

**Course Syllabus**  
**PSY 4010 , Section 1**  
**Issues in Psychotherapy–Theology Integration**

Fall 2022

Wed, 4:15-6:45

Location: Liberty Station 202

Semester Units: 3

Instructor: *G. Michael Leffel, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology*

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**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 AND DESIGN**

The University catalog describes this course as follows: *This foundational course clarifies key issues in human nature and prepares the student for developing a worldview that is consistent with their theological and spiritual orientation.* It is a detailed study of issues in the integration of theological insights and psychotherapy approaches within the therapeutic setting.

The purpose of each class session is to highlight selected topics from the required readings and to supplement this material with related ideas. *Students are responsible for all assigned readings, whether or not discussed in class.* A “graduate style” discussion format will be used in the course. *Each student is expected to have read the assigned reading for class discussion (course Schedule below), and be prepared to think together about the reading in class.*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

**A. Weekly Reflections (40%)**

Each week you will turn in two (2) Reading Reflections. Each class we will use your personal reflections and questions as guide for our discussion. Graded 0-10 on completeness and thoughtfulness of your reflection.

**B. Essay “Type-as-You-Read” Mid-Term and Final Exams (60%)**

There will be a Take-home Mid-Term Essay Exam (format and topics TBD), and an essay Final Exam.

**C. Attendance Policy and Contribution to Grade**

Please come to class. When you are not present and participating, the chemistry of class

changes.

Inconsistent class attendance/tardiness impacts your final grade in the following way:

1. Following two unexcused absences, beginning with the third unexcused absence, five (5) points will be deducted from your Final Total for each absence. In this class this deduction usually has a substantial impact on your grade.
2. In addition: 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 drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

*That would be after two (2) unexcused absences in this class.*

### **PLNU Attendance Policy and Reporting**

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 drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

#### What is an "Unexcused" Absence?

1. "There are no allowed or excused absences except when absences are necessitated by certain University-sponsored activities and are approved in writing by the Provost" (Catalog).
2. In addition, the Professor will excuse (legitimate) illness only with MD note. No exceptions please.
3. Medical (check-ups) and Dental appointments ARE NOT excused absences.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

To schedule an appointment with me, either: (i) arrange a time with me before/after class, or (ii) write me a note with your available times and telephone number. *Making an appointment* will assure that you have the uninterrupted amount of time you wish to speak with me.

### **COURSE READINGS**

1. (Text) Siegel, D. (2010). *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation*.
2. *University Reader*

### **FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY**

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the Class Schedules site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

### **PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY**

PLNU, 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.

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### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

#### **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

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 and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

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.

### **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.

## **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 require 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.

Note: This syllabus is not a contract. The Professor reserves the right to modify the syllabus to accomplish the learning objectives of the course.

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## ***Course Synopsis***

### ***Indwelling Goodness Psychotherapy and Spirituality in the Age of Relational Neuroscience***

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#### ***Unit 1***

##### ***“The End is in the Beginning”***

##### ***Toward a Spiritual Vision of the Psychotherapeutic Process***

*There are metaphysical assumptions behind our personal theory of therapy, our view of the person, our view of the good life, the nature of good and evil, and our notion of psychological health . . . so it is important that the therapist be conscious of them.*

-L. Corbett, *The Sacred Cauldron*

*Themes to Develop:* Why a spiritual vision of therapy is important; how relational neuroscience is changing how we think about therapy and spirituality; the problem of “reductionism” in contemporary therapeutic and spirituality theory; the ambiguity of spirituality; the concept of spiritually integrative therapy; the meaning and significance of psychotherapy-theology “integration” (clinical integration); Christian theology as a resource for developing a spiritual vision of therapeutic activity.

#### ***Unit 2***

##### ***The Sacred Crucible***

##### ***Transformational Change and Implicit Spirituality***

*The spiritual quest is, at one level, a psychological quest, and every psychological quest in some way reflects the basic spiritual quest.*

-D. Benner, *Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest*

*Themes to Develop:* The lost “moral” vision of S-I therapy; limitations of the presently-dominant “dimensional” model of integration; the “integrative” paradigm of relational spirituality; the distinction between implicit and explicit memory and multiple “levels” of personality; the “psychospiritual unity” of personality; implicit spirituality as alternative model of spiritual integration; the concept of transformational change; principles of relationally-oriented, experientially-focused therapies; psychotherapy and the “latent capacity to love”

#### ***Unit 3***

##### ***Crafts of Change***

##### ***Therapeutic Process in the Paradigm of Memory Reconsolidation***

*A person cannot choose to desire a certain kind of relationship, any more than he can will himself to ride a unicycle, play the Goldberg Variations, or speak Swahili. The requisite neural framework for performing these activities does not coalesce on command . . . A patient doesn't become generically healthier; he/she becomes more like the therapist.*

-Lewis, Amini, & Lannon, (2000). *A General Theory of Love*

*Themes to Develop:* A meta-model of three “common factors” in transformational change; the difference between “counteractive” vs. “memory reconsolidation” therapies; steps in the “memory reconsolidation” process.

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## **Psychology 4010 Issues in Psychotherapy-Theology Integration**

### **Week 1 (Wed, Aug 31)**

#### **Introduction and Overview of the Course**

*A Story about a Prince Who Became a Turkey*

(Class Notes)

### **Unit 1**

#### **“The End is in the Beginning”**

#### **Toward a Spiritual Vision of the Psychotherapeutic Process**

*There are metaphysical assumptions behind our personal theory of therapy, our view of the person, our view of the good life, the nature of good and evil, and our notion of psychological health . . . so it is important that the therapist be conscious of them.*

-L. Corbett, *The Sacred Cauldron*

### **Week 2 (Sept 7)**

#### **“Citizens of Two Realms”**

#### ***Contrasting Visions of Therapy and the “Spirituality” Hypothesis***

**Reminder:** EACH WEEK please write assigned Reading Reflections and bring to class. Format for Reading Reflections are in your packet distributed Week 1.

Introduction: Contrasting Visions of Mental Health and Therapeutic Outcome

Topic 2.1      Swimming Pool or Quest?  
*Two Visions of Life, and of Psychotherapy*  
**Reader:** Frattaroli (*Healing the Soul in the Age of the Brain*, Ch. 5)  
**(Read and Write Reading Reflection in packet)**

Topic 2.2      How “Spirituality” Gets into the Therapist’s Office  
*Psychotherapy as Spiritual Activity*  
**Reader:** Corbett (*The Sacred Cauldron*, Introduction)  
**(Read and Write Reading Reflection in packet)**

### **Week 3 (Sept 14)**

#### **Winds of Change**

***The New Conversation on Spirituality and Psychotherapy***

Introduction: Changing “the Subject”

Topic 3.1 The Relational and Neurobiological “Turn” in Psychotherapy  
*What Undergraduate Textbooks Are Not Telling You*  
**Reader:** Elkins (*The Human Elements of Psychotherapy*, Foreword, Intro, and Ch. 5)

Topic 3.2 Can You Hear the Music?  
*The Meaning of “Spirituality” and Spiritual Transformation*  
**Reader:** Vieten (*Spiritual & Religious Competencies in Clinical Practice*, Ch. 5)

**Mid-Term “Type-As-You-Read” Essay Exam Distributed (Due: Fri, Nov 11)**

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**Week 4 (Sept 21)**

**“The Hand of God”**

***Viewing Psychotherapy through the Lens of Spiritual Theology***

Introduction: Transformational Change and Divine-human Interaction

Topic 4.1 “Are We Forever Captives to Our Past?”  
*Introduction to the Concept of Transformational Change*  
**Reader:** Ecker (Unlocking the Emotional Brain, in *Psychotherapy Networker*)

Topic 4.2 What is Spiritual Theology?  
*(And, Why It Matters for Therapy)*  
**Reader:** McMinn (*Psychology, Theology, & Spirituality*)

Topic 4.3 “Quest” Spirituality: Introduction to a Spiritual Theology for Psychotherapy  
(Handout)

Theology Integration Principle #1:  
*Forgiveness and Healing Are Not the Same Things*  
(Handout)

**Unit 2**

***The Sacred Crucible***

**Transformational Change and Implicit Spirituality**

*Psychotherapy is the study and understanding of the vicissitudes of love. It entails finding the point at which development was frustrated and the adaptive patterns that were used to cope with this frustration.*

-S. Roth, *Psychotherapy: The Art of Wooing Nature*, p. 17

*The spiritual quest is, at one level, a psychological quest, and every psychological quest in some way reflects the basic spiritual quest.*

-D. Benner, *Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest*, p. 108

**Week 5 (Sept 28)**

**“Why Therapy Works”**

***How Relational Neuroscience is Changing Our View of Therapeutic Healing (and Spirituality)***

Introduction: What Makes Therapy Work?

- Topic 5.1      The New Great Debate  
*The “Mechanisms” of Counteraction vs. Reconsolidation*  
**Reader:** Ecker et al. (*Unlocking the Emotional Brain*, pp. 31-35; 110-119)
- Topic 5.2      Relational Spirituality  
*A Psychospiritual Paradigm for Transformational Change*  
**Reader:** Hall (*Relational Spirituality*, Introduction)
- Topic 5.3      Theology Integration Principle #2:  
*Moral Likeness as “Ultimate Concern” of the Healing Quest*  
 (Handout)

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### **Week 6 (Oct 5)**

#### **The “Neurodynamic” Model of the Psyche (Part 1)**

#### ***Principles of the Relational Neuroscience Therapeutic Paradigm***

Introduction: Seven Principles of Relational Neuroscience-Informed Therapy (RNST)

- Topic 6.1      A “Whole” New Way of Seeing Symptoms and Their Underlying Problems  
*Principle #1: “The Emotional Truth of the Symptom” (Symptom Coherence)*  
**Reader:** Cozolino (*Why Therapy Works*, Ch. 3)
- Topic 6.2      Sacred Psyche: A “Natural Spirituality” for Psychotherapy  
*The Silent Spirituality of Symptoms*  
**Reader:** Benner (*Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest*, Ch. 5)
- Topic 6.3      Theology Integration Principle #3:  
*The “Psychospiritual Unity” of Personality*  
 (Handout)

### **Week 7 (Oct 12)**

#### **“Wooing Nature” (Part 1)**

#### ***How Relationally-oriented, Experientially-focused Therapy Works***

Introduction: Psychotherapy as the Science (and Art) of “Wooing Nature”

- Topic 7.1      “Cut Off from the Neck Down”  
*Principles #2 and 3: Transference and Unconscious Emotion*  
**Reader:** Siegel (*Mindsight*, Ch. 7)
- Topic 7.2      Transference and Relationship with God  
*How Therapy Transforms “Images” (Not “Concepts”) of God*  
**Reader:** Jones (*Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion*, Ch. 3)
- Topic 7.3      Theology Integration Principle #4:  
*Relational Problems Are Healed Relationally*  
 (Handout)



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### **Week 8 (Oct 19)**

#### **The “Neurodynamic” Model of the Psyche (Part 2)**

#### ***Principles of the Relational Neuroscience Therapeutic Paradigm***

Introduction: The Elephant and Its Rider

Topic 8.1 “Those Things We Cannot Remember, But Never Forget”  
*Principle #4: The Priority of Implicit Memory*  
**Reader:** Cozolino (*Why Therapy Works*, Ch. 5)

Topic 8.2 “Prisoners of the Past”  
*How Trauma Lives in the Body*  
**Text:** Siegel (*Mindsight*, Ch. 8)

Topic 8.3 Theology Integration Principle #5:  
*Changing “Minds” and Transforming “Hearts” Are Not the Same Things*  
(Handout)

**\*Get Reading for next week (distributed in class today)**

### **Week 9 (Oct 26)**

#### **“Wooing Nature” (Part 2)**

#### ***How Relationally-oriented, Experientially-focused Therapy Works***

Introduction: “Loved into Loving”

Topic 9.1 Attachment and the Therapeutic Relationship  
*Principle #5: The Centrality of Attachment (In)Security*  
**Distributed last week:** Cozolino, *Why Therapy Works*, Ch. 7

Topic 9.2 How Early Attachment Shapes Our Capacity to Love  
*(And, Your Relationship with God)*  
**Reader:** Hall (*Psychology in the Spirit*, Ch. 12)

Topic 9.3 Theology Integration Principle #6:  
*“Love” as Socially-Constructed, Emergent Capacity*  
(Handout)

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**Week 10 (Nov 2)**

**The “Neurodynamic” Model of the Psyche (Part 3)**

***Principles of the Relational Neuroscience Therapeutic Paradigm***

Introduction: Every Elephant Has a Secret Love Story

Topic 10.1 “Our Multiple Selves”  
*Principle #6: Others “Forgotten, but Not Gone”*  
**Text:** Siegel (*Mindsight*, Ch. 10)

Topic 10.2 “Presences of Good”  
*Relational Deep Structure and the “Implicit Moral Self”*  
(Handout)

Topic 10.3 Where Does the Capacity to Love Come From?  
*More about Agape vs. Caritas*  
(Handout)

**Reminder: Mid-Term Exam Due Next Friday (Nov. 11)**

**Week 11 (Nov 9)**

**“Wooing Nature” (Part 3)**

***How Relationally-oriented, Experientially-focused Therapy Works***

Introduction: Love’s “Second Nature”

Topic 11.1 “The Neurobiology of We”  
*Principle #7: The Imperative of Corrective Relational Experiences*  
**Text:** Siegel, (*Mindsight*, Ch. 11)

Topic 11.2 Who Says Therapy is About Love?  
*Wisdom from Some Therapy “Masters”*  
**Reader:** Chessick (*Intensive Psychotherapy*, Ch. 14)

**\*Mid-Term Exam Due (Due: Fri, Nov 11)**

Submit hardcopy to my box in Culbertson Hall before 3:00 in the afternoon. Please DO NOT email.

**NOTE:** Remainder of Syllabus to be distributed later, based upon class discussion and expressed interests.