

**Loyola Institute for Ministry  
Loyola University New Orleans**

**Synodality  
Fall 2024  
Undergraduate Course**

**Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Emily Jendzejec, Ph.D.

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Important:** Please check your Canvas course and/or your Loyola email account for an email from the instructor alerting you the course is open, then reply to that email confirming you are ready to begin the course. If you experience difficulties in finding your email address or accessing the course, please contact Loyola's Information Technology Help Desk ASAP: (504)-865-2255.

**Course Description**

This course examines Synodality and explores its implications for ministry and the life of faith today. This online course culminates in a week-long trip to Rome during the Second Session of the XVI General Assembly of Bishops in October 2024. Students will participate in the programming with CENTERS (**Catholic Education Network To Experience Rome and Synodality**) along with other students at participating universities.

CENTERS is an emerging collaboration among more than 10 Catholic institutions of higher education across the U.S., the leadership of their respective sponsoring charisms, and other Catholic organizations involved in education to design and offer an immersion experience in synodality for 100-150 college students in Rome in October 2024.

**Key Learning Outcomes**

As a result of taking this course, students will be able to:

- Be formed in the spiritual practices of synodality - encounter, active listening, communal discernment, co-responsibility for mission through collaboratively designed and facilitated programming

- Understand key elements of Synodality from its roots in tradition, in light of Vatican II, and in contemporary developments.
- Participate in synodal encounters with Church leaders while in Rome and to become synodal witnesses and animators in their home communities (campus, parish, diocese, etc.)
- Student Competencies that this course works towards through the use of the synodal “Conversations in the Spirit” model are: (1) active listening, (2) making space for others without judgment, (3) building together through dialogue

**Required Texts**

Please order the required text as soon as possible from the [Loyola Bookstore](#) or another bookstore of your choice.

- Rafael Luciani, *Synodality: A New Way of Proceeding in the Church* (Paulist Press, 2022) ISBN: 978-0809156115 / \$18.95
- Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream* (Simon & Schuster, 2022) ISBN: 978-1982171872 / \$17.00
- Phyllis Zagano, *Just Church: Women, Catholic Social Teaching & Synodality* (Paulist Press, 2023) ISBN 978-0809156535 / \$17.95

Additional readings available in Canvas and through the Monroe Library. The designation (L) in the weekly readings means that you will need to access the reading in the ATLA Serials Database or another Monroe Library database.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation**

Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments

Online Modules	Goal	Content	Assignments	
8/26 Week One: Introductions	Introduce students to course material and to one another	Syllabus Learning Agreement Course Expectations	Introduce self, Initial Understanding Exercise, Be assigned to small group learning cohort (Three-Four each that will meet during	

			class and in Rome to reflect together)	
9/1 Week Two: Roots of Synodality: Early Church	Understand the roots of synodality based in early christian communities		Discussion Questions	
9/9 Week Three: Roots of Synodality: Vatican II	Understand the roots of synodality based in the documents and processes of Vatican II	Ormond Rush “Inverting the Pyramid” Rafael Luciani <i>Synodality</i>	Discussion Questions, Optional online Zoom class	
9/16 Week Four: Synodality and Papacy of Pope Francis	Understand Synodality in the context of the Papacy of Pope Francis	Rafael Luciani <i>Synodality</i> Pope Francis, <i>Let us Dream</i>	Small Virtual Group Meeting, Small Group Reflection due	
9/23 Week Five: Synod on Synodality	Understand the timeline, process and documents of the current Synod on Synodality	Rafael Luciani <i>Synodality</i> Documents from Synod on Synodality Kristin Colberg Video	Discussion Questions	
9/30 Week Six: Conversations in the Spirit	Learn how to facilitate a conversation in the Spirit by participating in and reflecting on one	Tracey Lamont “A Church that Listens”	Mandatory Online Zoom Class	
10/7 Week Seven: Synodality as <i>Just Church</i> ?	Who is being listened to? What does it matter?	Zagano, <i>Just Church</i>	Discussion Questions, Mandatory Zoom Class to Go Over Logistics for Trip	

10/14 Week Eight: Immersion in Rome	Experience Synod on Synodality by immersing in the process and meeting with voting members.	Field trips, conversations with voting synod members, reflections with CENTERS group	Full Participation in daily sessions in Rome.  Assignment in Rome: 1 blog post/video reflecting on trip experience.	
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Assessment

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

		Percentage of Grade	Undergrad/Grad Requirements
	Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings and/or synchronous sessions	30%	Active and timely participation in weekly online discussions and assignments.
	Full and Active Participation in Rome Immersion	40%	
	Final Assignment	30%	Details Below.
		100%	

Initial Understandings Exercise

The purpose of the Initial Understanding assignment is for you to establish your baseline understanding of Synodality. So, before you do any other assignments for this course, please spend at least twenty minutes writing on the following questions. You will not submit what you’ve written, but you will need to consult it on your final project, so find some place to keep it safe.

- What is Synodality, and why is it important?

## Discussions (30%)

As in all RELM courses, the strength of our program is the intentional learning community and its ongoing invitation to disciplined conversation. Through the online courses you will be part of an intentional learning community that will carry on extended and disciplined conversation by way of the internet.

A discussion is an “asynchronous” or time-independent application. This means that generally you will have no set times or schedules when you must be in class on any particular day. It is up to you to determine when to log in and post during the course of a week, within the parameters of the given weekly deadlines. We do expect that you will log in to this class several times a week to read the comments of your instructor and fellow students and to post your required comments. Except for the last week, each weekly session runs from 12:01 a.m. US Central Monday until 11:59 p.m. Central the following Sunday. Late posts are subject to reduced grade or to a grade of 0. Please consult with your professor about any foreseen or unforeseen absence from the course.

Each week I will select Discussion Leaders to help initiate the flow of our conversation. The task of the Discussion Leader is simply to post first. S/he will essentially begin the conversation around the given question(s) for the week by posting her response to the session question; everyone else assigned to that group will respond on that same thread. In at least one of your responses, you will also offer your own reflections on the question (perhaps in addition to your response to the discussion question). Each week you will be able to earn four points for each question, for your weekly participation; this includes your response to the assigned question(s), as well as the thoughtful replies you are asked to make to your colleagues’ posts.

All students are expected to contribute at least three substantive responses for each question (150-300 words each). Lead students post their initial reflections by Wednesday; everyone who is not a lead student should post at least once by Friday.

There will be two **synchronous zoom classes** during the course. To participate, students will need access to a computer with a web camera and microphone, and earphones or earbuds. More information will be included in the Canvas course. There will also be one **required small group meeting** during the course. More information will be included in the Canvas course.

## Posting

Contributions to Discussions should be the fruit of, and therefore demonstrate, a critical engagement with the course assignments. To achieve this, you are asked to note comments, questions, observations, reflections, insights that surface as the natural result of thoughtful reading. Your weekly postings should be substantive and respect the word limit posted for each week’s questions. A substantive response will include both your own reflections on the question and some interaction with course materials you’re your fellow students’ reflections.

Please include references to the course materials to indicate this interaction; include a parenthetical reference with at least the name of the material or the author and, if possible a page number (e.g., Cooke 15; Clifford video). Please also alert your readers when you refer to other outside sources, such as other books or websites.

Your replies to your colleagues should also be substantive: “I agree” or “I like what you posted” or something similar is not a substantive comment. Please articulate what about their posting is compelling to you, the connections you make with the assigned material for the week, and why you consider their comment relevant, challenging, important, etc. Ideally, each discussion thread will become a conversation. (If you have a comment that you would like to make to a colleague that is not related to the discussion, you may either post it in the “Student Lounge” Discussion (accessible from the course homepage) or send an email to the student via the People section of the course.)

### 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. It can be challenging to effectively convey tone and nuance in an online discussion. This can sometimes lead to misunderstanding, conflict and frustration in the learning group. But this does not have to be the case! When in doubt about the meaning of a posting, please ask questions before making assumptions or jumping to conclusions. Even if the meaning seems straightforward, it is good practice to ask follow-up questions and/or questions for clarification. Questions will also help deepen our conversations and reflections.

In sum, what should your Discussion posts look like?

- Your posts should always be substantive, meaning focused, succinct, and worth reading. Keep in mind that we all have to read these posts!
- Your posts should bring your own experience into conversation with our course materials and with what the other members of the learning community are saying, and they should always directly address the question at hand.
- Your responses should also be critical, meaning that the conversation should also generate questions, requests for clarification, and other methods of deepening the discussion. As you can see, remarks like “I loved your post” or “I agree wholeheartedly” are NOT substantive posts!
- In addition to being substantive, our online conversations should also be authentic—that is, anything that you say online should be something that you would say if we were all sitting around a table in a physical room.

## Rome Immersion (40%)

Full and active participation in the Rome Immersion experience. Attendance and participation at each session.

## Final Assignment (30%)

The purpose of the final assignment is for you to synthesize what you've learned in this class. There are two parts to the assignment:

- 1) One blog post/video reflecting on trip experience. These will be shared publicly on LIM's Social Media Accounts.
- 2) Upon returning from Rome, look back at your Initial Understanding assignment for your baseline understanding of Synodality. Use course materials, and your experience in Rome, to reflect on your now deeper understanding of Synodality. This assignment will be three-four pages in length.

You will receive precise instructions in the Canvas course.

## 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 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, accessible education, and more.