



COM 465 Communication Theories and Research

Department of Communication & Theatre

Spring 2016 ♦ 3 Units ♦ Cabrillo 202 ♦ Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:45 a.m.

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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 Mission

Your goal this semester is to gain working knowledge of quantitative and qualitative communication research methods. This includes learning how to read research, evaluate research, and conduct research to solve communication problems. To accomplish this you will learn how to formulate research questions and design a research study using the appropriate methods and measures to complete the study. You will also learn how to write in a research format so plan to spend considerable time and effort writing this semester. Finally, you will present your research project and findings in a poster session at the end of the semester.

Course Description

This course will critically survey contemporary theories and models of human communication emphasizing both the essence of human communication as well as underlying philosophical and paradigmatic contexts. The steps involved in generating original research will also be emphasized culminating in a communication research project.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. To develop an integral framework with which to organize knowledge about communication.
2. To understand the function and process of research in generating insight into communication phenomena.
3. To create an awareness of the essential features of a broad variety of current theories.

Required Texts:

Davis, C. S., Powell, H. P., & Lachlan, K. (2012). *Straight talk about communication research methods*. 2nd Edition. Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt Publishing.

Infante, A.D., Rancer, A.S., & Avtgis, T.A. (2010). *Contemporary Communication Theory*. Dubuque, IA: Kendal Hunt.

*Readings Posted on Canvas

Recommended Texts:

APA Publication Manual (6th Ed.), (2010). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (1979). *The elements of style* (3rd ed.). New York: Macmillan.

Additional Materials: Please open a free account on Mendeley for your research articles and plan for poster session expenses including the printing and display materials.

Course Assignments:

(1) Chapter Quizzes/Exams: Periodic quizzes over Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan readings. Four exams defined by the Parts 1-4 in the Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan text. Varying points.

(2) Annotated Bibliography: Students will write an annotated bibliography for 5 sources related to their assigned topic. 25 points

(3) Literature Review Part 1: Expanding on the annotated bibliography, students will write a literature review on their assigned topic. 25 points

(4) Literature Review Revision: This class is writing intensive, and as such, requires writing and revising a paper. You will revise your literature review based on peer and professorial feedback. Note that the second grading of your literature review requires you to have made the revisions suggested. 25 points

(5) Group Methodology Presentation: Your group will teach one of the research methodologies on the assigned day. You will have 25 minutes for your presentation. For your assigned methodology, you will present to the class:

1. A description/definition of the method (its characteristics, how it is conducted, steps, etc.)
2. An example of the method from a published journal – explain how the method was used in the example (remember -- your classmates won't have read the example so explain it/describe it to them)
3. Terminology with definitions and examples

Grades will be based on quality of presentation, thoroughness and accuracy of material, creativity, and individual effort. Group members will rate each other on effort. 100 points

(6) Workshop Exercises: Periodic exercises to better understand research principles. (varying points)

(7) Research Project:

You will take your topic from your literature review to conduct a research project, either qualitative or quantitative methodology, related to that topic, and design a study, administer it, statistically analyze the data, and write up the findings. You will:

- Write a Research Question or Objective
- Design the research project to address your RQ (determine the correct sampling methodology, sample size, data collection method, measurement, etc.)
- Conduct the research
 - o Sample the population
 - o Collect the data
 - o Analyze the data
 - o Write up the findings

Your methodology must match your RQ or hypothesis.

Your paper will include sections on:

- Introduction
- Your research question or study objectives;
- Methodology (approach, population, sampling, measurement, validity/reliability/credibility, ethics, variables, analysis plans)
- Analysis (Coding/Statistics)
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Limitations

- Copy of your instrument or study protocol
- Consent form (if applicable)

See Appendix A of Davis, Powell, & Lachlan for more details and a suggested outline. 100 points

(8) Participation: Students are required to be on time and thoughtfully participate in lectures, group work and presentations. Absences and poor classroom behavior will result in a points deducted at the professors discretion.

Course Schedule:

Please expect some schedule changes this semester. Any changes will be made orally in class, posted in Canvas and/or sent via email.

Date	Class Plan	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS/PREPARATION
MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION RESEARCH		
JAN 14	Introduction to Course Introduction to Communication Research	Review Syllabus and put all important dates in planner or phone with “alerts” set. Extensions will <u>not</u> be granted after due date has passed. Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, “Introduction and Welcome” and Chapter 1: What is Communication Research?
MODULE 2: PARADIGMS AND METATHEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS/LIBRARY RESEARCH		
JAN 19	Research Paradigms	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 2: Metatheoretical Considerations, Research Perspectives, and Research Paradigms
JAN 21 BRESEE LAB	Reading & Using Research; Using the Library in Communication Research MEET IN BRESEE LAB at 9:30 a.m. sharp	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 3: Discovering What’s Already Known: Library Research
MODULE 3: LITERATURE REVIEWS, RESEARCH ETHICS		
JAN 26-28	Literature Reviews	Write Annotated Bibliography Chapter 4: Writing a Literature Review
MODULE 4: RESEARCH ETHICS		
FEB 2	Research Ethics	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 5: Understanding Research Ethics Complete Annotated Bibliography Group Presentation Assignments Prepare for Test 1
FEB 4	TEST 1 ON CHAPTERS 1 - 5	
MODULE 5: RESEARCH QUESTIONS, HYPOTHESES, VARIABLES		
FEB 9	Research Questions and Hypotheses	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 6: Research Questions and Hypotheses
FEB 11	Understanding Variables	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 7: Understanding Variables LITERATURE REVIEW DUE

MODULE 6: SAMPLING, VALIDITY, AND RELIABILITY		
FEB 16	Sampling	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 8: Sampling
FEB 18	Validity and Reliability	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 9: Ensuring Validity and Reliability
MODULE 7: SURVEYS		
FEB 23	TEST 2 on Chapters 6-9	
FEB 25	Surveys	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 10: Survey Research Group Presentation on Survey Research REVISED LITERATURE REVIEW DUE
MODULE 8: QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS		
MAR 1-3	Quantitative Content Analysis	Read Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, Chapter 11: Quantitative Content Analysis Group Presentation on Quantitative Content Analysis
MODULE 9: QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS AND EXPERIMENTS		
MAR 15	Experiments	Read Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, Chapter 12: Experiments Group Presentation on Experiments LITERATURE REVIEW 1 RETURNED TO STUDENTS
MAR 17	Experiments	Read Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, Chapter 12: Experiments
MODULE 10: STATISTICS AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS		
MAR 22	Analyzing Quantitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 13: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Quantitative Research
MAR 24	NO CLASS EASTER RECESS	
MODULE 11: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS		
MAR 29	Writing and Critiquing Quantitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 13: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Quantitative Research
MAR 31	Writing and Critiquing Quantitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 13: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Quantitative Research LITERATURE REVIEW REVISION DUE
MODULE 12: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH		
APR 5	TEST 3 on Chapters 10-13	
APR 7	Introduction to Qualitative Research Approaches	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 14: Qualitative Approaches to Communication Studies Research Group Presentation on Ethnography Group Presentation on Performance Studies

MODULE 13: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH		
APR 12-14	Qualitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 14: Qualitative Approaches to Communication Studies Research Group Presentation on Conversation Analysis (CA) Group Presentation on Focus Groups Group Presentation on Qualitative Interviewing Group Presentation on Qualitative Observation
MODULE 14: COLLECTING QUALITATIVE DATA		
APR 19-21	Collecting Qualitative Data	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 15: Collecting Qualitative Data RESEARCH PROJECT DUE APRIL 19
MODULE 15: ANALYZING QUALITATIVE DATA		
APR 26	Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Qualitative Research	Read Davis, Gallardo, & Lachlan, Chapter 16: Writing, Analyzing, and Critiquing Qualitative Research
APR 28	POSTER SESSION Location: TBD	
FINAL EXAM	Test 4 on Chapters 14-16	

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.*)

Course Norms Related to Instruction

1. Students are expected to come to class on time, stay for the duration and not carry on side conversations during lecture. In other words, students are expected to be active participants in the learning process.
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 course. No exceptions.
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 and out of the classroom. Points will be deducted for distractions.

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 and not expect exceptions to be made for you.

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.