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|  | | Department of Communication Studies COM 2065: Introduction to Research in Communication 3 units |
| Fall 2021 | | |
| Meeting days: Tuesday/Thursday | Instructor title and name: Dr. Jeff Birdsell | |
| Meeting times: 9:30am-10:45am | Phone: 619-849-3370 | |
| Meeting location: Bond Academic Center 151 | Office location and hours: Cabrillo 204 Mondays 8:45-9:45, 1:30-2:30 Tuesdays 8:45-9:15 Wednesdays 1:30-2:30 Thursdays 8:45-9:15 Fridays 8:45-9:45 (other times available by appointment) | |
| Final Exam: December 14, 10:30am | E-mail: jebirdse@pointloma.edu Twitter: @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 introduces students to disciplinary expectations for research in communication, including source evaluation and citation, and equips them to review literature, select methods, and propose ethical research in communication from qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

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 and ethical 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 all majors in the Department of Communication Studies, please visit the curriculum maps at <http://assessment.pointloma.edu/academic-assessment/department-of-communication-theatre/curriculum-maps/> to identify which PLOs this class addresses for your major.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

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., & Lachlan, K. L. (2017). *Straight Talk about Communication Research Methods* (3rd ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

During the course of the semester you will be responsible for the following written assignments. See the descriptions below and the detailed instructions for more details.

| Assignment Distribution: | | Grade Scale | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------|-----------|--------|---------|
| | | Percentage | | Points | |
| Online Quizzes (5 pts each) | 70 pts | A | 93 - 100 | 604.5 | - 650 |
| CSI Discussions (10 pts each) | 70 pts | A- | 90 - 92.9 | 585 | - 604 |
| In-class activities | 70 pts | B+ | 87 - 89.9 | 565.5 | - 584.5 |
| <i>(completed activities ÷ total activities)</i> | | B | 83 - 86.9 | 539.5 | - 565 |
| Concept Reports (100 pts each) | 200 pts | B- | 80 - 82.9 | 520 | - 539 |
| Literature Review & Methods Proposal | 240 pts | C+ | 77 - 79.9 | 500.5 | - 519.5 |
| CITI Training Certificate (must be successfully completed to pass the course) | REQUIRED | C | 73 - 76.9 | 474.5 | - 500 |
| | | C- | 70 - 72.9 | 455 | - 474 |
| | | D+ | 67 - 69.9 | 435.5 | - 454.5 |
| | | D | 63 - 66.9 | 409.5 | - 435 |
| | | D- | 60 - 62.9 | 390 | - 409 |
| | | F | 0 - 59.9 | 0 | - 389.5 |

ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS

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). The most likely time for your computer/internet connection to crash is minutes before an assignment is due. Please plan ahead.

GRADING

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.

Feedback on assignments will be provided using the “Annotated Comments” feature in Canvas. Please follow the instructions at <https://tinyurl.com/BirdsellGrades> to access them.

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.)

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in on 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.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, 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.

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

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

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

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.

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

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.

CITI IRB Training

One of the goals of this class is to prepare you to pursue communication research throughout your program. Because human subjects often provide the data we analyze to test hypotheses and answer research questions, it's vital that we collect that data ethically. To that end, all students must complete the CITI IRB training available at:

<https://www.pointloma.edu/institutional-review-board/training>

The training contains six (6) modules and the estimated time to complete the modules is four (4) hours. The training may be done in different sessions and there is a quiz at the end of each module for which the average score across all six (6) modules must be at least 80%. Your completion certificate is valid for three (3) years. A copy of your completion certificate must be uploaded to Canvas in order to receive a passing grade in this course and IRB protocols you submit for future courses will not be approved unless you are able to provide a copy of the Completion Report.

If the completion certificate is not uploaded by the submission of midterm grades, you will receive an "F" as your midterm grade and reminded of this requirement. If you have not uploaded the certificate by the drop deadline, I will suggest you drop the course. If you remain enrolled and this requirement remains unmet at the time of final grade submission, you will receive an "F" for the course regardless of your scores on other assignments.

CONCEPT REPORT INSTRUCTIONS

Develop the annotations on a concepts by using 5 sources (you may use the same source to answer multiple questions) to answer each question below in your own words, ending with a parenthetical citation. I have provided a column that can help you navigate the articles you find.

Working Through the Articles

| Question to answer (five times, one sentence each) | Where to find the answer in most research articles |
|---|--|
| How is it defined? | Literature review |
| What theories are usually involved when studying it? | Literature review |
| How do we get more or less of it? | Literature review and Results |
| What can be predicted if we have a lot or a little of it? | Literature review and Results |
| What contexts is this concept often observed in? | Literature review |
| What methods are commonly used to measure this concept? | Methods |
| What variables are usually collected to see your concept? | Methods |
| What sampling methods are often used to collect your concept? | Methods |
| What statistics are usually used to test hypotheses/answer research questions about your concept? | Methods and Results |
| What have researchers suggested be done next in the understanding of your concept | Discussion |
| What recommendations have researchers made to improve the measurement of your concept? | Discussion |

Your submission should end with a References page with complete APA citations for each source.

The annotated bibliography will be evaluated based on:

- The number of times you answer each question
- The quality and relevance of sources you use to answer them (the best sources will be peer-reviewed journal articles from communication journals/scholars)
- APA formatting (parenthetical citations and complete citations on References page)
- Writing – clarity, precision, focus, spelling and grammar, etc.

CONCEPT REPORT GRADING SHEET

Name: _____

Score: _____ /100

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

NUMBER OF ANSWERS: _____

1 point per answer for a maximum of 55 points:

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/>)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

SOURCES:

Are all sources scholarly/academic/credible? Are they drawn primarily from articles written in communication journals or by communication scholars?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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 2nd 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/Rationale

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 are and state your RQ/H as a purpose. E.g. “The purpose of this research is...”

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.

4. 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. Conceptually define variables. Conclude the literature review with your *hypothesis* and/or your research question.

5. Methods

Describe your 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)?
 - Operational definition of each variables
 - 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

6. Limitations

What are the limitations to your research?

7. References

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

8. Appendix

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

RESEARCH PROPOSAL GRADING SHEET

Name: _____

Score: _____ /240

Grading Scale:

- 2- 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/>)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

ABSTRACT:

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

INTRODUCTION/RATIONALE:

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

| Week | Dates | Topic | "Straight Talk" Readings | CSI Readings | Graded Work Due (<i>Recommended Pace</i>) |
|--------------------|-------|--|------------------------------|--------------|--|
| 1 | 9/2 | Intro to course | | | |
| 2 | 9/7 | What is Communication Research | Chapter 1 | | <i>Chapter 1 Quiz</i> |
| | 9/9 | Decide What You're Looking For | | Step 1 | CSI Discussion 1 submitted to Canvas by 8am |
| 3 | 9/14 | Paradigms | Chapter 2 | | <i>Chapter 2 Quiz</i> |
| | 9/16 | Library Research | Chapter 3 | Step 2 & 3 | CSI Discussions 2 and 3 submitted to Canvas by 8am |
| 4 | 9/21 | Writing a Lit Review | Chapter 4 | | <i>Chapters 3&4 Quizzes</i> |
| | 9/23 | Research Ethics | Chapter 5 | | <i>Chapter 5 Quiz</i> |
| 5 | 9/28 | RQs and Hypotheses | Chapter 6 | | <i>Begin CITI training</i> |
| | 9/30 | Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement | Chapter 7 | | <i>Chapter 7 Quiz</i> |
| 6 | 10/5 | Variables | | | |
| | 10/7 | Sampling | Chapter 8 | | <i>Chapter 8 Quiz</i> |
| 7 | 10/12 | Sampling (continued) | | | Concept Report 1 |
| | 10/14 | Validity, Reliability, Credibility | Chapter 9 | | <i>Chapter 9 Quiz, Quizzes Due by Midnight (Chapters 1-5, 7-9)</i> |
| 8 | 10/19 | Survey research | Chapter 10 | | <i>Chapter 10 Quiz</i> |
| | 10/21 | Survey research (continued) | | | CITI Training Certificate submitted to Canvas |
| 9 | 10/26 | Content Analysis | Chapter 11 | | <i>Chapter 11 Quiz</i> |
| | 10/28 | Content Analysis | | | |
| 10 | 11/2 | Experiments | Chapter 12 | | <i>Chapter 12 Quiz</i> |
| | 11/4 | Experiments (continued) | | | |
| 11 | 11/9 | Statistical analysis | Chapter 13 (if you're brave) | | Concept Report 2 |
| | 11/11 | Statistical analysis (continued) | | | |
| 12 | 11/16 | Qualitative research | Chapter 14 | | <i>Chapter 14 Quiz</i> |
| | 11/18 | Collecting Qualitative Data | Chapter 15 | | <i>Ch 15 Quiz, CSI Discussion 4 submitted to Canvas by 8am</i> |
| 13 | 11/23 | Collecting Qualitative Data | | Step 5 | CSI Discussion 5 submitted to Canvas by 8am |
| | 11/25 | NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING | | | Quizzes Due by Midnight (Chapters 10-12, 14-16) |
| 14 | 11/30 | Ethnography and Narratives | Chapter 16 | Step 6 | <i>Ch 16 Quiz, CSI Discussion 6 submitted to Canvas by 8am</i> |
| | 12/2 | Evaluation Research | | | |
| 15 | 12/7 | Conversation Analysis | | Step 7 | CSI Discussion 7 submitted to Canvas by 8am |
| | 12/9 | Peer Editing | | | <i>RESEARCH PROPOSAL ROUGH DRAFT (bring to class)</i> |
| Finals Week | 12/14 | Proposal Presentations | | | Research Proposal |