

 POINT ¹⁹  LOMA ⁰² NAZARENE UNIVERSITY	Department of Communication Studies
	COM 3030 Persuasion 3 Units
Spring 2026	

Meeting days: M/W/F	Professor: Dr. Lisa Raser
Meeting times: 1:30 - 2:25 pm	Phone: 619-849-2585
Meeting location: Cabrillo Hall 104	Email: lraser@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: Fri May 8 th , 1:30 pm	Office location: Cabrillo Hall 201
Office Hours: M & F: 2:30 - 3:30 pm and by appointment	

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.

REQUIRED MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2022). *Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance Gaining* (7th ed.). Routledge.

→ Please read and save this syllabus. If you remain in the course after the first day of class, then you are stipulating that you will abide by the university and course policies described within this syllabus.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will be learning *how* and *why* persuasion functions. We will also learn about some of the techniques of propaganda and how propaganda differs from persuasion. Through examples, analysis, and application, our goals will be to: (1) become more effective persuaders and (2) to learn how to resist unethical influence attempts of others.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- explain and apply persuasion theories, processes, and practices
- identify the differences between persuasion and propaganda
- differentiate between different propaganda techniques and interpret them through an original poster project
- discuss the ethical implications of persuasion and propaganda
- distinguish between persuasion and compliance gaining and identify compliance-gaining strategies
- analyze an advertisement and deconstruct “how it works” persuasively

COURSE FORMAT AND POLICIES

Support: I am committed to helping every student attain their best possible education.

I am here to help! Please do not hesitate to ask questions, or ask for help, in or out of class. I will also be available if you would like me to review your work and give you feedback before it is turned in or presented. If you have any needs that it would be helpful for me to be aware of, please do let me know.

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 drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

COM 3030 Attendance Policy: As members of a learning community, your presence is appreciated, and your absence is noticed. The class sessions are set up to help people learn from each other (through discussions, activities, etc.) and you are expected to attend each class session. **Everyone** has useful and insightful information to offer to the class. Participation is the core of this work, and to help keep track of that, I take attendance.

You are allowed two (2) absences during the semester without penalty. The only absences excused after that will be university approved absences (see section below). It is your choice how you use these absences, and it is encouraged that you use them wisely. Please note that these 2 absences DO include instances of illness and family obligations. Each absence over two will result in a 10-point deduction to your overall grade.

University Approved Absences: Absences for certain events and obligations recognized by the University (i.e.: participation in sports, forensics, music tours, field trips, etc.) may be counted as “excused.” Please notify me at least one week prior to such absences with documentation and contact information from the sponsoring program/department. You are responsible for making up all work missed due to absences in a timely manner, to be worked out ahead of time with me.

Late to Class/Leaving Early: It is an expectation of this class community that we begin our class time together, and complete our class time together each day. Instances of habitual lateness are a distraction to our class community and will impact your ability to participate fully in the course. Please talk to me early in the semester if you have any concerns about arriving to class on time.

Being absent for more than 20 minutes during any part of a class period, whether at the beginning, middle, or end, will constitute an absence. Similarly, it is expected that you remain actively engaged in the classroom discussion and activities until the end of the class period. If you absolutely must leave early one day for a personal/emergency reason, please let me know at the class period prior or via email before class. (During advising time, please arrange any advising meetings with your academic adviser so that they do not conflict with your class schedule.)

Late Work/Make-Up Work: All assignments are to be submitted/turned in according to the due dates set on this syllabus schedule and on Canvas. In general, no late or makeup written assignments/presentations/exams will be allowed. Please communicate with me in advance of an assignment due date (not the day of) if you are concerned that an illness or other personal hardship may prevent you from turning in an assignment on time. Presentation dates are your commitment and should not be changed, as changes impact class planning. Exam or presentation makeups will only be considered in the rare instance of a documented illness or personal emergency and you have notified me prior to the beginning of class.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances, given reasonable justification.

Electronic Devices: The use of cell phones and laptops during class is prohibited unless I ask for them to be used as a specific part of a class activity. Please join me in turning off or silencing all cell phones, laptops, and similar electronic devices and keeping them out of sight for the duration of class. You will need to bring a laptop to class to take the midterm and final exam.

Notetaking in Class: Please plan to take lecture notes in class by writing rather than typing and using a pen/pencil and paper. A notebook is recommended to keep all class notes together and organized. Laptops will not be permitted for notetaking. A tablet with a stylus that lays flat on the desk is the only electronic device that will be permitted for notetaking in class. The purpose of this policy is to limit multitasking and distractions during lecture for yourself and others.

This notetaking policy was influenced by two important pieces of research: 1. Faria Sana, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda, "Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers," *Computers and Education* (March 2013): "We found that participants who multitasked on a laptop during a lecture scored lower on a test compared to those who did not multitask, and participants who were in direct view of a multitasking peer scored lower on a test compared to those who were not. The results demonstrate that multitasking on a laptop poses a significant distraction to both users and fellow students and can be detrimental to comprehension of lecture content." 2. Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking" (April 2014). In this study, the authors found that students who hand wrote their notes during lectures remembered more material than students who used laptops for notetaking because they could not write everything

down verbatim. The extra processing required by the hand writers to select important over extraneous information was beneficial for their retention of the material they were learning.

Email: I will frequently use email to communicate with you, and I do my best to respond to your emails as promptly as possible. If you send me an email after 5 pm, or over the weekend or on a holiday, I will respond on the following school day.

Written Work: It is my expectation that all submitted writing will be clear, coherent, and free of grammatical/spelling errors. Please proofread all written work – your grade will reflect both the substance and the style of your writing.

Exam Policy: Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The midterm exam and final exam will not be given before or after our assigned date/time. Please arrange any activities or transportation for the breaks around this exam schedule so that you can be present at the assigned time. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class 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.

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: Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc. may only be used to generate IDEAS. 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 intention to use AI, or any concerns about using AI, please consult with the professor. Violations of this policy will be treated as breaches of academic integrity.

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 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.

Spiritual Care: PLNU strives to be a place where students 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 if you have prayer requests, you can contact the [Office of Student Life and Formation](#).

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. 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 or find a list of campus pastors at 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

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 online distance education outside of 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.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Exams: There are three exams in this course. Exams will include material from the book and in-class discussion/activities. You may bring one 3x5 notecard (front and back, handwritten – not typed) to each exam. The first two exams will consist of short essay questions only and the final exam will have a mix of short essay questions and some multiple-choice questions.

Reading Quizzes: There will occasionally be short quizzes (8-10 points each) on the assigned reading (designated in the course schedule). Reading quizzes will be administered on Canvas, at the beginning of class. Please make sure that you have a laptop with Honorlock installed with you in class to complete the quiz. You may use handwritten notes that you have taken on the reading as an aid on the reading quizzes, but open textbooks are not allowed. If you arrive late to class, you will not be given additional time to take the quiz. The reading quiz with the lowest score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Quiz Policy: Quizzes will not be given early and the first quiz missed cannot be made up. If you are absent (for illness or travel, for example) on the day of a quiz, that first quiz grade will be dropped. If you miss more than one quiz, make-up quizzes will only be given if you have an illness or other personal hardship and you notify me in advance of your absence. Make up quizzes will not be given for quizzes missed the class session before spring and Easter breaks. Exception to this policy: a first and subsequent missed quiz may be made up only for instances of university approved absences (debate team, athletic team travel, field trip for another class, etc.).

Original Propaganda Poster & Paper: You will design an original propaganda poster using a selection from the ten propaganda techniques that we will learn about in class. You will need to acquire a poster board for this assignment. Prompts will be given in class and you will have choice in selecting the overall theme of your poster. You will write a paper that accompanies your paper and describes your understanding of the propaganda techniques and corresponding examples. On the day that your poster is due, we will hang them around the classroom and complete a “gallery tour,” identifying the different propaganda techniques that we have studied.

Ad Analysis Presentation: You will select and analyze a video advertisement to uncover “how it works” persuasively. In an oral presentation, you will identify and evaluate the advertisement’s use of persuasive strategies and explain what the advertisement is attempting to accomplish. Your textbook will be a very important resource to you in the successful completion of this project, so it is imperative that you keep up with your reading assignments.

In-Class (or Canvas) Assignments: At times, you will be given short assignments or exercises in class (or on Canvas) that are worth points toward your final grade. These assignments may include written responses/reflections, podcasts, discussions, group work, etc. The point value for these assignments may vary but will be clearly designated on the assignment.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Grade Scale (% to Letter):

93-100	A	73-76.9%	C
90-92.9%	A-	70-72.9%	C-
87-89.9%	B+	67-69.9%	D+
83-86.9%	B	63-66.9%	D
80-82.9%	B-	60-62.9%	D-
77-79.9%	C+	0-59	F

Rounding: Typically, grades follow the scale above and are not rounded up. Rounding of grades is only done in rare circumstances when the percentage point after the decimal is extremely close to the next grade and the student has demonstrated exemplary participation and effort in the course. **Any possible changes are made by instructor discretion; please do not request that your grade be rounded up.**

Point Distribution

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	Number of Points AVAILABLE	Number of Points I EARNED
Test # 1	50	
Test # 2	50	
Test # 3	100	
Original Propaganda Poster	75	
Ad Analysis Presentation	100	
Additional Assignments & Reading Quizzes	125	
TOTAL	500	
- Absence penalties (10 pts. per absence after 2 absences)	(e.g., 3 absences = -10)	

NOTE: There may be adjustments made to the point values/totals listed above. Each assignment will be clearly marked with the point value when assigned in class or on Canvas.

Student grades will be posted in the Canvas grade book after each assignment has been graded. It is important to read the comments written on your assignment or posted on Canvas as these comments are intended to help you improve your work.

COM 3030 Course Schedule

- Subject to change with fair notice.
- Please complete reading prior to arriving at class on the assigned due date.

WK	Date	In-Class	Reading/Assignments Due
1	M 1/12	Welcome/Course Intro	Introductions and review of the course syllabus & schedule Take Honorlock Practice Quiz
	W 1/14	Why Study Persuasion? What Makes Things Go Viral?	Ch. 1 Group Quiz on Ch. 1 – bring notes & laptop
	F 1/16	Why Study Persuasion? Prop Tech # 1 & 2: Assertion and Bandwagon	Persuasion Scavenger Hunt Jamboard due on Canvas by 1/15 by 11:59 pm
2	M 1/19	<i>MLK Holiday</i>	<i>No Classes</i>
	W 1/21	What Constitutes Persuasion?	Ch. 2 Quiz on Ch. 2 – bring notes and laptop
	F 1/23	What Constitutes Persuasion?	
3	M 1/26	Attitudes and Consistency Start group work on attitude assessments	Ch. 3
	W 1/28	Attitudes and Consistency Peer feedback on attitude assessments	Attitude Assessment Group Google Form due to Canvas by 11:59 pm
	F 1/30	Attitudes and Consistency Present attitude assessment to class	Ch. 3 Individual Reflection on Attitude Assessment due by 11:59 pm
4	M 2/2	Credibility Prop Tech # 3: Cardstacking <i>Introduce Propaganda Poster</i>	Ch. 4 Quiz on Ch. 4 – bring notes and laptop
	W 2/4	Credibility	
	F 2/6	Communicator Characteristics and Persuadability Prop Tech # 4 & 5: Glittering Generalities and False Dilemma	Ch. 5 Quiz on Ch. 5 – bring notes and laptop
5	M 2/9	Communicator Characteristics and Persuadability	
	W 2/11	Conformity and Influence in Groups Prop Tech # 6: The Lesser of Two Evils	Ch. 6
	F 2/13	Conformity and Influence in Groups	
6	M 2/16	Test # 1 (bring a note card & laptop)	Test # 1 (Ch. 1-5) & Prop Techs # 1-5
	W 2/18	Language and Persuasion	Ch. 7

	F 2/20	Language and Persuasion	Is it “Natural?” Reading and response due on Canvas by Thurs 2/19 @ 11:59 pm
7	M 2/23	Nonverbal Influence Introduce Ad Analysis Project	Ch. 8
	W 2/25	Nonverbal Influence Prop Tech # 7: Pinpointing the Enemy	Nonverbal Disruption Assignment Due in class
	F 2/27	Structuring and Ordering Persuasive Messages Hidden Brain Podcast Discussion	Ch. 9 Listen to: Hidden Brain Podcast, Episode 55: Snooki and the Handbag Podcast Listening Reflection Due
8	M 3/2	Structuring and Ordering Persuasive Messages Prop Tech # 8: Plain Folk Prop Tech # 9: Testimonial	
	W 3/4	Sequential Persuasion	Ch. 10 Quiz on Ch. 10 – bring notes and laptop
	F 3/6	Visual Persuasion Prop Tech #10: Transfer	Ch. 14 Quiz on Ch. 14 – bring notes and laptop
3/9 - 3/13		<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>No Classes</i>
9	M 3/16	Visual Persuasion	
	W 3/18	Visual Persuasion	
	F 3/20	Test # 2 (bring a note card & laptop)	Test # 2 (Ch. 6-10) & Prop Techs # 6-8
10	M 3/23	Esoteric Forms of Persuasion	Ch. 15
	W 3/25	Esoteric Forms of Persuasion	
	F 3/27	Propaganda Poster prep day and open office hours	
11	M 3/30	Propaganda Poster Gallery Tour	Propaganda Poster Due
	W 4/1	Motivational Appeals	Ch. 13 Quiz on Ch. 13 – bring notes and laptop
	F 4/3	<i>Easter Break</i>	<i>No Classes</i>
12	M 4/6	<i>Easter Break</i>	<i>No Classes</i>
	W 4/8	Motivational Appeals - Fear	
	F 4/10	Compliance Gaining Sign up for Ad Analysis pres. dates	Ch. 11
13	M 4/13	Deception	Ch 12 Quiz on Ch. 12 – bring notes and laptop
	W 4/15	The Ethics of Persuasion	Ch 16
	F 4/17	Ad Analysis Workshop	Bring your chosen ad to class for feedback (10 pts.)

14	M 4/20	Ad Analysis Meetings w/ Dr. Raser	Location: Cabrillo 201
	W 4/22	Ad Analysis Meetings w/ Dr. Raser	Location: Cabrillo 201
	F 4/24	Ad Analysis Presentations	
15	M 4/27	Ad Analysis Presentations	
	W 4/29	Ad Analysis Presentations	
	F 5/1	Ad Analysis Presentations	
16	Finals Week	Test # 3 (bring a note card) 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm Friday, May 8 th	Test # 3 (Ch. 11-16) & Prop Techs # 9-10 Test # 3 will not be given early before our assigned date/time. Please arrange any activities or transportation for the break around this schedule so that you can be present to take the test.