



Communication Studies Department

COM 4090 Health Communication

3 Units

Fall 2024

Meeting days/times (T/TH 9:30-10:45am)

Meeting location (Cabrillo Hall Room #202)

Final Exam: (Thursday, 12/19, 10:30am-1:00pm)

| INFORMATION | SPECIFICS FOR THE COURSE |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Instructor title and name: | Dr. Johnny Capra |
| Email: | jcapra@pointloma.edu |
| Office location and hours: | Cabrillo Hall #207 Monday 12:00pm-1:00pm, Tuesday 11:00am-1:30pm, Wednesday 1:00pm-2:00pm, Thursday 11:00am-1:30pm |

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 is a survey course designed to introduce students to the field of health communication while placing an emphasis on contemporary research and practices. Specifically, students will explore and critically evaluate topics including health literacy, patient-provider communication, interpersonal communication in health contexts, health communication campaigns, health-related risk and crisis communication, and mediated health communication.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Understand and recall the core assumptions and claims of historical and contemporary perspectives in health communication research.
2. Define and assess the concepts of health, communication, and health communication.
3. Compare and contrast the different models of medicine and current issues in healthcare.
4. Define and critique personal, cultural, social, and organizational understandings of health.
5. Analyze communication's influence on health across a variety of different settings.

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.

COURSE FORMAT AND POLICIES

Required Text:

du Pré, A., & Overton, B. C. (2023). *Communicating about health: Current issues and perspectives* (7th ed.). Oxford University Press.

This course is part of our course material delivery program, *LomaBooks*. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials and all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas. You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming materials provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pick up or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials.

For more information about LomaBooks, please go: [HERE](#)

*Students are responsible for having the required course textbook prior to the first day of class.

Communication: All communication for this course will take place on the course Canvas system. Here you will be sent reminders regularly. I will also use our course's Canvas page to post the syllabus, reading materials, assignment descriptions, and any other materials related to the course. The Grade Center on Canvas will be used to post grades throughout the semester; however, **it is your responsibility to actively check your canvas email and the course canvas page.**

Email: jcapra@pointloma.edu

I check my email frequently and try my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during the workweek (Monday- Friday). If you have not received a response from me within 48 hours, then

please send me a follow up email. On the weekends my response time is typically slower so please take that into consideration.

PLNU Attendance and Participation: 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.

COM 4090 Attendance: Students are allowed (2) absences during the course of the semester without penalty excluding university approved absences or Covid-related absences. Each absence over these three will result in a 15-point deduction from your final grade. Please notify me at least one week prior to excused absences with documentation and contact information from the sponsoring program/department. You are responsible for communicating with your instructor in order to make up missed work within one calendar week of the excused absence.

Late Policy: In order to benefit from each class session, it is important that students attend the entire class period. Tardiness exceeding 5 minutes at any point during the class period is taken note of. If a student demonstrates habitual tardiness points will be taken from their final grade.

Electronic Devices: The use of cell phones is prohibited in class. Laptops/tablets may be used for note taking or other class-related activities. If any of these devices becomes a distraction the student will be asked to put them away.

Reading Policy: You are expected to read the designated chapters in the text before coming to class on the day the readings are due. Coming to class is not a substitute for reading the text, nor is reading the text a substitute for attending class. Class time will be used to build on your reading, not to review it as not all of the material from the book will be covered in class. Come to each class prepared to ask questions you have about the reading, to explore confusing aspects of the material, and to provide examples and illustrations of the theories and concepts covered in the text.

Professionalism: Please be respectful of your peers and instructor at all times and recognize that both rhetorical and relational sensitivity are important in a course environment (as well as at work).

- Use your best communication skills; be professional, positive, and supportive of others.
- Respect your classmates and instructor
- Use technology appropriately for notetaking and course-related reasons only during class. Shopping, social media, direct messaging etc. are not course-related and use of devices to do these things during class is rude and distracting to your instructor, and,

research indicates, to your classmates. Therefore, it is prohibited. Silence all communication devices during class.

- Put laptops away during in-person student presentations.
- Because writing is so important to a successful career, grammar, spelling, typos, and punctuation will be considered in grading all of your submissions.

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 [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam 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.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted via canvas on or before their assigned due date. Late assignments will not be accepted in this course. If you are unable to attend class on the day an assignment is due, plan to turn in the assignment ahead of time.

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 you 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 Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

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. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined 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, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) 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 in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). 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 work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

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.

Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

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. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

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.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

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.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

Loma Writing Center

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see [Loma Writing Center webpage](#) or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar: <https://plnu.mywconline.com/>
- Website: <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center>
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Graded Course Contributions:

Final Project: In groups, students will research a health communication topic of their choice and compile their findings in a written report. Complete instructions will be discussed in class. **100 points possible**.

Presentation: At the end of the semester, students will present on their research paper findings in an oral presentation. Complete instructions will be discussed in class. **50 points possible**.

Reflections: Students will complete 3 reflection assignments during the semester wherein they will thoughtfully answer a prompted question, summarize course content, and apply their own unique perspective to it. Full details will be given in class. **150 points possible** (50 pts. each).

Exams: There will be 2 scheduled quizzes during the semester, consisting of multiple choice, true/false, and short-answer questions. **100 points possible** (50 pts. each).

Participation: During the course of our class, we will have a variety of homework assignments, and synchronous and asynchronous activities for which you will receive points. **100 points possible.**

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Final Project | 100 points |
| Presentation | 50 points |
| Reflections x3 (@50pts) | 150 points |
| Exams x2 (@50pts.) | 100 points |
| Participation | 100 points |
| Total: 500 points | |

Grading Policy: The grading criteria for all assignments, presentations, and exams are below. Remember, just because you did the work does not mean you will receive an “A” – you must demonstrate *mastery* of concepts in order to receive the highest grade.

A range work: Work is outstanding, demonstrating clear mastery of course concepts. Written work is organized, focused, using strong evidence to support one’s position with very few, if any, grammatical errors. Presentations are professional, highly engaging, and very well-rehearsed. Exam performance reveals a deep understanding of course content, far beyond simply regurgitating facts and definitions. Overall, work is intellectually rigorous and contains few, if any, areas for improvement.

B range work: Work is of high quality and demonstrates understanding of course concepts. Written work is organized and demonstrates reasonably consistent mastery of course concepts and contains relatively few grammatical errors. Presentations are professional, clear, and rehearsed. Exam performance yields a thorough understanding of all content, but not to the level of mastery. Work demonstrates solid grasp on all content and strengths outweigh weaknesses but could use improvement to reach A range.

C range work: Work is completed and of acceptable quality. Written work is competent, on-topic and responds to requirements of assignment, but does not show mastery of concepts. Written work contains errors in grammar and mechanics and may be disorganized or unclear at times. Presentations contain issues with audience engagement, professionalism or rehearsal of material. Exam performance yields basic understanding of elements but does not go into depth or exhibit strong connection between concepts. Work demonstrates reasonable and average grasp of content but lacks intellectual rigor and strengths do not outweigh weaknesses.

D range work: Work is seriously limited, demonstrating little mastery of course concepts. Written work is flawed by one or more of the following: weak critical thinking, insufficient examples and reasoning, poor organization, and major vocabulary and grammar problems. Presentations are not professional, not clear and have not been rehearsed. Exam performance reveals issues in basic knowledge of course content. Work may be inconsistent,

partially incomplete, or off topic. Demonstrates a weak grasp on all content and does not meet intellectually rigorous application of material.

F range work: Work is fundamentally lacking, demonstrating very little or no mastery of course concepts, and is of unacceptable quality. Written work is severely flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses: no clear point of view, disorganized or unfocused, many fundamental errors in writing, and pervasive errors in vocabulary and grammar. Presentations fail to address assignments at a basic level and lack fundamental structure or organization. Exam work reveals a lack of basic understanding of course content. Work demonstrates a minimal level of understanding and skill and exhibits little or no effort in completing assignments. Attendance record may be erratic or poor.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:

Below you will find a detailed course outline. Please keep in mind that this is a living document that may change at any time. It is your responsibility to actively and regularly check the course canvas page, as well as your canvas email to stay up to date on any changes made to this outline.

| Week | Date | Topic/Activity | Reading / Assignment |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | 9/3 | Intro / Syllabus | |
| | 9/5 | What is Health/Communication? | Defining Health Padlet |
| 2 | 9/10 | Introducing Health Communication | <i>Chapter 1</i> |
| | 9/12 | | |
| 3 | 9/17 | Health Communication in Context | <i>Chapter 2</i> |
| | 9/19 | | |
| 4 | 9/24 | Patient-Provider Communication | <i>Chapter 3</i> |
| | 9/26 | 1 Month Check-in | Reflection #1 |
| 5 | 10/1 | Patient-Provider Perspectives | <i>Chapters 4 & 5</i> |
| | 10/3 | | Final Project Topic Selection |
| 6 | 10/8 | Health Communication and Diversity | <i>Chapter 6</i> |
| | 10/10 | | |
| 7 | 10/15 | Health Communication and Culture | <i>Chapter 7</i> |
| | 10/17 | | |
| 8 | 10/22 | Midterm Exam | |
| | 10/24 | <i>No Class-Fall Break!</i> | Reflection #2 |
| 9 | 10/29 | Coping and Health Resources | <i>Chapter 8</i> |
| | 10/31 | Ted Talk Discussion | Compiled Sources |
| 10 | 11/5 | Health Communication and Technology | <i>Chapter 9</i> |
| | 11/7 | | |
| 11 | 11/12 | Organizational Health Communication | <i>Chapter 10</i> |
| | 11/14 | | |
| 12 | 11/19 | Mediated Health Communication | <i>Chapter 11</i> |

| | | | |
|-----------|-------|---|---|
| | 11/21 | Media and Health Communication Padlet | Reflection #3 |
| 13 | 11/26 | Public Health | <i>Chapter 12</i> |
| | 11/28 | <i>Thanksgiving Break – No Class</i> | Rough Draft |
| 14 | 12/3 | Health Promotion Campaigns | <i>Chapter 13 & 14</i> |
| | 12/5 | | |
| 15 | 12/10 | Presentations | |
| | 12/12 | Presentations | |
| 16 | 12/19 | Final Exam (Thursday 12/19 10:30 am-1:00 pm) | Final Project Due Friday 12/20 @ 11:59pm |