

Fall 2020

Meeting Days: T/TH	Instructor: Lynn Walsh
Meeting Times: 11 am - Noon PT	Phone: 619-849-2605
Meeting Location: Zoom	E-mail: LWalsh@pointloma.edu
Office Hours: Upon request	

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

A critical approach to interpreting media messages is grounded in the study of how messages are constructed, how media industries function, and how communication theory, research, and media ethics explain its impact on society. Emphasis is placed on making informed choices as a media consumer, and considering the impact of media from a Christian perspective.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will gain a critical understanding of mass media economics and systems.
2. Students will be more informed consumers of all forms of media, including understanding how to distinguish among information sources and evaluate their reliability.
3. Students will gain a fuller understanding of the journalistic process, the challenges journalists face, the impacts of journalism in democratic society, and the relationships between journalists and the public they serve.

4. Students will better understand the workings of state and local governments, including how state and local government decision-making affects our daily lives, how news coverage and other media content influences these decisions and how citizens can engage to influence change. The course focuses significantly on helping students understand and evaluate journalistic products and processes and their role in democracy. However, it also will provide students an opportunity to learn more about state and local government structures and processes and how they can be influenced by citizen engagement.
5. An ability to apply a biblical-Christian worldview and faith perspective to media analysis, critique, and the production of media messages.
6. An understanding and ability to apply media literacy analysis knowledge and skills in the four different dimensions of media literacy:
 1. Cognitive/Background-Factual dimension: includes the background-facts about the message, including: the medium and the messenger-- who created the message, their background and role in this message, their perspectives, ideology, the target/principle audience(s), when message created, where did it appear, how much \$\$ did it cost to make and how much \$\$ did it make, its popularity and awards, and other factors.
 2. Emotional dimension: how and why messages engage us emotionally and intellectually-- and the effects of this emotional engagement on our values, beliefs, and behaviors/actions.
 3. Aesthetic dimension: the artistic aspects of mass media messages, and how story in words and/or imagery and sound elicit emotional reactions and can affect us in positive and negative ways.
 4. Moral-ethical-spiritual dimension: includes the moral, psychological, and spiritual effects of media on individuals, culture, and society, and the ability to analyze and determine the ethics of media message content and their effect(s).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This class will have a diverse format. While the class will have group discussions and brainstorming sessions, there will also be individual assignments that will include writing, reading and critical thinking. Some assignments will be ongoing through the entire semester. In addition students will have the opportunity to submit assignment in video/audio form.

There is no textbook for this course. The reading materials, podcasts, etc., will all be available as hyperlinks from the syllabus or the course Canvas site. Most of the readings are news articles carefully selected because they represent high quality journalism. You are expected to read these articles and to listen to or watch the podcasts or documentaries listed on the syllabus before the class for which they're assigned. Pop quizzes, as well as your participation in class discussions, will help assess whether you're doing so.

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 3-unit class. Specific details about how the class meets the credit hour requirement can be provided upon request.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

ASSIGNMENT VALUES:	GRADE % SCALE:
News Consumption Log (100 points each)	A=90-100
News Consumption Log Reflection Paper (100 points)	B-=80-89
Misinformation Assignment (50 points)	C=70-79
Story Pitching Assignment (50 points)	D=60-69
FOIA/CPRA Assignment (100 points)	F=0-59
Class Participation (50 points)	
Pop Quizzes (10 points)	
Interviewing Assignment (100 points)	
Examining Biases Assignment (50 points)	
Trust Assignment (100 points)	

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

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. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

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.

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. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers compatible with their computer available to use. If a student is in need of technological resources please contact student-tech-request@pointloma.edu. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your classwork.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

News Consumption Log & Reflection Paper

Description: Students will keep track of the news/media they consume each week.

Requirements: Students must submit three news story pitches (due dates can be found [here](#)). Students will use [this log](#) to keep track of the news and information they consume throughout the semester. At the end of the semester the students will reflect on that consumption. While reflecting on the news they consumed you are consuming, they should consider the following questions:

- Did you feel the news was trustworthy and unbiased? Why/Why Not?
- What was the purpose of the news you consumed? Was it meant to inform? Persuade? Make you feel good? Get you to take action? Uncover something?
- How was the storytelling? Was the story engaging? Was it boring?
- Would you change anything about the news content? Could it be more visually appealing? Better writing? Did it leave you left with unanswered questions?
- Did you change your news consuming habits throughout the semester? Why/Why not?
- Did anything about your log and consumption habits surprise you? Why/Why not?

Story Pitching Assignment:

Description: Students will pitch and discuss stories they think would make good news stories.

Requirements: Students must submit three news story pitches (due dates can be found [here](#)). Pitches should include the best practices discussed in class.

FOIA/CPRA Request:

Description: Students will research, write and submit at least one FOIA or CPRA request.

Requirements: Students are responsible for writing the request and submitting it to the proper agency. The student is also responsible for following up with the request and ideally is able to receive documents back from an agency to produce video content. When the assignment is due (due dates can be found [here](#)) students will provide a copy of the original requests and any responses or back and forth received. Students will be prepared to talk about the experience in class.

Misinformation Assignment :

Description: Students will learn how to tell if information is misleading or created to deceive the public.

Requirements: Complete (due dates can be found [here](#)) the following online course and to test your knowledge of misinformation/disinformation and gain a better understanding of how to report on conspiracy theories and incorrect information shared online.

- [Identifying and Tackling Manipulated Media](#)
 - [Geolocation Challenge](#)
 - [Observation Challenge](#)
-

Interviewing Assignment :

Description: Students will interview five classmates, family, friends, community members, professors,

etc. to understand their concerns about journalism/news/media.

Requirements: Write about who you interviewed and what they said when you asked them about their concerns about the news media (due dates can be found [here](#)). The class will discuss the assignment in class and students should be prepared to talk about:

- What did you find? (While they're doing this I can create a map on the board of overlapping concerns)
 - What was most concerning to you?
 - What surprised you the most?
 - Do you agree with the concerns raised?
-

Examining our Identities and Biases Assignment:

Description: Our experiences and personal biases can impact how we consume, interpret and feel about the media. What are your biases?

Requirements: Write about what your biases are and how you are working to consume news despite these biases. Or maybe you are not. Explain.

Trust Assignment:

Description: Trust in news is low. What are you seeing news organizations do to rebuild trust?

Requirements: During your consumption of news this semester, be on the lookout for examples of coverage that you find trustworthy or untrustworthy. Be prepared to write about ten of these examples and explain why you feel this way. If you have ideas for how news organizations could make their content more trustworthy, include those as well.