

Meeting days/times: Tuesday and Thursdays 1:30-2:45 pm

Meeting location: Smee 100

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 16th from 1:30-3:00 pm

Instructor title and name:	Dr. Jennifer Guerra Aldana
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Office location and hours:	Smee 210, schedule through link in canvas.
Teachers Assistant	Kendra Hudson

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:

Students will be introduced to the church as a formational community for discipleship. The roles and offices of all members of the Christian church will be defined and seen as working together as the Body of Christ. The classical Christian disciplines will be practiced and studied as a means of grace. A method of theological reflection for ministry will be outlined and implemented.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Identify biblical, theological, and historical elements of ministry.
2. Understand a Wesleyan view of the “means of grace.”
3. Gain skills in personal and corporate spiritual practices and apply a method of theological reflection for ministry

Course of Study Ability Statements (for those pursuing ordination)

CH 4 Ability to pursue holy character (Christlikeness) by practicing faith formation and the classic Christian disciplines as a means of grace.

CH 5 Ability to locate, understand, and use resources for individual and corporate spiritual formation.

CH 8 Ability to practice holistic stewardship (mutual submission in gender relationships, sexual purity, marriage and family, personal finances, professional conduct, practicing Sabbath, etc.)

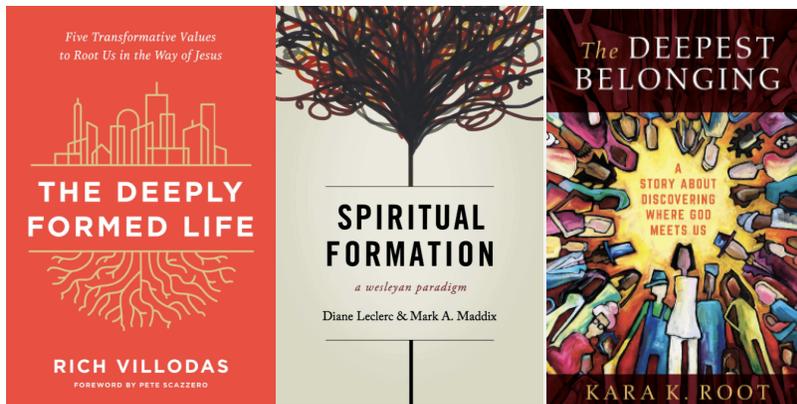
Land, Labor, and Life Acknowledgement

As students and scholars at PLNU, we acknowledge our presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the [Kumeyaay Diegueño Indian Tribe](#). May we be good guests to the people, the stories, the wisdom, the fruits of the land, and dwell with one another with peace.

Course Philosophy

Learning is a communal and collaborative process. Therefore, I hope we can co-construct an environment of rich conversation and critical engagement. I expect students to engage deeply with the readings, come ready to have meaningful discussions, and engage the content with curiosity and effort. *I believe in active learning.* I recognize that I will ask you to engage in theological reflection and conversation in this course that may feel beyond your level of expertise or comfort– embrace it! Lean in, take risks, and give your best effort. As your professor, I commit to providing feedback and being a partner in learning. *The best learning happens when we are stretched beyond what we know or are comfortable with but not to the point of becoming overwhelmed.* Communication will be critical; the more you choose to share, the better I can partner with and support you.

Required Texts



- **The Deeply Formed Life** by Rich Villodas / ISBN-13: 978-0525654407 / 2020
- **Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm** by Diane Leclerc & Mark A Maddix / ISBN-13: 978-0834126138 / 2011
- **The Deepest Belonging** by Kara Root / ISBN-13: 978-1506470931 / 2021

Lomabooks Instructions:

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 pick-up 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: [HERE](#)

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 15 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 120 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes.

Assessment and Grading

Grades will be based on the following:

<p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Reports (180) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 18 reading reports (10 pt each) ● Reflections (200) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Faith Stone Exercise (50) ○ Spiritual Autobiography (100) ○ Spiritual Direction (50) ● Practice and Ministry Assignments (300) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Missional Presence (50) ○ Community Assessment (100) ○ Worship Explorations (50) ○ Ministry Safe Training Program (100) ● Spiritual Formation Retreat Final Project (320) <p>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 1,000</p>	<p>Grading Scale:</p> <p>A=93-100% A-=92-90% B+=87-89% B=83-86% B-=80-82% C+=77-79% C=73-76% C-=70-72% D+=67-69% D=63-66% D-=60-62% F=0-59%</p>
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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 [Class 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.

Content Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. All of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually

challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

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. Late assignments will only be accepted if the professor has been notified in advance and will receive a 10% deduction per day they are late. Extensions may be granted case-by-case. Assignments turned in five days after the due date will not be accepted. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware that 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 students 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](#).

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 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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

This class requires personal reflection and theological discernment. Neither of these tasks requires AI. 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. 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.

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 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 essential 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 model the Christ-like quality of hospitality. You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

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 "humanity," "humans," and "he or she" better acknowledge women as full persons. Papers submitted with exclusive language will receive a point deduction (minor, but an incentive to be attentive).

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.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is 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. **Absences-** Since the class meets weekly, it is imperative that you attend. 2 or more absences will result in a 50% grade reduction, and three or more will result in de-enrollment or failing the course

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 Writing Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

Course Schedule and Assignments

Date	Class Content	Read & Do Before Class
<i>Faith Formation...happens where learning meets presence</i>		
Week 1 September 2 Welcome!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who do you bring with you? 	
September 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Community Agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting To Know You Survey
Week 2 September 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of Class and Introduction to Sentipensar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <u>The Deeply Formed Life</u>, Intro, and complete the reading organizer.
September 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storytelling, meaning-making, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <u>The Deepest</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and belonging Intro to Reading and Retention Tip #1: Consider your Reading/studying environment and show up prepared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Belonging</u>, Intro-Ch. 1, and complete the reading organizer.
Week 3 September 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing our Stories of Faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <u>Spiritual Formation</u>, Ch. 1, and complete the reading organizer. Faith Stones Exercise DUE
<i>Faith Formation...begins with God</i>		
September 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent Questions and Spiritual Formation R&R Tip #2: Use a planner and know what to read and when. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <u>The Deepest Belonging</u>, Ch. 2, and complete the reading organizer.
Week 4 September 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bible and Spiritual Formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <u>Spiritual Formation</u>, Ch. 2-3 and complete the reading organizer.
September 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditions of Faith Formation R&R Tip #3: Break it down and implement realistic goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spiritual Autobiography DUE
Week 5 September 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wesleyan Spiritual Tradition and the Means of Grace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <u>Spiritual Formation</u>, Ch. 5-7 and complete the reading organizer.
October 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer and Spiritual Formation R&R Tip #4: Limit Distractions, especially technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <u>Spiritual Formation</u>, Ch. 4 and complete the reading organizer.
Week 6 October 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Examination and Self-Awareness on the Spiritual Journey Prayer (breath prayers, fasting/feasting, movement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read <u>Soul Feast</u>, Ch. 7 and complete the reading organizer. (Reading posted on canvas)
October 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch Ministry Safe Videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-Semester Check-In

<i>Faith Formation...is lived in community</i>		
Week 7 October 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Formation of Families: Community of Origin • R&R Tip #4: Limit Distractions, especially technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>Spiritual Formation</u>, Ch. 18-19 and complete reading organizer.
October 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Formation and the Church • R&R Tip #5: Set a Comprehension Goal. Is there a concept you want to understand better? Set the goal before you begin and track what you learned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>The Deeply Formed Life</u>, Ch. 9-10 and complete the Missional Presence reflection. • Read <u>Spiritual Formation</u>, Ch. 8-9 and complete reading organizer.
Week 8 October 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inward Outward Rhythm of Faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>The Deeply Formed Life</u>, Ch. 1-2 and complete the reading organizer.
October 23-24: Fall Break (No Classes)		
Week 9 October 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interior Examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>The Deeply Formed Life</u>, Ch. 5-6 and complete the reading organizer
October 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship Explorations Shared • R&R Tip #6: Be aware of what motivates you! Take breaks and reward yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship Explorations reflections due
<i>Faith Formation...is lived out in ministry for the sake of others</i>		
Week 10 November 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Friendship/Spiritual Direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>Spiritual Formation</u>, Ch. 15, and complete reading organizer. • Read <u>Soul Feast</u>, Ch. 8 and complete the Spiritual Direction Discussion

November 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitality • R&R Tip #7: Identify an effective note-taking method (Cornell, outline, mapping, concept map) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>The Deepest Belonging</u>, Ch. 7, and complete reading organizer.
Week 11 November 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Care/Dignity and Rule of Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>Soul Feast</u>, Ch. 10, and complete reading organizer.
November 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Formation in Context Guest Speaker: Jason Evans? • R&R Tip #8: CRIT Method 6 Steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>The Deeply Formed Life</u>, Ch. 3-4 and complete reading organizer.
Week 12 November 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exegeting the OB neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk Newport Avenue in Ocean Beach in a small group of 2-3. Fill out a community assessment form together.
November 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Work Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Assessment Due
Week 13 November 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclaiming Sabbath Time 	
November 26-28: Thanksgiving Break (No Classes)		
Week 14 December 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Spaces for Faith Formation (Visit SDFC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Ministry Safe Training
December 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the counter-cultural kingdom of God • Guest Speaker: Rev. Rob 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>Spiritual Formation</u>, Ch. 6 & 16, and complete reading organizer.
Week 15 December 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivating Shalom • God in All Things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <u>The Deepest Belonging</u>, Ch. 11-12, and complete reading organizer.
December 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecology of Faith Formation Assessment 	
FINAL: Dec. 17	Spiritual Formation Retreat Final Project Due	

Assignment Descriptions

Reading Organizers

The reading organizers are designed to help you actively engage with course texts, identify key ideas and quotes, and make connections between readings, personal experiences, and class discussions. By completing an organizer for each assigned reading, you will develop skills in critical reading, theological reflection, and application to ministry contexts.

Reflections

- **Faith Stone Exercise:** This exercise invites you to reflect on key moments, relationships, and experiences that have shaped your faith journey. Drawing out stones and streams on a piece of paper,, you will identify and label 5-6 “faith stones,” each representing a significant spiritual milestone or turning point. You will share your stones in a gallery walk format, listening to and learning from the stories of your classmates. This activity will help you recognize patterns in your spiritual formation, deepen connections within the learning community, and prepare for writing your spiritual autobiography.
- **Spiritual Autobiography:** For this assignment, you will write a 4–5 page narrative tracing your spiritual journey from your earliest memories to the present, highlighting key moments, relationships, and practices that have shaped your faith and worldview. Your autobiography should identify major turning points, persistent questions, and hopes for your future formation. This is not simply a list of events but a thoughtful reflection on how God has been present in your life, even in unexpected ways. Creative elements such as scripture, poetry, images, or artwork may be included.

Projects

- **Worship Exploration:** For this assignment, you will participate in a Christian worship gathering outside your regular experience and explore how its practices shape both personal and communal faith formation. You will observe and reflect on spiritual practices such as prayer, scripture, sacraments, song, testimony, and acts of service, noting how they invite participants into deeper relationship with God and one another. Special attention will be given to the role of the senses in worship and how worship forms people for life beyond the gathered service. You will use the provided Faith Formation Worship Observations Checklist to guide your participation, and you will share a brief “worship snapshot” in class that highlights the most formative element you experienced. Your reflection may be submitted in writing (2-3 pages double spaced) or as a 5–7 minute audio or video recording.
- **Community Assessment:** Faith formation happens within a particular context, and understanding the life of a community is essential for meaningful ministry. In this assignment, you will work in teams to explore a neighborhood, paying attention to its physical environment, cultural and faith expressions, community assets, and visible challenges. Using the Community Assessment Field Notes template, you will gather observations during a neighborhood walk, noting where spiritual practices such as hospitality, service, justice, or prayer might naturally connect with community life. Your

team will submit a 4-5 double spaced page paper or 7–10 minute audio/video report. This project will help you practice the art of listening to and learning from a community as a foundation for ministry.

- **Ministry Safe Training:** Creating environments of safety and trust is essential for faithful ministry. This online training equips you with best practices for protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults in ministry settings. You will complete the Ministry Safe video modules and knowledge check to meet program requirements. This assignment will help you understand your role in fostering safe spaces and complying with ethical and legal standards in ministry. Completion of this training is mandatory for participation in certain course activities and future ministry opportunities.

Spiritual Formation Retreat Final Project

Project Overview:

With your teams, you will design a one-day or weekend ministry retreat that could be implemented for a church, campus ministry, or community group.

Your retreat plan should demonstrate:

1. A biblical, theological, and historical foundation for ministry.
2. Integration of the Wesleyan “means of grace.”
3. Personal and corporate spiritual practices supported by a method of theological reflection.

You will present your retreat plan to the class as if you were pitching it to a ministry leadership team. The class will vote for the winning idea.

Your team will work through having a detailed template filled out and will prepare a “pitch” for the class:

- Introduce the theme, purpose, and intended audience.
- Walk us through the retreat schedule, explaining the flow and rationale.
Highlight the biblical/theological/historical foundations and means of grace.
- Share your creative element and how it supports the retreat’s purpose.
- Share your Retreat Schedule & Planning Sheet with class.