



COM 265 Introduction to Empirical Research

Department of Communication & Theatre
Fall 2015 ♦ 3 Units ♦ C102 ♦ TR 9:30-10:45 am

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Office hours: Monday & Wednesday 2-3 p.m.;
Tuesday 1-2 p.m.; Thursday 11-12 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 will introduce the discipline of communication in all areas. The course will also consist of a survey of qualitative, statistical and content analytic methods in communication research. The class includes an introduction to IRB protocols and forms, a review of APA style requirements, as well as the use of statistical software in data analysis.

Required Texts

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

Treadwell, D. (2014). *Introducing Communication Research: Path of Inquiry*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

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

*ALL THREE books will be required for COM 465

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Be able to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research.
2. Become familiar with IRB policies and how to request IRB approval.
3. Be able to critically interpret academic research articles.
4. Be able to explain the basic scientific method for conducting research.
5. Perform basic statistical analysis utilizing SPSS.
6. Construct a basic quantitative survey.
7. Propose a basic research project and methodology for both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

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. **Theory Summary (50 pts)** – Each student will pick a general communication area and summarize the major theories presented in the textbook chapter.
2. **“Theory in a Nutshell” Presentation (75 pts)** – Students will present on a specific communication theory to the class.
3. **Survey Construction & SPSS (25pts)** - All students will construct a usable survey for a quantitative research design. The survey should include multiple variables.
4. **Research Proposal (100pts)** – This is the major assignment of the course. This will be a full proposal through the first three stages of the scientific method. More information will be provided in specific handouts.
5. **Content Analysis (50pts)** – All students will conduct a content analysis from a portion of interviews/excerpts of research. Multiple themes and conclusions should be identified.
6. **Poster Session Evaluation (25pts)** – All students in the course will be required to attend the COM 465 upper division research methods class to evaluate their research projects.
7. **Three Exams (150pts)** – There will be three exams over the course material. Exams will be objective in nature.

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.
4. Classroom disruption by cell phones or other electronic devices (i.e. text messaging) is prohibited. All 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. 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.

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
Sept 3	Welcome Course Intro & Expectations	Review Syllabus and put important dates in planner or phone with "alerts" set. IRA Chapter 1
Sept 8	Introduction to Research	IRA Chapter 1
Sept 10	Perspectives on Communication Theory	IRA Chapter 2
Sept 15	Communication Theory	IRA Chapter 3
Sept 17	Approaches to Communication	IRA Chapter 4
Sept 22	Paradigms and Communication Theory	IRA Part II
Sept 24	Communication Theory	IRA Chapters 6-12 Write Theory Summary
Sept 29	Theory Presentation Preparation Theory Summary Due	Design & Practice "Theory in a Nutshell" Presentation
OCTOBER		
Oct 1	Theory in a Nutshell Presentations	Read Treadwell Chapter 1
Oct 6	Theory in a Nutshell Presentations	
Oct 8	Theory in a Nutshell Presentations	Read Treadwell Chapter 2
Oct 13	Qualitative vs. Quantitative	Read Treadwell Chapter 5
Oct 15	Measurement	Read Treadwell Chapter
Oct 20	Measurement & Variables	Study for Exam 1
Oct 22	Exam 1	Read Treadwell Chapter 7
Oct 27	Sampling	Read Treadwell Chapter 8
Oct 29	Survey Construction	Read Treadwell Chapter 6
NOVEMBER		
Nov 3	Descriptive Statistics	Work on survey construction
Nov 5	Descriptive Statistics	Complete survey construction

Nov 10	SPSS Lab- Meet in Computer Lab Survey Construction Due	Read Treadwell Chapter 11
Nov 12	Quantitative Analysis	
Nov 17	Exam 2	Review APA/ Learning Projects
Nov 19	Content Analysis	Work on Content Analysis
Nov 24	Content Analysis	Work on Content Analysis
Nov 26	No Class	Happy Thanksgiving
DECEMBER		
Dec 1	APA Content Analysis Due	Read Treadwell Chapter 12
Dec 3	Presenting Research	Review IRA & Treadwell for Final Exam
Dec 8	Research Proposal Due Review for Final	Review IRA & Treadwell for Final Exam
Dec 10	COM 465 Poster Session	Prepare for Final Exam Write Poster Session Evaluation
Dec 15	Final Exam 10:30 a.m. Poster Session Evaluation Due	

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.