

# Point Loma Nazarene University

## COM 265 – Introduction to Empirical Research

**Instructor:** Dr. Kathleen Czech  
**Office:** Cabrillo 204  
**Office Hours:** Mon. & Tues. 1-2pm

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### **Required Textbooks:**

- Infante, D., Rancer, A., & Avtgis, T. (2010). Contemporary Communication Theory. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company
- Treadwell, D. (2014). Introducing Communication Research: Path of Inquiry. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- APA Publication Manual (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.), (2010). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

**\*\*ALL THREE books will be required for COM 465\*\***

### **Course Description:**

This course will introduce the discipline of communication in all areas. The course will also consist of a survey of qualitative, statistical, and content analytic methods in communication research. The class includes an introduction to IRB protocols and forms, a review of APA style requirements, as well as the use of statistical software in data analysis.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research.
2. Students will become familiar with IRB policies and how to request IRB approval.
3. Students will be able to critical interpret academic research articles.
4. Students will understand the basic scientific method for conducting research.
5. Students will be able to perform basic statistical analysis utilizing SPSS.
6. Students will be able to construct a basic quantitative survey.
7. Students will be able to propose a basic research project and methodology for both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

### **Assignments:**

All assignments must be typed and double-spaced. Hand written work will not be accepted. Please note that standard font and margins are expected of one inch and 12 point font (New Times Roman). There should be no grammatical errors or

misspelled words in your assignments. Always proofread your assignments and have someone else proof them too. All assignments are due the day specified and on time. An assignment is late within 5 minutes of the beginning of the class period it is due on! This means that turning in an assignment 6 minutes after class has started will result in an automatic lowering of one full grade level. Late assignments will be accepted with penalties. Late assignments are penalized a grade level for each day they are late starting after the first 5 minutes of class on the day they are due. This means planning on your part. Make sure your printers are working and plan far enough in advance to handle printer or computer lab hours.

**Course Assignments:**

1. **Theory Summary (50 pts)** – Each student will pick a general communication area and summarize the major theories presented in the textbook chapter.
2. **Theory in a Nut Shell Presentation (75 pts)** – Students will present on a specific communication theory to the class.
3. **Survey Construction & SPSS (25pts)** - All students will construct a usable survey for a quantitative research design. The survey should include multiple variables.
4. **Research Proposal (100pts)** – This is the major assignment of the course. This will be a full proposal through the first three stages of the scientific method. More information will be provided in specific handouts.
5. **Content Analysis (50pts)** – All students will conduct a content analysis from a portion of interviews/excerpts of research. Multiple themes and conclusions should be identified.
6. **Poster Session Evaluation (25pts)** – All students in the course will be required to attend the COM 465 upper division research methods class to evaluate their research projects.
7. **Three Exams (150pts)** – There will be three exams over the course material. Exams will be objective in nature.

**Grades:  
Assignments**

	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Theory Summary	50pts	



explanation of why the grade should be changed, and I will be happy to discuss it with you. Asking for an appeal and defending your case does not secure, nor imply a change of grade. If at any point during the course you are concerned with your overall class grade or other issues in the course, please feel free to make an appointment or stop by my office. I want to help you learn and succeed in this course.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

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. Therefore, cheating and/or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Attendance:**

This course is a course in communication and research. In order to do both you must be present in class regularly. Therefore attendance will be taken. You will be allowed 2 excused/unexcused absences. On the third absence your final grade will be lowered a half step. For each subsequent absence another half step lowering of your final grade will occur. Classes will consist of material that will not be covered by the text and in class activities or quizzes that cannot be made up if you choose to miss class.

In the tragic event that you do miss class please get notes from someone in the class. **Do NOT ask me for notes.** You will be expected to get notes, handouts, and assignments from someone in class. Please do not ask me for my lecture notes!! You are responsible for missed material and should try to make a friend or two in this class that you can count on. In addition I do not post lecture material or power point presentations on Canvas.

Your attendance in class means that you are fully "attending" to class. Please do not engage in disruptive discussions, sleeping, or doing other homework. Please plan your schedule based on the daily syllabus and I will do my best to honor the schedule in the syllabus.

**Make-ups & Extra Credit:**

All assignments are due on the date specified in the syllabus, within 5 minutes of the beginning of the class period. I am not responsible for turning in your assignments on time – YOU ARE! Please be responsible and figure out how you will get the assignment done and turned into me. In the event of an unexpected and unavoidable scheduling conflict, it is your responsibility to make prior arrangements (well in advance) with me to resolve the problem. Excuses after the assignment dates are unacceptable with the exception of extreme circumstances. Extra credit is not available, so please do well on the assignments in the course.

**Classroom Demeanor:**

While I enjoy a relaxed classroom atmosphere, with lots of discussion and jokes, disrespect will not be tolerated. Please respect both your peers and instructor!! This simply means that you need to pay attention and participate in class. Challenging ideas in class is welcome, but personal attacks are not! While the course will encounter lots of opinions and views, it is everyone's responsibility to keep an open mind, and avoid character attacks, stereotypes, and racist or sexist language.

**Technology:**

The use of electronic devices during class is **NOT** permitted. This includes cell phones, i-pods, and laptops! This means you should bring something else to take notes on! Students are not permitted to listen to music while taking a test or to use their cell phones during tests. Continued use of technological devices during class will result in a lack of respect for the student.

**Academic Accommodations:**

All students are expected to meet the minimum standards for this course as set by the instructor. Students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should first discuss options and services available to them in the Academic Support Center (ASC) during the first two weeks of the semester. The ASC, in turn will contact professors with official notification and suggested classroom accommodations, as required by federal law. Approved documentation must be provided by the student and placed on file in the ASC prior to the beginning of the semester.

**Daily Syllabus**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Activity</b>	<b>Readings</b>
R Sept. 4	Introduction to Research	
T Sept. 9	Approaches to Communication	Chp. 3 (IRA)
R Sept. 11	Communication Paradigms	Chp. 4 (IRA)
T Sept. 16	Communication as Science	Chp. 2 (IRA)
R Sept. 18	Overview of Theories	Chp. 6-12(IRA)

**Daily Syllabus**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Activity</b>	<b>Readings</b>
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T Sept. 23	Overview of Theories	
R Sept. 25	The Research Process & IRB <i>Theory Summary Due!</i>	Chp. 3 & 4 (T)
T Sept. 30	<b>Theory in a Nut Shell Presentations</b>	
R Oct. 2	<b>Theory in a Nut Shell Presentations</b>	
T Oct. 7	<b>Theory in a Nut Shell Presentations</b>	
R Oct. 9	Qualitative vs. Quantitative	
T Oct. 14	<b>Exam 1</b>	
R Oct. 16	Measurement	Chp. 5 (T)
T Oct. 21	Measurement & Variables	
R Oct. 23	Hypothesis Construction	Chp. 2 (T)
T Oct. 28	Sampling	Chp. 8(T)
R Oct. 30	Survey Construction	Chp. 9 (T)
T Nov. 4	Descriptive Statistics	Chp. 6 (T)
R Nov. 6	Descriptive Statistics	
T Nov. 11	<b>Exam 2</b>	
R Nov. 13	SPSS LAB – Meet in Computer Lab <b>Survey Construction Due!</b>	
T Nov. 18	Quantitative Analysis	Chp. 7(T)
R Nov. 20	Content Analysis	
T Nov. 25	Content Analysis	
R Nov. 27	Happy Thanksgiving – No Class	

## **Daily Syllabus**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Activity</b>	<b>Readings</b>
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T Dec. 2

APA  
*Content Analysis Due!*

R Dec. 4

Presenting Research

T Dec. 9

**Exam 3**

R Dec. 11

COM 465 – Poster Session

***R Dec. 18***

***Final Exam – Final Research Proposal Due!***

