



Masters of Occupational Therapy Program

OCC6027 Neurologic Adult - Older Adult Conditions, Assessments, and Interventions (3 credit units)

OCC6027L Neurologic Adult - Older Adult Conditions, Assessments, and Interventions Lab (2 credit units)

Spring 2026

Mondays 10:30-1 and Tuesdays 8:30-12:30

Orthotic Lab/Movement Lab

Final Skill Check: April 6th and 7th

Final Exam: Tuesday May 4th

Information	Specifics for the Course
Instructor title and name:	Heather Distelrath, MS, OTR/L
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Email:	hdistelr@pointloma.edu
Office location and hours:	Tuesdays at 12:30-2 or by appointment

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

This lab-based course allows students to learn how to administer, score, interpret, and document standardized and non-standardized occupation-based assessments commonly used with adults and older adults with neurologic disorders. Through case-based learning, simulation, and hands-on practice, students will gain an appreciation of the impact of conditions on occupational performance and engagement. Competency in assessment and treatment will be assessed through simulation and skill checks.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

PLO # 1: Use critical reasoning to provide evidence-based occupational therapy services across the lifespan, in a variety of service delivery models, health care settings, and community-based systems.

PLO # 2: Develop and utilize a therapeutic use of self during client interactions which supports the client's engagement in occupational therapy and achievement of the clients' goals.

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

PLO # 4: Demonstrate compliance with legal, ethical, and professional standards when interacting with clients, service providers, and/or systems.

PLO # 5: Exhibit the ability to document, manage, and evaluate outcomes of services provided.

PLO # 6: Develop clinical programs which meet a need for underserved persons, groups, and/or populations in the community.

PLO # 7: 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.

Course Learning Outcomes

Analyze occupational performance aspects that are affected by diagnoses including heritable diseases, genetic conditions, mental illness, disability, trauma, and injury. (B.2.6)

Demonstrate professional reasoning to evaluate, analyze, diagnose, and provide occupation-based interventions that address client factors, performance patterns, and performance skills. maintenance, modification, and prevention. (B.3.2)

Evaluate client(s)' occupational performance, including occupational profile, by analyzing and selecting

standardized and non-standardized screenings and assessment tools to determine the need for occupational therapy intervention(s). Assessment methods must take into consideration cultural and contextual factors of the client. (B.3.3)

Interpret evaluation findings including occupational performance and participation deficits, results based on psychometric properties of tests considering factors that might bias assessment results (e.g., culture and disability status related to the person and context). (B.3.4)

Based on interpretation of evaluation findings, develop occupation-based intervention plans and strategies that must be client centered, culturally relevant, reflective of current occupational therapy practice, and based on available evidence. Report all evaluation findings and intervention plan to the client, interprofessional team, and payors. (B.3.5)

Recommend and provide direct interventions and procedures to persons, groups, or populations to enhance safety, health and wellness, chronic condition management, and performance in occupations, including therapeutic exercise, support well being and self-advocacy, and virtual interventions. (B.3.6)

Monitor and reevaluate, in collaboration with the client, care partner, and occupational therapy assistant, the effect of occupational therapy intervention and the need for continued or modified intervention. (B.3.7)

Assess, grade, and modify the way persons, groups, and populations perform occupations and activities by adapting processes, modifying environments, implementing assistive technology or adaptive equipment, and applying ergonomic principles to reflect the changing needs of the client, sociocultural context, and technological advances. (B.3.8)

Select, design, and implement occupation based interventions using the strategies of establish, restore, and modify approaches to address deficits in performance skills. (B.3.9)

Develop a plan for discharge from occupational therapy services in collaboration with the client and members of the intraprofessional and interprofessional teams by reviewing the needs of the client, caregiver, family, and significant others; available resources; and discharge environment. (B.3.10)

Evaluate the needs of persons, groups, or populations to design programs that enhance community mobility, and determine alternative means of transportation in community settings, including driver rehabilitation and other community access options. (B.3.11)

Provide recommendations and training in techniques to enhance functional mobility, including physical transfers, wheelchair management, and mobility devices. (B.3.12)

Evaluate and provide interventions for dysphagia and disorders of feeding and eating to enable performance, and train others in precautions and techniques while considering client and contextual factors. (B.3.13)

Apply the principles of assessment to identify appropriate features of assistive technologies and [durable medical equipment](#) to support the client's participation.

Demonstrate the ability to design, fabricate, apply, fit, and train in assistive technologies and devices (e.g., aids for communication, mobility, sensory loss, computer access, seating, and positioning)

systems) used to enhance occupational performance. (B.3.15)

Assess the need for orthotics, and design, fabricate, apply, fit, and train in orthoses and devices used to enhance occupational performance and participation. (B.3.16)

Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources

NOTE: Students are responsible to have the required course 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.

Dirette, D. & Gutman, S. (2020). *Occupational therapy for physical dysfunction* (8th ed.). Lippincott (LWW). ISBN-13: 978-1975110550

Smith-Gabai, H. (2017). *Occupational therapy in acute care* (2nd ed.). AOTA Press. 978-1569003930.

Assessment and Grading

Sample Assignment Distribution by Percentage:

In class activities	10%
Assignments	20%
Level 2 Skill Check	15%
Level 3 Skill Check	20%
Midterm	15%
Final Exam	20%

Sample Grading Scale:

A=93-100	B-=80-82	D+=67-69
A-=92-90	C+=77-79	D=63-66
B+=87-89	C=73-76	D-=60-62
B=83-86	C-=70-72	F=0-59

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.

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, a desire to meet or share any prayer requests with Rev. Portillo, you may contact him directly at KevinPortillo@pointloma.edu.

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 [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

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. Any deviation from this policy will be explicitly stated in the assignment with detailed procedures.

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 619-849-2486). 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. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

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 special 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 or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

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 or as shown in the PLNU Spiritual Care section of this syllabus.

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 Course Modality Definitions

1. Online Courses: These are courses with class meetings where all instruction and interaction is fully online.
 - a. Synchronous Courses: At least one class meeting takes place at a designated time.
 - b. 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).

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 detail.

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.

We are here to support you! Contact us anytime: GPSWritingCenter@pointloma.edu