

Course Syllabus
PSY 4010-1
Issues in Psychotherapy–Theology Integration

Spring 2023

Wed, 4:15-6:45, Liberty Station 207

Semester Units: 3

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

E-mail: michaelleffel@pointloma.edu

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: "Whenever the number of accumulated absences in a class, for any cause, exceeds ten percent of classes (equivalent to one and one-half weeks of a 15-week semester course), the faculty member sends a written report to the Associate Provost for Academic Administration which may result in de-enrollment" (PLNU Catalog). *That would be after two (2) unexcused absences in this class.*

2.

PLNU Attendance Policy and Reporting

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 HONESTLY 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, examination, or the course, depending on the seriousness of the offense. 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.

3.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

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 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.

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 3 unit class delivered over 16 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 150 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

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.

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

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) 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.

5.

Course Synopsis

“Indwelling” Goodness: Psychotherapy and Spirituality in the Age of Relational Neuroscience

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

Models and Processes of Transformational Change

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; steps in the “memory reconsolidation” process; models of memory reconsolidation therapy

6.

Psychology 4010
Issues in Psychotherapy-Theology Integration

Week 1 (Wed, Jan 11)

Overview and Introduction to the Course

A Prince Who Became a Turkey

(Class Notes)

Jan 18

No Class (Dr. Leffel speaking at a conference)

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 (Jan 25)

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.

Overview and Introduction: What is Psychotherapy For?

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 (Feb 1)

Winds of Change

The New Conversation on Spirituality and Psychotherapy

Overview and 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)

7.

Week 4 (Feb 8)

The Hand of God

Integrating Psychotherapy and Spiritual Theology

Overview and 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)

Mid-Term “Type-As-You-Read” Essay Exam Distributed (Due: Fri, Mar 17)

Unit 2

The Sacred Crucible

Transformational Change, Embodied Love, 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 (Feb 15)

The Sacred Crucible

The New “Psychospiritual” Paradigm for Psychotherapy

Overview and Introduction: Psychotherapy as “Sacred Crucible”

- Topic 5.1 What Makes Therapy Work? 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 New Paradigm for Psychotherapy – Theology Integration
Reader: Hall (*Relational Spirituality*, Introduction)
- Topic 5.3 Theology Integration Principle #2
Moral Likeness as “Ultimate Concern” of the Healing Quest

(Handout)

8.

Week 6 (Feb 22)

The New “Neurodynamic” Model of the Psyche

Principles of the Relational Neuroscience Paradigm of Emotional Healing

Overview and 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
Implicit Memory as Psychological Foundation of Spirituality
Reader: Benner (*Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest*, Ch. 5)

Topic 6.3 Theology Integration Principle #3
The “Psychospiritual Unity” of the Person
(Handout)

Week 7 (Mar 1)

“Wooing Nature”

How Relationally-oriented, Experience-focused Therapy Works (Part 1)

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

Topic 7.1 “Crepes of Wrath”
RNS Principle #2: The Past is Still Happening (Transference)
(Text): Siegel, *Mindsight*, Introduction and Ch. 2 (skip Ch. 1)

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
Implicit Relational Problems Are Healed Relationally
(Handout)

Mar 8

Happy Spring Break

9.

Week 8 (Mar 15)

“The Body Keeps the Score”

How Relationally-oriented, Experience-focused Therapy Works (Part 2)

Overview and Introduction: The Futile Attempt to Hide from Pain

Topic 8.1 “Cut Off from the Neck Down”
RNS Principle #3: The Prison of Buried Emotions (Complex Unconscious Emotion)
(Text): Siegel (*Mindsight*, Ch. 7)

FRI, Mar 17 Mid-Term “Type-as-You-Read” Due (in my box in Culbertson Hall) Submit hardcopy to my box in Culbertson Hall before 3:00 in the afternoon. Please DO NOT email.

Week 9 (Mar 22)

The Elephant and Its Rider

How (and Why) We Have a Divided Mind

Overview and Introduction: The Elephant and Its Rider

Topic 9.1 “Those Things We Cannot Remember, But Never Forget”
Principle #4: The Dual Priority of Implicit Relational Knowledge (Implicit Memory)
Reader: Cozolino (*Why Therapy Works*, Ch. 5)

Topic 9.2 “Prisoners of the Past”
How Trauma Lives in the Body
Text: Siegel (*Mindsight*, Ch. 8)

Topic 9.3 Theology Integration Principle #5
Changing the “Mind” and Transforming the “Heart” Are Not the Same Things
(Class Handout)

Week 10 (Mar 29)

“Loved into Loving”

How Relationally-oriented, Experience-focused Therapy Works (Part 3)

Overview and Introduction: How Early Attachment Shapes Our Capacity to Love

Topic 10.1 Attachment and the Therapeutic Relationship
Principle #5: The Centrality of Attachment (In)Security (Attachment)
In Class Packet: Cozolino, *Why Therapy Works*, Ch. 7

Topic 10.2 How “Insecure Attachment” Shapes the Way We Love
(And, Your Relationship with God)
Reader: Hall (*Psychology in the Spirit*, Ch. 12)

Topic 10.3 Theology Integration Principle #6
“Love” as Socially-Constructed, Emergent Capacity
(Class Handout)

10.

Week 11 (Apr 5)

Love and Relational Deep Structure

Dilemma of the “Diminished Capacity” to Love

Overview and Introduction: Why Every Elephant Has a Secret Love Story

Topic 11.1 Anatomy of “Relational Deep Structure”
(And, the Diminished Capacity to Love)
(Class Handout)

Topic 11.2 “Our Multiple Selves”
Principle #6: Presences of Others “Forgotten, but Not Gone” (Relational Deep Structure)

Text: Siegel (*Mindsight*, Ch. 10)

Topic 11.3 Theology Integration Principle #7
A “Cooperant” Model of Divine-human Interaction
(Class Handout)

•Final Exam Essay Questions Distributed in Class

Apr 12

Happy Easter Recess

Week 12 (Apr 19)

Who Cares?

An Old, New Vision of Love and Relationship

Overview and Introduction: Love’s “Second Nature”

Topic 12.1 Relational Deep Structure and the Capacity to Love
The “Implicit Moral Self”
(Class Handout)

Topic 12.2 “The Neurobiology of We”
Principle #7: The Imperative of Corrective Relational Experiences (Neuroplasticity)

Text: Siegel, (*Mindsight*, Ch. 11)

•Final Exam Essay Questions Distributed in Class

Week 13 (Apr 26)

Course Review

“Indwelling Goodness”: What Does This Mean?

Topic 13.1 Who Says Therapy is About Love?
Wisdom from Some Therapy “Masters”
Reader: Chessick (*Intensive Psychotherapy*, Ch. 14)

Topic 13.2 “Indwelling Goodness”
Quest, Transformational Change, Embodied Love, and Implicit Spirituality
(Class Handouts for the Final Exam)

May 3
Final Exam Week

Fall

Week 14 (Nov 30)

Internal Family Systems Therapy (IFS)

A “Relationally-oriented, Experience-focused” Therapy

*Reading and Reading Reflection Distributed last class

Van der Kolk, Ch. 17, Putting the Pieces Together. *The Body Keeps the Score*.

Topic 14.1 Principles of the IFS Model of Therapy
Memory Reconsolidation in IFS

Week 15 (Dec 7)

Course Review

“Indwelling Goodness”: What Does This Mean?

Topic 15.1 Who Says Therapy is About Love?
Wisdom from Some Therapy “Masters”
Reader: Chessick (*Intensive Psychotherapy*, Ch. 14)

Topic 15.2 “Indwelling Goodness”
Transformational Change, Embodied Love, and Implicit Spirituality
(Class Handouts for the Final Exam)

Week 16 (Dec 14)

Final Exam Week