



Department of Communication Studies

COM 2065: Introduction to Research in Communication

3 Units

Spring 2024

MWF | 8:30 AM – 9:25 AM

Cabrillo Hall 102 (C 102)

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 1, 2024 | 7:30-10:00 AM

Instructor: Professor John Loo
Phone: 832.723.0799
Email: jlou@pointloma.edu
Office location and hours: Via Zoom on TTH 10-11am or in-person BY APPOINTMENT
Additional info: Feel free to text me if you have any questions between 9 am – 5 pm M-F

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

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.

PROGRAM AND COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course is required for communication majors in the Communication Studies Department.

Successful completion of the course should enable you to:

1. Recognize methods used in communication research.

2. Extract most salient points from disciplinary research articles.
3. Select appropriate and ethical research methods for a variety of hypotheses or research questions.
4. “Speak the language” of communication research methods.
5. Cite scholarly research using discipline appropriate style.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

Berger, A. A. (2018). *Media and Communication Research Methods*. (5th edition). SAGE.

ISBN: 9781544332673

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 delivered over 16 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes.

Assessment and Grading

Grades will be based on the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| A. Content Analysis – 2.5% | F. Research Proposal Presentation – 20% |
| B. Research Design – 5% | G. Research Reflection Papers – 25% |
| C. Annotated Bibliography – 5% | H. Midterm Exam – 10% |
| D. Literature Review – 5% | I. Final Exam – 10% |
| E. Methods Assignment – 5% | J. Participation – 12.5% |

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%	

The "A" Student - An Outstanding Student

Attendance: "A" students have virtually perfect attendance. Their commitment to the class resembles that of the teacher.

Preparation: "A" students are prepared for class. They always read assignments fully. Their attention to detail is such that they occasionally catch the teacher in a mistake. They always participate in class.

Curiosity: "A" students show interest in the class and in the subject. They look up or dig out what they don't understand. They often ask interesting questions or make thoughtful comments.

Retention: "A" students have retentive minds. They are able to connect past learning with the present. They bring their background with them to class.

Attitude: "A" students have a winning attitude. They have both the determination and the self-discipline necessary for success. They show initiative. They do things they have not been told to do.

Talent: "A" students have something special. It may be exceptional intelligence and insight. It may be unusual creativity, organizational skills, commitment—or a combination thereof. These gifts are evident to the teacher and usually to the other students as well.

Results: "A" students make high grades on work in courses—usually the highest in the class. Their work is a pleasure to grade.

The "B" Student - A Good Student

Attendance: "B" students miss class infrequently. Academics sometimes compete with other priorities.

Preparation: "B" students are usually prepared for class. They try to participate in class discussion.

Curiosity: "B" students have some interest in the subject and ask questions when they do not understand.

Retention: "B" students will frequently make connections among different ideas in the course and occasionally with other ideas from outside.

Attitude: "B" students desire to master the course material. They are active participants. They occasionally show initiative and seek out additional topics related to the course.

Talent: "B" students have talent and the ability to master novel material. Some students underutilize abundant skills. Others are still learning academic skills, which can later make them "A" students. Some "B" students are excellent in other fields of knowledge and skill, but must work harder in this subject.

Results: "B" students usually improve over the duration of the course with increasing grades on course work as they master the material and become more efficient in their work.

The "C" Student – A Fair Student

Attendance: "C" students miss class too frequently. Too often they put other priorities ahead of academic work.

Curiosity: "C" students ask few questions and show little interest in course readings and class discussion.

Preparation: "C" students prepare their assignments consistently but in perfunctory manner. Their work may be sloppy or careless. At times, it is incomplete or late.

Attitude: "C" students are not visibly committed to the class. They participate without enthusiasm. Their body language often expresses boredom.

Talent: "C" students vary enormously in talent. Some have exceptional ability but show undeniable signs of poor self-management or bad attitudes. Others are diligent but simply average in the academic skills they've developed so far.

Results: "C" students obtain mediocre or inconsistent results on tests or presentations. They have some concept of what is going on but clearly have not mastered the material.

The "D" Student - A Student in Difficulty

Attendance: "D" students miss classes frequently, sometimes a majority of the time. When they miss class, they often fail to find out what was covered in class or even what work was assigned. **Curiosity:** "D" students rarely ask questions and often hope not to be noticed during class discussion.

Preparation: "D" students prepare their work in a slipshod fashion. Sometimes they miss assignments and fail to follow directions on others. Work is submitted late.

Attitude: "D" students are uncommitted to the class. They may be in the course only because it is required or because the other alternatives are worse. They are frequently bored by the class and show it. They have poor study habits and try to minimize their study time in the course.

Talent: "D" students may have many abilities but do not utilize them. They also usually lack self-discipline and diligence in class work. They try to minimize the effort made for any assignment.

Results: "D" students demonstrate little understanding of course material on papers, class work, and exams. They fail to complete many assignments and rarely participate in class discussions unless forced to do so.

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 2065, 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 1) rhetorical analysis, 2) ideological criticism, 3) psychoanalytic criticism, 4) discourse analysis, 5) historical analysis, 6) participant observation, 7) content analysis, and 8) ethnomethodological research. 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 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 2065, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include 1) rhetorical analysis, 2) ideological criticism, 3) psychoanalytic criticism, 4) discourse analysis, 5) historical analysis, 6) participant observation, 7) content analysis, and 8) ethnomethodological research. Each time these topics appear 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 written assignments posted in Canvas are to be submitted/turned in by 11:59 pm when they are due. Speeches must be given on the days that you signed up for. Failure to give your speech on the day that you signed up for will result in a zero or an incomplete in extremely unusual circumstances.

Important note: Due to scheduling constraints, **no make-up speeches will be permitted without written documentation of a medical or unprecedented emergency.**

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 me. I will use AI identifying systems to scan submitted assignments, so please do not submit AI work that will result in a zero for plagiarism.

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

Assignments At-A-Glance:

Assignment details and assessment will be given during class lectures. If you miss class lectures, you must get notes from a classmate. All assignments are due on Canvas by 11:59pm. Late assignments are not accepted without making prior arrangements or without a university approved excuse.

1. Participation (125 points total):

During class time, we will discuss and practice key concepts and skills. You will need to bring your textbook to class with you. You must check & sign the physical attendance sheet to receive credit for attending each class period. ONLY YOU can mark yourself present (no other classmates or friends). Sick and approved excused absences will need to be discussed with me to receive credit.

2. Friday Research Labs - Research Reflection Papers (250 points total):

We will have 10 Friday research labs. You will be required to do the assigned reading or activities for each research lab and write a 200-word minimum Research Response Paper on Canvas. These Research Response Papers will be due on Sundays by 11:59pm. You must complete all 10 Friday research labs for full credit (25 points each).

3. Research Assignments (225 points total):

You will complete a series of research assignments that will prepare you for your final presentation, as well as give you the guiding principles for conducting communication research. These research assignments will investigate ONE communication research topic of your choosing.

- A. Content Analysis Assignment (25 points):** In this assignment, you will work independently to categorize and develop codes for qualitative data.
- B. Research Design Assignment (50 points):** In this assignment, you will design a research study. The project will focus on a communication topic of your choosing.
- C. Annotated Bibliography Assignment (50 points):** In this assignment, you will use the same topic from your research design to explore in greater depth. You will develop an annotated bibliography containing at least 10 scholarly journal articles and 5 or more other sources.
- D. Literature Review Assignment (50 points):** In this assignment, you will conduct a critical analysis of the relationship among different sources you have cited in the annotated bibliography, relate them to the communication topic you chose to explore, and propose a research question.
- E. Methods Section Assignment (50 points):** In this assignment, you will describe (1) your research claim(s); (2) sampling method; (3) sampling process; and (4) research method(s) for conducting your research project.

4. Exams (200 points): Two exams (midterm & final) focus on key concepts from the readings, class lectures, research labs, and group activities. The exams will be essay exams. Study guidance will be given in class lectures.

5. Research Proposal Presentation (200 points): You will use the research assignments that you submitted to develop and deliver a Research Proposal Presentation. The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate your understanding of the Communication Research Process and to showcase your interest in a communication topic of your choosing. A PowerPoint presentation will be required on the day of the presentation. You will also be required to engage with presentations as an audience member by asking questions and providing feedback to classmates who present.

Total = 1000 points

Consistent with University policy, I retain the right to adjust course design, including assignments, assessments, and deadlines. Major departures from the syllabus shall be made only for compelling reasons. Any major changes to the course syllabus will be announced in class, communicated to all students electronically, and incorporated into an updated and posted version of the syllabus.

Course Schedule

Module	Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments
Unit 1: Methods of Textual Analysis	Mon 1/8	Intro to Investigating Communication	Syllabus
	Wed 1/10	What Is Research?	Chapter 1
	Fri 1/12	RESEARCH LAB #1	<i>Research Reflection #1 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
	Wed 1/17	The Research Process	Chapter 2
	Fri 1/19	RESEARCH LAB #2	<i>Research Reflection #2 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
	Mon 1/22	Semiotic Analysis	Chapter 3
	Wed 1/24	Rhetorical Analysis	Chapter 4
	Fri 1/26	RESEARCH LAB #3	<i>Research Reflection #3 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
	Mon 1/29	Ideological Criticism	Chapter 5
	Wed 1/31	Psychoanalytic Criticism	Chapter 6

	Fri 2/2	RESEARCH LAB #4	<i>Research Reflection #4 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
	Mon 2/5	Discourse Analysis	Chapter 7
	Wed 2/7	Interviews Annotated Bibliographies	Chapter 8
	Fri 2/9	RESEARCH LAB #5	<i>Research Reflection #5 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
Unit 2: Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods	Mon 2/12	Historical Analysis	Chapter 9
	Wed 2/14	Ethnomethodological Research Research Design	Chapter 10
	Fri 2/16	RESEARCH LAB #6	<i>Research Reflection #6 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
	Mon 2/19	Participant Observation	Chapter 11
	Wed 2/21	Content Analysis	Chapter 12
	Fri 2/23	RESEARCH LAB #7	<i>Research Reflection #7 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
	Mon 2/26	LIBRARY RESEARCH LAB <i>*work on Annotated Bibliography</i>	
	Wed 2/28	LIBRARY RESEARCH LAB <i>*work on Annotated Bibliography</i>	<i>Content Analysis Assignment Due by 11:59pm.</i>

	Fri 3/1	RESEARCH LAB #8	<i>Research Reflection #8 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
	Mon 3/11	Surveys	Chapter 13
	Wed 3/13	Experiments	Chapter 14 <i>Research Design Assignment Due by 11:59pm.</i>
	Fri 3/15	RESEARCH LAB #9	<i>Research Reflection #9 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>

	Mon 3/18	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam
	Wed 3/20	Literature Reviews	<i>Annotated Bibliography Assignment Due by 11:59pm.</i>
	Fri 3/22	RESEARCH LAB #10	<i>Research Reflection #10 Due by Sunday 11:59pm</i>
Unit 3: Application & Evaluation	Mon 3/25	Descriptive Statistics	Chapter 15
	Wed 3/27	Common Thinking Errors Methods Section	Chapter 16 <i>Literature Review Assignment Due by 11:59pm.</i>
	Wed 4/3	Writing Research Reports	Chapter 17
	Fri 4/5	PRESENTATION PREP LAB 1	

	Mon 4/8	Presentations Workshop #1	<i>Methods Section Assignment Due by 11:59pm.</i>
	Wed 4/10	Presentations Workshop #2	
	Fri 4/12	PRESENTATION PREP LAB 2	
	Mon 4/15	PRESENTATIONS	<i>*PowerPoint Due</i>
	Wed 4/17	PRESENTATIONS	<i>*PowerPoint Due</i>
	Fri 4/19	PRESENTATIONS	<i>*PowerPoint Due</i>
	Mon 4/22	PRESENTATIONS	<i>*PowerPoint Due</i>
	Wed 4/24	PRESENTATIONS	<i>*PowerPoint Due</i>
	Fri 4/26	Final Exam Preparation	
	Wed 5/1	Final Exam: Wednesday, May 1 from 7:30am – 10:00am	