



Honors Program

Fall 2026

HON3000: Humanities Seminar (1 unit)	Bond 155, W 3:00-4:50pm
William Wood, Colt Hall 113 Office Hours: MF 1-5pm, TR 8-11am and by appointment	Email: bwood@pointloma.edu Phone: Ext. 2489
Final Exam: Wednesday, October 21	

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 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.

Honors Program Mission

"The Honors Program exists to promote greater understanding of diverse human traditions of self-awareness and creativity. Examining these traditions in light of the Christian faith and liberal methods of learning, students excel in their abilities to interpret and discuss written, visual, and sonic texts within theological and interdisciplinary frameworks. Students take their education beyond the classroom in extracurricular activities, as well as in works of service and mercy as informed by the Wesleyan tradition."

Course Description

This course examines major questions of human existence – including meaning and purpose, work and vocation, culture and creativity – through cross-disciplinary perspectives.

Honors Program Learning Outcomes

- Analyze and discuss diverse human traditions of creativity and self-reflection while examining them in light of Christian faith.
- Interpret written and visual media in light of their contexts, complexity, and aesthetics.
- Articulate life questions within multidisciplinary and theological frameworks.
- Demonstrate an ability to design and participate in discourses in an informed and hospitable manner.
- Participate in acts of devotion and works of mercy through service opportunities, as informed by the Wesleyan tradition

Course Learning Outcomes

At the Conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- analyze major questions of human existence, such as meaning, purpose, and vocation, using insights from literature, philosophy, art, and social thought.
- evaluate the role of culture and creativity in shaping individual and collective understandings of human purpose across historical and contemporary contexts.
- engage cross-disciplinary perspectives to reflect on personal and societal practices, making reasoned judgments about what constitutes a meaningful and productive life.

Required Text

Morson, Gary Saul. Wonder Confronts Certainty: Russian Writers on the Timeless Questions and Why Their Answers Matter. (2023)

Course Assignments

Note-taking: No computers or phones are allowed in class. Tablets with digital pencils are OK. Taking notes by hand is superior to computers for thinking, learning, and remembering. If you have an accommodation that allows you to have a laptop, let me know and we will work out arrangements.

Reading: The dates on the syllabus indicate what we will be discussing in class. Please have the assignment read prior to the discussion.

Reading Responses: Seven times during the semester – once a week – each student will write in class a response to the daily reading. Unless specific directions are given, the response may involve an analytical reflection, a personal reflection, or may connect the book to course themes. It may also be a combination of any of these elements. It must include direct reference to the daily reading in the form of direct quotations or allusions with page citations. You may reference your notes while you write.

Final Exam: Write a 500–600-word essay about Christian Scholarship that addresses the major themes of the class. Themes include the origins, scriptural basis, crafts and habits, and purpose of Christian scholarship. More details will be forthcoming.

Participation: Every student is expected to actively participate in HON3000. This means showing up on time, having completed the daily reading and prepared to discuss it, listen, and learn from fellow students. Participation informs 25% of our final grade. Because HON3000 meets once a week, every class is valuable, and so students are allowed to miss one class without penalty (no explanation will be needed). But after that, each absence will deduct 10% from your final grade. Excessive absences/tardies will warrant a written warning to Dr. Cater.

Honors events: Honors events may be included in the program to enhance classroom learning. Attendance is optional but highly encouraged.

Assessment and Grading

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Responses	50%
Final Exam	25%
Participation	25%

Sample 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	

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction

Morson, Introduction (38 pp.)

Focus: Great Conversations and Accursed Questions

Week 2 –

Morson, Chapters 1 and 2 (55 pp.)

Focus: Russian literature: what and who

Week 3 –

Morson, Chapters 3 and 4 (47 pp.)

Focus: Two types of thinkers (the wanderer and the idealist)

Week 4 –

Morson, Chapters 5 and 6 (65 pp.)

Focus: Thinker #3 (the killer) and “Theoretism and its discontents”

Week 5 –

Morson, Chapters 7 and 8 (61 pp.)

Focus: What shouldn’t we do and why is it not our fault

Week 6 –

Morson, Chapters 9 and 10 (73 pp.)

Focus: What time is it not and what are we missing

Week 7 –

Morson, Chapters 11 and Conclusion (42 pp.)

Focus: What doesn’t it all mean

Week 8 –

Focus: Concluding reflections and Final Exam

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. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined 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 619-849-2486). 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.

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.

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.

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: <https://plnu.mywconline.com/>
- Website: <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center>
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu