



## **COM 340 Organizational Communication**

*Department of Communication & Theatre*

Fall 2015 ◊ 3 Units ◊ M/W 10:55 a.m.-12:05 p.m.

**Dr. Melissa Newman**

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Office hours: Monday & Wednesday 2-3 p.m.; Tuesday 1-2 p.m. and by appointment

### **Required Texts**

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

Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

*On Reserve at Ryan Library:*

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

### **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.

### **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. Group Research Project: Description provided separately. 150 points
2. Exams: Two exams. 100 points each

3. Article Reviews: Students will complete two 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).
4. 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). 15 points
6. 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. 20 points

### 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 1         | Welcome  |   |
| Sept 2         | Course Intro & Expectations  | Review Syllabus and put all important dates in planner or phone with “alerts” set.<br>Read Modaff, Butler & DeWine (MBD) Chapter 1 (pp 1-10) & Chapter 6 (pp 96-100; 109-112)<br>Complete Artifact Assignment |
| Sept 7         | No Class- Labor Day  | Read MBD Chapter 1 & review <i>NYT</i> article on Amazon<br>Prepare Artifact Discussion   |
| Sept 9         | Artifact Discussion<br><br>Foundations of Organizational Communication<br><br>Personality Plus Intro | Read MBD Chapter 2  |
| Sept 14        | Classical Theories of Organizations  | Complete Personality Plus Presentation  |
| Sept 16        | Personality Plus Presentations   | Read MBD Chapter 3  |
| Sept 21        | Humanistic Theories of Organizations   | Read MBD Chapter 4  |
| Sept 23        | Systems Theory   | Read MBD Chapter 6  |
| Sept 28        | Critical Theory  | Review Chapters 1-4, 6  |
| Sept 30        | Theory Review  | Prepare for Exam 1  |
| <b>OCTOBER</b> |  |   |
| Oct 5          | Exam 1 (chapters 1-4, 6)   | Read Maxwell Chapters 1-2<br>Find Journal Article on Organizational Communication   |
| Oct 7          | Qualitative Research   | Read Maxwell Chapters 3-4<br>Decide on Research Topic   |
| Oct 12         | Doing Qualitative Research   | Read Maxwell Chapters 5-6<br>Write Research Proposal  |
| Oct 14         | Research Proposal  | Read Maxwell Chapter 7<br>Read MBD 7-8<br>Work on Research Project  |
| Oct 19         | Recruitment & Socialization  | Read MBD 9<br>Work on Research Project  |

|                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Oct 21          | Superior-Subordinate Communication                                  | Read MBD 10<br>Work on Research Project   |
| Oct 26          | Peer- Coworker Communication  | Read <i>Difficult People</i><br>Work on Research Project                                  |
| Oct 28          | Peer-Coworker Communication<br>“Difficult People” Presentation Info | Read MBD Chapter 11<br>Work on Research Project<br>Read & research difficult people topic |
| <b>NOVEMBER</b> |   |   |
| Nov 2           | Organizational Teams  | Work on Research Project  |
| Nov 4           | Organizational Teams  | Read MBD Chapter 12<br>Work on Research Project   |
| Nov 9           | Leaders & Leadership  | Work on Research Project  |
| Nov 11          | Leaders & Leadership  | Read MBD Chapter 13<br>Read HBR Article<br>Write Reflection<br>Complete Research Project  |
| Nov 16          | Research Project Due<br>Gender & Emotion                            | Read HBR Article<br>Write Reflection<br>Work on Research Project                          |
| Nov 18          | Gender & Emotion  |   |
| Nov 23          | Difficult People Workshop Prep Day                                  | Complete Presentation Prep  |
| Nov 25          | No Class- Thanksgiving  |   |
| Nov 30          | Difficult People Workshop   | Prepare for Exam 2  |
| <b>DECEMBER</b> |   |   |
| Dec 2           | Difficult People Workshop   | Prepare for Exam 2  |
| Dec 7           | Exam 2  |   |
| Dec 9           | Course Evaluation and Reflection<br>Final Exam 12/14 10:30 a.m.     | Prepare for Final Exam  |

### **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.