

# WELCOME TO COM 175 Scriptwriting for TV and Film

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**Office Location** Cabrillo 203

**Office Hours** Tuesday & Thursday, 11-noon  
(and more available via appointment)

Okay to drop in--but with projects and other responsibilities, there's no guarantee when I'll be in my office. Best is to email me for an appointment.

**Personal Link** <http://www.pointloma.edu/experience/academics/schools-departments/department-communication-theatre/faculty/alan-c-hueth>

## Course Introduction, Resources, Websites

### INTRODUCTION

It all starts with a script! Every film and television (TV) program -- no matter what type -- is based on ideas and instructions conveyed through a script or some other pre-script document that the producer, director, and other crew members need in order to create a film or TV program. Given this fact, scriptwriting is *the* foundation (and most important component) for creating film and TV programs.

The past 38 years of innovation -- starting with the inception of cable TV (especially HBO and CNN) followed by the internet --has created an explosion of new television and film program content throughout the world. With this expansion has come a huge need for creatively-skilled and dependable writers who have the ability to write many different forms and types of scripts for all of the different types of film and television programs.

This course is based on these facts. It is a survey of the scriptwriting process and the techniques for writing scripts for a variety of different program forms for TV, film, and new media. It is a hands-on course--designed to give you experience in writing scripts for the *most common* types of shows on TV and film. These include interview shows, news/documentaries and reality shows, TV commercials, public service announcements (PSA's), television show promos and film trailers, corporate and educational media, and TV and film drama and comedy.

Your understanding of the approaches and techniques of scriptwriting will be broadened and deepened through reading, screening, discussion, analysis, and practice in writing these different kinds of programs. You'll learn the craft and conventions of scriptwriting by experiencing the writing process--first hand-- through individual and group exercises and scriptwriting assignments.

### RESOURCES

You have two resources for this course:

1. The textbook for this course is [Writing Scripts for Television, Film & New Media](#), by Dr. Alan Hueth (your instructor)--and is available (FREE!) in the "Modules" section on this website. It

includes chapters on all course content, and will be published later this year or early next year (Taylor & Francis/Routledge/Focal Press); and

2. The textbook chapter's website content will also be available in the "Modules" section...also FREE! There are hundreds of links to full programs and clips of the different film, television, and new media programs AND supplemental readings..

## **PLNU Media Comm WEBSITES**

### **Get to Know the *Point TV***

Acquaint yourself with some cool Point TV websites below to guide you for this assignment! See all kinds of projects and films that can inform, inspire, and stir some creative thinking for this course and beyond.

Here's the [Point TV](#) website that includes show descriptions, production schedules, crew lists for shows, press releases/news about the latest news about the station and the media com and multimedia journalism students and their activities. Some of these shows were born in this course AND many scripts were written in this course!

[Point TV's Facebook page](#)

**For past films/webisodes:** [Point TV Vimeo Channel](#)

**For past TV shows:** [Point TV YouTube Channel](#)

## Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

As a result of taking this course, you will be able to do the following: demonstrate an understanding and ability to...

1. ...apply the elements and principles of drama in writing scripts for film, TV, and new media programs;
2. ...practice the creative process for writing scripts for the different types of film, TV, and new media programs;
3. ...do basic pre-script research for film, TV, and new media scripts;
4. ...formulate communication objectives for film, TV, and new media programs, and write scripts that accomplish those objectives;
5. ...envision creative concepts in scripts for film, TV, and new media programs;
6. ...write scripts in the conventional and professionally-correct script formats for film, TV, and new media programs;
7. ...rewrite script material that has been critiqued and returned to you--for making changes/writing additional drafts, etc.; and
8. Demonstrate an appreciation for, and an ability to give and receive constructive criticism of your own and others' creative ideas and scripts.

## Activities

The course learning outcomes will be accomplished through the following activities:

- Mini-lectures
- Textbook readings and chapter reports
- Supplemental internet readings on scriptwriting
- Active student discussions of course topics -- based on the readings and website contents
- Viewing, analysis, and critique of student-produced and professional, award-winning TV/film/new media programming
- In-class notes/outlines/exercises and follow up Discussions on group exercises
- In-class, ungraded individual and group writing exercises
- Graded scriptwriting assignments
- Analysis and critique of your own and other's concepts and scripts

## • Evaluation: Assignments, Points & Grading Scale, Policies

<i>Scriptwriting for....</i> book reading reports and In-Class Lecture Notes	20 @ 10 points each	200
<i>Who I Am</i> Script Formatting Assignment		100
TV commercial/PSA/Show Promo Action Plan, Scripts & Storyboards		100
Interview Show Action Plan and Script		100
Documentary/Reality Show Action Plan and Treatment/Script		150
Corporate Media Action Plan & Treatment/Script		100
Short Film, Webisode, or Feature-Length Screenplay		150
Attendance & Participation		100
TOTAL POINTS:		1000

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- Your grades for projects will be based upon grading criteria provided for each assignment -- and how well you satisfy the criteria. The criteria include several components:
  - 1. Your creativity in utilizing the elements of drama to (potentially) elicit *pathos* in the audience through your script *visions*;
  - 2. Your ability to write material in the appropriate script format -- based on the type of show; and
  - 3. The clarity, completeness, and quality of the other areas that are included in each assignment.
- The specific criteria are included on each assignment page posted on this website. Be sure to include every component and requirement of the assignment - or the submission will be considered incomplete and will negatively affect your grade. Also, your grades for these assignments will be posted on the *Grades* section of this course website.
- **A Special Note:** I will do my best to return your graded scripts back to you in a reasonable amount of time. It usually takes 1-2 weeks to grade and return

assignments. The time-length that I need is based on the complexity and length of the assignment, other courses and projects I'm working on from week-to-week, and how long my *honey-do list* is for each weekend. I usually grade on the weekends which do not have too many other intrusions on my time. In any case, you can count on receiving graded scripts back to you *before* the next assignment is due so that you can benefit from my feedback *before* you write your next script. Your patience on this is much-appreciated.

- [Script Evaluation Codes](#)   I have been using abbreviations rather than full-word/sentence explanations in my evaluations of student scripts. These codes will consist of single letters and short abbreviations. You can click on the Script Evaluation Codes to see these abbreviations and interpret my feedback--evaluations of your scripts. If you ever need a more complete explanation, I'm glad to meet with you and provide some additional explanation. This is all created for your benefit, learning, and growth as a scriptwriter.
- Grading Scale:
- Your course grade will be based upon the following cumulative point scale:
- 920-1000 A
- 900-919 A-
- 880-899 B+
- 820-879 B
- 800-819 B-
- 780-799 C+
- 720-779 C
- 700-719 C-
- 680-699 D+
- 620-679 D
- 600-619 D-

## • Course Schedule

- FIRST MENTION OF CHAPTER READING is **emboldened** and signifies the day when that chapter's Reading Report assignment(s) is/are due.

### • WEEK 1:

- **Tuesday, 8/28/18** NO READING ASSIGNED <sup>{L}</sup><sub>{SEP}</sub>
  - A. Introductions
  - B. Syllabus, activities, assignments, etc. <sup>{L}</sup><sub>{SEP}</sub>
- **Wednesday, 8/29/18** NO READING ASSIGNED <sup>{L}</sup><sub>{SEP}</sub>
  - A. Syllabi, etc.--continued
- **Friday, 9/31/18** **READING: *Writing Scripts... Preface & Introduction; and Chapter 1: Principles & Elements of Outstanding Scriptwriting***
  - A. Introductions (continued) <sup>{L}</sup><sub>{SEP}</sub>
  - B. Discussion: principles and elements of drama

- **WEEK 2:**
- **Monday, 9/3/18--NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)**
- **Wednesday, 9/5/18 READING:** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> **Chapter 2: Vision & Language of Scriptwriting**
  - A. Discussion: vision and language of scriptwriting
  - B. Screen examples on website
- **Friday, 9/7/18 READING: Chapter 4: The Vision: Scriptwriting Formats**
  - A. Intro to *Who I Am* assignment
  - B. Exercise: Script Formatting
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- **WEEK 3:**
- **Monday, 9/10/18 READING: Chapter 3: The Vision -- Creativity & the Process of Scriptwriting**
  - A. Discussion: creativity and the process of scriptwriting
  - B. Work on *Who I Am* assignment -- w/instructor feedback
- **Wednesday, 9/12/18 READING: Chapter 9: News & Sports**
  - A. Discussion: writing for news & sports
  - B. Screen program samples
  - C. Group or individual exercise
- **Friday, 9/14/18 READING: review Chapter 9**
  - A. Exercise continued
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- **WEEK 4:**
- **Monday, 9/17/18 READING: Chapter 10: Interview Shows & review Ch. 3--the creative process**  
**WHO I AM ASSIGNMENT DUE**
  - A. Discussion: Interview Show Assignment
  - B. Discussion: writing for interview shows<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
  - C. Screen program samples
- **Wednesday, 9/19/18 READING: review Ch. 10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process**
  - A. Screening & Discussion--Interview show types & styles (continued)
  - B. Group Brainstorming session: interview show ideas
  - C. Screening interview shows: [The McLaughlin Group](#) and [Dr. Keith](#)
- **Friday, 9/21/18 READING: review Ch. 10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process**
  - A. Share interview show concept ideas
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- **WEEK 5:**

- **Monday, 9/24/18** READING: *review Ch. 10 Interview Shows & Ch. 3--the creative process*  
A. Individual Exercise: start writing your interview show w/instructor feedback
- **Wednesday, 9/26/18** READING: **Chapter 11--Documentary**  
A. Discussion: documentary TV shows and films  
B. Screen samples of documentaries
- **Friday, 9/28/18** READING: *review Ch. 11--Documentary...*  
A. Discussion & screen: documentaries (continued)
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- **WEEK 6:**
- **Monday, 10/1/18** READING: <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>*review Ch. 11--Documentary...*  
A. Discussion & screen: documentaries (continued)
- **Tuesday, 10/2/18, noon: INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT DUE**<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- **Wednesday, 10/3/18** READING: **Chapter 12--Reality Shows**  
A. Discussion & screen reality shows  
B. Group Brainstorm session: documentary or reality show series
- **Friday, 10/5/18** READING: *review Ch. 11--Documentary... and 12--Reality Shows*  
A. Group Presentation--documentary or reality show series concept
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- **WEEK 7:**
- **Monday, 10/8/18** READING: **Chapter 13 Corporate & Educational Media**  
A. Discussion of corporate & educational programs  
B. Screening & discussion of corp & ed programs--[The Secret to Success](#)
- **Wednesday, 10/10/18** READING: *review Ch. 12 Corporate...*  
A. Screening & discussion of corp & ed programs  
B. Corporate & Educational Script Assignment
- **Friday, 10/12/18** READING: *review Ch. 12 Corporate...*  
A. Group Brainstorm session: a corporate & educational program
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- **WEEK 8:**
- **Monday, 10/15/18** READING: *review Ch. 13 Corporate...*  
**DOCUMENTARY ASSIGNMENT DUE**  
A. Group Presentation: Corporate & Educational Program Ideas
- **Wednesday, 10/17/18** READING: **Chapter 8: Commercials, PSA's & Promos**  
A. Discussion: Commercials, PSA's and Promos  
B. Screening & discussion
- **Friday, 10/19/18** NO CLASS--FALL BREAK

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- **WEEK 9**
- **Monday, 10/22/18** READING: *Review Ch. 8: Commercials...*  
**CORPORATE & EDUCATIONAL ASSIGNMENT DUE** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
A. Screening & Discussion
- **Wednesday, 10/24/18** READING: *Review Ch. 8: Commercials...*  
A. Group Brainstorming Session: Commercial OR PSA OR Show Promo Campaign
- **Friday, 10/26/18** READING: *Review Ch. 8: Commercials...*  
A. Group Brainstorming--Commercial Campaign...etc.

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- **WEEK 10:**
- **Monday, 10/29/18** READING: **Chapter 5: Film & Television Drama**  
A. Discussion: film and television drama  
B. Screening & discussion
- **Wednesday, 10/31/18** READING: *review Ch. 5 Film...*  
A. Screening & discussion
- **Friday, 11/2/17** READING: *review Ch. 5 Film...*  
A. Screening & discussion

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- **WEEK 11:**
- **Monday, 11/5/18** READING: **Chapter 6 Film & Television Comedy**  
**COMMERCIAL/PSA/PROMO CAMPAIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE**  
A. Discussion: film and television comedy  
B. Screening & discussion
- **Wednesday, 11/7/18** READING: *review Ch. 6 Film...*  
A. Screening & discussion
- **Friday, 11/9/18** READING: *review Ch. 6 Film...*  
A. Screening & discussion

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- **WEEK 12:**
- **Monday, 11/12/18** READING: **Chapter 7: Short Films**  
A. Principles & Elements of Drama in Short Films<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
B. Screenplay Synopsis/Short Comedy/Drama Script Assignment<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
C. Screen, analyze, discuss short films
- **Wednesday, 11/14/18** READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*  
A. Short films--screening & discussion

- **Friday, 11/16/18** READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*  
A. Short films--screening & discussion
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- **WEEK 13:**
- **Monday, 11/19/18** READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*  
A. Short films (continued)
- **Wednesday, 11/21/18 NO CLASS--HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**
- **Friday, 11/23/18 NO CLASS--HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**
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- **WEEK 14:**
- **Monday, 11/26/18** READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*  
A. Discussion: short film ideas
- **Wednesday, 11/28/18** READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*  
A. Synopsis/short film script writing exercise w/instructor feedback
- **Friday, 11/30/18** READING: *review Ch. 7 Short Films*  
A. Synopsis/short film script writing exercise w/instructor feedback
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- **WEEK 15:**
- **Monday, 12/3/18** READING: **Chapter 13: Ethics and Law in Scriptwriting**  
A. Discussion: ethics and law in scriptwriting<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
B. Ethics writing case study & Potter Box Model
- **Wednesday, 12/5/18** READING: *Review Ethics...*<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>  
A. Laws and legal issues (case studies)
- **Friday, 12/7/18** READING: **Chapter 14: Getting Started...**  
A. Starting a writing career, getting experience and "your foot in the door," "should and should-not do's," resources, links, etc.
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- **MONDAY, 12/10/18, 10 a.m. (or before):**  
**TV/FILM SYNOPSIS-SCRIPT ASSIGNMENT DUE**

## Assignments: An Overview

### Watch Our *Point TV Shows*

See all kinds of projects and films that can inform, inspire, and stir some creative thinking for this course and beyond.

Here's the [Point TV](#) website that includes show descriptions, production schedules, crew lists for shows, press releases/news about the latest news about the station and the media com and broadcast journalism students and their activities.

[Point TV's Facebook](#)

[Point TV Vimeo Channel](#)

[Point TV YouTube Channel](#)

The course learning outcomes will be accomplished through the following reading and writing assignments:

- *Scriptwriting for....* book chapter Reading Reports
- *Who I Am* Script
- Interview show script (sports, news/topic/issue oriented, etc.)
- Documentary treatment & script
- TV commercial/PSA script
- Corporate/industrial action plan & video script
- Screenplay synopsis for feature-length film, or short (7-10 min) drama/comedy script

Outstanding and producible scripts and concepts will be presented to producers in the COM 425 TV Workshop (fall, 2018 and spring, 2019) and COM 443 Studio Production short film (spring, 2019) courses for consideration for production and to be included on PLNU's *Point TV* YouTube or Vimeo channels. Or, you can produce your show-script with a COM 420 Communication Practicum (1-2 units)...after you've completed COM 243 Intro to TV and Film Production.

## Course & Attendance Policies

### **SOME ASSUMPTIONS:**

1. You are passionate about the media, and have a desire to learn all that you can;
2. You understand the power of story to engage and emotionally-move the audience;
3. You understand that the script is the most important component in producing successful TV and film programs, and that it is difficult for even professional writers to write great scripts; and
4. You understand that -- after this course -- you'll be involved in producing lots of television and film programs at PLNU. And just as professional film and TV directors and crew members are depending on the writer to "get it right" -- you, too, as a student, will have your peers depending on you to "get it right."

### **PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION**

A very important part of your preparation for working in the media industries (or any professional field) is "professional socialization." This includes the following:

1. Proving that you're serious about your education in the PLNU media communication major by consistent punctual arrival and attendance to all class sessions;
2. A laser focus attention to all in-class lectures, discussions, screenings, presentations, and exercises. This means NO SMART PHONE OR COMPUTER USAGE during class time...unless it is required for an assigned in-class exercise--see PLNU Classroom Behavior policies on this course website; and
3. Submitting all script assignments and reading reports by/before the deadline. It is extremely-important that you begin to demonstrate this ability. Meeting deadlines is evidence that you have made the assignment (and this course required in your major) **a priority** over other activities that you were able to accomplish that particular week.

### **IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION:**

Ten (10) percent of your course grade is partially-based upon this part of your performance in this course. You will not receive a high "A" in this portion of the course simply by attending all class sessions and being on time. That is noble and notable, however, that is only a baseline requirement for receiving an "A" in attendance and participation. An "A" grade participant is one who exhibits excellent participation. They are consistently and actively involved in the class discussions. They are honest, yet tactful and respectful in their evaluation of other's work, and are open to criticism of their own work. They consistently provide insightful comments, pose pertinent and important questions, and generally enhance everyone's understanding of the course material by their presence and input. An excellent participant also exhibits an energetic and positive attitude throughout the semester.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

This is, probably, the most important part of your professional socialization. Absences and tardiness are not acceptable in the media professions. The script is **the foundational component** for program production, and the ability to get the job done and show up is evidence of your seriousness, maturity, and priorities -- someone that your co-workers can count on to show up and get the job done! Therefore, perfect attendance will greatly help you to earn all points. All students start with 100 attendance and participation points. You can count on losing ten (10) points for every absence accumulated throughout the semester. I will usually shut the door at the beginning of class. If you have to open the door to enter after class starts, do tell me after class why you were late.

### **From the Provost:**

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes in which a student is registered is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements to be met. There are no allowed or excused absences except when absences are necessitated by certain university-sponsored activities and are approved in writing by the Provost.

Whenever the number of accumulated absences in a class, for any cause, exceeds ten percent of classes [this is equivalent to missing 4.5 sessions for this course], the faculty member has

the option of filing a written report to the Vice Provost for Academic Administration which may result in de-enrollment, pending any resolution of the excessive absences between the faculty member and the student. If more than 20 percent [9 sessions or more in this course] is reported as missed, the faculty member may initiate the student's de-enrollment from the course without advance notice to the student. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of "F" ♦ or "NC." There are no refunds for courses where a de-enrollment was processed.

## PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

### **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.

## Academic Behavior Policy

See the university's NEW POLICY included in the PLNU undergraduate handbook:

### **ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Both faculty and students at Point Loma Nazarene University have the right to expect a safe and ordered environment for learning. Any student behavior that is disruptive or threatening is a serious affront to Point Loma Nazarene University as a learning community. Students who fail to adhere to appropriate academic behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Although faculty members communicate general student expectations in their syllabi and disruptive student conduct is already addressed in the Undergraduate Student Handbook, the purpose of this policy is to clarify what constitutes disruptive behavior in the academic setting and what actions faculty and relevant administrative offices may take in response to such disruptive student behavior.

“Disruption,” as applied to the academic setting, means classroom, instructor or classmate-related student behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with or deviating from normal classroom, class-related, or other faculty-student activity (advising, co-curricular involvement, etc.). Faculty members are encouraged to communicate positive behavior expectations at the first class session and to include them in course syllabi. Examples of disruptive classroom behavior include, but are not limited to:

- persistent speaking without being recognized or interrupting the instructor or other speakers;
- overt inattentiveness (sleeping or reading the newspaper in class);
- inordinate or inappropriate demands for instructor or classroom time or attention;
- unauthorized use of cell phone or computer;
- behavior that distracts the class from the subject matter or discussion;

- unwanted contact with a classmate in person, via social media or other means;
- inappropriate public displays of affection;
- refusal to comply with reasonable instructor direction; and/or
- invasion of personal space, physical threats, harassing behavior or personal insults.

The policy applies if the behavior is reported by a faculty member or academic administrator and occurs exclusively or primarily in a student-faculty member interaction. Incidents which involve both academic and non-academic behavior may result in responses coordinated by the Vice Provost for Academic Administration and the Dean of Students.

Civil and polite expression of disagreement with the course instructor, during times when the instructor permits discussion, is not in itself disruptive behavior and is not prohibited.

Some students possess medical or psychological conditions that may affect functioning within the standards of the university. Although such students may be considered disabled and are protected under the Rehabilitation Act/ADA, they are required to meet the fundamental university academic and behavioral policy as described in the Student Handbook, Undergraduate Catalog and/or faculty syllabi.

## PLNU Copyright Policy

### **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 Academic Accommodations Policy

### **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY** Ⓢ

While all students are expected to meet the minimum standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic adjustments, modifications or auxiliary aids/services. At Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), these students are requested to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. ([DRC@pointloma.edu](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). The DRC's policies and procedures for assisting such students in the development of an appropriate academic adjustment plan (AP) allows PLNU to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 504 (a) prohibits discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities. After the student files the required documentation, the DRC, in conjunction with the student, will develop an AP to meet that student's specific learning needs. The DRC will thereafter email the student's AP to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. The AP must be implemented in all such courses.

If students do not wish to avail themselves of some or all of the elements of their AP in a particular course, it is the responsibility of those students to notify their professor in that course. PLNU highly recommends that DRC students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester about the applicability of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not desire to take advantage of some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

# PLNU Campus Computer/Network Usage Policy

Careful and ethical use of computing resources is the responsibility of every user. Students will be held to a standard of accountability for how they use computers at PLNU.

**Link to Computer Use Policy:**

<http://www.pointloma.edu/discover/new-student-orientation/campus-life/computer-faqs>