receive a 12% drop in grade; in the third day, it will receive a 20% drop in grade; beyond that, 50% will be deducted.**

*Please be attentive to these ground rules so that there is no confusion on the matter.*

### **On Writing:**

I cannot emphasize enough that grammar, spelling and punctuation all play a *highly* critical role in my evaluation of all your papers.

The grading rubric I will utilize:

**Content / Concepts / Main Ideas 60%**

**Clarity / Organization / Paragraph Usage 20%**

**Spelling 5%**

**Grammar / Punctuation / Capitalization 15%**

Additionally, the School of Theology and Christian Ministry at PLNU is committed to the equality of women and men, including in the exercise of the gifts and graces

of ministry in local church congregations. Recognizing that people have often used language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women and other often marginalized people, the SOTCM strongly urges students, faculty and staff to avoid sexist and racist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions and in written work. ***Indeed, such language use in a paper will be scrutinized under the Content / Concepts / Main Ideas category above.***

#### **Other Matters:**

##### **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, or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's efforts. 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:**

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at [DRC@pointloma.edu](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu). See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

##### **PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy:**

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings (please note that in summer school, this means two days' worth of classes!), the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent (i.e., *five* unexcused class sessions), the student may be de-enrolled without notice

until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

**Semester Academic Work Policy:**

Please note that when the semester ends, so do all opportunities to work to improve your grade. No last-minute or after-the-fact appeals for extra credit will be even briefly considered.

All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should discuss options with the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of class. The ASC will contact professors with suggested classroom needs and accommodations. (Approved documentation must be on file in the ASC prior to the start of the semester.

**Course Calendar:**

Jan 14 – Introduction to the course; 1 Corinthians 8

Jan 16 – *Christian Foundations* 1-22.

Jan 21 – *Christian Foundations* 22-46

Jan 23 – *Walking* introduction and 1-14

- **Spiritual autobiography due in Canvas no later than midnight, Jan 25.**

Jan 28 – Lodahl away for a funeral; no class. *Genesis 1 & 2 lecture handout. Video material assignment on Genesis 1 & 2.* (You might also begin Thursday's reading assignment, since it's a little longer than usual.)

Jan 30 – *Christian Foundations* 47-75

- **Response to Heidt, c. 1, due no later than midnight, Feb 1. (15 points attendance / participation)**

Feb 4 – *Walking* 15-48.

Feb 6 – *Walking* 49-76

Feb 11 – *Walking* 77-107

Feb 13 – *Walking* 108-122; Lodahl, *Matthew Matters* 1-11

- **Response to Heidt, c. 2, due no later than midnight, Feb 15. (15 points attendance / participation)**

Feb 18 & 20 – Lodahl away to give a paper at a conference in Florida. Read material on *All Things Necessary* excerpts; complete video material assignment on nature and authority of the Bible.

Feb 25 – *Walking* 123-143

Feb 27 – *Christian Foundations* 76-94; Christology handout material.

- **Response to Heidt, c. 3, due no later than midnight, Mar 1. (15 points attendance / participation)**

Mar 4 – *Christian Foundations* 95-113; *Walking* 144-163

Mar 6 – *Christian Foundations* 114-131: excerpt from Paul van Buren, “Speaking of God”

### **March 10-14 – Spring Break**

Mar 18 – *Christian Foundations* 132-148; *Walking* 164-179

- **Please note that I am offering significant extra credit opportunities March 19-21, during Point Loma School of Theology’s annual Wiley Lecture Series. This year the lectures feature Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, a leading Latina theologian. There are four lectures scheduled as listed below, all of which will be delivered in Crill Performance Hall. For each lecture you attend for extra credit, you must attend in person, take careful notes (to be turned in), and write a thoughtful 2-3 page (double-spaced) summary / reflection / response paper. For each lecture response paper, the paper will be graded with a maximum possible extra point total (for each paper) of 25 points in the attendance / participation category. All extra credit papers for these**

lectures will be due as hard copies at the beginning of class April 22 (immediately after Easter break).

- Lecture 1 – Wednesday March 19, 11 – 11:50
- Lecture 2 – Wednesday, March 19, 1:30 – 2:20
- Lecture 3 – Thursday, March 20, 9:30 – 10:20
- Lecture 4 – Friday, March 21, 8:30 – 9:20

For all lectures that you attend, please keep your ear open for how Dr. Conde-Frazier speaks (either explicitly or implicitly) about the nature and mission of the Church. In other words, all of your reflection papers should focus especially on the issues of *ecclesiology*.

Mar 20 – *Christian Foundations* 149-162.

- Response to Heidt, cc. 4-5, due no later than midnight, Mar 22. (15 points attendance / participation)

Mar 25 – *Christian Foundations* 163-179; sacraments handout material.

Mar 27 – *Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* introduction, 17-34

- Saturday, March 29, brief reflection paper on the interrelationship of doctrines of God and humanity in Christian teaching, due no later than midnight.

Apr 1 – *Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* 35-57

Apr 3 – *Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* 58-70; excerpts from Calvin and Arminius

Apr 8 – *Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* 70-86

Apr 10 – *Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* 87-105

- Saturday, April 12, response to Heidt, c. 6, due no later than midnight (15 points)

Apr 15 – Lodahl, *Matthew Matters* 128-145

Apr 17 – Beginning of Easter Break. Christ is risen!



Apr 22 – *Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* 106-127.

- Any and all extra-credit reflection essays on Conde-Frazier's Wiley Lectures due at beginning of class, hard copy.

Apr 24 – *Walking* 180-201

- Saturday, April 26, term research paper topic due no later than midnight. This includes proposed title, paper outline, and working bibliography all in proper format. (25 points in attendance / participation category.)

Apr 29 – *Christian Foundations* 180-209

May 1 – *Christian Foundations* 210-230

- Research term paper due no later than Saturday, May 3, midnight.
- Final Exam scheduled for Tuesday, 4:30 – 7 p.m.