



COM 2020 Small Group Communication

Department of Communication Studies

Fall 2019 ♦ 3 Units ♦ MWF 10:55-12:05 ♦ Cabrillo 202

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Office hours:

PLNU Mission

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Description

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

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

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

Required Text

Beebe, Steven and John Masterson. (2012). *Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Required Materials

\$5 class fee (cash or Venmo)

Occasional requests for household items for group work

Assessment and Grading

Below you will find the assignments for the semester. Your grade will be calculated by dividing the number of points you earn by the total number of points at the end of the semester. Course assignments and scheduling are subject to change due to the nature of the course. All changes will be made orally in class, provided in writing and posted on Canvas.

1. **Group Project:** This is your semester project. You may handle it as creatively as possible. You must produce a 30-minute presentation for the class on the day assigned to your group. You may generate a video, a slide presentation, a play, a symposium, a debate, a television game or reality show, etc. Whatever format and topic you choose, it should be a cohesive group decision in which everyone participates. The topic must be an innovative presentation of a concept, theory, or practice of small group communication. Plan to do considerable research outside of class. 100 points.
2. **TIP (Team Identity Package):** Construct a TIP including a team name, slogan, and logo for your project team in this course. The name, logo, and slogan should reflect the nature of your team's course project and/or the nature of the concepts and processes discussed in the course. You will present your TIP to the class. 15 points.
3. **Team Contracts:** Norms and responsibilities for group project. Should include goals and objectives, a time line to accomplish these goals, specific activities, resources needed, time required, person(s) responsible. 15 points.

4. **Group-Directed Conferences:** During the semester, you must meet with me in my office and/or classroom during assigned conference times to discuss your Group Project. This is mandatory and will be part of your project grade.
5. **Event Team Project:** Students will prepare and attend a small group event in November. Details and responsibilities will be handed out in class. 50 points possible.
6. **Quizzes:** Periodic reading quizzes on text and lecture material. Points vary.
7. **Exams:** Four exams which are a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions. They will cover Chapters 1-3; 4-6; 7-9; 10-12. Points vary.
8. **Article Reviews:** Students will complete thought papers based on articles handed out in class. Papers should include a brief summary of the article, an opinion of the concept, and personal connections. All papers for this class should be 3-4 typed pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman Font with one-inch margins. 25 points each.
9. **Team Progress Report Journals:** Written and oral periodic progress reporting analysis of your group experience including goal reflection, meeting agendas and problem solving. Points vary.
10. **Participation:** This course is participatory in nature. Students who fail to participate in a timely and regular manner risk losing points from their final grade. This is at the professor's discretion.

Grade Scale

A- = 90-92%; A = 93-97%; A+ = 98-100%: Excellent (*Phenomenal work that far exceeds the minimum requirements of the assignment; excellent logic, structure, and organization; virtually no grammar and punctuation errors; engaged in class lecture and discussion; Comprehensive excellence is needed for a superlative grade in this course.*)

B- = 80-82%; B = 83-87%; B+ = 88-89%: Above average (*Excellent work that exceeds the minimum requirements of the assignment; no major problems with logic, structure, and organization; very few grammar and punctuation errors.*)

C- = 70-72%; C = 73-77%; C+ = 78-79%: Average (*Good work that meets the minimum requirements of the assignment; may have minor problems with logic, structure, and organization; may have some grammar and punctuation errors; midpoint between extremes of excellence and failure.*)

D- = 60-62%; D = 63-67%; D+ = 68-69%: Below average (*Poor work that does not fully meet the minimum requirements of the assignment; may have some problems with logic, structure, and organization; grammar and punctuation errors may hinder meaning.*)

F = 59% and below: Failure (*Poor work that does not fulfill the assignment; may have serious problems with logic, structure, and organization; grammar and punctuation errors may obscure meaning.*)

Method of Instruction

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

1. Students are expected to come to class on time, stay for the duration, and not carry on side conversations during lecture or do work for other classes during our class time. In other words, students are expected to be active participants in the learning process. Failure to make presentations on schedule will result in a failing grade for that presentation.
2. All written work must be typed, and attention should be paid to form (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, MLA or APA formatting, and general appearance) as well as content.
3. Integrity is of great importance. Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated and will result in a grade of "F." Additionally, for our class's purposes, the speaking and writing process is often collaborative, and students share and borrow from each other all the time. There are ways to do this that are acceptable (such as taking suggestions from a professor or a peer), but there are also ways to use other people's ideas or words in a way that is considered plagiarism (such as passing off somebody else's work—even just a sentence—as your own). We will discuss this further in class. If you have questions about proper citation and documentation of any sources you are using, please ask me.

4. Classroom disruption by cell phones or other electronic devices (i.e. text messaging) is prohibited. All laptops, cell phones and similar electronic devices must remain turned off and out of sight for the duration of class. A student may face a zero and/or failure in the class if an electronic device is used for cheating during a test.

5. Please DO NOT disrupt class while students are presenting. This includes walking in/out of the classroom.

6. Your PLNU email account and Canvas should be checked daily. This is the way that I will most frequently communicate with you outside of class, and it's also the way the university distributes important information.

7. This syllabus serves as the contract between the students and professors. Your continued enrollment in the course serves as agreement to abide by the policies and information set forth here and not to expect exceptions to be made for you.

Course Schedule

Week Of:	Class Plan	Assignment(s) & Readings Before Class
Sept 4 & 6	Introductions Course information Name Game Intro to Group Communication Lecture	Read Syllabus and Text Overview Read Chapter 1
Sept 9	Chapter 1: Introducing Group and Team Principles Group Activity: Math Books	Read Chapter 2 Review Lecture Notes Learn Communication Theory
Sept 16	Chapter 2: Small Group Communication Theory Theory Presentations 9/18	Complete Theory Presentation Read Chapter 3 Review Lecture Notes
Sept 23	Chapter 3: Group Formation	Preparation for Exam 1
Sept 27	Exam 1 (chapters 1-3)	Read Chapter 4
Sept 30 *online day	Promo Piece	Review Lecture Notes Complete Promo Piece for Team Project
Oct 2/4	Chapter 4: Preparing to Collaborate Promo Piece Due 10/7	Read Chapter 5 Review Lecture Notes
Oct 7	Chapter 5: Relating to Others in Groups and Teams Group Roles	Read Chapter 6 Review Lecture Notes
Oct 14	Chapter 6: Improving Group Climate Final Project Groups Assigned	Complete TIP Presentation Complete Team Contracts

Oct 21	Team Contracts/TIP/Review	Preparation for Exam 1
Oct 23	Exam 2 (chapters 4-6)	
Oct 25	Fall Break: No Class	Revise TIP
Oct 28	Chapter 7: Enhancing Group and Team Communication Skills	Team Project Planning Complete Journal 1 Read Chapters 8 & 9
Nov 4 & 6	Chapter 8: Managing Conflict Journal 2 Due 11/4	Prepare for Exam 3 Team Project Planning Complete Journal #2
Nov 8	Exam 3 (chapters 7-9)	Read Chapter 9
Nov 11	Group Work day	
Nov 13-15	Chapter 9: Leadership	Prepare for Exam 3 Team Project Planning Read Chapters 10 & 11
Nov 18	Chapters 10 & 11: Problem Solving Chapter 12: Creativity Journal 3 Due 11/22	Read Chapter 12 Finalize Team Project Collect Items for Tower Competition
TBD	Tower Competition	Complete Journal #3
Nov 25	Friendsgiving	Finish Team Project Prepare for Meeting with Professor
Nov 27-29	No Class: Happy Thanksgiving	
Dec 2/4	Group Led Conferences with Dr. Newman Exam Review	Read Appendix B: Presentations Final Project Prep Prepare for Exam 4
Dec 6	Exam 4 (chapters 10-12 & Appendix B)	Prepare for Meeting with Professor
Dec 9/11/13	Group Presentations	Practice Team Project Project Feedback Project Reflection

	Journal 4 Due 12/9	Complete Journal Reflection # 4 Prepare for Final Exam
Dec 18 10:30 am Final Exam	Final Exam Team Grading	Complete team grading forms

Final Course Grades

Final course grades will be submitted electronically at the conclusion of the semester by the deadline set forth by the university. Any questions regarding final grades need to be addressed within two weeks of the class ending and must be sent in writing to the professors. Grade inquiries beyond that time will not be allowed.

PLNU Academic Accommodations: If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU’s Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

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. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

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 Attendance and Participation Policy: Attendance & Participation

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member has the option of filing a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. Because discussion and participation is an important part of our class, your regular attendance and participation are required for you to be successful. Every absence in this class will result in a 5 point deduction from final points earned. Coming to class unprepared, staring at a screen, or being disruptive in class will also count as an absence. Truly perfect attendance (with no tardies or absences of any kind—you were literally present for all of every class meeting) will earn you 1% of extra credit at the end of the semester. For further information please reference the Academic Policies in the academic catalog.