

HIS3035: The History and Culture of Surfing

Fall 2023 - Evans Hall 122

11am-12:1pm

Dr. Ben Cater

[bcater@pointloma.edu](mailto:bcater@pointloma.edu)

Office hours: drop-ins and by appointment



### PLNU Mission: To Teach, Shape, & Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is molded 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 Description

This course introduces students to the history and culture of surfing from the early nineteenth century to the present. It explores the origin and evolution of riding waves as it developed in Polynesia before spreading to Southern California, Australia and beyond to become a global cultural phenomenon. Readings, films, and discussions will concentrate on the key people, places, ideas, and events that precipitated, embodied, or reflected changes in surfing. Since the history and culture of wave riding is rich and broad enough to constitute a major course of study, this class serves only to introduce students to a vast ocean of knowledge. Our hope is that you will wade in, paddle out and catch a few waves, not just now but for the rest of your

life.

### Foundational Explorations (General Education) Learning Outcome #2c

1. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the complex issues faced by diverse groups in global and/or cross-cultural contexts.

### Student Course Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze significant primary texts concerning surf history and culture from pre-history to the 1900s. [See RQ assignments]
2. Evaluate and articulate the diversity of human experience across this range of historical periods.
3. Use a historical perspective to understand the world today and address contemporary problems/issues.
4. Critically evaluate several of the major beliefs, ideologies, and values that have influenced the modern world.
5. Assess your own culture within the context of the process of globalization since 1800.
6. Examine historical developments with a particular emphasis on values and ethical choices, in light of being global citizens.
7. FELO 2(c): Demonstrate an understanding of the complex issues faced by diverse groups in global and/or cross-cultural contexts.
8. Analyze (analysis) the social, cultural, ethnic, gendered, and/or historical contexts of the works and their authors, and connect (synthesis, evaluation) the texts with their own lives.

### Required Texts

Chouinard, *Let My People Go Surfing* (9780143109679)

Tsu, *Tao Te Ching* (9780140441314)

Westwick and Neushul, *The World In The Curl* (9780307719485)

### Weekly Participation

Weekly participation is vital to succeeding in this course. Showing up to class on time, contributing to class conversations, and taking notes are all ways to participate. HIS3035 is a three-unit course, which means it will require about 6 hours of studying per week. Studying includes doing the assigned readings, writings, and film viewings, as well scheduling voluntary office hours and showing up to out of the classroom events.

### Course Communication

Students are responsible for all messages from and to their PLNU email and Canvas accounts. Since Dr. Cater frequently provides clarifying notes about course content and assignments, please check your accounts daily. If you have questions or comments, please contact the instructor at: [bcater@pointloma.edu](mailto:bcater@pointloma.edu). However, please do not expect your professor to respond during the weekend (Friday evening to Sunday evening) unless it is an emergency. If that is the case, please indicate it in the subject line of your email.

## Grading Policy (Scale and Weights)

|    |         |
|----|---------|
| A  | 94-100% |
| A- | 90-93%  |
| B+ | 87-89%  |
| B  | 84-86%  |
| B- | 80-83%  |
| C+ | 77-79%  |
| C  | 74-76%  |
| C- | 70-73%  |
| D+ | 67-69%  |
| D  | 64-66%  |
| D- | 60-63%  |
| F  | 0-59%   |

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| Participation | 10% |
| Quizzes/Notes | 20% |
| Assignments   | 20% |
| Midterm       | 25% |
| Final         | 25% |

### Assignments

A: Quizzes will take place every week and help assess students understanding and remembering content in readings, viewing, and lectures. They will take place at the beginning of class and should take no longer than 5 minutes.

### B: Written Assignment

A written reflection will come due by the end of the semester. The reflection can be completed in two different ways - see below.

## (A) The Session

Borrow a surfboard from the Board Library (see Dr. Cater). Make sure the board is different than the one you normally use in terms of outline, fin set-up, bottom contour, or length. Take it out for a few sessions and pay attention to how it connects to the sea, specifically how it paddles, floats, gets into waves, turns, and accelerates; the type of waves it's ideally designed for (flat, hollow, small, big, etc.); and the athletic adjustments you need to make to ride it well. In addition, think about how the surfboard is sacred, a piece of functional art made by a skilled, ocean-minded craftsman, and that by riding it you're experiencing the artist's wisdom and creativity; or how surfing helps you cultivate moral virtue (love peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control, and happiness?); or ways that surfing can help deepen your Christian faith (via quiet time for prayer, contemplating the beauty of Creation and the Creator, and more). Write down your all thoughts in a well-written, organized 2-3 page reflection. Include a selfie with the board you rode. The goal of this assignment is to think deeply and broadly about how surfing is not merely a sport or culture, but rather a liberal art that helps us grow in wisdom for life.

## (B) The Surf Check

Take a few half-hour walks along Sunset Cliffs. As you walk, pay attention to surfers in the water, specifically the time of day that they're surfing, where they're riding waves, and the weather conditions in which they're doing so (approximate wind speed and direction, rising or falling tide, water temperature, and swell direction). Try to figure these things out through careful observation (bring your binoculars if you have them or borrow some from me) and/or talking with surfers. Most surfers will gladly tell you about how much fun they've just had or are about to have. Look carefully at the ocean's surface (clean, choppy, etc.); what surfers are wearing (full suit, hood, booties, gloves, etc.); and try to identify swell lines in the ocean (you might use a compass to help you here). Take a picture and include it in your reflection. In addition to all this, write down your thoughts about the ocean's horizons, stirring waves, and mysterious depths. How do they make you feel? What do they encourage you to think about (life, love, calling, etc.)? Who else do you see walking on the Cliffs - what are they doing? The goal here is to help us consider that the ocean can help us reflect on our hopes, dreams, and fears, and in this way prepare us for the "job" of living.

Finally, students will be required to read a book of his/her choosing and submit a 2-3 page (12 pt. font, 1 inch margins) written review of the work. The review essay should be clearly organized with an introduction and thesis, middle paragraphs, and conclusion. Besides honing your reading and writing skills, the assignment seeks to encourage students to more fully explore aspects surfings' history and culture only briefly touched on this course.

## Incomplete and Late Work

Don't submit incomplete or late work. Incomplete work can be completed and resubmitted for reduced credit (5% off) within one day of its original due date. Late work

can be submitted for reduced credit (5% off each day) until two days of the original date; after that, it counts as an incomplete.

### Final Exam Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final exam on its scheduled day. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

### 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. **All work submitted electronically is automatically checked against Turn-It-In.** 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. For more information, see the following link:

[https://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=41&navoid=2435#Academic\\_Honesty](https://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=41&navoid=2435#Academic_Honesty)  
Links to an external site.

### University Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the U.S. Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

Below is an approximate schedule of units, topics, assignments, and assessments. Dr. Cater reserves the right to make adjustments if necessary.

### PART I: Surf History

Aug 29 – Prehistory to 1900

Aug 31 – Prehistory to 1900

Reading: WC Chpts 1

Sept 5 – 1900-1940

Reading: WC Chpt 2

Sept 7 – 1900-1940

Reading: WC Chpt 3

Sept 12 - 1940s/50s

Reading: WC Chpt 4

Film: [https://www.pbs.org/video/waterman-duke-ambassador-of-aloha-djus8w/Links to an external site.](https://www.pbs.org/video/waterman-duke-ambassador-of-aloha-djus8w/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.)

user: [bcater@pointloma.edu](mailto:bcater@pointloma.edu)

pass: SurfClass2023!

Sept 14 - 1940s/50s

Reading: WC Chpt 5

**Monday Sept 18 - Meet at Dr. Cater's (4644 Adair St.) from 5-7pm**

Come ready for dinner and discussion about the readings below. They're intended to broaden your understanding of surf community and culture in Southern California from the 1930s until now.

<https://viewpoint.pointloma.edu/combo-swell/>

[c09 \(2\).docx](#) Download c09 (2).docx

Sept 21 - 1960s

Reading: WC Chpt 6

Sept 26 - 1960s/70s

Watch and take notes on "A Line in the Sand" [https://www.kpbs.org/news/arts-culture/2019/11/13/line-sand-story-americas-first-surfing-parkLinks to an external site.](https://www.kpbs.org/news/arts-culture/2019/11/13/line-sand-story-americas-first-surfing-parkLinks%20to%20an%20external%20site.)

Sept 28 - 1960s/70s

Reading: TSJ article on Hobie Alter + "A Shaping Life" video on Terry Martin

Oct 3 - 1960s/70s

Reading: WC Chpt 7

Oct 5 - 1970s/80s

Film and Readings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GJ2vg4NVkc>Links to an external site.



<https://www.surfersjournal.com/editorial/thirteen-oclock/>Links to an external site.

[https://tsjarchives.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/pdfs/12.5.86-93.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJABECCZ4TSLRMBQQ%2F20231003%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4\\_request&X-Amz-Date=20231003T200022Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=46b87c08a81c6f05a36cb5ef63630bc3419db3e8f723e5a2c3176186a9a21f53](https://tsjarchives.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/pdfs/12.5.86-93.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJABECCZ4TSLRMBQQ%2F20231003%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20231003T200022Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=46b87c08a81c6f05a36cb5ef63630bc3419db3e8f723e5a2c3176186a9a21f53)Links to an external site.

user: bcater@hotmail.com

pass: SurfClass2023

Boardroom Show <https://boardroomshow.com/>Links to an external site.

Oct 7-8

Oct 10 - 1970s and 80s

Watch: Dogtown and Z Boys ([https://www.amazon.com/Dogtown-Z-Boys-Sean-Penn/dp/B000I8ERUS/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=3HVXF8VPXLM8Q&keywords=dogtown+and+z+boys&qid=1696869709&srefix=dogtown+and+z+boy%2Caps%2C147&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Dogtown-Z-Boys-Sean-Penn/dp/B000I8ERUS/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3HVXF8VPXLM8Q&keywords=dogtown+and+z+boys&qid=1696869709&srefix=dogtown+and+z+boy%2Caps%2C147&sr=8-1)Links to an external site.)

Oct 12 - WC Chpts 8-9

Oct 17 - WC Chpt 10

Oct 19 - **NO CLASS**

Oct 24 - WC Chpt 11

Oct 26 - WC Chpts 12-13

Watch and take notes on "Step In to Liquid" and "Trouble: the Lisa Andersen Story". Your notes should be organized thematically around the following topics: 1) Technology and New Approaches to Big Wave Riding 2) A New Era of Women's Surfing in the 1990s

Oct 31 – WC Chpt 14

Surf Shop Activity at South Coast Surf Shop, Wahines, and Pride Surf Shop in O.B.

Think about the following questions as you visit the shops:

What products would you expect to find at a surf shop?

What products did you find at the surf shop?

How would you the products' connection to wave riding - directly connected? Indirectly connected? Not at all connected?

Where and in what kind of facility are the products made? Where do you imagine these products are bought and sold? What kinds of people buy these products and how come?

What are the products made out of? Do they appear to be related to the ocean or are they artificial and inorganic?

Nov 2 – WC Chpt 15

## Part II: Surf Culture

Nov 7 – **MIDTERM EXAM**

Nov 9 - Josh Hall Surfboards Guest Lecture

5305 Grant Street

<https://joshallsurfboards.com/Links to an external site.>

details TBA

Nov 14 – Surf Film

Come to class having watched and thought about *Endless Summer* (1966) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

Questions to think about:

What do we want out of a surf movie? What do we often get?



What makes *Endless Summer* and *Apocalypse Now* compelling? What makes the latter a "surf movie"?

Written Reflection Due - Peyton and Mariano

Nov 16 – Surf Film - Guest Lecture by Dr. James Wicks

\*\*Come to class having read the poetry below

[Story\\_Hour\\_7\\_from\\_the\\_Dao\\_De\\_Jing.pdf](#) Download  
[Story\\_Hour\\_7\\_from\\_the\\_Dao\\_De\\_Jing.pdf](#)

Nov 21 – Surf Music

Be prepared to name and play a song that makes you think of surfing, excited to surf, or be near the ocean.

Written Reflections Due - Dylan and Faith

Nov 23 – **NO CLASS**

Nov 28 – Surf Philosophy

Reading: *Tao Te Ching*

Film: *Yin and Yang of Gerry Lopez*

Written Reflections Due - Makana and John

Nov 30 – Surf Philosophy

Reading: LMP pgs. 1-73

Written Reflections Due - Ted and Katherine

Dec 5 – Surf Philosophy

Reading: LMP pgs. 73-150

Written Reflections Due: Will

Dec 7 – Surf Philosophy

Reading: LMP pgs. 151-232

Book Review Due

Dec 14 – **FINAL EXAM** 10:30am-1pm

