



**Department of Communication and Theatre**  
**COM 265: Introduction to Empirical Research in**  
**Communication**  
**3 units**

**Fall 2016**

<b>Meeting days:</b> Tuesday/Thursday	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Dr. Jeff Birdsell
<b>Meeting times:</b> 9:30-10:45am	<b>Phone:</b> 619-849-3370
<b>Meeting location:</b> BAC 102	<b>Office location and hours:</b> Cabrillo 204 Monday/Wednesday 10:30-11:30, 1:30-2:30 Tuesday/Thursday 11-noon, 2-3:30 (other times available for appointments)
<b>Final Exam:</b> Thursday, December 15 10:30am-1:00p	<b>E-mail:</b> jebirdse@pointloma.edu <b>Twitter:</b> @ProfBirdsell

**PLNU Mission**

**To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

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 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. Not repeatable. Letter grading.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Successful completion of the course should enable you to:

- Recognize methods used in communication research
- Extract most salient points from disciplinary research articles
- Select appropriate research methods for a variety of hypotheses or research questions
- “Speak the language” of communication research methods
- Cite scholarly research using discipline appropriate style

**PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES**

As a required course for a degree in Managerial and Organizational Communication, this course will contribute to the following PLOs

- Develop a sophisticated understanding of communication as the negotiation of meaning.
- Display communication competence both verbally and nonverbally in interpersonal, small group, organizational, and intercultural contexts.
- Formulate a thesis, organize a complex idea, and support it with appropriate evidence using proper grammar and punctuation.
- Demonstrate an ability to present themselves in a professional manner including resume, interview skills, and presentations.
- Demonstrate an understanding and ability to work collaboratively in a group.
- Analyze and conduct original communication research (quantitative and qualitative) using scholarly journals, data bases, and collecting and analyzing empirical data.
- Demonstrate an understanding of basic theoretical concepts relative to organizational behavior including scientific management, systems theory, and organizational culture.
- Integrate a Christian perspective of values and ethics in their communication in interpersonal, small group organizational and intercultural contexts.
- Develop an awareness of multiple approaches to leadership and develop a personal leadership philosophy.

## REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

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Curnalia, R. M. L. & Ferris, A. L. (2014). *CSI: A step-by-step guide to writing your literature review in communication studies*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

Davis, C. S., Powell, H., & Lachlan, K. L. (2013). *Straight talk about communication research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

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Note: Clearly define a grading policy to avoid any confusion concerning expectations. It is most helpful if at least two things are present: 1) a point distribution and 2) a grading scale.

Assignment Distribution:		Grade Scale			
		Percentage		Points	
Online quizzes <i>(5 pts/quiz, lowest quiz dropped)</i>	10% (65 pts)	A	93 - 100	604.5	- 650
		A-	90 - 92.9	585	- 604
		B+	87 - 89.9	565.5	- 585
Online postings <i>(10 pts/step, lowest post dropped)</i>	10% (65 pts)	B	83 - 86.9	539.5	- 565
		B-	80 - 82.9	520	- 539
		C+	77 - 79.9	500.5	- 520
In-class activities <i>(completed activities ÷ total activities)</i>	10% (65 pts)	C	73 - 76.9	474.5	- 500
		C-	70 - 72.9	455	- 474
		D+	67 - 69.9	435.5	- 455
Annotated Bibliography	30% (195 pts)	D	63 - 66.9	409.5	- 435
		D-	60 - 62.9	390	- 409
Literature Review & Research Proposal	40% (260 pts)	F	0 - 59.9	0	- 390

## **INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

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All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances. Assignments turned in past due will be accepted but the grade will be reduced by 10% as soon as the assignment is tardy and another 10% for every 24 hour period after that.

## **GRADING**

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Regardless of your prior experiences with grading, I am insistent that a “C” is considered “average” or acceptable work, grades of “B” and “A” are awarded for above average and exceptional work respectively. Normally, those students receiving A’s represent the top 10 - 25% of a class.

There is a 24-7 rule in this class: you must wait at least 24 hours after receiving a grade to discuss it, and no later than 7 days. Any discussion of grades must occur outside of class time. I will gladly talk about assignments (non-grade issues) past the 7-day period. To avoid confusion, you must (a) document the error in writing, (b) state why you think it is an error (based on the syllabus (course expectations, grading policies, etc.) and specific assignment details.), and (c) suggest what you think should be done to rectify the error (in cases where this is not obvious). These matters will be dealt with promptly. (If an error had been made which benefits you, please accept it as a “gift” which does not need to be reported.)

## **FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY**

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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.

## **PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY**

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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 HONESTY POLICY**

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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.

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## **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

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](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu). See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

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## **PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY**

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 can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

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## **CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Your attendance will be recorded when you sign in to the daily form that is passed around the classroom. You are responsible to ensure that your signature has been collected on the form. There is not stronger evidence that you were in attendance. If you did not sign in, you will be counted as having missed class regardless of other evidence you may provide.

Missing class will negatively impact your grade in the following way:

If you miss 0 classes = No impact on final grade

If you miss 1 class = No impact on final grade

If you miss 2 classes = 2% reduction of final grade

If you miss 3 classes = 3% reduction of final grade

If you miss 4 classes = 4% reduction of final grade

If you miss 5 classes = 5% reduction of final grade, etc.

At various points in the semester you will be asked to complete in-class activities. Your submissions in response to these activities will contribute to your grade (see Assessment and Grading). These activities may not be made up regardless of the reason for the absence.

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## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

While technological resources have made it possible to exchange messages at a greater rate, particularly through email, please remember that just because you're available to send a message doesn't mean I'm available to respond to those messages. I especially frown upon frantic emails sent hours before an exam or assignment. I typically respond to email within one 24-hour school day (M – F). For example, if you email me at 1:00pm on Wednesday afternoon, I will typically respond by

1:00pm on or before 1:00pm on Thursday afternoon. If you email me at 9:00 am on Saturday morning, I will typically respond on or before 9 am on Tuesday morning. It is your responsibility to plan ahead.

Research summaries I have read, along with my own experience as both an instructor and a student, suggest that taking notes by hand on paper improves information retention. If you are taking notes on a laptop or tablet, please disable your connection to the internet unless otherwise instructed.

Please silence your phone when you are in class. If a call or text interrupts our class session, I reserve the right to answer the phone on your behalf and/or make fun of an unoriginal ringtone.

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS**

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All assignments must be typed (double-spaced, 8.5" x 11" paper, one-side, 225-250 wpp, 1" margins, 12pt font, Times New Roman or Courier typeface) unless otherwise instructed. Use the APA style guide where necessary (see <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> for formatting assistance). Written assignments and readings are due at the beginning of class on the appropriate day. Quizzes and online discussions are due according to the times listed in Canvas and on the attached calendar. The most likely time for your computer/internet connection to crash or printer to die/run out of ink, is minutes before an assignment is due. Please plan ahead.

### **ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS, RUBRICS, AND CALENDAR**

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Refer to the attached pages for assignment instructions, rubrics, and the course calendar. Any modifications to these expectations and dates will be announced in-class or via email and updated on Canvas.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY INSTRUCTIONS

Find **fifteen (15) scholarly/academic** sources relevant to your research topics using the guidelines discussed in class and in readings for evaluating the quality of sources. Using APA formatting, list all 15 sources in your annotated bibliography.

From those 15, select the **ten (10) best scholarly/academic** sources relevant to your particular research question/hypothesis. Read the full-text of these ten articles and for these 10 scholarly sources provide a short paragraph *annotation* for each source that addresses the points below. Each annotation should be 150 – 200 words, and follow standard course guidelines for style including spelling and grammar, writing (concise, precise, clear, and organized), and selection of quality sources.

- APA citation for article
- Purpose statement of the article
- Research question/hypotheses
- Key concepts or variables under study
- Method of data collection (as stated in the article)
- Key findings or conclusions
- Limitations and value of source (identified in the document and/or that you note from your analysis)
- How the article may compare/contrast with other information in the bibliography

The final document should also include

- Your research question and/or hypothesis along with any adjustments made based on your research and/or reflection
- A numbered list of each citation and annotation (10)
- A numbered list in APA format of the additional 5 sources you found but did not annotate.

The annotated bibliography will be evaluated in terms of:

- Quality and relevance of sources
- APA format
- Fulfilling requirements in terms of content and length (working creatively within assignment constraints)
- Writing – clarity, precision, focus, spelling & grammar, etc.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY EXAMPLE

First Name Last Name

Research Question / Hypothesis

Annotated Sources

1. Cheney, G., Zorn, T. E., Planalp, S., & Lair, D. J. (2005). Meaningful work and personal/social well being. Organizational communication engages the meanings of work. In C. S. Beck (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 32* (pp. 136-185). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Under each of the first ten sources you should provide a short paragraph *annotation* for that is 150 – 200 words, follows standard course guidelines for style including spelling and grammar, writing (concise, precise, clear, and organized). It should a purpose statement of the article, the study's research question/hypotheses (as appropriate), the key concepts or variables under study, the method of data collection (as stated in the article), the key findings or conclusions, and the limitations and value of source (identified in the document and/or that you note from your analysis), as well as how the article may compare/contrast with other information in the bibliography.

2. Lair, D. J., Sullivan, K., & Cheney, G. (2005). Marketization and the professionalization of self. *Management Communication Quarterly, 18*, 307-343.

Under each of the first ten sources you should provide a short paragraph *annotation* for that is 150 – 200 words, follows standard course guidelines for style including spelling and grammar, writing (concise, precise, clear, and organized). It should a purpose statement of the article, the study's research question/hypotheses (as appropriate), the key concepts or variables under study, the method of data collection (as stated in the article), the key findings or conclusions, and the limitations and value of source (identified in the document and/or that you note from your analysis), as well as how the article may compare/contrast with other information in the bibliography.

3. Source 3 in APA format...

TIP: Include the type and method used by the article to make its claims.

4. Source 4

For some articles, (e.g., a review of existing literature or a rhetorical analysis), you may not be able to provide variables under study; however, you can address the key concepts under study. In these situations, it can clarify your annotation to include the particular approach and/or method of the article as part of the purpose

....

10. Source 10

### Additional Sources

11, Arthur, M. B., Hall, D., & Lawrence, B. (1989). *Handbook of career theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

12. Buzzanell, P. M., & Goldzweig, S. R. (1991). Linear and nonlinear career models. Metaphors, paradigms, and idealogies. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 4, 466-505.

13. Source 13

Sources for both sections should be *scholarly or academic* and in APA format which includes alphabetical order.

14. Source 14

15. Source 15

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY GRADING SHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Grading Scale:

- 1- Missing, not relevant to the assignment
- 2 or 3- Improvement needed, does not satisfy requirements as presented
- 4, 5, 6- Good, average work, satisfies requirements of assignment and collegiate expectations
- 7 or 8- Above average and superior work, exceeds minimum requirements, shows depth of thought, analysis, and insight
- 9- Exceptional scholarship in every regard, far exceeds expectations

### **MECHANICS:**

Is this the first draft of the assignment or has it been “polished” and free from spelling, syntax, and grammatical errors? Have you followed all instructions in the syllabus or does it appear to be thrown together at the last moment? Are citations complete and in APA form?

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>)

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### **SOURCES:**

Are all sources scholarly/academic? How relevant are the sources selected to your research question/hypothesis? Does the annotation appear to adequately summarize and evaluate the chosen article or is it merely a description of it?

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### **OVERALL IMPACT:**

This is a function of many aspects including clarity of thought, depth of analysis, vivid writing style, and attention to detail. Does the assignment leave the impression that you have done an excellent job of preparing and presenting the assignment in proper form and on time?

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# Research Proposal Assignment

## Organization

### 1. Title Page

Follow APA format using the OWL guide available at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

### 2. Abstract

Your abstract will be 120 – 150 word proposal summarizing the importance/relevance of your topic and study, the central research question(s) and/or hypotheses, as well as your proposed method. An abstract is a condensed version of the proposal, highlighting the major points covered, concisely describes its content and scope, and reviews its material in abbreviated form. It sets the tone for the proposal and the audience. A good abstract is concise, easy to read, and cover the important points of the proposal. A proposal abstract will:

- a. Identify the major objectives and conclusions.
- b. Identify key words and ideas for topic and methods section.
- c. State the central problem of /purpose of/motivation for the study as well as its importance.
- d. State hypothesis and/or research question
- e. State method used (may reference participants).
- f. Remove extra words and phrases
- g. Only convey essential information
- h. Convince the reader the proposed study is worthwhile (ideally) and/or convince the reader to want to keep reading/learn more.

Your abstract will be on a separate page (the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of your document) and be followed by a list of no more than 5 to 6 keywords. Consider looking at other abstracts and evaluating them against these standards to find a boilerplate or model for your abstract.

### 3. Introduction

For your introduction, formulate a research objective, research question, or hypothesis that is appropriate for communication research. Your topic should further scholarly understanding of communication and/or respond to a need in society. Describe the nature of the situation, and provide an overview of the selected topic. Describe your topic area and state your RQ/H as a purpose. E.g. “The purpose of this research is...”

### 4. Rationale

Justify the selection of your particular research topic. Describe its prevalence, implications for individuals, families, organizations, and/or society at large. Focus your research by indicating why *others* should be interested in the selected topic. Convince the audience that the topic is worthy of study. Be sure to use appropriate references cited correctly.

### 5. Literature Review

Develop the background for your topic. Explain why your topic is interesting or important. Introduce any key terms and describe previous work on the topic. Explain the questions that the previous work answered, and explain how the previous work leads up to your question or hypothesis. Conclude the literature review with your *hypothesis* and/or your research question.

## 6. Methods

Describe your experiment or study in plenty of detail. Include enough detail that someone could actually do the experiment well enough to get good results. Explain *why* you've designed the experiment in the way you have; try to convince the reader that your experiment is the best way to test your hypothesis. You might want to include a diagram, drawing, or table, if it will help you explain your experiment or study. Selecting an appropriate method will require some independent research and readings on different methodologies and becoming an "expert" in the particular method for your study. In the same way a hammer (as opposed to a screwdriver) is the best tool to be used when driving a nail, so too should your method align with your research question or hypothesis. As part of this section you need to:

Decide on the best method for getting an answer to your RQ/H.

- Describe in detail what methodology you will use, and justify your decisions: (e.g., Experimental research, survey research, textual analysis, ethnographic research,
- Define and describe your population and sample.
  - What is your sampling design? Who will you talk to? How many?
  - When/where/how?
  - (If applicable) Describe how you will select your sample.
  - (If applicable) Describe how you will administer your instrument.
  - (If applicable) Describe how/when you will conduct observation(s).
- How will you address concerns about validity, reliability, and ethics?
- (If applicable) What are your variable(s)?
  - Conceptual definition
  - Operational definition
  - Which are independent/dependent (if applicable)
- List information to be gathered.
- List the types of questions you will ask.
- Describe how you intend to analyze the results.
- Include an estimated timeline of your project

## 7. Limitations

What are the limitations to your research?

## 8. References

List any sources that you referred to in your proposal in APA format. Make sure your in-text citations are also correct.

## 9. Appendix

Include any survey or instruments used and/or observation protocols.

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL GRADING SHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grading Scale:

- 1- Missing, not relevant to the assignment
- 2 or 3- Improvement needed, does not satisfy requirements as presented
- 4, 5, 6- Good, average work, satisfies requirements of assignment and collegiate expectations
- 7 or 8- Above average and superior work, exceeds minimum requirements, shows depth of thought, analysis, and insight
- 9- Exceptional scholarship in every regard, far exceeds expectations

### **MECHANICS:**

Is this the first draft of the paper or has it been “polished” and free from spelling, syntax, and grammatical errors? Have you followed all instructions in the syllabus or does it appear to be thrown together at the last moment? Are citations complete and in APA form? (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>)

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Is it an appropriate length? Does it include essential elements? Does reading it entice the reader to read more?

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### **INTRODUCTION/RATIONALE:**

Does the proposal have a clear purpose? Have you articulated the value of this study? Does your reader know why it matters?

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### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Have your main concepts been defined? Does the reader get a sense of what we know and don't know about these concepts from existing literature? Does this section end with research questions or hypotheses that are logically born from your literature review?

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### **METHOD/LIMITATIONS:**

Did you describe the proposed method in enough detail that someone else could complete this study? Are the sample and sampling strategy appropriate and complete? Does the method fit the RQ/hypothesis? Are variables identified and defined? Are instruments summarized in the proposal and included in the appendix (where possible)? What relevant limitations are there for this study?

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### **OVERALL IMPACT:**

This is a function of many aspects including clarity of thought, depth of analysis, vivid writing style, choice of supporting materials, and attention to detail. Does the paper leave the impression that you have done an excellent job of preparing and presenting the assignment in proper form and on time?

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