

**Spring 2026**

BBU 3010 Data-Driven Decision Making is an online course. All lectures, assignments, and exams will be delivered asynchronously via the learning management system, Canvas, from March 16 <sup>th</sup> to May 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2026.	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Assistant Professor of Data Analytics, Thea Copeland, MBA
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	<b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:tcopelan@pointloma.edu">tcopelan@pointloma.edu</a>
	<b>Office location and hours:</b> Upon Request - <a href="#">Schedule Office Hours with Professor Copeland</a>

*Table 1 Course Information*

**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 is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

**Fermanian School of Business Mission**

**Character – Professionalism – Excellence – Relationships – Commitment - Innovation**

As members of a vital Christian community, we strive to provide high quality business programs that equip students to make a positive impact in their workplace and community by connecting purpose to practice.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores how leaders can use data to inform the decision making process. Topics include identifying the right information, eliminating bias, understanding predictive analytics, data visualization, communicating uncertainty, and addressing challenges to your data. An emphasis is placed on basic methods of gathering, analyzing, and communicating data.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. Define “big data” and the increasing role of evidence-based decision making to support executive decision making (PLO 1).
2. Explain the differences between predictive, prescriptive, and descriptive analytics, and the organizational questions that can be answered with each approach (PLO 1).
3. Examine processes of gathering, analyzing, visualizing and communicating data (PLO 1, 2, 3).
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of analytics using examples from a variety of organizational functions and industries (PLO 2, A2, G2).
5. Recognize the ethical implications of collecting, managing, and using data for managers and leaders (PLO 4).

## COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION

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### Distribution of Student Learning Hours

It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. The time expectations for this course are shown below:

Category	Time Expectation in Hours
Required Reading	15
Lecture	15
Discussions	25
Homework Assignments & Exams	60
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>115</b>

*Table 2 Distribution of Student Learning Hours*

### REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

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1. Richardson, V.J. & Watson M.W. (2024). *Introduction to business analytics*. New York: McGraw Hill LLC. ISBN: 978-1-265-45434-0
2. Microsoft Excel – [Load the Analysis ToolPak in Excel](#)
  - a. The Analysis ToolPak will support various statistical analysis applications throughout the course.
3. Tableau Public – [Sign Up Here](#)
  - a. Students will use Tableau Public, a data visualization platform, to complete multiple labs, homework, and exams.
4. Trailblazer Account – [Sign Up Here](#)
  - a. Students will gain access to the Salesforce Trailhead learning platform after creating a Trailblazer Account. Salesforce, Tableau’s parent company, developed learning modules specific to Tableau. Students can earn badges upon completing a learning module.
5. **\*\*Optional\*\*** Loth, A., Vogel, N., & Sparkes, S. (2019). *Visual analytics with tableau*. John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 978-1-119-56020-3
  - a. Some students desire a book resource for learning Tableau. If an organized, chronological book supports your Tableau learning, this is a good option. This book can be purchased online or accessed via the PLNU Ryan Library. Throughout the course, various online resources will be provided to help you learn Tableau.

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assignments & Exams	Quantity	Points Each	Points Total	Grading Scale
Discussions	16	12.5	200	A=93-100 A-=90-92 B+=87-89 B=83-86 B-=80-82 C+=77-79 C=73-76 C-=70-72 D+=67-69 D=63-66 D-=60-62 F=0-59
Homework	6	25 - 150	500	
Exams	2	100 - 150	300	
<b>Total Points</b>			1,000	

*Table 3 Point Distribution and Grade Scale*

### INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted by the due date indicated in Canvas. Late assignments are not accepted. Late work will not be accepted for credit except in the following University-sanctioned circumstances: illness (with doctor's note), death, university-sponsored field trip or activity, military obligation, or religious holiday. There are no makeup quizzes or exams.

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

Each assignment in this course includes specific guidelines on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Generally, you are allowed to use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but the use of AI tools to generate content (data files, charts, graphs, tables, text, video, audio, images) is limited. These guidelines are designed to support you in building AI skills while developing core data analytics skills, considering ethical issues, and avoiding plagiarism.

#### Permitted:

AI tools can be used to support idea generation, debug analytical models, perform rote data scrubbing, or support understanding of complex topics. Why? You want to practice using AI to augment your work and help you work more efficiently.

#### Restricted:

Absolutely no AI-generated Excel spreadsheets, Tableau workbooks, or written content will be included in your submissions. All submissions will be originally created by you. Why? You must develop fundamental analytical skills and understand how to operate and troubleshoot with data analysis tools.

#### AI Citations:

Students must provide a copy of the AI-generated work along with the proper citation. The AI-generated work is not sufficient. You must "own" the work by making revisions that align with the specific assignment objective(s), and it must be clear that your final submission is uniquely your "own" work. Credit will not be given for work that is AI-generated, without evidence of your "human touch."

Any work that uses AI-based tools must be clearly cited in accordance with APA 7th edition guidelines. Here are guidelines and an example of a proper citation:

[APA Style: How to Cite ChatGPT](#)

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT (version 3.5) [Large language model]. Retrieved from <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

AI Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined as using or taking credit for someone or something else's work without permission or acknowledgment. If you use AI tools to generate work in this course and do not properly cite it, this constitutes plagiarism and will be reported to the university as an Academic Integrity violation. In addition to reporting plagiarism to the university, students who use AI to generate work and fail to cite it properly will receive a grade of zero on the submitted assignment.

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**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).

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**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) or as shown in the PLNU Spiritual Care section of this syllabus.

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)

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**SPIRITUAL CARE**

PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end, we provide resources for our Graduate and Adult Undergraduate students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. We have onsite chaplains at our different campuses who may be available during class break times across the week. If you have questions or a desire to meet or share any prayer requests with our chaplains, you can find them at the [Chaplain's Page via myPLNU](#).

In addition, the Mission Valley and Balboa campuses have a prayer chapel for use as a space set apart for quiet reflection and prayer.

## GPS ACADEMIC RESOURCES

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PLNU offers the following free academic resources virtually for Graduate Professional Studies (GPS) Students. Visit myPLNU through the links below for more information.

- **[The GPS Writing Center](#) offers:**
  - **Zoom Writers Workshops** offered each quad on a variety of helpful topics
  - **One-to-one appointments** with the Writing Coach
  - **Microlearning YouTube Video Library** for helpful tips anytime
  - **[Research Help Guide](#)** to help you start your research
  - The physical office is located on the third floor of the **[Mission Valley Regional Center](#)** off the student lounge
- **[Academic Writing Resources Course](#)**: Found on your Canvas Dashboard, this course is non-credit with 24/7 access, no time limits, and self-paced content. **[Watch a quick video run-through](#)** and take time now to explore!
- **[Grammarly](#)**: Students have unlimited FREE access to Grammarly for Education, a trusted tool designed to help enhance writing skills by providing real-time feedback, identifying areas for improvement, and providing suggestions. Grammarly's Generative AI is NOT available with our student accounts.
- **[Tutoring](#)**: Students have access to 24/7 live or scheduled subject tutoring through Tutor.com, including a Paper Drop-Off Service with feedback within 12 hours.

We are here to support you! Contact us anytime: [GPSWritingCenter@pointloma.edu](mailto:GPSWritingCenter@pointloma.edu)

## STATE AUTHORIZATION

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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 of California.

## PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

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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**

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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**

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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 [Adult Undergraduate Academic and General Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

During the first week of class, you will be asked to submit an Academic Honesty Verification Statement. Submitting the statement is a requirement of this course. By submitting the Academic Honesty Verification Statement, you will be verifying all assignments completed in this course were completed by you. Carefully review the Academic Honesty Statement below.

Statement: "In submitting this form, I am verifying all the assignments in this course will be completed by me and will be my own work."

## **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

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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 ensure 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.

## **COURSE MODALITY DEFINITIONS**

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1. Online Courses: These are courses with class meetings where all instruction and interaction is fully online.
  - a. Synchronous Courses: At least one class meeting takes place at a designated time.
  - b. Asynchronous Courses: All class meetings are asynchronous.
2. Hybrid Courses: These are courses with class meetings that take place both in the classroom and online synchronously and/or asynchronously.
3. In-Person Courses: These are courses that meet in person with the instructor and students in a physical classroom setting. With approval by the area dean, this may include up to 25% of qualified class interactions through a Learning Management System (such as Canvas).

## **PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY**

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Students taking online courses with no specific scheduled meeting times are expected to actively engage throughout each week of the course. Attendance is defined as participating in an academic activity within the online classroom which includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging in an online discussion
- Submitting an assignment
- Taking an exam
- Participating in online labs
- Initiating contact with faculty member within the learning management system to discuss course content

Note: Logging into the course does not qualify as participation and will not be counted as meeting the attendance requirement.

## **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

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In order to be successful in your course, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers, microphone, or webcams compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible) to complete exams online.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

## **FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY**

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Successful completion of this class requires completing the final examination by its the due date.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

WK   Date	Class Content	Assignments
WK1 03/16	Read Richardson & Watson Chapter 1 Analytics Ascendancy Model SOAR Report WK1 Discussion 1 & 2	WK1 Homework: SOAR Report, 3/22 @ Midnight
WK2 03/23	Read Richardson & Watson Chapter 6 Introduction to Tableau Chart Selection & Design WK2 Discussion 1 & 2	WK2 Homework: Data Visualization Using Tableau, 03/29 @ Midnight
WK3 03/30	Read Richardson & Watson Chapter 2 Data Sources & Types WK3 Discussion 1 & 2	WK3 Homework: Data Sources, 04/05 @ Midnight
WK4 04/06	Read Richardson & Watson Chapter 3 Applied Statistics WK4 Discussion 1 & 2	WK4 Homework: Data Analysis Labs and SOAR Reports, 04/12 @ Midnight
WK5 04/13	Review Richardson & Watson Chapters 1-3 & 6 WK5 Discussion 1 & 2	WK5 Midterm Exam, 04/19 @ Midnight
WK6 04/20	Read Richardson & Watson Chapter 4 Descriptive and Diagnostic Analytics WK6 Discussion 1 & 2	WK6 Homework: Descriptive Analytics Case Studies, 04/26 @ Midnight
WK7 04/27	Read Richardson & Watson Chapter 5.1 - 5.2 Time Series Analysis WK7 Discussion 1 & 2	WK7 Homework: Creating a Dashboard, 05/03 @ Midnight
WK8 05/04	Read Richardson & Watson Chapter 5.2 - 5.3 Regression Analysis WK8 Discussion 1 & 2	WK8 Exam on Predictive Analytics, 05/10 @ Midnight

*Table 4 Course Schedule and Assignments*

**Discussions:** This course includes two discussion topics each week. The intention of the discussion topics is to expand your learning, enhance course content, and provide opportunities for collaboration with other students. Your discussion posts should do more than state your position. Your posts should explain your logic, raise any additional aspects, and invite feedback. Finally, discussion posts should provide supporting information and link to course material, include references (as with a formal report), and implement proper grammar.

**Homework:** This course includes six homework assignments. All five homework assignments will be submitted in the SOAR Report format. The purpose of the homework assignments is to allow for deep critical thinking and hands-on application with software tools, Microsoft Excel and Tableau.

**Exams:** This course includes two exams. The first exam will focus on exploratory analytics (descriptive and diagnostic), while the second exam will emphasize confirmatory analytics (predictive and prescriptive).