DRAFT v1
Subject to change. Full syllabus available in Canvas January 13, 2027.

Loyola Institute for Ministry
Loyola University New Orleans

Church, Sacraments, and Liturgy
LIM-G722-Y1G0E

Spring 2027

Important! You will be notified by email when your course is available (normally the week before class begins). Please check your *Loyola Gmail* account for instructions. ***Please reply*** to the instructor's email when you receive it.

Course Description

This course presents the experience and theology of church, sacraments, and liturgy as they have unfolded throughout Christian history and in practice. A major part of the course is dedicated to a deeper understanding of the meaning of sacramentality and the theology of the individual sacraments in the Catholic tradition. Special emphasis is given to Vatican II and post-conciliar developments in the church's self-understanding and in the theology and practice of ministry, sacraments, and liturgy.

Course Goals and Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- articulate a foundation in ecclesiology, including the Church's contemporary identity and mission as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council; broader theological models of the Church; and structures and roles within the Church as the People of God.
- formulate an understanding of the Church as sacrament, and of the Church's sacramental celebrations as rooted in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- analyze the meaning and role of liturgy in the life of the Church. identify ministry, and your specific ministry, as part and parcel of the Church's identity, role, and mission.
- deepen your insight into symbol, space, time, and ritual.
- recognize creation's basis for sacraments and liturgy and their environmental implications.
- practice and apply critical, contextual practical theological reflection.

Required Readings

Please order the required texts as soon as possible from the bookstore of your choice.

Imperatori-Lee, Natalia. *Cuéntame: Narrative in the Ecclesial Present.* Orbis Books, 2018. ISBN 978-1626982673 List price: $35.00. This book is available for free as an e-book through Loyola's Library. You may also wish to purchase it.

Rausch, Thomas P. *Towards a Truly Catholic Church: An Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium.* Liturgical Press, 2005. ISBN: 978-0814651872 List price $24.95

Additional readings and media as included in the Canvas course.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments

Weekly sessions in this course run from Tuesday–Monday. Please note that all assignments must be completed by Midnight on Monday, the last day of the weekly session, except for Week 1; you must complete your personal introduction by Sunday, 1/24 by 11:59 pm Central Time, or risk being administratively dropped from the course and your discussion questions by Monday, 1/25, by 11:59 pm Central Time.

Session	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 1/18 – 1/25	Introductions 1/18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday	Sign Learning Agreement; introduce self by Sunday, 1/24 by 11:59 pm CT, complete readings and initial understanding journal reflection by Monday, 1/25 11:59 pm CT.
Week 2 1/26 – 2/1	Sacramentality	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 3 2/2 – 2/8	Models of the Church	Complete readings, media, discussion questions or attend Synchronous Zoom Meeting (optional)
Week 4 2/9 – 2/15	Mardi Gras Holiday	
Week 5 2/16 – 2/22	Community and Hierarchy	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 6 2/23 – 3/1	Holiness and Marks of the Church	Complete readings, media, Small Virtual Group Meetings (required)
Week 7 3/2 – 3/8	A Hopeful and Global Church	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; submit Spiritual Reflection 1 by 11:59 pm on 3/8
Week 8	Creation, Liturgy, and Sacraments	Complete readings, media, discussion

3/9 – 3/15		questions; attend Synchronous Zoom Meeting (optional); paper 1 due Monday, 3/15, by 11:59 pm CT
Week 9 3/16 – 3/22	Ritual	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 10 3/23 – 3/29	Holy Week and Easter Holiday (no class)	
Week 11 3/30 – 4/5	Life, Worship, and Cultural Diversity	Complete readings, media, local research; attend Small Virtual Group Meetings (required)
Week 12 4/6 – 4/12	Sacraments of Initiation	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 13 4/13 – 4/19	Eucharist	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 14 4/20 – 4/26	Sacraments of Healing	Complete readings and media and discussion questions; work on final assignment; attend Synchronous Zoom Meeting (optional)
Week 15 4/27 – 5/3	Working Break	Submit Spiritual Formation Journal #2 due by 5/3, 11:59 pm CT
Week 16 5/4 – 5/7	Course Closing	Submit final paper by Tuesday, 5/4, 11:59 pm CT

Tuesday, 5/18, Due date to post grades

Week One Assignments

1) Read and sign Learning Agreement
2) Read overviews in Canvas
3) Participate in Discussion on Canvas:
    a. Introduce oneself and greet one's fellow students (Complete by 11:59 pm on 1/24 to avoid being administratively dropped from the course.)
    b. Complete Initial Understanding assignment by Monday, January 25, at 11:59 pm CT.

Assessment

Each student's final grade will include the following parts:

		Percentage of Grade	
		Graduate	CEU
1	Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings	40%	90%
2	First Paper	15%	–
3	Spiritual Formation Journals	10%	10%
4	Final Paper	35%	–

1) Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings (45% graduate; 90% CEU)

Please note that credit for the course for certificate (CEU) level students is based in large part on participation in each session's discussion board. If you are a CEU student, this participation is 90% of your grade for credit. (The additional 10% comes from the spiritual formation component of the course.)

Each week you will be able to earn 2 points for each Discussion Board question. For each weekly discussion, your participation includes your original post in response to the assigned question(s), as well as the comments you are asked to make on your colleagues' posts. There are specific directions posted about these requirements each week in Canvas. Postings should address the question(s) for the session, respect the word limit posted for each week's question(s) and demonstrate some interaction with course materials for that session.

In addition to addressing the question(s) for each week, you are also asked each week to comment on the postings of your colleagues in this course. This comment should also be substantive; "I agree" or "I like what you posted" is not a substantive comment. Please articulate what about a posting is compelling to you, and why you consider their comment relevant, challenging, important, etc. There is no word limit requirement to comment posts.

Asking Questions: One of the most effective tools of a good online discussion is the question. Communication in the online medium can be easily misinterpreted; conversely, it can be challenging to effectively convey tone and nuance in an online discussion. This can lead to misunderstanding, conflict, and frustration in the learning group.

When in doubt about the meaning of a posting, a good strategy is to pose a question about it, and to avoid making assumptions or jumping to conclusions. Even if the meaning seems straight- forward, it is good practice to ask follow-up questions and/or questions for clarification. My hope for our discussions is that we will rely on the question as a standard tool for effective communication.

Discussion Leaders: Each week there will be one or two Discussion Leaders to help initiate the flow of our conversation. The task of the Discussion Leader is simply to post first. He or she will essentially begin the conversation around the given question(s) for the week by posting their response to the session question by Wednesday at 8pm Central of each week. Others will then be able to respond to this initial posting and engage in a thread. All subsequent postings in the conversation, both for the Discussion Leader and the rest of the class will be due the following Monday at 12 Noon Central. Each week's session will follow this general format.

I will plan for and post a schedule of Discussion Leaders for several weeks ahead of time. Be sure to check the Discussion Leaders link on the course homepage to see when your

name will come up. If you are unable to lead the week you are scheduled, please let me know as soon as possible.
In weeks when you participate in Small Group Meetings, you will submit a journal entry of 300+ words in place of participation on the Discussion Board.

Discussion Board Posting Schedule (Please note: All times are U.S. Central)

Beginning at noon on Monday

Read the overview for the week's work and begin individual work ("Read" and "Watch" assignments) for this session. Questions that arise about the material may be addressed to the instructor on the Question Board.

Before Wednesday 8:00 p.m.

Post response to the mini-course on hermeneutics assignment on the Discussion Board. This initial post should be between 300-500 words.

Before Thursday 8:00 p.m.

Post responses to each other's hermeneutics posts, establishing a discussion that will proceed through the week's end.

Beyond the initial post due Wednesday, each student should have at least two postings that respond to others, the first of which is due by Thursday night, and each of which should be between 150-300 words. Your posts should raise a question for the person to whom you are responding, or to the group in general. There is no word limit for any posts you contribute beyond these two required posts.

Before Friday 8:00 p.m.

Post response to ***Test Through Discussion (TTD)*** assignment.

Before Saturday 8:00 p.m.

Post responses to each other's TTD posts on the Discussion Board, establishing a discussion that will proceed through the weekend.

Beyond the initial TTD post due Friday, each student should have at least two postings that respond to others, the first of which is due by Saturday night, and each of which should be between 150-300 words. One of your posts should raise a question to the person you are responding to, or to the group in general. There is no word limit for any posts you contribute beyond these two required posts.

Before noon Monday

As we begin a new week, any further issues you think still need to be raised in relation to the previous week's work can be shared through either the Question Board or the Student Lounge depending on to whom you're primarily addressing the issue, the instructor or members of the group.

2) Midterm Assignment (15% graduate; not required for CEU)

The purpose of this 1,000-1,500-word essay is to explore a topic in ecclesiology that we address in this course and to study how it is playing out in the Church and world today. Full details in Canvas.

3) Spiritual Formation (10% graduate; 10% CEU)

Students complete two 300+-word reflections over the course of the semester. Full assignment details are found in Canvas.

4) Final Assignment (30% graduate; not required for CEU)

The purpose of this 7-8-page paper is to chart the growth of your understanding of either sacramentality or one of the seven Roman Catholic Sacraments (if your tradition is not Roman Catholic, you may present how your understanding of this Sacrament within your tradition has grown) and the concrete and transformative implications of that growth for your ministry. Full details in Canvas.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	**B-**	80-82.9	**D+**	67-69.9
A-	90-92.9	**C+**	77-79.9	**D**	60-66.9
B+	87-89.9	**C**	73-76.9	**F**	0-59.9
B	83-86.9	**C-**	70-72.9		

Overall Grading Scale

Please note that the LIM grading scale uses B as the standard for graduate-quality work. A and B+ indicate graduate work done with distinction, with B- and below signifying levels below graduate standards.

Letter Grade	Quality Points	Characteristics of Student Work
A	**4.0**	Work done with distinction. An outstanding use of all four evaluation criteria as a catalyst for critical reflection.
A-	**3.7**	Work done with distinction, with a few minor corrections needed.

B+	**3.3**	Work of very good quality. The assignment is addressed in an exceptional manner with a good balance of personal insight and academic documentation.
B	**3.0**	The standard for the master's degree. The assignment is adequately addressed in a clear and concise manner with appropriate documentation. If subsequent work meets this standard of quality, the degree will be awarded.
B-	**2.7**	The work is slightly below the standard for master's level work. The assignment is addressed, but a number of corrections is needed to address the assignment in a clear and concise manner. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C+	**2.3**	Substandard graduate work. Evaluation criteria are not adequately met in the assignment. Moderate improvement is needed. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C	**2**	Less than graduate-level work. Evaluation criteria are not met. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C-	**1.7**	Below average, grade does not count towards graduation.
D+	**1.3**	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
D	**1**	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
F	**0**	Assignment not addressed at all, incomplete assignment, or not submitted on time.

Course Policies

Incomplete Grade Policy

Students are subject to the university policy regarding incomplete grades with the following additions to university policy. Grades of Incomplete are given at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources » Policies, Forms, & Services section of their Canvas course. Students should first inquire of their instructor whether or not they are eligible for an incomplete; this must occur with sufficient time to complete the process explained here. To be eligible, students may not have received an Incomplete in the previous semester, must have completed at least 75% of the course work to date, and must have at least a C or above in the course. After the instructor makes an initial assessment of eligibility, including checking with the LIM Office to ensure there was no Incomplete in the previous semester and finds the student eligible, by the due date of the course's final assignment, a student must complete and obtain all signatures for LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources section of their Canvas course and submit it to their instructor, who will forward a copy to the LIM Director. LIM graduate students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in consecutive semesters.

Attendance & Participation

Students are subject to the university policy regarding attendance found online in the Bulletin. Students in online courses communicate their presence by active participation in weekly discussions. Each course's instructor sets requirements for how many times students must post on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Failing to post during the first week of class may result in removal from the course. If you foresee that you will be unable to post in a

given week, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Extensions for posting are given at the instructor's discretion and for a valid reason may be granted if arranged ahead of time. In extraordinary circumstances, students may arrange with their instructor to post up to two weeks after a deadline, though this may entail a grade reduction. Posts and other assignments submitted more than two weeks late may be subject to a grade of zero. If students do not post in a given week, they are considered absent. Absence for more than one week without contacting the instructor may result in removal from and failure of the course.

University Policies

Please read Part 2 of the syllabus (located on LORA and in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, AI, accessible education, and more.