



College of Health Sciences

Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

OCC 6004: Health and Equity Disparities

1 credit unit

Fall 2025 / Quad 2

October 27 - December 21, 2025

In Person

Meeting Days: Friday

Instructor: Professor Robert Valiente-Neighbors

Meeting Times: 9:00-10:45 am

Email: rvalient@pointloma.edu

Meeting Location: Balboa #246

Office Hours: Available by appointment

Final Presentation Submission due, Friday by 11:59 pm

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.

Occupational Therapy Mission

The mission of the PLNU Occupational Therapy program is to produce competent and professional graduates who provide evidenced-based and occupation focused interventions that serve others as an expression of faith.

Course Description

This course examines the theoretical frameworks explaining health disparities across various populations, with a focus on social determinants of health. Students will explore a diverse set of policies and practices that impact access to healthcare including those that address privilege and power, encourage capacity building, and facilitate community engagement. Bridging macro and micro approaches to health, this course aims to cultivate health professionals who practice empathy. (8-week course, quad two).

Relationship of Course to Curricular Design

This course is foundational in building the awareness and capacity to work with diverse clients, groups, and populations during community seminar one and two courses, Level I and Level II Fieldwork. The knowledge acquired and applied will enable students to develop the awareness and empathy of the social determinants of health for persons, groups, and populations who are at risk for disabilities and chronic health conditions. The Health and Equity Disparities course is taken concurrently with the following courses: introduction to occupational therapy, evidence-based practice, and applied human anatomy. This course supports the curricular thread of occupations.

Course Learning Outcomes - Occupational Therapy

The course learning outcomes are the ACOTE Standards and students will be using concepts and skills that will be introduced and/or be expected to show beginning competency. Students will:

1. Apply and analyze the role of sociocultural, socioeconomic, and diversity factors, as well as lifestyle choices in contemporary society to meet the needs of persons, groups, and populations. (B.1.2)
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the social determinants of health for persons, groups, and populations with or at risk for disabilities and chronic health conditions. This must include an analysis of the epidemiological factors that impact the public health and welfare of populations. (B.1.3)
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of intraprofessional and interprofessional team dynamics to perform effectively in different team roles to plan, deliver, and evaluate patient- and population-centered care as well as population health programs and policies that are safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable. (B.3.22)

Course Learning Outcomes - Athletic Training

DEI 1: The program demonstrates systematic diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice efforts in its development, design, and delivery. Annotation Programs advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice through a variety of efforts. These can include (but are not limited to) the following: participating in institutional efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice; incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice across the program curriculum; recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, students, and preceptors; improving faculty and preceptors understanding and integration of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice; implementing policies that support a climate of equity and inclusion, free of harassment and discrimination; community engagements and/or scholarly endeavors (opportunities) that are reflective of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice; and gathering program data that informs the programs diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice efforts. Sources may include, but are not limited to, demographic reports, retention reports, equity analysis, climate data, participation in DEI activities, competency development, program evaluations, and interviews/focus group data.

DEI 2: Practice cultural competency, foster cultural humility, and demonstrate respect in client/patient care. This includes (but is not limited to) the following: Using contemporary nomenclature of various identities. Analyzing

the impact of group identification, including the intersectionality of multiple identities, on health disparities, patient care, and patient outcomes. Analyzing the impact of marginalization on health disparities, patient care, and patient outcomes. Developing strategies that minimize the impact of clinician-based bias, prejudice, and privilege on patient interactions. Devising patient-centered interventions to diverse populations that account for the healthcare delivery system.

Program Learning Outcomes

This course contributes to the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for occupational therapy practice and addresses these Program Learning Outcomes:

PLO # 3: Provide services within a client-centered and occupation-based framework, with consideration of contextual factors which influence a person, groups, and/or populations ability to engage in meaningful occupational tasks and roles.

PLO # 6: Prepare diverse health care professionals as providers and leaders in the delivery of high quality, accessible, culturally responsive care within a highly technological and global environment.

PLO # 7: Advance the awareness and ability to work collaboratively with interdisciplinary team members to enhance the provision of client-centered, quality occupational therapy services.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

1. Learning, Informed by our Faith in Christ

Students will acquire knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world while developing skills and habits of the mind that foster lifelong learning.

2. Growing, in a Christ-centered Faith Community

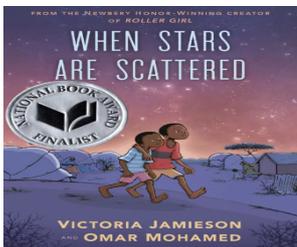
Students will develop a deeper and more informed understanding of others as they negotiate complex professional, environmental, and social contexts.

3. Serving, in a Context of Christian Faith

Students will serve locally and/or globally in vocational and social settings.

Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources

All weekly reading assignments have been linked in Canvas. Students are required to read the assigned content, and submit responses to the prompts about the reading Thursday by 11:59 pm (before class meets on Friday mornings).



There is one required textbook, which is a graphic novel titled *When Stars are Scattered* (2020) written by Omar Mohamed and Victoria Jamieson. It is based on Omar's childhood growing up in the Dadaab refugee camp with his brother, after his father was killed and he and his brother were separated from their mother in Somalia. This is a Young Adult book from which students will draw to complete an assignment for WK 4. ISBN-10 0525553908 and ISBN-13 978-0525553908.

There is a recommended study resource for this course: Wells, S., Black, R., Gupta, J. (2016). *Culture and occupation: Effectiveness for occupational therapy practice, education, and research* (3rd ed.). AOTA Press. ISBN: 978-1-56900-371-8.

- Supplemental readings will be provided in Canvas.
 - Jamieson V. Mohamed O. & Geddy I. (2020). [When stars are scattered](#). Dial Books for Young Readers.
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Note: Students are responsible for having the required textbooks prior to the first day of class. Students are also encouraged to begin reading the books in preparation for the class as soon as possible.

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. All supplemental materials posted on this

course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

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 1-unit class delivered over 8 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 37.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided below and in the Canvas modules.

Assessment and Grading

Assessment methods include reflection, video creation, group work and a final video presentation.

Weighted Grades

This course uses weighted grades. Each assignment category is worth a certain percentage of the total grade (100%) for the course, as specified in the table below:

Course Weighting

Category	Grade %
Weekly Reading Responses	40%
In-Class Work Submissions	30%
Class Participation	20%
Final Group Presentation	10%

Student grades for assignments will be posted in the Canvas gradebook. It is important to read the comments posted in the gradebook as these comments are intended to help students improve their work. Final grades will be posted by the due date as posted in the Academic Calendar.

Grading is based on the PLNU grading scale. Grades will be rounded down from .1-.4; and rounded up from .5 to .9.

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	

MSOT Grade Intervention Plan

Scoring below a letter grade of B- (79.5%) in a Level II and Level III Clinical Competency/Skill check will be rated as not showing evidence of necessary competency.

AND

Scoring below a letter grade of a C (73%) in any didactic course is not considered to be a passing grade.

All students must develop a remediation plan if their grades do not meet the expected threshold. A remediation plan is a cooperative effort between the student, the course instructor, and the faculty advisor to establish specific learning activities with a plan to ensure competency and successful progression in the program.

Potential consequences of the above may include any of the following:

- Need to repeat a Level II or Level III clinical competency/skill check.
- Inability to take the next course in a sequence for which this course is a prerequisite.
- Academic warning.
- Academic probation.
- Need to join the next cohort of students.

Refer to the OT Student Handbook, found on the MSOT Program website for more information.

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 Health and Equity Disparities, all 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. 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 understanding of health equity, 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 Health and Equity Disparities, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include, but are not limited to, structural and personal violence, ableism and other forms of discrimination. 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 health equity, 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 by the designated due date and time of day, typically 11:59 pm. Each day an assignment is late, your grade will be reduced by 10%. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

PLNU Spiritual Care

Balboa Campus

PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end, we provide resources for our graduate students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. At the Balboa campus, we have an onsite chaplain, Rev. Kevin Portillo, who is available during class break times across the week. If you have questions or a desire to meet or share any prayer requests with Rev. Portillo, you may contact him directly at KevinPortillo@pointloma.edu.

PLNU Copyright Policy

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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 [Graduate Academic and General Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

During the first week of class, you will be asked to submit an Academic Honesty Verification Statement. Submitting the statement is a requirement of this course. By submitting the Academic Honesty Verification Statement, you will be verifying all assignments completed in this course were completed by you. Carefully review the Academic Honesty Statement below.

Statement: "In submitting this form, I am verifying all the assignments in this course will be completed by me and will be my own work."

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) in this course. Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly identified as such, including the specific tool(s) used. Please use the following sources to guide your citations when using AI.

- [MLA Style Center: Citing Generative AI](#)

- [APA Style: How to Cite ChatGPT](#)
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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 [PLNU's Nondiscrimination webpage](#).

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](#). 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 via our [Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#).

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources via our [Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy](#).

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements.

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.

Students who anticipate being absent for an entire week of a course should contact the instructor in advance for approval and make arrangements to complete the required coursework and/or alternative assignments assigned at the discretion of the instructor. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the instructor and does not waive attendance requirements.

Refer to [Academic Policies](#) for additional details.

Synchronous Attendance/Participation Definition

For synchronous courses that have specific scheduled meeting times (including in-person, hybrid, and synchronous online courses), absences are counted from the first official meeting of the class regardless of the date of the student’s enrollment. For courses with specific attendance requirements, those requirements are outlined in the course syllabus.

Note: For synchronous courses with an online asynchronous week, refer to the Online Asynchronous Class Attendance policy listed below.

Online Asynchronous Attendance/Participation Definition

Students taking online courses with no specific scheduled meeting times are expected to actively engage throughout each week of the course. Attendance is defined as participating in an academic activity within the online classroom which includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging in an online discussion
- Submitting an assignment
- Taking an exam
- Participating in online labs
- Initiating contact with faculty member within the learning management system to discuss course content

Note: Logging into the course does not qualify as participation and will not be counted as meeting the attendance requirement.

Course Modality Definitions

1. Online Courses: These are courses with class meetings where all instruction and interaction are fully online.
 1. Synchronous Courses: At least one class meeting takes place at a designated time.
 2. Asynchronous Courses: All class meetings are asynchronous.
2. Hybrid Courses: These are courses with class meetings that take place both in the classroom and online synchronously and/or asynchronously.
3. In-Person Courses: These are courses that meet in person with the instructor and students in a physical classroom setting. With approval by the area dean, this may include up to 25% of qualified class interactions through a Learning Management System (such as Canvas).

Use of Technology

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 nor allowable) 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.

GPS Academic Resources

PLNU offers the following free academic resources virtually for Graduate Professional Studies (GPS) Students. Visit myPLNU through the links below for more information.

- [The GPS Writing Center](#) offers:
 - **Zoom Writers Workshops** offered each quad on a variety of helpful topics
 - **One-to-one appointments** with the Writing Coach
 - **Microlearning YouTube Video Library** for helpful tips anytime
 - [Research Help Guide](#) to help you start your research
 - The physical office is located on the third floor of the [Mission Valley Regional Center](#) off the student lounge
 - [Academic Writing Resources Course](#): Found on your Canvas Dashboard, this course is non-credit with 24/7 access, no time limits, and self-paced content. [Watch a quick video run-through](#) and take time now to explore!
 - [Grammarly](#): Students have unlimited FREE access to Grammarly for Education, a trusted tool designed to help enhance writing skills by providing real-time feedback, identifying areas for improvement, and providing suggestions. Grammarly's Generative AI is NOT available with our student accounts.
 - [Tutoring](#): Students have access to 24/7 live or scheduled subject tutoring through Tutor.com, including a Paper Drop-Off Service with feedback within 12 hours.
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Assignments-at-a-Glance

The course summary below lists our assignments and their due dates. Click on any assignment to review it.