



Communication Studies Department

COM 4085-1 Communication, Values and Society: “Living Your Calling”

Spring 2026 * 2 Units * T/TH 12:25 – 1:20PM * Cabrillo 202

Professor: Dr. Paul A. Miniffee

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Office Hours: M/F 11-12 (and by appointment)

Course Final Exam: (Thursday, May 7, 1:30 – 4:00 pm)

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.

General Education Mission

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world’s diverse societies and culture.

Course Description

Senior seminar series focused on value-driven approaches to communication, applying a Christian perspective to real world contexts. In this course we will investigate various philosophical, religious, literary, and psychological approaches to discovering one's calling or "personal legend." In essence, we will probe these questions: What are my personal strengths and virtues? What is *God's* purpose or calling on my life? And how can I use my unique gifts to better the lives of others and bring glory to God? The course readings offer illuminating and life-giving principles that will enrich our discussions about how to live life mindfully, purposefully, compassionately, and in service to humanity. Required of all majors in the department.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

You will:

1. Articulate a definitive plan about how your *arete* (virtue, trustworthiness) and/or *eunoia* (goodwill) will align with your personal values and virtues through engagement with others.
2. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.
3. Use appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying your understanding and shaping the whole work.
4. Use graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.
5. Formulate an understanding of the purposes of Christian communication.
6. Recognize the responsibility we have to use our communication skills to engage and transform human culture.
7. Distinguish the scope of one's Christian perspective as it relates to human communication.
8. Appraise values and theory related to communication in a Christian context.

Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources*

Students are responsible for having the required course textbooks prior to the first day of class.

All supplemental materials posted on this course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

1.Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2018).

Assessment and Grading

Note: Clearly define a grading policy to avoid any confusion concerning expectations. It is most helpful if

Grades will be based on the following assignments that total 100 points:

1. Reflections on *The Call* (15 points)
2. Timeline Presentation (20 points)
3. Scriptural Introspections (15 points)
4. Class Participation (10 points)
5. “Wonderfully Made” Manifesto (20 points)
6. “Wonderfully Made” Speech (20 points)

Sample Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentages

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	

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.

Note: This note is relevant to the following two sections: Content Warning and Trigger Warning. These sections provide suggested syllabus components for courses that may contain uncomfortable or potentially triggering content or discussions.

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 [class name], all of the 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. These topics include [list topics]. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, 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 [subject/major], and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Trigger Warning*

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In [class name], we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include [list topics]. Each time this topic appears in a reading or unit, it is marked on the syllabus. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of [subject/major], and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

Note: You may use, revise, or delete this section as needed for your course.

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

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) is **prohibited** in this course for any aspect of your work, including idea generation, drafting, editing, or final submissions. This course is designed to assess your independent critical thinking, writing, and research skills without the assistance of AI technologies. 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.

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.

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

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.

Asynchronous Attendance/Participation Definition

A day of attendance in asynchronous content is determined as contributing a substantive note, assignment, discussion, or submission by the posted due date. Failure to meet these standards will result in an absence for that day. Instructors will determine how many asynchronous attendance days are required each week.

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](#)
- [Website](#)
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu

Assignments At-A-Glance

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](#)

Date	In-Class Plan	Asynchronous Work
Week of 1/12	Course Introduction Perspectives on one's "calling"	Read and take notes: "Calling and Life Satisfaction: It's Not about Having It, It's about Living It" (Canvas) Prep: 3-2-1 Seminar Due on 1/20: 3-2-1 on "Calling and Life Satisfaction"
Week of 1/20	Biblical Examples of Calling: Apostle Paul and Ananias Key Concepts: listening and obeying despite fears and biases	Read and take notes: Acts 9:1-19 Due on 1/26: Scriptural Introspection on Acts 9:1-19
Week of 1/26	3-2-1 Seminars on <i>The Call</i>	Read & take notes: <i>The Call</i> : Intro, Chapters 1-2 Due 1/29: 3-2-1 <i>The Call</i> (Submit on Canvas)
Week of 2/3	3-2-1 Seminars on <i>The Call</i>	Read & take notes: <i>The Call</i> Chapters 3 - 4 Watch this sermon, "Do You Make Me Better?" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7ETBtrLAvA Complete Values Explorer Worksheet Complete "Who Makes Me Better?" worksheet
Week of 2/10	"Uniquely You"	Complete "Uniquely You: Personalizing My Faith" assessment Due 2/12 : Uniquely You Response
Week of 2/17	Your Timeline	Design Timeline Assignment Due 2/19: Submit Timeline Assignment
Week of 2/24	Timeline Presentations	Submit two questions and two statements of encouragement to your peers.

Week of 3/3	3-2-1 Seminars	<i>The Call</i> : Chapters 5-6 Read “Little Girls in Church”
Week of 3/9 SPRING BREAK		
Week of 3/17	When Society and Satan Seed Self-Doubts	Read Jarena Lee’s <i>The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee</i> Due 3/29 Scriptural Introspection (See prompt on Canvas about Lee’s narrative)
Week of 3/24	Exigence & Ethos: Esther’s Calling, a Moral Obligation?	Read the book of Esther Due 3/26 Scriptural Introspection on “For such a time as this” (see prompt on Canvas)
Week of 3/31	Wonderfully Made Manifesto	Read <i>The Call</i> Chapters 7-9 Introduce “Wonderfully Made” Manifesto Assignment
Week of 4/7	Wonderfully Made Manifesto Workshop	Due Wonderfully Made Manifesto Rough Draft
Week of 4/14	Conferences	No Classes
Week of 4/21	A Fire in Your Bones	How to speak publicly with your whole heart. Prayerful preparation for your final presentations—proclaiming your “Wonderfully Made” manifestos. Due 4/21 Final Wonderfully Made Manifesto
Week of 4/28	Practice Oral Presentations	

May 7, 1:30 – 4:00pm	Final Presentations	
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