

	Department/School Name SOTCM THE 4095: Justice in the Church Senior Capstone Number of Units –3
Spring 2025	

Meeting days: Monday & Friday	Instructors title and name: Dr. Rebecca Laird and Dr. Felicia George
Meeting times: 3-4:15pm	Phone: 619 849 2993 (Laird) 619 849 2233 (George)
Meeting location: Wesleyan Ctr.	Email: rlaird@pointloma.edu , fgeorge@pointloma.edu
Final Exam:	Office location and hours: Laird, Smee 209 George, Smee 212
Additional info: Required attendance at 3 Wiley Lecture Events March 19-21	Additional info:

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.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will give special attention to the thought and practices of Christian righteousness in light of dynamics of inequality that have long faced Christian communities. Students will engage Christian tradition and contemporary life on the issues of the subjugation of women, economic alienation, slavery, racism and other structures of power. Approaches to these issues will be multi-disciplinary—underscoring the integration of biblical, theological, historical and philosophical perspectives—and culminate in concrete practices of ministry.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- *Demonstrate growing awareness of pressing theological themes of liberation and human flourishing in theological writing of past half-century; (assessment: reading responses)*
- *Integrate the practical implication of the theological themes of liberation and human flourishing for ecclesiology –doctrine of the church– and Christian ministry; (case studies)*
- *Examine and reflect critically and creatively on the integration of biblical, theological, historical and philosophical modes of interpretation; (faculty panel discussions, case studies)*
- *Show development of communication skills, both oral and written, in theological vocabulary and discourse. (class presentations and final paper)*

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life, eds: Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, Eerdmans, 2002.

Becoming Brave: Finding the Courage to Pursue Racial Justice Now, Brenda Slater McNeil, Brazos, 2020.

Other articles and podcasts as indicated on the syllabus.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING points possible

6 Reading responses 30 each	180
Vocational essay	60
Letter on Restorative Justice	20
4 Case study responses 50 each	200
Wiley lecture attendance/ response	60
Capstone group presentation	100
Final Paper	120
Total	740

Grades will be based on the following:

Sample Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentages

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

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	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Active Participation: Our class will primarily consist of guided discussion, but there will be some guided activities incorporated into the discussions. Students are expected to come ready for dialogue and participation. The professors will observe students' contributions in the following areas:

- *Sharing:* Actively and consistently shares ideas and comments that contribute to the assigned topics of conversation in substantive ways.
- *Engaging Peers:* Actively engages others in class through listening, inviting, asking questions, participating, and nurturing an atmosphere of mutual hospitality and respect.
- *Engaging Material:* Identifies and summarizes main points from the readings, activities, and previous discussions. Constructively helps the class maintain accuracy in statements made and focus on the topic of discussion.

Note: Students will receive 20% score deduction for each absence after 3. Students will be de-enrolled from the course at 8 absences.

Reading Responses: The purpose of the reading responses is to help students stay on track with the reading and prepare to contribute to classroom dialogue.

There will be 8 reading responses.

The first portion of each reading response involves self-reporting regarding the students' completion of the reading assignment as well as their quality of reading. This portion is worth $\frac{1}{4}$ of the reading report score. Students will score their own reading based on the scale below (...and Yes, *this is based on your honesty*):

5 = I read every word of the assignment and took excellent notes.

4 = I read the vast majority of the assignment and took notes.

3 = I read more than half of the reading assignment.

2 = I read very close to half of the reading assignment.

0 = I read very little to none of the reading assignment.

The second portion of the reading response requires the student to answer three prompts. This portion of the reading report is worth $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total score for the reading report.

- Please explain two themes that run throughout the reading. Be sure to explain any nuances the author provides amidst engaging these themes. (6 points possible)

- What did you learn from the reading? This can focus on new ideas, practical insight, or clarification on something you have been thinking about. (5 points possible)
- How does this reading connect with, build upon, or challenge other material you have encountered during your studies at PLNU? Think primarily about courses within the Christian Studies major. However, you can consider other aspects of your studies here as well. (4 points possible)

Your responses to the prompts need to be **three to four** well-formed paragraphs with parenthetical citation of page numbers. The responses should not simply be a quote or a string of quotes from the reading. The responses need to make it very clear that you are processing the entire reading assignment.

The reading responses need to be completed and submitted by the start of class time, 3pm, for each day reading is due.

Vocational Essay: Each student will write a 3-page essay that draws from course readings and discussions to explore implications for the kind of life the student is preparing and hoping to live. The essay will require the students to name commitments. More details are available on Canvas in the prompt.

Case Study Brief: Students will need to write four written briefs to case studies on Christian life and ministry. The case study responses need to be 500 words and incorporate insights from the subfields of theology and Christian ministry—ethnographic studies, Biblical studies, constructive and philosophical theology, historical theology, pastoral care and strategies. Each case study will require specific foci.

While every student needs to prepare and submit their response for every case study. Students will be assigned specific case studies and dates to lead the class by presenting their case study responses and engaging the class in conversation.

Wiley Lecture Attendance and Response: Students are expected to attend 3 Wiley-related events, lectures and dinners. In response, students will write a 750 word letter to the Wiley lecturer engaging two main points from the lecturer's work and presence on campus. The letter is to be appreciative, professional, and show theological engagement at a mature level.

Participant Observation Project and Group Presentation: In groups, students will engage in participant observation within a faith community. This will require visiting a specific community three times in three different aspects of the community's life. For example, if the faith community is a congregation, this might include (1) the main gathering of worship, (2) a Bible study, and (3) a service event. Students will need to focus on the following question sets amidst participant observation:

1. Who matters here? Whose bodies matter here? Whose flourishing is prioritized?

2. How does the community speak (language and symbols) and act (practices) of sacred things and beings?
3. Who is excluded? How are they excluded? In what ways is this intentional or unintentional?
4. What is the community's hope? Who do they long to be? What kind of world are they longing for and helping foster?
5. What would just action, mercy, and humility require for the community's hopes to be realized?
6. Different questions can emerge amidst participant observation. Students will need to identify and engage with at least one more question that emerged from your visits.

Students will give a 30 minute presentation in class on their project and findings. The presentation should include interaction and facilitate conversation. Each student will write an individual paper that engages our books, class learning and theological and pastoral perspectives.

Capstone Paper and Presentation: The capstone paper and presentation gives students an opportunity to present a thoughtful theology and philosophy of ministry that seeks to live out Micah 6:8. This will be a 6-8 page paper. This paper needs to include 8 citations from theological sources from our class and your college career. The paper needs to showcase your theological and writing capacity at the end of your undergraduate career. Make it stellar. A rubric will be provided on Canvas.

Students will present a 10 minute summary of their paper in a lively and professional manner during the final class session slot for this course.

SPIRITUAL CARE

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

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain, or if you have prayer requests, you can contact the Office of Student 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.

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. **Assignments more than one week late will not be graded. 5% off for each school day late.**

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.

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 at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. 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 at pointloma.edu/title-ix

COURSE MODALITY DEFINITIONS

1. In-Person: Course meetings are face-to-face with no more than 25% online delivery.

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 until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

ASSIGNMENTS AT-A-GLANCE

This following schedule is subject to change

Abbreviations for course books:

PT: Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life, eds: Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, Eerdmans, 2002.

BB: Becoming Brave: Finding the Courage to Pursue Racial Justice Now, Brenda Slater McNeil, Brazos, 2020.

ECF: Selected writings of Elizabeth Conde-Frazier found on Canvas.

Class date	Topic	Reading & Writing Assignment
F/1/17	Intro to class, Overview, What is a “capstone” and defining justice.	All assignments due before class Put all due dates on your calendars!
M 1/20	No Classes MLK day	
F 1/24	Living between belief and practice The Bible Women’s Project	PT, 1-32, complete reading response 1 on Canvas before class
M 1/27	Vsist with the Center for Justice and Reconciliation. Restorative rather than retributive justice.	BB, 17-61, PT 33-77

		Dear Jonathan Derby letter on restorative justice due, Monday 1/27 by midnight
F 1/31	Career Services Visit	PT, 78-120, Complete reading response 2 on Canvas before class
M 1/3	Dr. George on a vocational journey of justice making	Listen to video of Brenda Salter McNeil BB, 63-103
F 2/7	Being Shalom, students share from their vocational essay	BB, 105-195, write your vocational essay, "Who me?" prompt on Canvas
M 2/10	Communal Practices and Introducing the Case Study Method	PT 121-156 Reading Response 3 due before class
F 2/14	Classes cancelled, Dr. Fulcher's presidential inauguration	Extra credit--attend the SOTCM Homecoming event on Saturday
M 2/17	Case Study #1	Case Study Written Brief due before class
F 2/21	Introducing the Participant-Observer Project	PT 185-242 Reading Response 4 due before class Work in groups, brainstorm project
M 2/24	Field Trip #1	
F 2/28	Case Study #2	Case Study Written Brief due before class
M 3/3	Meet Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier through her preaching	Reading response 5 due before class
F 3/7	Meet Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier through her sermon "Dislocation and Relocation."	—online class Elizabeth Conde-Frazier sermon Reading response 6 due before class
SPRING BREAK 3/10-14	No Classes	No classes
M 3/17	No Class—Attend at least 2 of the lectures and a meal	
M 3/17 3/19	Attend Wiley lectures Guest Lecturer: Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, Founder of the Orlando E. Costas Hispanic and Latin American Ministries Program at Andover Newton Theological School, and retired Director of the Association for Hispanic Theological Education. Series Title: "Grace, Genuineness, and Glory:	

	<p>Spirituality for Living into the New Things of God” (All lectures in Crill Performance Hall) Lecture 1: “The Fullness of You” *Wednesday March 19, 2025 11:00-11:50am Lecture 2: “World, Woes, and Wonder” *Wednesday March 19, 2025 1:30-2:20pm Lecture 3: “The Dreams of the Heart of God” *Thursday March 20, 2025 9:30-10:20am Lecture 4: “You Are Befriended” *Friday March 21, 2025 8:30-9:20am</p>	
F 3/21	Attend Wiley lecture	Write a letter of response: Dear Elizabeth Conde-Frazier Barton.... Include major takeaways from her lectures.
M 3/24	Seeking Hospitality & Truth in Worship and Christian Practices	PT: 185-242
F 3/28	Case Study #3	Case Study Brief due before class
M 4/1	Group Work for Participant-Observer Project	Students will work in pairs to finalize the location, events to attend, and research questions.
F 4/5	Discernment in Community	PT 157-181 Complete reading response 7 on Canvas before class
M 4/7	Faculty panel	PT 245-263 Complete reading response 8 on Canvas before class
F 4/11	Case Study #4	Case study brief to be completed before class
M 4/14	Evaluating theological resources and media	Pick two of the podcasts on the list found on Canvas. Sample them and compare and contrast as if you were recommending to 1) a new Christian and 2) someone reevaluating faith. You will complete an online d-board to discuss with the class
F 4/19	EASTER BREAK	Christ is Risen
M 4/21	EASTER BREAK	Christ is Risen, Indeed!
F 4/25	Participant-Observer Projects Presented in Groups	
4/28	Outline of final paper due–peer review offered	Come with a rough draft
F 5/3	Final 5-6 page paper due	Students will read a portion of their final

	Each student will write a paper on findings from the group project. 8 citations from course books and other books from courses from your academic career at PLNU.	papers to the class
FINALS WEEK	Celebration time! Pizza party Pizza Nova	