

School of Theology and Christian Ministry
CHU 3095 Section 3
3 units
Fall 2023

Meeting days: M	Instructor: Prof. Wilson Ryland
Meeting times: 6:00-8:45 pm	Phone: 619-929-4530
Meeting location: LBRT 205A	Email: wryland1@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: Monday, Dec 11, 7:30-10:00 pm	Office location and hours: by appointment
LBRT 205	

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.

Foundational Explorations Mission

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

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.

INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILO)

1. Learning, Informed by our Faith in Christ

Students will acquire knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world while developing skills and habits of the mind that foster lifelong learning.

2. Growing, In a Christ-Centered Faith Community

Students will develop a deeper and more informed understanding of others as they negotiate complex professional, environmental and social contexts.

3. Serving, In a Context of Christian Faith

Students will serve locally and/or globally in vocational and social settings.

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning: Informed by our Faith in Christ

Students will:

- Demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills, both as individuals and in groups;
- Use quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and logic skills to address questions and solve problems; and
- Demonstrate the effective and responsible use of information from a variety of sources.

Growing: In a Christ-Centered Faith Community

Students will:

- Examine the complexity of systems in the light of the reconciling work of God in Christ; and
- Demonstrate a respect for the relationships within and across diverse communities.

Serving: In a Context of Christian Faith

Students will:

- Engage in acts of devotion and works of mercy informed by the Christian scriptures and tradition, rooted in local congregations, and expressed as love of God and neighbor.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the intellectual integrity, rich diversity, and coherence of the Christian tradition in its historical development. (ILO 1)
2. Explain the characteristic features of Wesleyan theology and the ways in which it embodies the central affirmations of the Christian tradition. (ILO 1)
3. Appreciate an ongoing, lifelong commitment to and participation in the Christian tradition and congregational life. (ILO 3)

FURTHER EXPLANATION OF COURSE OBJECTIVES & WHY THIS COURSE MATTERS

You have chosen to attend a university that is self-consciously and unapologetically Christian and which, as stated in the PLNU Core Values, seeks to foster an “intentionally Christian community” that is faithful to its “Nazarene heritage and a Wesleyan theological perspective.” This course is intended to fulfill this aspect of the PLNU mission by introducing you both to the

larger, more general Christian tradition as well as the specifically Nazarene/Wesleyan heritage of PLNU.

If you are a Christian, this course provides an opportunity to develop a deeper appreciation for your own faith tradition. You will be given a rough sketch of the history of world Christianity and an introduction to many of the key teachings and practices of the historic Church, and therefore find opportunities for your own faith as a Christian to be challenged, deepened, and enriched.

If you are not a Christian, or have serious questions about Christianity, this course will provide an opportunity for you to have many of your questions answered, or, at the very least, will give you a better understanding of the largest religious movement in the world (with over two billion adherents) and one of the most significant social forces in the world today. My hope also is that you will walk away from this course with a deeper appreciation for Christian faith and life and perhaps even find yourself led to become a vital and active participant in and contributor to this tradition.

Any religious or faith tradition is a *living* tradition, comprised of the *collective beliefs, practices, and personal commitments of all the faithful across time and space*. Therefore, to engage deeply with the Christian tradition, you will be expected to do so at all three levels—intellectual, practical, and personal. First, we will look at the core beliefs held by all Christians as well as the distinct beliefs of different Christian groups/denominations. Second, we will learn about and experience various Christian practices, some of which may seem strange to you because they are not part of your own community traditions, but are nevertheless widely practiced throughout the Christian church. And, finally, this class will become personal not only through the practices you will engage in, but also through the adoption of a patron/matron ‘saint’ who will serve as a kind of entry point and guide for some of your work (both intellectually and spiritually) throughout the semester. Understood broadly, saints are those persons whom the Church has affirmed as the best examples of what it means to *be* Christian and therefore most effectively illuminate what the Christian tradition aspires to be and, therefore, perhaps, what Christianity most essentially *is*. But there is also great diversity among the saints—indeed, there is disagreement among different Christians concerning what constitutes a saint, and therefore the lives of saints also provide a window into the profound diversity of the Christian tradition. (See below, under *Course Assignments*, to understand how your saint will shape and guide your work during the semester.)

Content Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In Christian Tradition, all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of Christian thought and practice, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Wilson Ryland

wryland1@pointloma.edu

Interaction with Professor/Office Hours: The best way to reach me is to email me: wryland1@pointloma.edu I am also available to schedule Zoom sessions for office hours.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*, ISBN 9780830848751

David Bentley Hart, *The Story of Christianity* ISBN 9781780877525

N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian* ISBN 9780060872700

You should purchase all of these books because you will be required to read most of each text for the class. They are available at the PLNU bookstore or at various online stores. Additional required and optional readings will be made available on each week's reading and discussion page in CANVAS.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

DISTRIBUTION OF POINTS

ASSIGNMENT	POSSIBLE POINTS
Spiritual Autobiography	70
Adopt a Saint	5
Saint Biography	75
Barton Reflection	75
Spiritual Practice Reflection 1	75
Saint Letter to Peers	75
Liturgical Worship Reflection	75
Spiritual Practice Reflection 2	75
Saint Letter to Yourself	75
Pentecostal Worship Reflection	75
Hart Reading Reflection	75

Extended Spiritual Practice Reflection 3	100
Final Exam	150
Total	1000

You may find all assignments listed below. You will also find all assignments in the Modules. Within each assignment page, you will find complete instructions, deadlines, and rubrics used for grading. If you have any questions about the assignments, feel free to contact your professor.

POINTS TO GRADE: The points-to-grade correlation is as follows:

Grade Scale

Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentage of Points Earned				
A	B	C	D	F
A 930-1000	B+ 870-899	C+ 770-799	D+ 670-699	F ≤ 599
A- 900-929	B 830-869	C 730-769	D 630-669	
	B- 800-829	C- 700-729	D- 600-629	

CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their course work. The time expectations for this course are shown below:

CREDIT HOUR DISTRIBUTION

ASSIGNMENTS	COURSE HOURS
Christian Practice Reflections	44
Readings and Reflections	53
Saint Biography	7
Final Exam	10
Total	114

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in as indicated under each assignment in the modules. Late assignments are accepted for **HALF** credit unless already approved by the professor, so if there are any issues you know about that may prevent you from completing an assignment in a

timely manner, be sure to discuss it with me well before the due date! My recommendation is that you plan **NOT** to wait until the last minute to turn in assignment.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

There is some kind of assignment due almost every week for this course. These assignments include:

1. **Course Readings.** Most days you will have assigned readings. When we have finished a text, you will be responsible to respond to a prompt related to the book. Reflection prompts will be distributed in class and on Canvas a week before the assignment is due.
2. **Religious/Spiritual Autobiography:** You will write a brief essay that outlines your church background and experience, including what church(es) you grew up in (if any), what you learned about the relationship of your church to the overall history of Christianity, how this background has shaped your relationship to God, and the theological convictions you have developed as a member of your church(es). This essay should be 300-400 words in length. It will be graded for clarity of writing, grammar, spelling, etc. Just to be clear, I am not looking for any particular answers. Each of your religious and spiritual stories will be unique. The point is that you openly and honestly reflect on your own journey so that you develop a greater sense of awareness about your own understanding of what it means to be Christian and can begin to locate yourself within or in relation to the various streams of the larger Christian movement.

If you have no church background, plan to meet with me in person so that we can talk about how you might approach this assignment. A secondary purpose of this assignment is that others (including me!) get to know you better as we forge open and honest dialogue as a class community.

Please note: If for some reason you feel uncomfortable sharing your own story with others, please talk to me personally. My hope is that everyone will be able to share something significant about themselves with the rest of their group while also being able to maintain a sense of safe boundaries.

3. **Adopt a Saint:** As noted in the course introduction, students will adopt Christian saints who will serve as a kind of guide to the Christian life. There are four graded assignments related to the saint adoption:
 - A. **Saint Selection:** Each student will adopt a saint and report their saint selection on the appointed discussion board. There is only one saint per person and it is first come first served, so if you wait too long you might not get the saint you want. The professor will provide a pre-approved list of saints, and students might request a non-list saint by contacting the professor directly.

- B. **Saint Biography:** Each student will write and post a wiki-like biography (600-800 words) about a patron/matron saint of their choosing. Each biography must include:
- a. The story of the saint's life, including background, key events in the saint's life, etc.;
 - b. A summary of the saint's chief ideas/beliefs;
 - c. An outline of the saint's most significant contributions to the Christian tradition, and
 - d. An assessment of why the individual should (or should not!) be considered a saint.
 - e. Students may also include additional items of interest related to the saint, such as pictures, drawings, key writings of the saints, etc. In gathering information about their saints, students may draw upon online resources (except for Wikipedia, which is not a respected source for such information), but they **must** also draw upon **at least two** scholarly texts, such as a book-length biography. All sources will be listed in a bibliography or reference page.
- c. **Saint Letter to Your Peers:** You will write a letter to your generation from your saint, pretending that you are the saint. This letter will focus on what young persons (either Christians or non-Christians) need to hear today in order for them to approach their lives effectively as members of the Christian tradition. It addresses what they should believe, how it is important for them to act, the kinds of commitments they should make (whether they should marry, have children, what kind of job and hobbies they should have), the kind of attitudes they should have about life and other people, etc. This should be **200-300** words in length and will be graded both for quality of writing and quality of engagement with the saint's perspective. Students should be as imaginative and creative as possible.
- d. **Saint Letter to Yourself:** Again pretending that you are the saint, you will write a personal letter to yourself. This letter will focus on what the saint has to say that you need to hear in order to live effectively as a member of the Christian tradition. It addresses what you should believe about yourself and your world and your place and work in it. This should be **200-300** words in length and will be graded both for quality of writing and quality of engagement with the saint's perspective. Students should be as imaginative and creative as possible.
4. **Christian Practice Reflections:** Throughout the five weeks of our class, you will be required to participate in some form of historic Christian practice, including attending two churches for worship, and spiritual disciplines like quiet reflection and meditation, devotional Bible reading, etc. You will be required to provide a reflection on each of these experiences. You will pick 1 discipline named in the Barton book to practice for an extended period of time and will be required to provide a longer reflection on this practice.

- 5. Final Exam:** The **final exam** will be a comprehensive essay based on the Wright book. Prompts will be distributed 2 weeks in advance. Hand written notes will be allowed.

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. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

COURSE POLICIES

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.

1. 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.

2. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) is not permitted, and use of these tools will be treated as plagiarism.

3. Identity Fraud

Committing identity fraud is considered particularly serious and could have legal as well as institutional implications. Any student who has another individual impersonate or in any other way commit identity fraud in any course, assignment, exam, or any type of academic exercise will be permanently suspended from Point Loma.

4. 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.

5. Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) page. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work. If you do need technical help you may click on the HELP button (located on the top-right corner of Canvas) and choose from whom you want assistance, or you may contact the campus help desk 619.849.2222.

Standard Case Policy: Students are encouraged to use technology, especially the Canvas site, for learning and communication *outside* of class. In fact, students should be checking their email daily to receive timely course-related communication. *In class, however, the professor has banned the use of electronic devices*, except by permission or in the case of specific need. (Please speak to me if, for example, you require a laptop for learning purposes and we will work out an accommodation.) For the sake of optimal student learning, and knowing the distractions available with just one click, you may not use laptops, tablets, smartphones, or any other screen-device during class.

6. University Catalog

For additional Point Loma policy items, review the current [Point Loma Nazarene University Catalog](#).

7. Accessibility of Historical Data in Point Loma Classes

PLNU strives to protect and preserve student data in accordance with FERPA laws. It is important for students and faculty to note that due to the nature of digital information, no data transmitted via emails or online learning management systems is entirely free from observation. The contents of this class, including the class discussion, may be monitored by PLNU faculty and staff at any time for the purposes of assisting students, gathering data, instructor training, or assessing the program.

8. 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 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.

9. Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our graduate students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

There are resources for your Christian faith journey available at the [Graduate & Professional Student Spiritual Life web page](#).

10. Classroom Etiquette

Students are expected to actively engage in an adult learning environment. Behaviors that disrupt the classroom environment and interfere with the learning of others are prohibited. Examples include talking with other students during a presentation or when others are speaking, texting, gaming, internet browsing, or reading non-course related materials. (Insert: for actually reading the syllabus, you get a bonus. Message me via Canvas by September 6 and tell me, "Origin of Alexandria is the most tragically overlooked Christian thinker." and I will give you 10 bonus points on your first graded assignment). All pagers, cellphones, and other electronic communication devices will be turned off at the beginning of class. Arriving late and leaving early are strongly discouraged and disruptive to the class.

Respect each other's opinions. Be considerate while your peers are speaking and actively engage them only when they have completed their point. Discourteous comments and side conversations will not be tolerated and will be addressed openly and directly by the instructor. Should a student's behavior become disruptive to the productivity of the course they will be asked to leave the classroom and not receive credit for attendance.

11. 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.

12. Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm

in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

13. Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week		
Module 1	THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN JESUS OF NAZARETH	
Aug 28 (Week 1)	Syllabus & Introductions	
Sept 4 (Week 2)	NO CLASS - LABOR DAY	
Sept 11 (Week 3)	<p>READING: Hart pp. ix-12</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: Spiritual Autobiography Due</p>	READING: Hart pp. 13-26

Week		
Sept 18 (Week 4)		<p>READING: Barton chapters 1-3 Hart pp. 27-40</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: Adopt a Saint Due</p>
Sept 25 (Week 5)		<p>READING: Barton chapters 4-6</p>
Oct 2 (Week 6)	<p>ASSIGNMENT: Saint Biography Due</p>	<p>READING: Barton chapters 7-9</p>
Module 2	THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN HISTORY	
Oct 9 (Week 7)		<p>READING: Hart pp. 41-61</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: Barton Reflection Due</p>
Oct 16 (Week 8)		<p>READING: Hart pp. 62-121</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: Spiritual Practice 1 Due</p>
Oct 23 (Week 9)		<p>READING: Hart pp. 122-190</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: Saint Letter to Your Peers</p>
Oct 30 (Week 10)	<p>ASSIGNMENT: Liturgical Worship Reflection Due</p>	<p>READING: Hart pp. 191-250</p>
Nov 6 (Week 11)		<p>READING: Hart pp. 215-264</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: Spiritual Practice 2 Due</p>
Nov 13 (Week 12)		<p>READING: Hart pp. 265-287 Wright chapters 1-3</p>
Module 3	INTEGRATION	

Week		
Nov 20 (Week 13)	<p>READING: Wright chapter 4</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: Saint Letter to Yourself Due</p>	<p>NO CLASS - Thanksgiving</p>
Nov 27 (Week 14)	<p>ASSIGNMENT: Pentecostal Worship Reflection Due</p>	<p>READING: Wright chapters 5-10 Hart pp. 288-329</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: Hart Reflection Due</p>
Dec 4 (Week 15)	<p>ASSIGNMENT: Extended Spiritual Practice Reflection Due</p>	<p>READING: Wright chapters 11-16</p>
	<p>FINAL EXAM</p> <p>Monday, Dec 11, 7:30-10:00 pm</p> <p>LBRT 205</p>	