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**Point Loma Nazarene University
School of Theology & Christian Ministry
Spring Semester 2026**

Point Loma Nazarene University 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 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.

Course: Theology 2050. Introduction to Christian Theology.
M-W, 1:30 to 2:45 p.m., Smee 100

Professor: Dr. Michael Lodahl. Office – Smee 206
Office phone 849-2331, cell (858) 405-3184.

Texts: Blackwell, Ben C. and Hatchett, R.L.,
Engaging Theology: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Introduction

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: A Narrative Theology*

McNutt, Jennifer Powell and McNutt, David W. *Know the Theologians*

Selected primary sources.

Objectives: **1)** To introduce students, especially (but not only) theology majors, to the root convictions, methodologies and pressing concerns of classical and contemporary Christian theological reflection;

2) To explore the crucial doctrines of Christian faith in their complex and rich interrelations, and in relation to Christian life, practice and ministry. Doctrines to be explored in their interrelationships with one another include: divine revelation in the history of the people Israel and particularly in Jesus Christ; scriptural testimony and authority; Scripture in relation to tradition, reason and experience; the nature and attributes of God the Creator and Sustainer of all things; human beings in the image of God; human sin and divine grace;

divine predestination and human agency / responsibility;
Christology; ecclesiology; pneumatology; sacramental theology and
eschatology;

3) To develop an understanding and appreciation for the distinctive
emphases and contributions of the Wesleyan-Arminian theological
tradition, particularly in regard to the doctrine of entire
sanctification; and

through
4) To become more effective communicators of theological ideas
reading and writing good theological prose.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to

- 1) explain the importance of theological reflection for the life and
ministry of the Christian church;
- 2) distinguish among the various sub-disciplines of theology and
their corresponding emphases and rationales;
- 3) describe the deep interconnections among the doctrines of
Christian faith – especially God, creation, Christology, humanity,
and sin; and
- 4) appreciate the rich historical heritage of theological reflection,
especially as received and enriched by the Wesleyan
theological tradition;
- 5) demonstrate growth and improvement in writing skills pertinent
to academic theological studies.

Course Requirements:

- 1) Faithful attendance to class and reading of assigned materials. Typically,
each class session will be 'worth' 10 attendance / participation points,
though that may vary depending upon quizzes. You will be held
responsible for the assigned reading each day you step into the
classroom. On many if not all days, a brief quiz or other form of
accountability will be administered that addresses main points in the
reading for the day. *It is your responsibility to stay current in the reading.*
(CLOs 1-4)
- 2) Submission of questions, observations, criticisms, or complaints that arise
from your reading of the assigned material (CLOs 4, 5) via Canvas. These
will be by midnight before the day in class for which the reading is
assigned.

- 3) Spiritual autobiography paper, 5-6 pages in length, that introduces your life, significant experiences, sense of calling, particular interests, etc., to your professor. I invite and encourage you to be yourself in this paper. I hope you will feel free also to mention or discuss any theological / spiritual issue or question that is troubling you. This paper is for the purposes of my getting to know you better – and also to give you an early indication of possible opportunities for improvement in your writing. **This paper is due no later than midnight, January 31.** (CLO 1, 5)
- 4) A reflection paper, 5-6 pages in length, on the interrelationship between the doctrine of God the Creator and the doctrines implied in theological anthropology. This paper will incorporate Scripture, class lectures and discussions, as well as the relevant reading from assigned texts. (CLOs 2, 3, 5) **This paper is due no later than midnight, March 6.**
- 5) Research term paper, 9-10 pages (not counting the *title page*, which is required, with a suitable and at least minimally creative title), with a minimum of 12 bibliographical resources (books and journal articles) and 300 pages of reading. **You are required also to utilize the help of a careful and reliable proofreader, and to list the proofreader's name on your title page.** This paper will address a particular doctrine, theologian, or theological controversy that is relevant to the subject material of the present course. **All term paper topics are to receive approval from the professor and papers should be written (and will be evaluated) on the basis of material in the Writing Tips document.** **This paper is due no later than midnight, May 3.** (CLOs 3, 4, 5)
- 6) One final examination, comprehensive in nature, brief replies and essays. (CLOs 1-3). **Our final examination is scheduled for Friday, May 8, 1:30 to 4 p.m.**

Course Grade:

Your grade will be calculated on the basis of attendance / participation, including quizzes (16%); questions and insights from assigned reading (14%); spiritual autobiography paper (10%); paper on the doctrines of God and humanity (theological anthropology) (10%); research term paper (20%); midterm exam (10%) and final exam (20%).

On Attendance

Each class day attendance is worth 10 quiz points; quizzes will vary in point total, roughly anywhere between another 5 and 15 points on any given day. Extra-credit points are added to the attendance / participation / quizzes category.

On Punctuality

On any writing assignment, if it is **handed in during the day past the midnight due date, said paper will receive a 5% drop in grade; in the second day past the midnight due date, paper will receive a 12% drop in grade; in the third day, it will receive a 20% drop in grade; beyond that, 50% will be deducted.** *Please be attentive to these ground rules so that there is no confusion on the matter.*

On Writing:

I cannot emphasize enough that grammar, spelling and punctuation all play a *highly* critical role in my evaluation of all your papers.

The grading rubric I will utilize:

Content / Concepts / Main Ideas 60%
Clarity / Organization / Paragraph Usage 15%
Spelling 5%
Grammar / Punctuation / Capitalization 20%

Additionally, the School of Theology and Christian Ministry at PLNU is committed to the equality of women and men, including in the exercise of the gifts and graces

of ministry in local church congregations. Recognizing that people have often used language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women and other often marginalized people, the SOTCM strongly urges students, faculty and staff to avoid sexist and racist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions and in written work. ***Indeed, such language use in a paper will be scrutinized under the Content / Concepts / Main Ideas category above.***

Other Matters:

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, or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's efforts. 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:

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy:

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings (please note that in summer school, this means two days' worth of classes!), the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent (i.e., *five* unexcused class sessions), the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

Semester Academic Work Policy:

Please note that when the semester ends, so do all opportunities to work to improve your grade. No last-minute or after-the-fact appeals for extra credit will be even briefly considered.

All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should discuss options with the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of class. The ASC will contact professors with suggested classroom needs and accommodations. (Approved documentation must be on file in the ASC prior to the start of the semester.)

Course Calendar:

January

12 – 1 Corinthians 8: 1-6. Introduction to the course and introduction of ourselves. What is Christian theology?

14 – Readings from Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and sermon, "Love in Action."

19 – Martin Luther King, Jr., Day – no classes.

21 – *Engaging Theology* 15-51.

26 – *Story of God* 13-52.

28 – *Know the Theologians* 1-5, 79-88, 93-114

31 – Spiritual autobiography paper due by 11:59 p.m.

February

2 – *Know Theologians* 22-49; *Engaging* 52-64.

4 – *Know Theologians* 194-218; *Engaging* 65-76.

9 – *Know Theologians* 9-21; *Engaging* 77-99.

11 – *Engaging* 100-120; *Story of God* 53-64.

16 – *Know Theologians* 181-193; *Story of God* 65-73, 237-240; Lodahl monograph excerpt.

18 – *Know Theologians* 50-62; *Story of God* 75-90

23 – *Story of God* 91-124.

25 –Midterm examination.

March

2 – *Know Theologians* 65-77; *Engaging* 121-144.

4 – *Story of God* 127-152.

6 – Reflection paper on relationship between doctrines of God and humanity (i.e., theological anthropology), due by 11:59 p.m.

Spring Break, March 9-13

16 – *Know Theologians* 165-177, *Engaging* 145-165.

18 – *Engaging* 166-188; excerpt from Lodahl, *Renewal in Love*

23 – Catherine Keller, “Salvation Flows: Eschatology for a Feminist Wesleyanism” ***Our class session for this day will be to attend Catherine Keller’s 1:30 Wiley Lecture in Crill Auditorium. We will stay afterwards for the rest of our class session time to discuss together what we heard in her lecture.***

All of Keller’s other lectures this week are extra-credit opportunities for you. I heartily encourage you to attend as many of her four lectures as possible. Attending, taking careful notes, and writing a 2 to 2 ½ page summary / response / reflection paper for each lecture qualifies for a possible 25 e.c. points in attendance / participation category for course grade. Keller is probably the leading philosophical theologian in the world today! Other lectures days / times:

**Monday, 11 – 11:50
8:30 – 9:20**

Tuesday, 9:30 – 10:20

Wednesday

All extra-credit essays will be due by midnight, Sunday April 12.

25 – Review *Story of God* 69-86; *Engaging* 166-188.

30 – *Know Theologians* 88-92, 93-105; *Story of God* 153-164.

April

1 – Excerpt from William Placher, “Gospels’ Ends.”

Easter Break

8 – *Know Theologians* 123-136; *Engaging* 189-207

10 – Research term paper topic due no later than 11:59 p.m.

13 – *Know Theologians* 137-150; *Engaging* 207-216; *Story of God* 183-190.

15 – *Engaging* 217-230; *Story of God* 165-174.

20 – *Know Theologians* 151-164; *Engaging* 231-242; *Story of God* 175-182.

22 – *Know Theologians* 219-233; *Story of God* 191-203; excerpt from Lodahl, *Renewal in Love*

24 – Research term paper outline and sources due no later than 11:59 p.m.

27 – *Engaging Theology* 243-269.

29 – *Story of God* 205-236.

Research Term Paper: due no later than Sunday, May 3, 11:59 p.m.

Final Exam: Friday, 1:30 to 4 p.m.