



COM 2020 Small Group Communication

Communication Studies Department

Fall 2023 ♦ 3 Units ♦ TR 11:00 AM-12:15 PM ♦ Cabrillo 202

Dr. Melissa Newman

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Office hours: Upon request and Wednesdays 10-11 am; Tue/Thurs 1-2; alternating Mondays 9-12

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

Nature and function of communication in the small group context. Includes consideration of research methods, leadership, and conflict resolution. Theory applied to active classroom participation.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Understand the nature and function of communication in the small group context.
2. Develop a theoretical understanding of task group processes and group dynamics in organizational settings.
3. Recognize the role of power and explain leadership styles and strategies for exerting leadership.
4. Explain cohesiveness in groups and strategies for building group cohesion.
5. Understand that a company's strength and success is largely dependent on effective small group communication.

Required Text

Beebe, Steven and John Masterson. (2020). *Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Please use the 12th edition for our course.

Assessment and Grading

Below you will find the assignments for the semester. Assignments and speeches will have grading rubrics that you are welcome to view at any time. Your final grade will be calculated by dividing the number of points you earn by the total number of points at the end of the semester. Here are the categories of assessment (see Canvas for the points possible):

1. Assignments: interactive lessons, research assignments, presentations, article reviews, collaborative work and personal reflection journals (points vary)
2. Exams over course material (4 exams, 100 points each)
3. Group Project: Group project with added assignments (branding, contracts, collaboration) (points vary)

Grade Scale

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Method of Instruction/Course Norms

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. This class requires a large group project. Instructions will be provided as the semester progresses.
2. We will meet in class on Nov 21st so Thanksgiving travel plans should be made after that point. Likewise, our final exam is scheduled for Thursday of finals week, so you should not plan to leave campus before then.
3. We will abide by the university notifications listed below.
4. PLNU allows up to 25% of course work to be completed in Canvas and this section may use Canvas for much of the course work required. It has your assignments listed with due dates set and all the materials needed for the course beyond the textbook so be sure to set your Canvas user preference to get daily reminders for assignments due. 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.
5. Late work will be accepted with a point reduction for *one week*.
6. 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.
7. Please check your PLNU email account daily. This is the way that I will most frequently communicate with you outside of class, and it's also the way the university distributes important information.
8. The subject librarian for Communication, Denise Nelson, is available to help you with planning and organizing your research, as well as locating resources for your class assignments. She can be reached at dnelson@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2247.
9. We will not maintain an "always on" mentality as it's not a sustainable way to conduct our work this semester. To that end, I am committed to responding to emails within 24 hours (and on Mondays for emails sent to me Fri-Sun).
10. 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. Please do not expect exceptions to be made for you.

Course Schedule

Please note, this schedule may change depending on our circumstances. Any changes will be posted on Canvas and announced in class. Rest assured, I will not spring any new assignments or work on you at the last minute.

Date	Plan	Work for the Week
Foundations of Group and Team Communication		
Week 1 Aug 29 & 31	Course Introduction and Expectations Reading and Discussion Intro to Group Communication Lecture	Read Syllabus and Text Overview Course Introduction Read and take notes on chapter 1 Interactive Lesson Take Team Player Quiz
Week 2 Sept 5 & 7	Chapter 1: Introducing Group and Principles	Read chapter 1 and complete Interactive Lesson Read and take notes on chapter 2 to prep for Theory Week Watch Ted Talk Interactive Lesson

Week 3 Sept 12 & 14	Chapter 2: Small Group Communication Theory Theory Presentations	Read chapter 2 and complete Interactive Lesson Interactive Lesson Collaborative Work -Presentation Prep Read article
Week 4 Sept 19 & 21	Chapter 3: Group Development	Read chapter 3 and complete Interactive Lesson Collaborative Work Study for Exam 1
Week 5 Sept 26 & 28	Exam 1 (Chapters 1-3) 9/28 Chapter 4: Preparing to Collaborate	Take Exam 1 Read and take notes on chapter 4 Collaborative Work Read chapter 4 and complete Interactive Lesson Begin Promo Piece Design
Managing Group and Team Relationships		
Week 6 Oct 3 & 5	Chapter 5: Relating to Others in Groups Individual Assignment- Promo Piece Due Oct 5	Read and take notes on chapter 5 and complete the Interactive Lesson Collaborative Work Individual Assignment: Read & Respond to "Creating an Extraordinary Group" by Bellman and Ryan
Week 7 Oct 10 & 12	Chapter 6: Improving Group Climate	Read and take notes on chapter 6 and complete th Interactive Lesson Individual Assignment- Promo Piece Collaborative Work Prepare for Exam 2 Group Selection Preferences
Week 8 Oct 17 & 19	Chapter 7: Enhancing Group and Team Communication Skills Exam 2 (Chapters 4-6) Oct 17 Meet your Team this week! Oct 19-Fall Break no class	Read and take notes on chapter 7 and complete the Interactive Lesson Collaborative Work: Initial Group Meeting-Prep TIP assignment Midterm Feedback
Week 9 Oct 24 & 26	Chapter 8: Managing Conflict TIP presentations (10/26)	Read chapter 8 and complete Interactive Lesson Conflict Article Review on Gallo's article TIP presentations Journal Submission Work on Team Contract Assignment Complete Journal #1
Week 10 Oct 31 & Nov 2	Chapter 9: Leadership "New Science of Building Great Teams"	Read chapter 9 and complete Interactive Lesson Work on Group Project Journal Submission Team Contracts Due Read "New Science of Building Great Teams"
Week 11 Nov 7 & 9	Chapters 10 & 11: Making Decisions and Problem Solving Exam 3 (11/9)	Read chapters 10 & 11 and complete Interactive Lessons Exam 3 Work on Group Project Article Review: "Hidden Traps in Decision Making"

Managing Group and Team Tasks		
Week 12 Nov 14 & 16	Chapter 12: Enhancing Creativity in Groups	Read chapter 12 and complete Interactive Lesson Journal Submission Work on Group Project Prepare for Professor Meeting
Week 13 Nov 21	Professor Meetings	Prepare for Professor Meeting Thanksgiving break Nov. 22-24
Week 14 Nov 28 & 30	Professor Meetings	Complete Group Project Prepare for Exam 4
Week 15 Dec 5 & 7	Group Presentations	Submit Journal Response Group grading and evaluation Prepare for Exam 4 Course Evaluation
Week 16 Thursday, December 14 10:30 am- 1pm	Final Exam Week: Exam 4	Course wrap up

University Notifications

Final Examination 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. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Content Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In COM 2020, all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics include group and team communication in the workplace and beyond. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of group and team communication, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Trigger Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In COM 2020, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include working in groups and teams, interpersonal communication examples. Each time this topic appears in a reading or unit, it is marked on the syllabus. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must

have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of communication, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

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.

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 your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

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.

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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g. ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that

will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

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.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

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 withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade.

Course Modality Definitions

- *1. In-Person:** Course meetings are face-to-face with no more than 25% online delivery.
- 2. Online:** Coursework is completed 100% online and asynchronously.

3. Online Synchronous: Coursework is completed 100% online with required weekly online class meetings.
4. Hybrid: Courses that meet face-to-face with required online components

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.

*Our course is slated as an "In-Person" class.

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.