The Reuben Welch School of Theology & Christian Ministry

Church History 3095, Section 2: The Christian Tradition

Three Units

Fall 2025 Semester

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1 – 2:15 p.m.

Starkey B 100

Final Exam: Friday 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Professor: Dr. Michael Lodahl
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Office: Smee 208 (upstairs and to your left)
Office Hours: Mondays 3-5; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 – 5:30

University Mission Statement:

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 for whom grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

General Education Mission Statement:

Point Loma Nazarene University 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 cultures.

Course Description:

Catalogue description: A historical survey of the ideas, practices, and institutions of Christianity from the end of the New Testament period to the present, with attention to the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition. [*Note*: The 'Wesleyan' refers primarily to John Wesley, 1703-1791; and 'Arminian' to Jacob Arminius, 1560-1609.]

Elaborated description: We shall attempt to focus our historical and theological study through the lens of the doctrine of ***creation***, including the creation of human beings in God's image – and what this teaching implies about human responsibility in, and for, God's creation. This means that we shall attempt to keep ever before us the following question: What have selected Christian leaders down through the 21 centuries of Christian faith *believed*, and *written*, about **the material world as God's creation**? We will especially examine the doctrines of **the incarnation of the Word** and **the resurrection of the body** in connection with the doctrine of creation. Further, we shall attempt to discern what practical difference(s) such beliefs and claims have made upon those people's lives: what have they *done* in response to, and in light of, their convictions about the world as God's good creation – compromised and perverted by human sin?

Such questions as these demand that special attention be given to *Christology*, or the doctrine of Christ. This means that we shall attempt to keep ever before us the following question: What have selected key people during the 21 centuries of Christian faith *believed, thought*, and *said*, about Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ (or Messiah, the Anointed One of God)? Further, we shall attempt to discern what practical difference(s) such convictions have made upon those people's lives: what have they *done* in response to, and in light of, their faith in Jesus Christ? Most particularly, how have Christians thought about, and acted within, God's creation – the world in which we live and upon which we depend – in the light of Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son?

Course Texts

Lodahl, Michael and Cordero, April. *Renewal in Love: Living Holy Lives in God's Good Creation* (***Renewal***)

Course anthology, *Crucial Readings in the Christian Tradition* (***Readings***), compiled, edited, and additional notes by M. Lodahl.

Please note that this anthology listed immediately above (*Crucial Readings in the Christian Tradition*) is posted among course materials on Canvas, but it is there for you to download. It is strongly encouraged that all students in this course print a hard copy of the anthology for heightened pedagogical value, unless you use a screen on which you can take notes. Providing material evidence of having a hard copy, or at least of having some way to take notes on the pages of the anthology, will be worth an extra credit of 25 points in the attendance /

participation category of this course, as long as it is presented within the first two weeks of the semester.

Course Learning Outcomes.

Upon successful completion of this course, you will have:

1) demonstrated increasing understanding of Christian Scripture and tradition, both through engagement with classic literary sources and through participation in a variety of Christian worship settings;

2) demonstrated the ability to describe the critical issues in the historical development of Christian tradition, particularly in regards to *Christology*, or the doctrine of Christ;

3) demonstrated the ability to describe the characteristic features of Arminian-Wesleyan theology, particularly in its development within Reformation debates and concerns;

4) examined the deep connections between central Christian convictions and ethical living, particularly as formulated and taught in the Wesleyan theological tradition, and considered especially in relationship to our growing ecological crisis;

5) grown in appreciation for the importance of active participation in Christian congregational life in its liturgical diversity; and

6) demonstrated a growing excellence in the discipline of effective writing, particularly as related to biblical, religious and theological literacy.

General Education Learning Outcome

GELO 3: Students will demonstrate an understanding of Christian Scripture, tradition, and ethics, including engagement in acts of devotion and works of mercy.

Signature assignment: Written reflection upon your participation in a corporate religious practice / worship service in a tradition different from your own.

This will entail an in-person visit of a worship service from one of three "groups": Group 1, Group 2, or Group 3.

Group I: Roman Catholic, Orthodox (Greek, Russian, Coptic, Armenian, etc.), Anglican, Episcopal.

Group 2: Presbyterian, Lutheran, United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, United Church of Christ, Congregational Church, Christian Church (Disciples), Church of Jesus Christ, Scientist (Christian Science), *American* Baptist, Community of Christ (formerly known as Reorganized Latter-day Saints).

Group 3**:** *Southern* Baptist, *General* Baptist, Friends, Seventh-day Adventist, Church of God in Christ, Christian Reformed, Assemblies of God, Nazarene, Salvation Army, Free Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Foursquare, charismatic, Pentecostal, Calvary Chapel, non-denominational congregations, Messianic synagogues, Jehovah's Witnesses (Kingdom Hall), Latter-day Saints (Mormon).

***There may be possibilities other than these listed; however, please check with your professor before visiting a church congregation not listed above. Please note: if the church tradition you have been most immersed in is, for example, the Roman Catholic, then you must choose a church from Groups 2 or 3. Similarly, if your home church tradition is, for example, Methodist or Lutheran, choose from Groups 1 or 3. Most (but far from all) students at PLNU tend to come from nondenominational contexts, so they must choose from Groups 1 or 2.**

If you come to Point Loma with little to no church background, then of course you may visit a worship service from any one of the three groups.

In this 5-6 page (double-spaced) paper, you will offer your own observations of the worship service or activity you attend; **for example**, write what you noted about the congregation's demographics, the style and content of the worship, the use of Scripture or other printed texts, ***what is said about (or to) Christ***, what role art and architecture seem to play in this congregation's life and worship, the behavior and sermon of the minister, priest or worship leader, etc. ***You are strongly encouraged also to note what is said (if anything) in Scripture readings, hymns, or the sermon about the natural world or environment.*** Similarly, please note what emerges as the ethical or moral implication of what is preached, read, and / or prayed during this service. This paper ***should not*** be simply a summary of the sermon, though of course attention should be given to this. It is equally important to take note, theologically, of what is taught through the worship songs or hymns, Scripture readings, etc. You must include a photograph of the church bulletin (or some other corroborating document) from the service you attend, upon which you should have your handwritten notes from the service (or comparable activity) along with your signature. (CLO 1, 2, 4)

Your paper should also include evidence of your having done some background study of the particular denomination or tradition of the congregation you visit. (Internet sources are fine for this, but try to be certain that those sources are reliable and relatively objective.) *Your paper will be significantly strengthened, too, by including at least a brief quotation from conversation between you and the spiritual leader or one of the congregants.*

No "visits" of recorded services on the internet will be allowed for this assignment.

Grading rubric for this writing assignment:

Grammar / Spelling / Punctuation 25%

Clarity / Organization / Flow 20%

Content: What is communicated in the service, especially regarding Christology, Natural Environment (if anything) 45%

Historical / Social background of the denomination of the congregation visited 10%

Important Points Regarding Your Writing for this Class:

Please keep in mind that grammar, spelling and punctuation all play a critical role in your professor's evaluation of all your papers. Please avail yourselves of the services of a competent, trustworthy proofreader or the university's Writing Center (more information about the Center below). I make no apologies for this. This is a liberal arts institution, which means I reserve the right to be equally concerned with your spelling, grammar, and punctuation as I am with your ideas. Indeed, your ideas are severely compromised when expressed poorly in writing. I take this seriously.

- To help you in the endeavor of writing a good paper for this class and other classes, please give careful attention to the handout ('Writing Tips') from the professor regarding common errors in student writing. Peruse this document carefully; you shall be held responsible for its contents in your professor's reading of *all* of your assigned papers. Indeed, it is one of your first attendance /participation assignments for this course.

Other Course Requirements (in addition to the Signature Assignment):

1) Consistent class attendance and participation (CLO 1). Generally, attendance at any given class session is worth five attendance / participation points (out of five possible). Each absence is scored as 0/5 for that day and *after four absences the student is eligible to be dropped from the course roll.* ***I take this very seriously; I trust that you will too.***

2) Careful and disciplined reading of assigned texts for each class session. *Actually doing the daily reading is absolutely your responsibility*. This will be evaluated essentially by the quality of discussion/interaction which you are able to contribute to the life of the class, **and by occasional (or perhaps more than occasional) unannounced quizzes** whose scores will be entered in the attendance / participation category – such quizzes will address the day's assigned reading and / or the main points of the previous lecture or lectures (CLO 1, 2).

Final Grade will be determined on the basis of:

1. the two exams (20% on mid-term, 25% on the final);
2. the signature writing assignment (congregational worship / activity visit and reflection paper [25 %]; and
3. attendance, quizzes and participation (30%).

94-100, A; 90-93, A-; 87-89, B+; 83-86, B; 80-82, B-; 77-79, C+;

73-76, C; 70-72, C-; 67-69, D+; 60-66, D; 56-59, D-; below 56, F.

I do round up on percentages, e.g., a final percentage of 93.5 and higher is an A.

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 and is also included on the opening page of this syllabus. 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.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you 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 have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the Office of Spiritual Life and Formation.

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.

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 619-849-2533). 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. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

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 assure 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 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 other forms of discrimination, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, 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 accommodations and resources 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, faculty and staff are 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.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

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

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 and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see Loma Writing Center webpage or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar
- Website
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu

Course Calendar

Sept 3 – Introduction to the course and to the idea of Christian tradition(s).

Sept 8 – Parallel gospels handout. Topic: *Jesus's question: "Who do you say that I am?"*

Sept 10 – *Renewal in Love* Chapter 1; *Readings* 1-3. **(Please note that *Readings* will be identified not by page number but by sections.)**
Topic: *Humanity Created (and Renewed) in the Image of God.*

Sept 15 – *Renewal in Love* Chapter 2 (pages 35-44); *Readings* 6 (John 1:1-18).
Topic: *Jesus Christ, the Word, Image, and 'Very Being' of God*

Sept 17 – *Readings* 4-8 (excerpts from Gospel of Thomas, the *Didache*, and Ignatius of Antioch). Topic: *The Incarnate Word vs. Gnostic Christologies*

Sept 22 – *Renewal in Love,* 69-80; *Readings* 9-13.
Topic: *Irenaeus, Recapitulation and the Battle against Heresies*

Sept 24 – *Readings* 14-24 (excerpts from Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen) Topic: *Faith in Christ and Philosophical Reasoning*

Sept 29 – *Renewal in Love*, Chapter 3. Topic: *Reason's Intersection with Reading Scripture.*

Oct 1 – *Readings* 25-29 (excerpts from Arius and Athanasius)

Topic: *The Christological Debate at the Council of Nicea*

Oct 6 – *Renewal* 80-86; *Readings* 30-35 (excerpts from Apollinaris and Gregory of Nazianzus) Topic: *The Christological Debate at the Council of Constantinople*

Oct 8 – *Readings* 33-42 (excerpts from Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa) Topic: *The Cappadocians' Critical Contributions to Christian Tradition*

Oct 13 – *Readings* 43-45 (excerpts from Gregory of Nyssa and his older sister Macrina)
Topic: *The Resurrection of the Body in a Time of Platonic Immortality*

Oct 15 – *Readings* 46-49. Topic: *St. Augustine, the great Bishop of Hippo*

Oct 20 – *Readings* 50-52; *Renewal* 44-49. Topic: *Augustine's Incredible Rule for Reading Scripture*
Oct 22 – *Readings* 53-57; *Renewal* 86-92. Topic: *Human Nature in Eastern Christianity.*

Oct 27 – **Mid-term examination. Multiple choice questions only.**

Oct 29 – *Readings* 58-59. Topic: *Anselm and Abelard (and Heloise!)*

Nov 3 – *Readings* 60-64. Anselm, Abelard and Heloise, cont'd.

Nov 5 – *Readings* 65-68. Topic: *Thomas Aquinas: Reason and Revelation.*

Nov 10 – *Readings* 69-70. Topic: *Julian of Norwich: Mysticism, Christ, and Creation*

Nov 12 – *Readings* 73-81. Topic: *Luther vs. Erasmus on Divine Grace / Human Willing*

Nov 17 == *Readings* 82-86.
Topic: *On the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, or Eucharist*

Nov 19 – *Readings* 87-88. Topic: John *Calvin's Sovereign God*

Nov 24 – *Readings 89-92.* Topic: *James Arminius, and the Reaction of the Synod of Dort*

Thanksgiving Break

Dec 1 – *Readings* 94-99
Topic: *Reading Scripture in a Wesleyan Way: "God is Love"*

Dec 3 – *Renewal* 86-110. Topic: *Tasty Grace*

Dec 7, midnight: Signature writing assignment due. *No late submissions will be accepted.*

Dec 8 – *Reading 101*; *Renewal* 111-123. Topic: *Will God Salve All of Creation?*

Dec 10 – *Renewal* 123-146.
Topic: *Wesleyan Means of Grace and our Ecological Crisis.*

December 15 – 19 Finals Week
Final Exam: Friday, 1:30 – 4 p.m. Multiple choice questions only.