

	MA Public Administration Graduate and Professional Studies MPA6070 Communication in Public Service 3 units
Spring 2026	

Meeting days, times, and location: Online/Asynchronous	Professor Philip Falcone. M.A.
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	Office Hours: Online 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 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.

Course Description

Students in this course will build their communication skills across various contemporary platforms with a focus on the principles of public relations, marketing, and advertising within the context of public service communication and education campaigns for nonprofit organizations. Practical applications include memos, presentations, press releases, briefs, and a social media strategy. Relevant areas are covered such as local government, public safety, education, public health, social welfare, environmental concerns, and community development.

Program & Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes

You will:

1. Students will articulate the structure and function of public service organizations and their ability to meet the goals among targeted audiences.
2. Students will identify best practices in communication within public service campaigns and public issues.
3. Students will develop and implement public service communication strategies in real-world scenarios.
4. Students will overcome potential barriers to success by incorporating effective public service communication strategies.

Program Learning Outcomes

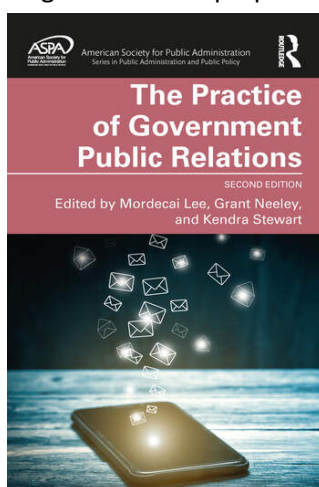
Students who complete the program will be able to:

- Demonstrate dedication to public service through collaborative and ethical leadership.
- Combine management approaches for fiscal and human resource management, policy formulation, and program administration to enhance service provision within non-profit and governmental sectors.
- Deliver evidence-based analysis and corresponding solutions to pressing societal issues, incorporating public policy considerations.
- Engage with a diverse population through a commitment to cultural responsiveness and equity.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

NOTE: Students are responsible to have the required course textbooks prior to the first day of class.

Students are also encouraged to begin reading the books in preparation for the class as soon as possible.



Lee, M., Neeley, G., & Stewart, K. (2021).

COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3-unit class delivered over 8 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Grades will be based on the following:

Assignment Distribution by Points	
Discussion Boards (3)	10%

Public Information Campaign Paper	15%
Portfolio Project Pieces (3)	45%
Portfolio Project Presentation + Video	20%
Communication Challenges (4)	10%
TOTAL POSSIBLE	100%

Grade Scale Based on Percentage of Points Earned				
A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-88	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F < than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted by the due dates posted and will be considered late if submitted after midnight Pacific Standard Time on the day they are due. If an assignment is submitted late, points possible for the assignment decreases 10% each day for four days after the due date.

Any assignment or deliverable submitted more than four days late will not be accepted.

Presentations cannot be “made up” and must be completed on the due date.

All deliverables for the course, including assignments, projects, presentations, papers, etc., must be turned in by 11:59pm on the last day of the course. No extensions or incompletes will be given to students to complete course requirements. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

If you believe you have an extenuating circumstance such as illness or family emergency, please send me an email as soon as possible so that we may speak about your options. With abundant notice, I'll be as accommodating as possible, as long as it does not compromise fairness for all.

PLNU SPIRITUAL CARE

PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end, we provide resources for our Graduate students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If you have questions for or a desire to meet or share any prayer requests with the onsite chaplain, you may email Dr. Sylvia Cortez Masyuk at scortezm@pointloma.edu.

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.

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 [Graduate 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."

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

Students 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. You may use tools such as (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) to conduct grammar/spelling checks and to help you gain skills to improve your writing. If you have any questions about using AI, please contact your instructor.

[MLA Style Center: Citing Generative AI](#)

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

[Chicago Manual of Style: Citing Content Developed or Generated by AI](#)

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 619-849-2486). 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. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

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 special 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 or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT & 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 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

PLNU COURSE MODALITY DEFINITIONS

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

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements. 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.

Students who anticipate being absent for an entire week of a course should contact the instructor in advance for approval and make arrangements to complete the required coursework and/or alternative assignments assigned at the discretion of the instructor. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the instructor and does not waive attendance requirements.

Refer to [Academic Policies](#) for additional details.

Online Asynchronous Attendance/Participation Definition

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 members within the learning management system to discuss course content

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In order to be successful in the online environment, 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.

GPS ACADEMIC RESOURCES

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**

ASSIGNMENTS AT-A-GLANCE

Reading Responses: After completing the weekly reading assignment, you will post a response to a Padlet. Your response will include key takeaways from the chapters and a personal anecdote or experience related to the topics. These weekly reading responses show that you have completed the assigned reading and can apply the concepts to real-world settings.

Discussion Boards Discussion boards are designed for you to engage with the course text and one another. An initial response to the prompt should be no less than 300 words, or a 2 minute video, followed by at least two responses to your classmates with 150-words or more. Use the text as your academic guide and cite as necessary. Personal anecdotes and views are encouraged as long as they add value to the discussion, are respectful, and can be supported by research. Discussions are in weeks 1, 2, and 7.

Communication Challenges During weeks 2-7 students will have the option to engage with communication challenges that will cover a spectrum of topics such as rewriting a letter from Parks Director Ron Swanson on NBC's Parks & Rec to be government PR approved, to dissecting and analyzing public comment from residents at local town hall meetings, to researching creative—and sometimes outrageous—ideas nonprofit organizations fundraise for their respective causes. This will resemble a

discussion board by way of formatting. Students are required to thoroughly complete four of the eight challenges throughout the quarter to receive full credit.

Public Information Campaign Paper As you can see from the Week 3 videos, public information (PI) campaigns have been a fixture in our society for years. It was, however, more “on the nose” and obvious in the past than today. Understanding how to identify and decipher these campaigns is now even more of a skill that you need to always sharpen. For this assignment, identify three samples of PI campaigns and/or crisis communication from the government within the last 5 years. (All three cannot be COVID-19 related.) Go through the campaign from start to finish—what caused it, who led it, how long did it last, was it effective in real time, what did you think about it in real time. Then, with the awareness and hindsight of time, dissect lessons learned, things that could have been done better, how crisis communication practices may have failed in real time and what you would have done differently. Cover this in one page per sample resulting in a minimum three page completed assignment. Site academic sources as needed and be sure to site the referenced PI campaigns.

Portfolio Project Piece 1 This is step one in the scaffolded final portfolio. Students are to first select a topic in which a public sector campaign can be built around. For example, this could be a local government anti-graffiti campaign, a neighborhood park or street adoption program, a worn American flag disposal program at local fire stations, a diaper donation program for underserved families, an e-waste/bulky waste disposal program, a public art mural beautification program, a book-sponsor campaign at local libraries/schools—the list is endless and can cover everything from infrastructure, environmental, social welfare, medical, art/architecture and more.

In Week 4 you will complete the selection of the campaign topic you will be covering, create its “identity” with a logo, color palette, and all other visual aspects of the brand so that it can be marketed. Think about elements needed for social media, letterhead, and graphic design needs. This can be submitted as a brand style guide. Refer to options online for structuring style guides—be creative!

Portfolio Project Piece 2 Now that you have your cause and a branded campaign theme, it is time to add substance to the campaign. In Week 5 you will complete an analytical analysis of the roll out and execution of the campaign. Items to think about to complete this assignment: rationale, mission, goals, timeline, intended outcomes, and data metrics to quantify efficacy. This piece should be between 3-4 pages.

Rationale: Why is this campaign needed? What is the purpose behind it? (1 paragraph)

Mission: What is the campaign seeking to do? (Typically a few concise sentences)

Goals: Three to five items this campaign seeks to accomplish (Itemized list)

Timeline: What is a reasonable amount of time to get the campaign off the ground and hitting success points? Map out the first three years.

Intended Outcomes: What would be considered success for the campaign? (1 paragraph)

Data metrics: How will success be measured? What are some subjective and objective forms of quantifying campaign success? (1 paragraph, charts/graphs of problem campaign seeks to fix are encouraged)

Roll out: How will this campaign be “unveiled” and how will it make a splash in today’s oversaturated, fast-paced news and social media cycles? What are the methods used to appeal to people with and without social media? (2 paragraphs, visual examples/ideas from other campaign rollouts can be added but not to exceed three samples)

Portfolio Project Piece 3 Now that you have a roadmap for what the campaign will do, how it will look and how its success can be measured, it’s time to have some newsworthy content. In Week 6 you will complete a media advisory, press release, and one pager on your campaign. The media advisory and press release will be for one specific newsworthy event within the campaign while the one pager is a flyer that covers all that one would need to know about the campaign on a single page.

What is “press release worthy” and how is it written to catch the eye of the media will be the two questions asked of you in this assignment. The launch of the campaign may be newsworthy but you cannot use that for this assignment. Think creatively! Perhaps the campaign is on the installation of public art in low income communities. A newsworthy item would be a successful awarding of a \$1 million grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to jump start the campaign efforts. The media advisory is a “warning” to news media that there will be a press conference the following day on a topic they will want to hear more about. Do not spoil all the news in the media advisory, rather, focus on a simple one page on Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How? Brand this with the campaign letterhead. A media advisory sample will be in the Week 6 module.

As for the press release, this is typically a couple pages and is the debrief after the press conference. It should have a brief, newsworthy headline (Example: National Endowment Makes \$1m Pledge to Local Public Art Campaign) followed by a summary of the event with a couple quotes from key speakers. A press release sample will be in the Week 6 module.

A “one-pager” is a version of a marketing flyer that tells the viewer everything they need to know about the respective cause/campaign/organization, etc. It is fully branded, has pictures, charts, campaign mission and goals along with other information you deem critical to being informed on what the campaign does. Organizations also use this one-pager to give donation information and a website to learn more. A good way to picture this is: if the public were to never hear or see anything about your campaign other than this one piece of paper, what would you put on it? This should *not* be one solid page of text on a white piece of paper. A one-pager sample will be in the Week 6 module.

Portfolio Project Presentation + Video This will combine the three previous pieces along with other aspects of the portfolio including at least one of these additional three elements: social media posts/ads, an advertisement for a magazine and newspaper, and/or a website for the campaign. All of these elements must match in design and branding to the larger portfolio. For the social media posts and/or ads, create three mock-up posts/ads highlighting the work of the campaign—there is freedom here so get creative! Use Instagram as your guiding platform. An advertisement for a magazine or newspaper should be one full-sized page and be in color. Use it to advertise some big news about the campaign. Remember, companies and organizations pay for this ad space so make sure it's worth the cost. Creating a simple

website is also an option and should have all aspects of this portfolio that an organization would want the public to see. If a website is selected, include that link on all campaign materials.

Finally, create a minimum 12-slide PowerPoint presentation explaining the portfolio via recorded video to the class. This should include everything from Week 4 (Piece 1) until the end of the portfolio project. The entire portfolio, PowerPoint, and video will be your final examination and is worth 65% of your grade.

How We Communicate All the above assignments are expected to be completed in a professional, academic manner. This includes proper use of grammar and language in all tasks for the course—the seemingly more casual settings of discussion boards or communication challenges should still utilize the same proper grammar as a written paper or the portfolio assignment. Similarly, communication between students and between student and professor should also be proper, respectful, and in compliance with standard grammar. Be sure to proofread any postings, assignments, or emails before submitting. The purpose of this class is the study of communication therefore continual attention to how we communicate is critical.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK #	TOPICS COVERED	ASSIGNED READINGS & MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1	-Government PR: Why do we need it? -The Do's and Don'ts of Govt PR	Course Text Ch 1, 2 Video review of syllabus and lecture Required Video: "Why I Wanted To Get Into Public Service In The First Place"	-Bios/intros of students -Discussion 1: How govt PR fits into students' world/work; what are some of your learned tips and tricks for PR? -Weekly Reading Response
WEEK 2	-The Push and Pull of Govt and the Media -Formulating the "message": how words are used to further the cause	Course Text Ch 3 Video lecture Required Video: How can social media impact the government? Clay Shirky	-Discussion 2: Select a high-stakes local, state, or federal event and explain the tools used by the government in messaging such event to benefit their cause. Examples: COVID-19 response, service delays due to weather/strike/inadequate equipment, school shooting threats/safety -Communication Challenge 1

WEEK #	TOPICS COVERED	ASSIGNED READINGS & MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS
			-Weekly Reading Response
WEEK 3	-Public Information Campaigns -Crisis Communication Challenges (COVID-19 focus)	Course Text Ch 4, 5 Video lecture Required Videos on PI Campaigns through the years: Coughs and sneezes spread diseases (1946) NHS Rabies Kills People - UK Public information advert from the seventies Give A Hoot Don't Pollute Public Service Commercial 1983 No on 131 – Angela Lansbury 1990 Ad "Angela" First TV ad for Coronavirus public information campaign	-Public Information Campaign Paper -Communication Challenge 2 -Weekly Reading Response
WEEK 4	-Why the brand matters in government -Branding the PR campaign -Branding online vs. in real life	Course Text Ch 6, 8, 9 Video lecture Required Video: How to brand anything Youri Sawerschel TEDxEHLLausanne	-Portfolio Project Piece 1 -Communication Challenge 3 -Weekly Reading Response
WEEK 5	-How to prepare your rationale, roll out, and efficacy -Understanding what the PR data is telling us -Social media as a tool to measure success	Course Text Ch 7, 12 Video lecture Required Video: A Beginners Guide To The Data Analysis Process	-Portfolio Project Piece 2 -Communication Challenge 4 -Weekly Reading Response
WEEK 6	-Ethics in PR campaigns	Course Text Ch 10, 11 Video lecture	-Portfolio Project Piece 3 -Communication Challenge 5

WEEK #	TOPICS COVERED	ASSIGNED READINGS & MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS
	-The change in credibility challenges for public sector -What is newsworthy? -How a one-pager is your one shot	Required Video: The Importance of Ethical Marketing	-Weekly Reading Response
WEEK 7	-How teaching PR is different from practicing PR -The role of civic professionals in shaping the message and educating the public	Course Text Ch 14, 15 Video lecture Required Video: How to have hope for American democracy Sharon McMahon TEDxBillings	-Discussion 3: Is trust in government messaging lost? What have been the top five contributing factors to the decline in public faith in government messaging? What are five tangible things that can be done to change this at the local, state and federal level? How have you seen this at work in your own life? What is the role of nonprofits and government-linked associations in this? -Communication Challenge 6 -Weekly Reading Response
Week 8	-What a completed PR portfolio provides us -The pros and cons of government PR -What is next for this field?	Course Text Ch 16 Video lecture View classmate's portfolio videos	-Compiled portfolio and recorded video presenting each element and how you made various decisions throughout the course. -Weekly Reading Response