



Dept. of Comm. &  
Theater

COM 3090 – Intro to PR  
3 Units

**Fall 2020**

<b>Meeting day:</b> Wednesday	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Professor Sarah Witmer, M.A.
<b>Meeting times:</b> 3:00– 5:45 pm	<b>Phone:</b> N/A
<b>Meeting location:</b> C 202 (online for now)	<b>E-mail:</b> switmer@pointloma.edu
<b>Final Exam:</b> Wednesday, Dec. 2	<b>Office location and hours:</b> By appointment only

**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 is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

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This course is introduction to the theory and practice of public relations. This includes public relations roles, publics, research, media relations, social media, and an introduction to cases and campaigns of public relations. This course discussed the public relations for in business, educational, governmental and nonprofit organizational settings.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

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- Understand the key theories that underlie the practice of public relations.
  - Understand and apply the standard processes of the practice of public relations.
  - Work with a group to research public relations career paths.
  - Understand the role of values and ethics in public relations.

**COURSE TEXTBOOK:**

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Guth, D. W., & Marsh, C. (2017). *Public relations: A values-driven approach* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. \*\*\*NOTE: this is only available in ebook (used older editions will also be accepted)\*\*\*

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**COURSE FORMAT:**

Over the semester, we will study an introduction to public relations and current issues. In-class discussions and exercises will draw on readings from the textbook, case studies, and current events and require students to apply the knowledge learned in the readings to various activities and group work.

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**ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:**

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**FILM ANALYSIS:**

Description: This first assignment will help you to get acquainted with the group with which you will work for the remainder of the semester. In pre-assigned groups of 5-6 students, you will each post a video introducing yourself and talking through a PR-themed film of your choice.

**IN YOUR VIDEOS:**

1. A brief introduction into who you are, what year of school you are in, where you are currently living, and what you want to do when you grow up.
2. A very brief description of the film (no more than 1 minute)
3. How PR was represented in the film
4. How accurate to the field the students believe the film to be
5. You can show a clip of the film (no more than 1 minute) but it's not required

**Requirements:**

- Videos must not exceed 5 minutes
- Videos must be posted well ahead of class time in case there are technical issues
- Students must watch each video in their group & write a comment to each person

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**QUIZZES:**

Description: Online quizzes will cover the reading material that is to be covered by the following class session. Quizzes will be posted to Canvas and are due before class. Quizzes cannot be re-taken or made up if missed. If there are any University excused reasons for missing any specific assigned quiz, the professor should be notified before the quiz is due.

Requirements: Students must take the quiz on Canvas well in advance to its due time, in case of any Internet or technical equipment issues. The student is responsible for taking the quiz with plenty of time to contact the PLNU Helpdesk in case of any issues.

Style Standard: Non-Applicable.

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**CASE STUDIES:**

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Description: Over the course of the semester, we will have seven (8) case study analyses within pre-assigned groups during class time. Each of these will be graded (3 pts. each).

Requirements: Students must watch the video lecture, respond to the case study prompt (given in the video) with their own research and analysis, and *write a response to the other students* in their group **before 6pm on the date** the case study is given in order to receive points.

Style Standard: Non-Applicable.

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## **FINAL EXAM:**

Description: The midterm exams will be timed on Canvas.

Requirements: Students must take the exam during class time on the exam date. No exceptions will be made.

Style Standard: The exams will each consist of 50 multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching questions, and short essays (which will be graded for: insight, analysis, clear connections to course content, and a sophisticated writing style.)

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## **SELF-BRAND PRESENTATION**

**PART ONE:** You must interview three people about how they see you. Who do they think you are? Write down notes from what they tell you for your PR "research" before you start to brand yourself.

These three people must include:

1. A family member.
2. A friend.
3. Someone who does not know you.

**PART TWO:** Based on these observations, decide how you want to “brand” yourself as a human being. Does anything need to change? Do you like how others see you? Create a short presentation (4-6 minutes) to describe how you want to “brand” yourself moving forward in the future.

**PART THREE:** Present your “brand” to the class via recorded video. Make sure you include the following in the presentation:

1. Your current “brand” (including your feedback from interviews and what your media consumption says about your tastes/who you are).

2. Three values you hold and/or talents you can use
3. A “mission statement” for who you are as a person/ who you want to be
4. At least one goal for your future

**FORMATTING DETAILS:** To create and present your brand you can use Google Slides, PowerPoint, or an online platform like Prezi. Please avoid Keynote. Get as creative with it as you want. Remember, you only have a few minutes to share with us, so keep it simple. To record the video of yourself presenting the final brand, I suggest you use LOOM.

**PARTICIPATION:**

This is a hands-on, student-centered course. Therefore, you will be graded on your participation. Those who are energetic, contributory, and consistent with attendance will receive a high participation grade. As contribution to and involvement with the class goes down, will the grade. Contributions to our roundtable discussions, guest speaker Q & A sessions, and group projects will be considered when calculating the participation grade.

**ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Your Score</b>
Film Analysis & Response to group members	10	
Canvas Chapter Quizzes (16 @ 5 pts each)	80	
Classroom case studies & discussions(9@3 pts each)	27	
Final Exam	73	
Self-Branding Presentation	10	
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>200 pts.</b>	

**GRADING SCALE:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

**GRADING STANDARDS:**

“A’s”...are awarded for work that is **highly exceptional, shows**

**insight and analysis** in submittals and class discussion and **goes beyond all minimal requirements**

“B’s”...are awarded for work that is above average and **goes beyond minimal requirements.**

“C’s”...are awarded for work that meets basic standards and requirements.

“D’s”.....are awarded for below average work that usually lacks minimal requirements.

“F’s”.....are awarded for work that clearly does not meet minimal standards, or is not completed.

### **GRADE CONCERNS:**

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If you feel that you were unjustly evaluated on any assignment, please talk with me within 2 weeks after the assignment has been returned. An appeal is welcome by scheduling an appointment. Please come with a well-reasoned and written explanation of why the grade should be changed, and I will be happy to discuss it with you. Asking for an appeal and defending your case does not secure, nor imply a change of grade. If at any point during the course you are concerned with your overall class grade or other issues in the course, please feel free to make an appointment. I want to help you learn and succeed in this course.

### **STATE AUTHORIZATION**

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

### **INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

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.

### **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 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.

## **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 ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Regular and punctual attendance at all synchronous class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions (virtual or face-to-face), the faculty member will issue a written warning of 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. In some courses, a portion of the credit hour content will be delivered asynchronously and attendance will be determined by submitting the assignments by the posted due dates. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate

Academic Catalog. If absences exceed these limits but are due to university excused health issues, an exception will be granted.

**Asynchronous Attendance/Participation Definition**

A day of attendance in asynchronous content is determined as contributing a substantive note, assignment, discussion, or submission by the posted due date. Failure to meet these standards will result in an absence for that day. Instructors will determine how many asynchronous attendance days are required each week.

**SPIRITUAL CARE**

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact the [Office of Spiritual Development](#).

**USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

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**COURSE CALENDAR**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Discussion/ Activity</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Assigned</b>
<b>Wednesday, August 19</b>  Week #1	Video Introduction to Class	Watch prof’s video. Respond to video & to at least two other students	Movie Analysis Video  Ch. 1 & 3 Canvas quiz
<b>Wednesday, August 26</b>  Week #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload movie analysis video <b>before</b> class</li> <li>• Watch &amp; respond to each video in your pre-assigned groups <b>before 6pm on 8/26</b></li> </ul> <p><b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chapter 1: What Is Public Relations?</li> <li>○ Chapter 2: Jobs in Public Relations</li> </ul>	Ch. 1 & 2 Canvas quiz due before class  Movie Analysis Video Due	Ch. 3 & 4 Canvas quiz

		Watch & Respond to each video in your pre-assigned group by 6pm	
<b>Wednesday, September 2</b> Week #3	<b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 3: A Brief History of PR</li> <li>Chapter 4: The Publics in PR</li> </ul> <b>RESPOND TO VIDEO IN GROUPS</b> <i>Case Study Group Discussion #1</i>	Ch. 3 & 4 Canvas quiz due before class C.S. #1 due before 6pm	Ch. 5 & 6 Canvas quiz
<b>Wednesday, September 9</b> Week #4	<b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 5: Communication Theory and Public Opinion</li> <li>Chapter 6: Ethics and Social Responsibility</li> </ul> <b>RESPOND TO VIDEO IN GROUPS</b> <i>Case Study Discussion #2</i>	Ch. 5 & 6 Canvas quiz due before class C.S. #2 due before 6pm	Ch. 7 & 8 & 9 Canvas quiz
<b>Wednesday, September 16</b> Week #5	<b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 7: Research and Evaluation</li> <li>Chapter 8: Planning</li> <li>Chapter 9: Communication</li> </ul> <b>RESPOND TO VIDEO IN GROUPS</b> <i>Case Study Discussion #3</i>	Ch. 7 & 8 & 9 quiz due before class C.S. #3 due before 6pm	Ch. 10 & 11 Canvas quiz
<b>Wednesday, September 23</b> Week #6	<b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 10: Multimedia Message Development</li> <li>Chapter 11: Cyber-Relations in the Digital Age</li> </ul> <b>RESPOND TO VIDEO IN GROUPS</b> <i>Case Study Discussion #4</i>	Ch. 10 & 11 Canvas quiz due before class C.S. #4 due before 6pm	Ch. 12 & 13 Canvas quiz
<b>Wednesday, September 30</b> Week #7	<b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 12: Crisis Communications</li> <li>Chapter 13: Public Relations and Marketing</li> </ul> <b>RESPOND TO VIDEO IN GROUPS</b> <i>Case Study Discussion #5</i>	Ch. 12 & 13 Canvas quiz due before class C.S. #5 due before 6pm	Ch. 14 & 15 Canvas quiz
<b>Wednesday, October 7</b> Week #8	<b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 14: Cross-Cultural Communication</li> <li>Chapter 15: Public Relations and the Law</li> </ul>	Ch. 14 & 15 Canvas quiz due before class	Ch. 16 Canvas quiz

	<b>RESPOND TO VIDEO IN GROUPS</b> <i>Case Study Discussion #6</i>	C.S. #6 due before 6pm	
<b>Wednesday, October 14</b> Week #9	<b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 16: Public Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</li> <li>Final Exam Review</li> </ul> <b>RESPOND TO VIDEO IN GROUPS</b> <i>Case Study Discussion #7</i>	Ch. 16 Canvas quiz due before class  C.S. #6 due before 6pm	Study Chapters 1-16
<b>Wednesday, October 21</b> Week #10	<b>FINAL EXAM: Chapters 1-16</b>		
<b>Wednesday, October 28</b> Week #11	<b>WATCH VIDEO LECTURE:</b> Self-Brand Assignment Explained & Workshop		Self-Brand Assignment
<b>Wednesday, November 4</b> Week #12	<b>BRANDING:</b> Self-Brand Presentations Workshop		
<b>Wednesday, November 11</b> Week #13	<b>PERFORMANCE FINAL:</b> Self-Brand Presentations		
<b>Wednesday, November 18</b> Week #14	<b>PERFORMANCE FINAL:</b> Self-Brand Presentations		
<b>Wednesday, November 25</b> Week #15	<b>NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>		
<b>Wednesday, December 2</b> Week #16	<b>AT HOME FINAL:</b> <b>SEMESTER REFLECTIONS DUE</b>		