



COM 340 Organizational Communication

Department of Communication & Theatre
Spring 2016 ◊ 3 Units ◊ M/W 1:30-2:45 p.m.

Dr. Melissa Newman

Cabrillo 200 ◊ mnewman@pointloma.edu ◊ 619.849.2561
Office hours: T/Th 1:15-3 p.m. and by appointment

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

This course is a study of traditional, modern, and post-modern approaches to organizational communication as well as its functions, forms and consequences. It also provides a theoretical overview of management theory and gives practical insights for communicating in a variety of organizations. More specifically, the course is based on the assumption that organizations are “collections of conversations” which both shape and are shaped by communicative interaction. To that end, topics will include: models/approaches to organizational theory and communication, interpersonal dynamics evidenced in networks, stress and social support, impression management, and issues of diversity.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Gain sophistication with the terms, concepts, and theories of organizational communication.
2. Increase understanding and appreciation of the complexities of communication and organizational life.
3. Develop competencies in organizational analysis and change strategies.
4. Demonstrate written and oral communication, as well as conceptual and analytical thinking.

Required Texts

Bramson, Robert M. (1988). *Coping with Difficult People*. New York: Dell.

Littauer, Florence. (1992) *Personality Plus: how to understand others by understanding yourself*. Revell.

Modaff, D.P., Butler, J.A., & DeWine, S. (2012). *Organizational communication: Foundations, challenges and misunderstandings*. (3rd ed.) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

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. Text/Lecture Quizzes (variable points)
2. Organizational Culture Report: Students will analyze an assigned organization based on course material. (100 points)
3. Exams: 3 Exams over course material. (100 points each)

4. "Difficult People" Presentation: In a randomly assigned group, students will present on one of six types of categorically difficult people. (50 points)
5. Article Reviews: Students will complete 1 or 2 thought papers based on articles from the *Harvard Business Review*. 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)
6. *Personality Plus* Reflection: Students will write a 3-4 page reflection of their highest score on the *Personality Plus* Inventory. Be sure to include a thorough description of the style, strengths and weaknesses, and examples. (25 points)
7. *Personality Plus* Group Presentation: You and your assigned group will do a 10 minute presentation on your personality type according to *Personality Plus*. Each group member is expected to have a speaking role during the presentation. Be sure to include a thorough description of the style, strengths and weaknesses, and examples. You will be graded on content, creativity, delivery and staying within time constraints. There will be one grade for the group (barring extreme circumstances). 50 points
8. Inventories, Case Studies and Participation: Students are required to be on time and thoughtfully participate in lectures, group work and presentations. Students will also do written work on academic articles discussed in class. Absences will result in a points deducted at the professors discretion.

Grade Scale

- A- = 90-93%; A = 94-97%; A+ = 98-100%:Excellent (*superior, first rate/class, exceptional, superlative paper and tests; engaged in class lecture and discussion, attendance, posture, interest, etc. Comprehensive excellence is needed for a superlative grade in this course.*)
- B- = 80-83%; B = 84-87%; B+ = 88-89%:Above average
- C- = 70-73%; C = 74-77%; C+ = 78-79%:Average (*mediocre, commonplace, ordinary, passable, fair, midpoint between extremes of excellence and failure.*)
- D- = 60-63%; D = 64-67%; D+ = 68-69%:Below average
- F = 59% and below: Failure (*omission or lack of satisfactory performance of action or task, inadequate, impassable, etc.*)

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 attend class and be on time. Failure to make presentations on schedule will result in a failing grade for that presentation. In the event of absence students seek missed information/notes from classmates.
2. All written work must be typed, and attention should be paid to form (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, 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" for the project and possibly the course. See university notifications below for specifics.
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. Also, please do not carry on side conversations while the professor is lecturing or during discussion. You can never show too much respect for your professors. Disruptions will result in points lost from participation grades.

6. This syllabus serves as the contract between the students and professor. Your continued enrollment in the course serves as agreement to abide by the policies and information set forth here within.

Course Schedule

Please note: Due to the nature of this course, the schedule is subject to change. All changes will be posted on Canvas and announced in class.

Date	Class plan	Assignment(s) & Readings
Jan 12	(1) Course Introduction (2) Lecture: Foundations of Organizational Communication	(1) Review Syllabus and put all important dates in planner or phone with "alerts" set. Extensions will not be granted after due date has passed. (2) Read Modaff, Butler & DeWine (MBD) Chapter 1
Jan 13	(1) Lecture: Foundations of Organizational Communication (cont.) (2) <i>Personality Plus</i> Intro	Read <i>Personality Plus</i>
Jan 18	No Class- Martin Luther King Day Finish reading <i>Personality Plus</i>	Read (MBD) Chapter 2
Jan 20	(1) Classical Theories of Organizations Lecture	Write <i>Personality Plus</i> reflection
Jan 25	(1) Turn in <i>Personality Plus</i> Reflection (2) <i>Personality Plus</i> Presentation planning session	Prepare <i>Personality Plus</i> Presentation
Jan 27	Personality Plus Presentations	(1) Study for quiz (2) Read (MBD) Chapter 3
Feb 1	(1) Classical Theories Quiz (2) Humanistic Theories of Organizations Lecture	(1) Study for quiz (2) Read (MBD) Chapter 4
Feb 3	(1) Humanistic Theories Quiz (2) Systems Theory Lecture	(1) Study for quiz (2) Read (MBD) Chapter 6
Feb 8	(1) Systems Theory Quiz (2) Critical Theory Lecture	Prepare for Exam 1
Feb 10	Exam 1 (MBD Chapters 1-4 & 6)	Read MBD Chapter 5
Feb 15	Organizational Culture Lecture	(1) Study for quiz (2) Prepare Org Culture Report with

		Group (3) Read <i>New York Times</i> Case Study
Feb 17	(1) Org Culture Quiz (2) <i>New York Times</i> Case Study	Read MBD Chapter 7
Feb 22	Recruitment & Socialization	Read MBD Chapter 8
Feb 24	Superior-Subordinate Communication	Find sources on qualitative research interviewing techniques
Feb 29	Qualitative Research Review	Meet with group to begin proposal process for Org Culture Project
Mar 2	PLNU Artifacts Exercise	Complete exercise and plan presentation
Mar 7-11	No Class- Spring Break	Read MBD 9
Mar 14	PLNU Artifact Presentations	Work on Organizational Culture Analysis Project
Mar 16	Organizational Culture Analysis Group Project Proposals	Work on Organizational Culture Analysis Project
Mar 21	Organizational Culture Analysis Group Project Proposals Due (Submit in Canvas)	Work on Organizational Culture Analysis Project Read MBD Chapter 10
Mar 23	Peer-Coworker Communication Lecture	Work on Organizational Culture Analysis Project
Mar 28	Organizational Teams	Read MBD Chapter 11 Complete Organizational Culture Analysis Project and plan presentation
Mar 30	No Class- Easter Recess	
April 4	Organizational Culture Analysis Group Project Due (submit in Canvas and bring hard copy to class) -Groups will present projects to the class	Read HBR Article Write HBR Article Review
April 6	Leaders & Leadership Lecture	Read MBD Chapter 12
April 11	TBD	Read MBD Chapter 13
April 13	(1) Leaders & Leadership Quiz (2) Gender & Emotion Lecture	Read <i>HBR</i> Article "Executive Women"
April 18	(1) Gender & Emotion Article Discussion	Prepare for Exam 2

	(2) "Difficult People" Presentation Info	Submit <i>HBR</i> Article "Executive Women"
April 20	Exam 2 (ch 5, 7-11)	Complete "Difficult People" Presentation
April 25	"Difficult People" Presentation	Submit <i>HBR</i> Article on "Difficult People"
April 27	"Difficult People" Presentation	Prepare for Final Exam
Wednesday 1:30-5 pm.	Final Exam (ch 12, 13, Difficult People, & Org Culture)	

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. Every absence in this class will result in a five point deduction from final points earned. See Academic Policies in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

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 three-unit class delivered over 16 weeks. Specific details about how the class meets the credit hour requirement can be provided upon request.

Academic Honesty and Dishonesty

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As explained in the university catalog, 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. Violations of university academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding the academic dishonesty of others, or malicious misuse of university resources. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. Students may appeal also using the procedure in the university catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for further information.

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 professor. Grade inquiries beyond that time will not be allowed.

Academic Accommodations

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students must request that academic accommodations by filing documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. See Academic Policies in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

FERPA Policy

In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by (Note: each faculty member should choose one strategy to use: distributing all grades and papers individually; requesting and filing written student permission; or assigning each

student a unique class ID number not identifiable on the alphabetic roster.). Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the "Information Release" section of the student portal. See Policy Statements in the (undergrad/ graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

Final Exam Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the "Class Schedules" site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

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.