



College of Arts and Sciences

School of Theology

RE 205: The Christian God and Human Experience

Henry Hall 227, MWF | Credits: 3 | Term: Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor	Dustyn Kainoa Ragasa, Ph.D.
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Phone	808-739-8533
Office Location	Henry Hall 206 F
Office Hours	MWF 11:30am – 1:30pm and by appointment
Virtual Office Hours	By appointment only

Communication

All written communication between the instructor and student must take place through official Chaminade University email addresses or through our Canvas course site. Please allow up to 24 hours for a response.

School and Department

School	School of Theology
Location	Henry Hall 206
Phone	(808) 739-4633

Course Description and Materials

Catalog Description

Students probe the nature of human experience and religious meaning, with special attention given to experience of the Judeo-Christian God. Contemporary Catholic-Christian faith is systematically analyzed in terms of its core concepts, values and visions. This study addresses the question and critique of God in the modern world and surveys contemporary theology in a spirit that is Catholic, Christian and Ecumenical. Offered every semester. This course fulfills the Catholic Intellectual Tradition General Education Requirement.

Course Snapshot

Modality	Face-to-Face
Meeting Location	Henry Hall 227
Meeting Days	Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
Time Allocation	As established by the Chaminade University of Honolulu Credit Hour Policy, this three-credit hour course represents completion of a minimum of 135 hours of student engagement over one 15-week semester. 1. 40.66 hours of regularly scheduled in-person classroom instruction (e.g., lectures on course themes, weekly seminars on assigned readings, collaborative group discussions, and three examinations)

	2. 24.00 hours of Final Project preparation (i.e., collaborative ideation, data collection, in situ immersive experiences, project refinement, and presentation development and revision) 3. 70.34 hours of ancillary work averaging 4.68 hours per week (e.g., course readings, examination preparation, supplementary research and study, office hour one-on-one support, optional reflection and clarification papers, completion of additional assignments as needed, etc.)
Required Materials	Please inform the instructor if you require assistance in accessing any of these materials. Assigned Texts <u>Textbook</u> (available at CUH Bookstore, Library Reserve, etc.) i. Mueller, J.J., ed. <i>Theological Foundations</i>, Alternate Edition. Winona: Anselm Academic, 2011. <u>Seminar Articles</u> (available on Canvas) i. Articles for Week 5 Seminar: 1. C.S. Lewis, "Making and Begetting." 2. C.S. Lewis, "The Three-Personal God." ii. Articles for Week 8 Seminar: 1. Vatican II, <i>Lumen Gentium</i>. 2. Letter to the Church at Philomelion, "The Martyrdom of Polycarp." iii. Article for Week 12 Seminar: 1. Leo XIV, <i>Magnifica Humanitas</i>. <u>Exam Articles</u> (available on Canvas) i. Articles for Examination I 1. Harry L. Poe and Jimmy H. Davis, "The Religious Way of Knowing." 2. Đuro Šušnjić, "The Dialogue Between Religion and Science," ii. Article for Examination II 1. Leonardo Boff, "The Communion of the Trinity as Basis for Social and Integral Liberation." iii. Articles for Examination III 1. Richard Gula, "Law and Obedience." 2. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Three Bluebooks for Examinations Students must provide their own Bluebooks for each of the three examinations. Bluebooks can be purchased from the counter at the CUH Bookstore for ~\$1.00 each. Nothing is to be written in or on Bluebooks prior to the examination; Bluebooks cannot be reused for subsequent examinations. Examinations will not be accepted in any other medium except by prior written arrangement with instructor.
Canvas	Access to internet-capable technology is essential as important information and materials such as Seminar and Exam Articles are posted on our Canvas site and will be updated regularly.

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Upon completion of the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies, the student will be able to:

1. Utilize the key concepts of Catholic theology in a critical reflection on integral human experience.
2. Engage in respectful dialogue on religious meaning in our globalized, multicultural society.
3. Employ Christian moral imagination in moral reasoning and decision making that affirms and/or challenges secular and cultural values.
4. Generate a substantive project that is animated by the Marianist Charism.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon completion of RE 205: The Christian God and the Human Experience, the student will be able to:

1. Correlate how the sacramental understanding of God is evident in human experience
2. Describe the meaning of Jesus as foundational for the Christian response to human existence, human choices, and social justice.
3. Explain the main themes of the relationship between humanity and God as expressed in the Judeo-Christian understanding of God.
4. Define significant terms used to describe God not only in Christianity but also other religious traditions, particularly Judaism and Islam.

Marianist Values

An education in the Marianist Tradition is marked by five principles. Reflect on how this course relates to one or more:

1. Education for formation in faith.
2. Provide an integral, quality education.
3. Educate in family spirit.
4. Educate for service, justice and peace, and integrity of creation.
5. Educate for adaptation and change.

Native Hawaiian Values

Education is central to both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture — both seek transformative, value-centered learning that serves the marginalized. This is reflected in the 'Ōlelo No'ēau (Hawaiian proverbs) below:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana): E ola au i ke akua ('Ōlelo No'ēau 364) — May I live by God.
2. Provide an Integral, Quality Education (Na'auao): Lawe i ka ma'alea a kū'ono'ono ('Ōlelo No'ēau 1957) — Acquire skill and make it deep.
3. Educate in Family Spirit ('Ohana): 'Ike aku, 'ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai ('Ōlelo No'ēau 1200) — Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped.
4. Educate for Service, Justice and Peace (Aloha): Ka lāma kū o ka no'ēau ('Ōlelo No'ēau 1430) — Education is the standing torch of wisdom.
5. Educate for Adaptation and Change (Aina): 'A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi ('Ōlelo No'ēau 203) — All knowledge is not taught in the same school.

Alignment of Course Learning Outcomes

	CLO 1	CLO 2	CLO 3	CLO 4
Marianist Values	1	4	3	2
PLOs	1	3	1	2
Native Hawaiian Values	1	3	1	5
Gen Ed Outcomes	4	4	4	4

Attendance and In-Class Participation

Attendance Policy

Our learning community will be characterized by a spirit of collaboration, so consistent participation is a fundamental requirement. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain materials from other students in the event of an excused absence.

Quick Reference — Absence Thresholds:

Excused Absence	The option to excuse absences is at the sole discretion of the instructor. Students must register absences via email to the instructor prior to the beginning of that class.
Unexcused Absence	Absences that are not registered via email to the instructor prior to the beginning of that class or absences for frivolous purposes will be considered unexcused.
Warning Threshold	Students who accumulate three (3) or more unexcused absences will be contacted by the instructor for redress.
Grade Penalty	Four (4) instances of non-participation imply that the highest final grade achievable is a "B."
Course Failure	Six (6) or more absences will constitute grounds for an administrative removal or a recommendation to withdraw from the course.
Late Arrival / Early Departure	Arriving more than 15 minutes late to class will count as one (1) tardy. Three (3) tardies will amount to one (1) unexcused absence. Departing class 15 minutes (or more) early or will amount to one (1) unexcused absence.

In-Class Participation Expectations

Active, respectful engagement is essential. Students are expected to come prepared and contribute meaningfully to discussions, activities, and collaborative work.

Students are expected to:

- Come prepared — complete readings and activities before each session.
- Participate actively in discussions and group work, demonstrating critical thinking.
- Engage respectfully and honor diverse perspectives.
- Use personal devices for course purposes only unless otherwise directed.

Course Activities

In-Class Activities

In-class activities will cycle between three formats:

1. *Seminar*. Assigned readings will introduce the weekly theme. Students will collaboratively analyze and discuss the readings in small group format. Seminars will occur on the first session of the week, ordinarily Monday.
2. *Lecture*. A lecture will examine a specific element of the weekly theme in greater detail. Outlines will be provided. Lectures will typically occur on the second session of the week, ordinarily Wednesday.
3. *Colloquium*. Plenary dialogue on the weekly theme will invite summative comments, synthesis of information, opportunities for sharing, and prospects for further exploration. Colloquia will typically occur on the third session of the week, ordinarily Friday.

Homework / Assignments	A careful reading of assigned materials in a timely and conscientious manner is essential. Assigned readings are to be completed and ready to be discussed on the seminar session of the week, usually Monday. Our readings are not easily understood when read quickly or skimmed, so do budget ample time to read. Please see page 10 of this syllabus for a complete schedule of readings. Students are also encouraged to perform additional research to enhance their understanding of the texts.
Quizzes / Exams	Students must prepare for and undertake the fifth, tenth, and fourteenth week in-class examinations. These short-essay examinations will assess learning of course materials. All work is to be submitted in Bluebooks, legibly written in blue or black ink, employing university-level grammar and syntax. Oral recitation of illegible examinations may be scheduled during office hours. Make-up examinations for justified and excused absences communicated in advance may be administered orally during a scheduled meeting.
Projects	Students will demonstrate subject matter proficiency through a collaborative Final project that entails real-world application of course themes to issues of justice. Please review page 9 for the full project prompt. Students will self-divide into small groups (3-5 students) for the project. A grading rubric will be distributed near the middle of the term.

Course Policies

Late Work	Late submission of work may be permitted by discretion of instructor with advance written permission.
Make-Up Work	Assignments, including midterm examinations, cannot be made up at a later date except by discretion of instructor and with advance written permission.
Extra Credit	One extra credit opportunity will be announced near the middle of the semester.
Incomplete Grade	Students unable to complete course requirements for legitimate circumstances may petition the instructor for an Incomplete no later than the twelfth week of class. The option to grant an Incomplete is at the sole discretion of the instructor.
Syllabus Changes	The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus. Changes will be announced in class and posted to Canvas.

Final Grades

Final grades will be submitted to Self-Service (selfservice.chaminade.edu) and are to be interpreted as follows:

Grade	Range
A	90% and above
B	80–89%
C	70–79%
D	60–69%
F	59% and below

Important Information

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or to a university official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, plagiarism, and unauthorized and/or undisclosed AI usage, in addition to more obvious dishonesty. See catalog section Student Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work for further information.

Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Director of the Academic College. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor, Director, and the Dean of Academic College and may include an "F" grade for the work in question, an "F" grade for the course, academic notice, or dismissal from the University.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) Statement

Chaminade University recognizes the increasing role of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in academic and professional environments. AI encompasses, but is not limited to, generative AI platforms, automated writing or content generation software, coding assistants, and similar tools. Students must ensure all submitted work genuinely reflects their knowledge and effort. Using AI to produce or significantly complete graded assignments, exams or other academic tasks – defined as use that substitutes for or substantially replaces a student's own analysis, reasoning or written expression – without explicit instructor approval is considered academic misconduct and will be dealt with according to the University's Academic Honesty Policy.

If an instructor has reasonable grounds to question whether submitted work genuinely reflects a student's own knowledge, authorship, or mastery of course material — or whether it meets the course's expectations for AI use — the instructor may require the student to provide additional or alternative evidence of authorship and content mastery. Such evidence may include drafts, notes, revision history, source materials, process explanations, oral discussion, in class work, or completion of an alternative assessment. A student's refusal or inability to provide such evidence may be considered, along with other available information, in evaluating whether the work meets course requirements and stated learning outcomes. Instructors will not rely solely on AI detection software or other automated tools in making grading or academic integrity determinations. Such determinations will be based on the totality of the available information and handled in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures. See the catalog section Student Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work for further information.

Title IX and Nondiscrimination

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator. For pregnant and parenting students, I am also obligated to provide you with similar resources for support and protections available to you. My goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources and support you need.

Contact information and reporting options: chaminade.edu/titleix/nondiscrimination/. File a report via the [Campus Incident Report Form](#).

Nondiscrimination Policy and Notice of Nondiscrimination

The university is committed to comply with all State and Federal statutes, rules, and regulations which prohibit discrimination. The university is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender identity and expression, age, religion, color, national origin (including shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics), ancestry, citizenship, disability, genetic information, marital status, breastfeeding, arrest and court record (except as permissible under State law), sexual orientation, or status as a covered veteran. Inquiries about Title IX or general Civil Rights concerns may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be found [HERE](#). On-campus Confidential Resources may also be found here at [CAMPUS CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES](#).

The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at: <https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the [Campus Incident Report form](#). Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates.

The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

Student with Disabilities Statement- Kōkua 'Ike

Accessibility Services recognizes disability as a valued aspect of diversity and ensures equal access to the educational environment in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended; and the principles and professional standards of the Association on Higher Education and Disability. Access is supported through reasonable accommodations and referrals to campus and community resources.

Appointments with the Accessibility Services Coordinator are available through Stellic at <https://chaminade.stellic.com> and may be held virtually or in person. Drop-in appointments are also welcome.

Students seeking support must meet with the Accessibility Services Coordinator as early as possible, even if they are unsure whether they have appropriate documentation of their disability or its impacts. The Accessibility Services Coordinator prioritizes listening to students' experiences and will discuss any documentation needs during the initial intake meeting. Students may seek support at any time.

Learn more at <https://chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations>

Assessment of Student Work

Chaminade University may use student work anonymously to assess achievement of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes as part of ongoing quality improvement efforts.

Campus Resources and Support Services

The following resources are available to all Chaminade students. Reach out early — these services exist to support your success.

Resource	Description	Contact / Website
Accessibility Services (Kōkua 'Ike)	Accommodations under Section 504 and ADA. Contact early — appointments via Stellic, virtual or in person.	ada@chaminade.edu chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations
Tutoring and Academic Coaching (Kōkua 'Ike)	Tutoring and Academic Coaching Services support students' progression toward their academic, personal, and professional goals with clarity and intention. Services include individualized support in English, math, nursing, sciences, and social sciences, as well as guidance in developing goals and study strategies.	chaminade.edu/tutoring-academic-coaching-services
Career Services	Career Services supports students throughout their career journeys. Services include individualized job search strategy coaching, resume reviews, job interview coaching, and access to career-related resources and opportunities.	chaminade.edu/career-services
Basic Needs Resources	Support for food insecurity, housing instability, and other basic needs.	chaminade.edu/basic-needs/
Title IX / Nondiscrimination	Reporting and support for sex discrimination and gender-based violence. Campus Incident Report Form available online.	chaminade.edu/titleix/resources-and-support/
Hazing Prevention	Confidential support, crisis intervention, and reporting for any type of abuse including hazing.	hazingpreventionnetwork.org/athlete-helpline/
Campus Safety / SafeSwords	Security escort service for anyone who feels unsafe walking alone on campus at any time of day. Call security and a professional will escort you to your destination.	chaminade.edu/student-life/security/campus-safeswords-program/
CUH Alert Emergency Notification	Emergency text system. Register your cell number via the Chaminade portal and confirm the text to complete enrollment.	chaminade.edu

Final Project and Presentations

As you will recall from our study of Catholic Social Teaching, an encyclical is a document written by the pope and is addressed to the whole of humanity. Sixteen social encyclicals were written between 1891 and 2026 each identifying issues of service, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in their sociopolitical contexts. In these social encyclicals, popes have endeavored to help examine and address the most pressing social issues of their day by proposing strategies and solutions informed by the spirit of the Gospel.

Three exemplars of the social encyclical tradition demonstrate the practical significance of ongoing theological reflection. At the peak of the Industrial Revolution, Leo XIII authored an encyclical entitled *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which called upon the universal church and its members to stand against the exploitation of workers. In *Pacem in Terris* (1963), John XXIII outlines his plea for world peace during the Cold War under threat of global nuclear warfare. Most recently, Pope Leo XIV has written *Magnifica Humanitas* (2026) on “safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence.”

I. Project Prompt

Imagine your small group of 3-5 students as advisors to Pope Leo XIV, the spiritual leader of over 1.4 billion Catholics across the world. You are being invited to propose a topic for a new encyclical.

1. First, identify an issue of service, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in our present day. Examples include, but are not limited to, racial injustice, sex trafficking, speciesism, indigenous marginalization, social stratification, bullying, gender discrimination, migration, environmental degradation, economic inequalities, ideological fundamentalism, and so forth. Your group is especially encouraged to consider issues that particularly affect the people and islands of Hawai'i. Using real-world examples and data, demonstrate where it is present, whom it affects, and why it is problematic.
2. Next, draw upon key concepts of Christian theology that we have talked about in our course to help you propose a solution for the problem. Your successful encyclical proposal will provide a clear and compelling account of how and why the Gospel message is relevant for addressing the problems facing our world today.
3. Finally, carefully evaluate your project according to the criteria described on the grading rubric to ensure that all standards have been satisfactorily met. Groups will have opportunities to consult with the instructor throughout the semester and during the three designated Final Project Preparation sessions. Revise your projects if necessary.

II. Finals Week Presentations

You will present your project to our class during our Finals Week session as assigned in the table below. A grading rubric will be provided as Finals week approaches. Members may jointly share their project or choose to appoint a spokesperson for the presentation. Projects may be shared as short documentaries, a PowerPoint presentation, a collection of vlogs, or any other creative way that your group would like to present your work. At the conclusion of your presentation, you will field and answer questions about your project. Presentations should approximate, but must not exceed, 10 minutes. Documentation of your entire project, including slideshows, videos, written papers, or any other materials, must be submitted to the instructor by the end of the class period during which you had presented. No exceptions will be made except for exceptional circumstances.

Section	RE 205-01-1 (MWF 8:30am – 9:20am)	RE205-02-1 (MWF 9:30am – 10:20am)	RE 205-03-1 (MWF 10:30am – 11:20am)
Final	Wednesday, 12/9 8:30am – 10:30am	Thursday, 12/10 1:15pm – 3:15pm	Wednesday, 12/9 11:00am – 1:00pm

Weekly Course Schedule

Date	Day	Class	Course Material
8/17	M	1.a	Course Introduction and Syllabus Review
8/19	W	1.b	Lecture: <i>Plato's Allegory of the Cave</i>
8/21	F	1.c	Colloquium: Identifying Transcendent Experiences
8/24	M	2.a	Seminar: Mueller, <i>Theological Foundations</i> , Chapter 2
8/26	W	2.b	Lecture: The Experience of Israel
8/28	F	2.c	Colloquium: Remembering the Exodus Today
8/31	M	3.a	Seminar: Mueller, <i>Theological Foundations</i> , Chapters 3 and 4
9/2	W	3.b	Lecture: An Encounter with Jesus
9/4	F	3.c	Colloquium: Examining the Christological Question in the 21 st Century
9/7	M	x	Labor Day – Holiday
9/9	W	4.a	Seminar: Mueller, <i>Theological Foundations</i> , Chapter 1
9/11	F	4.b	Lecture: The Task of Theology; Part I Conclusion and Exam I Review
9/14	M	5.a	Examination I
9/16	W	5.b	Seminar: Lewis, <i>Making and Begetting</i> and <i>The Three-Personal God</i>
9/18	F	5.c	Lecture: The Trinity Throughout Salvation History
9/21	M	6.a	Seminar: Mueller, <i>Theological Foundations</i> , Chapter 5
9/23	W	6.b	Lecture: The Threefold Mission of the Church
9/25	F	6.c	Colloquium: Reimagining Community in the Potato Age
9/28	M	7.a	Seminar: Mueller, <i>Theological Foundations</i> , Chapter 7
9/30	W	7.b	Lecture: The Sacramental Principle
10/2	F	7.c	Colloquium: Looking for God in All Things
10/5	M	8.a	Seminar: Vatican II, <i>Lumen Gentium</i> (paragraphs 52-69) and <i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>
10/7	W	8.b	Lecture: Mary and the Saints
10/9	F	8.c	Colloquium: Living the Universal Call to Holiness
10/12	M	x	Discoverers' Day – Holiday
10/14	W	x	<i>Wellness Week</i>
10/16	F	x	<i>Wellness Week</i>
10/19	M	9.a	Seminar: Mueller, <i>Theological Foundations</i> , Chapters 6, 10, and 11
10/21	W	9.b	Lecture: Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue
10/23	F	9.c	Part II Conclusion and Exam II Review
10/26	M	10.a	Examination II
10/28	W	10.b	Seminar: Muller, <i>Theological Foundations</i> , Chapter 8
10/30	F	10.c	Lecture: Moral Theology I
11/2	M	11.a	Seminar: Mueller, <i>Theological Foundations</i> , Chapter 9
11/4	W	11.b	Lecture: The Natural Law Foundations of the Common Good
11/6	F	11.c	Colloquium: Rebuilding a More Just Society
11/9	M	12.a	Seminar: <i>Magnifica Humanitas</i> (paragraphs 1-130)
11/11	W	x	Veterans' Day – Holiday
11/13	F	12.b	Seminar: <i>Magnifica Humanitas</i> (paragraphs 131-245)
11/16	M	13.a	Film I: <i>Moloka'i: The Story of Father Damien</i>
11/18	W	13.b	Film II: <i>Moloka'i: The Story of Father Damien</i>
11/20	F	13.c	Film III: <i>Moloka'i: The Story of Father Damien</i> ; Part III Conclusion and Exam III Review
11/23	M	14.a	Examination III
11/25	W	14.b	Course Conclusion and General Review
11/27	F	x	Thanksgiving Break – Holiday
11/30	M	15.a	Final Project Preparation I
12/2	W	15.b	Final Project Preparation II
12/4	F	15.c	Final Project Preparation III