PHL3021-1 Syllabus

Point Loma Nazarene University

Justice, Politics and the Social World

PHL 3021

Fall 2025

MW 10:50-12:05

Meet: Smee Wesleyan Seminar

Instructor: Heather K. Ross (she/her/hers)

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Office Hours: by appointment

PLNU MISSION:

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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will engage in the disciplined practice of asking questions about God, the world, and of themselves, including questions for which there may be no easy answers. (Learning, Growing)
2. Students will differentiate among interrelated movements or figures in the history of philosophy. (Learning)

3. Students will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of human reasoning or experience to provide an adequate account of significant issues that relates to our human condition, the world, ethics and Christian life. (Learning, Growing, Serving)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To examine what it means for us to be human as we exist with others.
2. To examine the way in which sociality has been utilized within the western philosophical tradition.
3. To examine concepts like justice, autonomy, the *polis*, race, gender, the Other, technology, social contract, class, power, torture, thought, bodies, community, etc.

TEXTBOOKS:

ISBN#: 9780872201361 *Republic* (Grube) by Plato / Grube, G. M. A. (Translator)

ISBN#: 9781624665578 *Politics*: New Translation by Aristotle / Reeve, C. D. C.

ISBN#: 9780141191751 *Of the Social Contract and Other Political Writings* by Rousseau, Jean-Jacques

ISBN#: 9781981084425 *Communist Manifesto* (Annotated) by Marx, Karl

ISBN#: 9780061627019 *Basic Writings* by Heidegger, Martin

ISBN#: 9780063354487 *Origins of Totalitarianism* by Arendt, Hannah

ISBN#: 9780679752554 *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* by Foucault, Michel

ISBN#: 9780812993547 *Between the World and Me* by Coates, Ta-Nehisi

ISBN#: 9780142000663 *Grapes of Wrath*: Centennial Edition by Steinbeck, John

PROCEDURE/REQUIREMENTS:

1. We will be reading from some of the most significant **texts** in the history of western thought. It is vitally important that you become acquainted with the material in order that you get a feel for not simply what the writer says, but *how* they make you think. I want you to be thoughtful and critical of what each of the thinkers writes, as well as of what I say in class. A significant portion of your grade will be based upon the

amount of reading you do. You will be asked to give a report each day at the beginning of class on your reading progress (scale of 0-10). For example, an 8.5 means that you read carefully and thought about carefully 85% of the assigned reading for that day.

1. Regular and punctual **attendance** is required for the full benefit of this class. If you are late it is your responsibility to see me after class in order that your attendance may be recorded. Any three tardies will be recorded as one absence. Due to the size and nature of this class in particular, dialogue will be very important. Dialogue tends to spawn new ideas and creativity, so discussion will be important. Therefore, *each* student will be expected to enter into class discussion. The extent to which this occurs (as well as the quality), along with attendance will be considered in your final grade. *You cannot pass the class* if you miss more than 6 class sessions. See the catalogue.

1. Throughout the term each of you will do an in-class quotation **presentation**. Please provide at least a 150 word general introduction to the work to be covered for that day. This should be *in your own words* If it is the first day discussing a figure, there should be a general philosophical introduction to the figure covered during that session. It may include cultural analyses elucidating the time period surrounding the figure/work. The presentations should mainly be an outline of the text for the day. You should reference 4-5 significant portions of the text to be covered in class. You must provide a detailed list of quotations and bibliographic citation/reference for each member of the class. Place your materials in the Quotation Presentation assignment box. Pictures are always a welcome addition.

1. There will be 3 Take-Home Exams**/essays** due throughout the semester. Each of the exams will cover the material just prior to the reception of the exam (including the material covered on the day of the reception of the exam). I will give you an essay prompt and you will have a week to respond. You absolutely may not use outside sources for the exams. You may study together and I encourage you to do so. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in either zero credit for the assignment and a full grade reduction for the class or (more likely) failure of the course all together (this is up to my discretion). Both will result in a letter to the Provost to be placed in your academic record.

1. Each of you will need to do a 750 word **book review** of Ta-Nehisi Coates' book, *Between the World and Me*. You will need to include a discussion of each of the following issues… the structure of the text (genre), the author himself (who is Coates?) and why does that matter?, the overarching theme/argument of the text, and a discussion of how this book has helped you understand the struggle of what it means –phenomenologically- to live as a black man in America. It is due via Canvas.

1. There will be a **final paper** due via Canvas. It will be 1800-2,000 words, double-spaced please. It will need to incorporate a vision of social existence whether critical or otherwise into an analysis of any topic or figure from the class as it relates to *Grapes of Wrath*. You will need to present a thesis statement to me prior to the final paper for my approval. You may make use of any official manual of style. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in either zero credit for the assignment and a full grade reduction for the class or failure of the course all together (this is up to my discretion). Both will result in a letter to the Provost to be placed in your academic record.

1. **Discussion boards** will take place via Canvas. There will be one discussion board open per week. It will be on a two day cycle in which you post initially on the first day and reply the second day. You will post an initial response to the reading and then within a day later, you will post a reply to your colleagues. You will need to post a total of two times per week. Between your two posts, you will need to post 150-250 words total. Please include a word count at the end of each of your posts.

1. The **grades** are based on all of these mentioned assignments. All outside assignments are due via Canvas. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in either zero credit for the assignment and a full grade reduction for the class or (more likely) failure of the course all together (this is up to my discretion). Both will result in a letter to the Provost to be placed in your academic record.

Presentation 16%

Discussion Boards 13% (1 point per week)

Reading 10%

Exam #1 12%

Exam #2 12%

Exam #3 12%

Coates Book Review 10%

Final Paper 15%

Total 100%

100-94%	A	79-77%	C+	63-60%	D-
93-90%	A-	76-74%	C	59-0%	F
89-87%	B+	73-70%	C-		
86-84%	B	69-67%	D+		
83-80%	B-	66-64%	D		

Discrimination and Harassment:

Discrimination or harassment related to race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual identity or orientation, differences in ability, religious choice, or any other type of behavior that dehumanizes human beings or dismisses difference, is not conducive to a good learning environment and is harmful to human vitality and healthy community. These behaviors will not be tolerated. We encourage all students to be open to any honest, respectful, and tactful discussion of issues that might arise in the context of our learning.

Inclusive Language:

The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of all people. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women and gender-diverse individuals, we urge 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, she or they” better acknowledge individuals as full persons.

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.

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

Links to an external site.

. May we be good guests to the people, the stories, the wisdom, the fruits of the land and dwell with one another with peace.

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. Further, if you plan to record any of the classroom discussion, you must receive explicit permission from the professor.

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.

Late Assignments and Incompletes

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in to Canvas when they are due. Any excused late assignment must be completed within one week of the original due date and must be approved via email by me. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

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 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.

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.

Note: The information below must be included under the "PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy" Section if you are teaching an Online or Hybrid course.

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 students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact the Office of Spiritual Development

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

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
- Links to an external site.
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- Website
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu

Use of Technology

Please do not use laptops in class unless you have been given an exception via email.

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, microphone, or webcams 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) 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.

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. In [class name], 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. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics include [list topics]. 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 come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of [subject/major], and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Trigger Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In [class name], we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include [list topics]. Each

time this topic appears in a reading or unit, it is marked on the syllabus. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of [subject/major], 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. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

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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.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) is prohibited in this course for any aspect of your work, including idea generation, drafting, editing, or final submissions. This course is designed to assess your independent critical thinking, writing, and research skills without the assistance of AI technologies. Violations of this policy will be treated as breaches of academic integrity.

If you find you have violated the policy above, please see below for ways to alert me to your usage. Your usage of these "tools," while harmful for your philosophical education and outside the bounds of any assignment given in this class, will be considered in calculating your grade and will result in a 50-100% reduction for each violation, depending on the degree of severity.

MLA Style Center: Citing Generative AI

Links to an external site.

APA Style: How to Cite ChatGPT

Links to an external site.

Chicago Manual of Style: Citing Content Developed or Generated by AI

Links to an external site.

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.

Schedule At A Glance

WEEK ONE

9/2 | CLASS | Introduction to the course

WEEK TWO

9/8 | Read Plato's *Republic* Book I (pdf)

9/9 | DB Initial

9/10 | Read Plato's *Republic* Book 2 (pdf)

9/10 | DB Reply

WEEK THREE

9/15 | Read Aristotle's *Politics* A Ava

9/16 | DB Initial

9/17 | Read Aristotle's *Politics* B Elena

9/17 | DB Rely

WEEK FOUR

9/22 | Rousseau's *Social Contract* A Serina

9/23 | DB Initial

9/24 | Rousseau's *Social Contract* B Ruthmanie

9/24 | DB Reply

WEEK FIVE

9/29 | Marx's *Communist Manifesto* A Bryce

9/30 | DB Initial

10/1 | Marx's *Communist Manifesto* B Lauren

10/1 | DB Reply

10/1 | Submit Exam I

WEEK SIX

10/6 | Heidegger's *Basic Writings* pp. 311-328

10/7 | DB Initial

10/8 | Heidegger's BW pp. 328-341 Seamus

10/8 | DB Reply

WEEK SEVEN

10/13 | Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* A Lana

10/14 | DB Initial

10/15 | Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* B Emily

10/15 | DB Reply

WEEK EIGHT

10/20 | Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* pp. 3-31 Amen

10/21 | DB Initial

10/22 | Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* pp. 195-228 Abi

10/22 | DB Reply

10/24 | Reminder: Start Reading Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*

WEEK NINE

10/27 | Read Scarry (pdf) pp. 27-59 Joey

10/28 | DB Initial

10/29 | Read Davis's *Planet of Slums* (pdf) pp. 121-150 Ella

10/29 | DB Reply

10/29 | Submit Exam II

WEEK TEN

11/3 | Read DeBeauvoir (link) Jessica

11/4 | DB Initial

11/5 | Read Butler (pdf) pp. 692-702 Riley

11/5 | DB Reply

WEEK ELEVEN

11/10 | Submit 13th Documentary Response

11/10 | Watch 13th Documentary on Netflix

11/11 | DB Initial

11/12 | Read Coates's "The Case for Reparations" (link)

11/12 | DB Reply

WEEK TWELVE

11/17 | Read Loomba (pdf) pp. 150-183

11/18 | DB Initial

11/19 | Read Mbembe (pdf)

11/19 | DB Reply

WEEK THIRTEEN

11/24 | Watch Sharon Betcher's

Crip/tography: Disability Theology in the Ruins of God

Links to an external site.

11/24 | Submit Exam III

11/26 | NO CLASS THANKSGIVING | Read Coates *Between the World and Me*

WEEK FOURTEEN

12/1 | Read Coates's *Between the World and Me* pp. 1-72

12/2 | DB Initial

12/3 | Read Coates's *Between the World and Me* pp. 73-152

12/3 | DB Reply

12/3 | Submit Coates Book Review

WEEK FIFTEEN

12/8 | Read Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* A

12/9 | DB Initial

12/10 | Read Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* B

12/10 | DB Reply

WEEK SIXTEEN

12/15 | Quotation Presentation #1

12/17 | Submit Final Paper in Canvas