

ESI3010

Spring 2025

Course Time and Location: Tuesday 1:30-2:45pm BAC151

Instructor: Ben Cater, Ph.D.

Office: Evans 124E

Phone: 619.849.2932

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

Office hours: drop-ins and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Sloane Young ([syoung0021@pointloma.edu](mailto:syoung0021@pointloma.edu))

### 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.

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### Course Description

ESI3010 is a discussion-based course that examines contemporary challenges to the environment, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and resource depletion. It emphasizes interdisciplinary study to reveal the scientific, social, economic, political, and religious dimensions of these issues. Learning from diverse people - policymakers, scientists, academics, pastors, indigenous people, and concerned citizens - encourages a broad understanding of the complexities and controversies surrounding care for God's creation. By engaging with them, students will develop a nuanced understanding of the global and local impacts of environmental change and strategies for addressing them. Reading, writing, and speaking about contemporary challenges will help sharpen professional skills, equipping students to put their environmental idealism into practice.

### Course Catalog Description

This course provides a seminar-style critical examination of current environmental issues and perspectives. Students will also engage in student mentorship at the appropriate level.

ESI 3010 may be repeated up to a combined total of eight (8) units. Environmental Studies majors must take at least three (3) units.

*Prerequisite(s): ESI 2050, or consent of instructor.*

### Course Learning Outcomes

Students who complete ESI 4070 will be able to:

1. Consider (evaluation & analysis) the human relationship with the natural world through diverse disciplines. **(PLO 2, 3)**
2. Exhibit (application) increasing competency in gathering knowledge from diverse places. **(PLO 3)**
3. Establish a collaborative network of colleagues and community (both student and faculty) through one-on-one and small group mentorship **(PLO 1)**
4. Communicate (application, comprehension) ideas with competency addressing appropriate audience, purpose, and medium. **(PLO 2, 3, 4)**

### Program Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the program in Environmental Studies will be able to:

1. Demonstrate synthesis (Synthesis, Application) of scientific and humanistic studies through practical environmental application. [Integrative Learning, Critical Thinking, Written Communication]
2. Locate, evaluate, and effectively use (Application, Evaluation) information to address environmental concerns. [Written Communication, Information Literacy, Critical Thinking]
3. Identify and articulate (Knowledge, Comprehension & Analysis) sociocultural dynamics as they relate to the natural world. [Quantitative Reasoning, Critical Thinking]
4. Present (Evaluation, Application) analysis to formal audiences, demonstrating appropriate strategies for audience engagement and oral communication. [Oral Communication, Written Communication]
5. Identify and secure (Application) post-graduate studies or careers in environmental fields. [70% Percent of alumni who have work in the broad environmental field] – evaluate 3 years.

### 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	25 pts
Reading Notes and Questions.	50 pts
Disciplinary Discussions	100 pts
Outdoor Reflections	100 pts
Reflection Essay and Presentation	100 pts

#### Participation

Participation is vital to success in this course. Ways to participate include coming to class on time, contributing to discussions, taking notes, completing coursework on time. ESI3010 is a one-unit course, which means it will require about two hours of studying per week. Studying includes doing the assigned readings, writings, and film viewings, and scheduling voluntary office hours.

Use of cell phones will not be permitted unless you have an academic accommodation OR I give you specific permission. **If you use your device to disengage from the course discussion, I will ask you to leave that day and try again next time.**

## Assignments

### A) Disciplinary Discussions

Each week, a student will lead the class in a discussion of an article or documentary of his or her choice. Students will choose the form of their presentation, using PowerPoint, handouts, or other devices to support their discussion. Presentations must explain the purpose and significance of the article and demonstrate enthusiastic knowledge about the topic. After their presentation, students should leave us with several questions or ideas to consider that lead us into a time of discussion. These discussions will exhibit the varied challenges of environmental change and the disciplinary and interdisciplinary methods we can use to understand them.

Each student will lead us in **two** discussions during the semester. Each discussion must be about a different topic, by a different author, and from a different disciplinary perspective. Some disciplines include Anthropology; Art and Design; Biology; Business; Chemistry; Computer Science; Creative Writing; Engineering; History; Journalism; Modern and Foreign Language; Literature; Political Science; Music; Sociology; and Theology.

**One week before your presentation**, you must email Dr. Cater a link to the article you'll be discussing. The link will be made available to the class, which will read the article.

**On the day of your presentation**, you must provide a handout or a visual (PowerPoint, etc) to guide us in your discussion. The discussion must be about 15 minutes long. Handouts or visuals must be 3-5 pages/slides in length, turned in to Canvas, and include the following:

- 1) a summary (75 words) of the article that includes the author, title, and source (link) and highlights the main argument and its complexities
- 2) a summary (75 words) of why we should care about the environmental challenges under review
- 3) a list of questions/ideas (2-3) that we should ponder and/or a list of credible action steps that we can take

Example articles:

[https://www.bu.edu/articles/2023/what-can-the-bible-teach-us-about-climate-change/Links to an external site.](https://www.bu.edu/articles/2023/what-can-the-bible-teach-us-about-climate-change/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.)

[https://www.nature.com/articles/s41370-024-00676-9Links to an external site.](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41370-024-00676-9Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.)

A resource hub that might be helpful: [https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/Links to an external site.](https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.)

**Students in the audience:** please come to class having read the articles and written two thoughtful questions per article that we can discuss in class. These questions will count towards your participation grade.

## B) Outdoor Reflections

Twice during the semester, students will find an outdoor space to sit/walk/hike/paddle for 30 minutes. Each space must be different and identified in the reflection (ex. the surf in front of campus, the natural park at Sunset Cliffs, hiking at Mission Trails, etc.). Take notes of what you see, hear, and smell, paying careful attention to plants, animals, insects, distant noises, and scents. Then use your notes to compose a well-written reflection that describes in sensory detail how the experience affected you. Include insights or connections to class discussions or readings if relevant, as well as a selfie of your time outdoors. Be prepared to share your reflection in class.

## C) Reflective Essay

Students will submit a 3-5 page essay that makes sense of what they've learned in the course and how it impacts the way they think and live with the environment. Information from disciplinary discussions and assigned readings, as well as class discussions and the reflective moments you experience during the semester, should inspire the content of the essay. The essay, as well as a presentation to the class, will count as your final exam grade.

## 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 from 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\\_HonestyLinks\\_to\\_an\\_external\\_site.](https://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=41&navoid=2435#Academic_HonestyLinks_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.

### Spiritual Care

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

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain, or if you have prayer requests, you can contact the [Office of Student Life and Formation](#).

### 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.

### Artificial Intelligence Policy

If it is part of your creative process, you are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, etc.) in this course. However, I would like you to speak to me before about how you plan to use this tool in your work. Another thing to note: most publications DO NOT allow use of AI in creative works. At this current cultural moment, using AI will limit where you can publish and work.

Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly identified as such, including the specific tool(s) used. For example, if you use ChatGPT, you must cite ChatGPT including the version number, year, month and day of the query and the statement "Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/Links to an external site..>"

Further, you must include with your work the sequential prompts and methodology that you used to generate it. Failure to indicate AI as part of the work will be considered plagiarism.

It is important that you protect your colleagues' intellectual property. Providing AI with samples of your colleagues' works will result in an F in this course.

### 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 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 ensure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

### 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](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

### 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](http://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](mailto:counselingservices@pointloma.edu) or find a list of campus pastors at [pointloma.edu/title-ix](http://pointloma.edu/title-ix).

### 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.

See [Academic PoliciesLinks to an external site.](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

### 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.

### Schedule

Dr. Cater reserves the right to adjust the schedule to support student learning.

Jan 14 - Introduction

Jan 21 - Model Disciplinary Discussion

Read and take notes on the following articles. Prepare 1-2 written questions per article and be prepared to discuss them in class. Upload your notes and questions to Canvas.

#### [Links to an external site.](#)

- Sider, "Redeeming the Environmentalists"  
([https://www.christianitytoday.com/1993/06/redeeming-environmentalists/Links to an external site.](https://www.christianitytoday.com/1993/06/redeeming-environmentalists/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.))
- White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"  
([lynnwhiterootsofcrisis.pdf](#)) [Download lynnwhiterootsofcrisis.pdf](#))

Jan 28 - Disciplinary Discussion #1

Feb 4 - Disciplinary Discussions #1

Feb 11 - Selections from Berry, *The World Ending Fire*



- documentary: "Wendell Berry and His Hopes For Humanity"  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ejYAfcjJmY&t=15s>Links to an external



[site.](#)

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Feb 18 - NO CLASS MEETING

- Instead of class, we'll meet on Saturday, Feb 22 to sail. See Dr. Cater if you cannot attend to complete an alternative assignment—details to follow.

Feb 25 - TBA

March 4 - Outdoor Reflection #1 Due

March 11 - Spring Break (NO CLASS)

March 18 - Disciplinary Discussion #2

March 25 - Disciplinary Discussion #2

April 1 - TBA

- TBA

April 8 - Outdoor Reflection #2 Due

April 15 - Selections from Berry, *The World Ending Fire*

April 22 - Putting Idealism into Practice

April 29 - Putting Idealism Into Practice

May 6 1:30-4pm Final Exam