



## COM 2020 Small Group Communication

Communication Studies Department

Fall 2025 ◊ 3 Units ◊ TR 11:00 AM-12:15 PM ◊ Cabrillo 202

**Dr. Melissa Newman**

Office #02 Academic Studies Office-Lower Bond ◊ mnewman@pointloma.edu ◊ 619.849.2561

Office hours: Tue/Thurs 1-2, and M-F upon request

### PLNU Mission: To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled 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.

### Course Description

Nature and function of communication in the small group context. Includes consideration of research methods, leadership, and conflict resolution. Theory applied to active classroom participation.

### Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Understand the nature and function of communication in the small group context.
2. Develop a theoretical understanding of task group processes and group dynamics in organizational settings.
3. Recognize the role of power and explain leadership styles and strategies for exerting leadership.
4. Explain cohesiveness in groups and strategies for building group cohesion.
5. Understand that a company's strength and success is largely dependent on effective small group communication.

### Required Text

Beebe, Steven and John Masterson. (2020). *Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Please use the 12<sup>th</sup> edition for our course.

This course is part of our course material delivery program, LomaBooks (see page 8 of this syllabus for more information).

### Assessment and Grading

Below you will find the assignments for the semester. Assignments and speeches will have grading rubrics that you are welcome to view at any time. Your final grade will be calculated by dividing the number of points you earn by the total number of points at the end of the semester. Here are the categories of assessment (see Canvas for the points possible):

1. Assignments: interactive lessons, research assignments, presentations, article reviews, collaborative work and personal reflection journals (points vary)
2. Exams over course material (4 exams, 100 points each)
3. Group Project: Group project with added assignments (branding, contracts, collaboration) (points vary)

### Grade Scale

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

**A- = 90-92%; A = 93-100: Excellent** (*exceptional, superlative presentations, engaged in class lecture and discussion, attendance, posture, interest, etc. Comprehensive excellence is needed for a superlative grade in this course.*)

**B- = 80-82%; B = 83-87%; B+ = 88-89%: Above average**

**C- = 70-72%; C = 73-77%; C+ = 78-79%: Average** (*mediocre, passable, fair, midpoint between extremes of excellence and failure.*)

**D- = 60-62%; D = 63-67%; D+ = 68-69%: Below average**

**F = 59% and below: Failure** (*omission or lack of satisfactory performance of action or task, inadequate, impassable, etc.*)

### Method of Instruction/Course Norms

The course is taught through lecture, discussion, class activities, and a semester project all designed to help you develop critical thinking abilities as they relate to organizational life. Lectures will often introduce material beyond that which is covered in readings and will assume information supplied in the text. Lecture and text should complement, not substitute for each other. It is your responsibility to come to class ready to think, challenge, analyze, and apply the material covered. Additional norms include:

1. This class requires a large group project. Instructions will be provided as the semester progresses.
2. We will meet in class on Nov 25<sup>th</sup> so Thanksgiving travel plans should be made after that point. Likewise, our final exam is scheduled for Thursday of finals week, so you should not plan to leave campus before then.
3. PLNU allows up to 25% of course work to be completed in Canvas and this section may use Canvas for much of the course work required. It has your assignments listed with due dates set and all the materials needed for the course beyond the textbook so be sure to set your Canvas user preference to get daily reminders for assignments due. All written work must be typed, and attention should be paid to form (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, APA formatting and general appearance) as well as content.
4. Late work will be accepted with a point reduction for *one week*. Late work submitted after that point will receive feedback but no points.
5. Integrity is of great importance. Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated and will result in a grade of "F" for the project and possibly the course.
6. Please join me in selecting "Do not Disturb" on your mobile device(s) and leaving phones off the desk/table you are working at. Recording of lectures must be discussed with the professor in advance.
7. Please check your PLNU email account daily. This is the way that I will most frequently communicate with you outside of class, and it's also the way the university distributes important information.
8. The subject librarian for Communication, Julie Sweeney, is available to help you with planning and organizing your research, as well as locating resources for your class assignments.
9. We will not maintain an "always on" mentality as it's not a sustainable way to conduct our work this semester. To that end, I am committed to responding to emails within 24 hours (and on Mondays for emails sent to me Fri-Sun).
10. We will abide by the university notifications listed below. Likewise, this syllabus serves as the contract between the students and professor. Your continued enrollment in the course serves as agreement to abide by the policies and information set forth here. Please do not expect exceptions to be made for you.

### Course Schedule

Please note, this schedule may change depending on our circumstances. Any changes will be posted on Canvas and announced in class. Rest assured, I will not spring any new assignments or work on you at the last minute.

Date	Plan	Work for the Week
<b>Foundations of Group and Team Communication</b>		
Week 1 Sept 2 & 4	Course Introduction and Expectations Reading and Discussion	Read Syllabus and Text Overview Course Introduction Read and take notes on chapter 1

	Intro to Communication Lecture	Interactive Lesson Take <a href="#">Team Player Quiz</a>
Week 2 Sept 9 & 11	Chapter 1: Introducing Group and Principles  Theory Presentation Prep	Read chapter 1 and complete Interactive Lesson Read and take notes on chapter 2 to prep for Theory Week Watch <a href="#">Ted Talk</a>
Week 3 Sept 16 & 18	Chapter 2: Small Group Communication Theory  Theory Presentations	Read chapter 2 and complete Interactive Lesson Interactive Lesson Collaborative Work -Presentation Prep
Week 4 Sept 23 & 25	Chapter 3: Group Development  Theory Presentations	Read chapter 3 and complete Interactive Lesson Collaborative Work Study for Exam 1 Take Exam 1
Week 5 Sept 30 & Oct 2	Chapter 4: Preparing to Collaborate  Exam 1 (Chapters 1-3) 9/30	Read and take notes on chapter 4 Collaborative Work Read chapter 4 and complete Interactive Lesson Begin Promo Piece Design
<b>Managing Group and Team Relationships</b>		
Week 6 Oct 7 & 9	Chapter 5: Relating to Others in Groups  Individual Assignment- Promo Piece <u>Due Oct 8</u>  Promo piece shared in class 10/9	Read and take notes on chapter 5 and complete the Interactive Lesson  Individual Assignment- Promo Piece  Individual Assignment: Read & Respond to "Creating an Extraordinary Group" by Bellman and Ryan  Group Selection Preferences
Week 7 Oct 14 & 16	Chapter 6: Improving Group Climate  Meet your Team this week!  Chapter 7: Enhancing Group and Team Communication Skills  Midterm Feedback	Read and take notes on chapter 6 and complete the Interactive Lesson  Collaborative Work  Work on Team Contract Assignment & TIP
Week 8 Oct 21 & 23	Oct 21-Group Work Day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Contracts</li> <li>• TIP</li> <li>• Research Assignment</li> </ul> Oct 23-Fall Break no class	Read and take notes on chapter 7 and complete the Interactive Lesson  Collaborative Work: Initial Group Meeting-Prep  Prepare for Exam 2 (10/31)

Week 9 Oct 28 & 30	Chapter 7: Enhancing Group and Team Communication Skills  Oct 30: Exam 2 (Chapters 4-6)	Read chapter 8 and complete Interactive Lesson Conflict Article Review on Gallo's article Finish and Submit TIP assignment Complete Journal #1
Week 10 Nov 4 & 6	Chapter 8: Managing Conflict  Nov 5: TIP presentations	Read chapter 8 and complete Interactive Lesson TIP presentations  Work on Group Project Journal Submission Read "New Science of Building Great Teams"  Journal Response #2
Week 11 Nov 11 & 13	Chapter 9: Leadership  Nov 13 Exam 3- (Chapters 7-9)	Read chapter 9 and complete Interactive Lesson Exam 3 Work on Group Project
<b>Managing Group and Team Tasks</b>		
Week 12 Nov 18 & 20	Chapter 10 & 11: Making Decisions and Solving Problems/Techniques	Read chapters 10 & 11 and complete Interactive Lessons Work on Group Project Prepare for Professor Meeting Article Review: "Hidden Traps in Decision Making"
Week 13 Nov 25	Chapter 12: Enhancing Creativity in Groups	Read chapter 12 and complete Interactive Lesson  Prepare for Professor Meeting
Nov 27	No Class: Thanksgiving Break	
Week 14 Dec 2 & 4	Professor Meetings	Complete Group Project Prepare for Exam 4 Journal Submission
Week 15 Dec 9 & 11	Group Presentations	Prepare for Exam 4 Group grading and evaluation Submit Journal Response Course Evaluation
Week 16 Thursday, December 18 10:30 am- 1pm	Final Exam Week: Exam 4	Course wrap up

### University Notifications

#### Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you

find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

### **Content Warning**

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In COM 2020, class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. I don't anticipate troubling content, but if you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of group/team communication and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

### **Incompletes and Late Assignments**

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

### **Spiritual Care**

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you 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 have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual 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 distance education outside California.

### **PLNU Copyright Policy**

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.]

### **PLNU Recording Notification**

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

### **PLNU 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. 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. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video,

audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

### **PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). 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 619-849-2533). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

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. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

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 assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any accommodations.

### **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.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination](http://www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination).

### **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).

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/bias](http://www.pointloma.edu/bias)

### **PLNU 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.

### **Loma Writing Center**

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you’re in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see [Loma Writing Center webpage](#) or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar: <https://plnu.mywconline.com/>
- Website: <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center>
- Email: [writingcenter@pointloma.edu](mailto:writingcenter@pointloma.edu)

### **Lomabooks Instructions for Students:**

This course is part of our course material delivery program, LomaBooks. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas.

You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pick up or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials.

For more information about LomaBooks, please go: [HERE](#)