

	Department of Communication Studies
	COM 4090-1 Compassionate Communication 3 Units
Spring 2025	

Meeting days: M/W/F	Professor: Dr. Lisa Raser
Meeting times: 11:00 - 11:55 am	Phone: 619-849-2585
Meeting location: Cabrillo 102	Email: lraser@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: M May 5th at 10:30 am	Office location: Cabrillo Hall 201
Office Hours: M/W/F by appointment	

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.

REQUIRED MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Required:

Brown, B. (2021). *Atlas of the heart: Mapping meaningful connection and the language of human experience*. Random House.

Recommended:

Rosenberg, M. (2015) *Nonviolent communication: A language of life* (3rd ed.). Puddle dancer Press.

Additional course materials will be posted on Canvas.

→ Please read and save this syllabus. If you remain in the course after the first day of class, you are stipulating that you will abide by the university and course policies described within this syllabus.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will develop the knowledge and skills needed to become more compassionate communicators, both with ourselves and with others. We will explore the communication of emotion by identifying eighty-seven distinct emotions and human experiences, enabling us to better recognize, regulate, and express our feelings. Key objectives of this work will be to gain a deeper understanding of our own intrapersonal communication and to foster more meaningful connections with others. This course will also enhance our understanding and application of the principles of Nonviolent Communication at an advanced level. Through journaling, role-playing, and practical hands-on activities, we will cultivate skills for expressing and receiving empathy while communicating authentically.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between eighty-seven different feelings and human experiences.
- Discover the connections between your emotions and your thoughts, behavior, and communication.
- Develop precise language to produce emotional granularity and make sense of your feelings and experiences.
- Apply practical skills for giving and receiving empathy and communicating compassion toward yourself and others.
- Invent a tangible practice that supports others in their communication of one of the emotions from the course.

COURSE FORMAT AND POLICIES

Support: I am committed to helping every student attain their best possible education.

I am here to help! Please do not hesitate to ask questions, or ask for help, in or out of class. I will also be available if you would like me to review your work and give you feedback before it is turned in or presented. If you have any needs that it would be helpful for me to be aware of, please do let me know.

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.

COM 4090 Attendance Policy: As members of a learning community, your presence is appreciated, and your absence is noticed. The class sessions are set up to help people learn from each other (through discussions, activities, etc.) and you are expected to attend each class session. Everyone has useful and insightful information to offer to the class. Participation is the core of

this work, and to help keep track of that, I take attendance.

You are allowed two (2) absences during the semester without penalty. The only absences excused after that will be university approved absences (see section below). It is your choice how you use these absences and it is encouraged that you use them wisely. Please note that these 2 absences DO include instances of illness and family obligations. Each absence over two will result in a 10-point deduction to your overall grade.

University Approved Absences: Absences for certain events and obligations recognized by the University (i.e.: participation in sports, forensics, music tours, field trips, etc.) may be counted as “excused.” Please notify me at least one week prior to such absences with documentation and contact information from the sponsoring program/department. You are responsible for making up all work missed due to absences in a timely manner, to be worked out ahead of time with me.

Late to Class/Leaving Early: It is an expectation of this class community that we begin our class time together, and complete our class time together each day. Instances of habitual lateness are a distraction to our class community and will impact your ability to participate fully in the course. Please talk to me early in the semester if you have any concerns about arriving to class on time.

Being absent for more than 20 minutes during any part of a class period, whether at the beginning, middle, or end, will constitute an absence. Similarly, it is expected that you remain actively engaged in the classroom discussion and activities until the end of the class period. If you absolutely must leave early one day for a personal/emergency reason, please let me know at the class period prior or via email before class. (During advising time, please arrange any advising meetings with your academic adviser so that they do not conflict with your class schedule.)

Late Work/Make-Up Work: All assignments are to be submitted/turned in according to the due dates set on this syllabus schedule and on Canvas. In general, no late or makeup written assignments/presentations/exams will be allowed. Please communicate with me in advance of an assignment due date (not the day of) if you are concerned that an illness or other personal hardship may prevent you from turning in an assignment on time. Presentation dates are your commitment and should not be changed, as changes impact class planning. Exam or presentation makeups will only be considered in the rare instance of a documented illness or personal emergency and you have notified me prior to the beginning of class.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances, given reasonable justification.

Electronic Devices: The use of cell phones and laptops during class is prohibited unless I ask for them to be used as a specific part of a class activity. Please join me in turning off or silencing all cell phones, laptops, and similar electronic devices and keeping them out of sight for the duration of class.

Notetaking in Class: Please plan to take lecture notes in class by writing rather than typing and using a pen/pencil and paper. A notebook is recommended to keep all class notes together and organized. Laptops will not be permitted for notetaking unless for an academic accommodation.

A tablet with a stylus that lays flat on the desk is the only electronic device that will be permitted for notetaking in class. The purpose of this policy is to limit multitasking and distractions during lecture for yourself and others.

This notetaking policy was influenced by two important pieces of research: 1. Faria Sana, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda, “Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers,” *Computers and Education* (March 2013): “We found that participants who multitasked on a laptop during a lecture scored lower on a test compared to those who did not multitask, and participants who were in direct view of a multitasking peer scored lower on a test compared to those who were not. The results demonstrate that multitasking on a laptop poses a significant distraction to both users and fellow students and can be detrimental to comprehension of lecture content.” 2. Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking” (April 2014). In this study, the authors found that students who hand wrote their notes during lectures remembered more material than students who used laptops for notetaking because they could not write everything down verbatim. The extra processing required by the hand writers to select important over extraneous information was beneficial for their retention of the material they were learning.

Email: I will frequently use email to communicate with you and I do my best to respond to your emails as promptly as possible. If you send me an email after 4 pm, or over the weekend or on a holiday, I will respond on the following school day.

Written Work: It is my expectation that all submitted writing will be clear, coherent, and free of grammatical/spelling errors. Please proofread all written work – your grade will reflect both the substance and the style of your writing.

Final Exam Policy: Successful completion of this class requires participating in the final exam class activity (“10 Learnings”) on the scheduled day. Please arrange any activities or transportation for the break around this exam schedule so that you can be present at the assigned time. 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.

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: Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) may only be used to generate IDEAS. 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 intention to use AI, or any concerns about using AI, please consult with 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.

Spiritual Care: PLNU strives to be a place where students 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 if you have prayer requests, you can contact the [Office of Student Life and Formation](#).

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

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.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Knowledge Pit Stop: When a traveler makes a “pitstop” during a trip, they are stopping somewhere for a short period of time, often to refuel themselves (snacks!) or service their vehicle. In our “Knowledge Pit Stops,” we pause between reading *Atlas* and moving forward to explore the ideas in class discussion and activities. Each Knowledge Pit Stop contains a short list of multiple-choice questions that are connected to key ideas from the reading. We will complete three Knowledge Pit Stops near the beginning of the semester to establish a rhythm of accountability and connection to the unit reading. You may use your own handwritten notes as an aid on a Knowledge Pit Stop, but not an open book.

Road Trip Playlist Discussion Board: When a traveler makes a musical “road trip playlist,” they are gathering meaningful companions for their journey. In a similar way, you will create your own “road trip playlist” that gathers, synthesizes, and captures key “take-aways” from in-class learning and the reading from *Atlas*. Consider what elements of your learning that you most want to remember and carry with you as you journey in and beyond this course. The “road trip playlist” will take the form of a discussion board with peer responses, so that you can share your most important learning with others and encourage them in their process. These playlists are also excellent preparation for creating and gathering your “10 Learnings” at the end of the semester.

Advanced NVC Journals: You will complete three guided journals in this course to support our in-class empathy practice work. In each journal, you will be asked to write about a recent situation that has elicited a feeling, and you will record your observations, judgements, feelings, needs, and physical sensations related to that situation. Your feelings and needs inventory (as well as the Nonviolent Communication textbook) will be helpful resources to you in completing these journals.

Awe Walk Project/Presentation: As a part of our exploration of the emotion of awe, you will complete an “awe walk” experience in a familiar *and* unfamiliar location. You will write about your experiences, take photographs, and present your findings to the class in a formal presentation.

Compassion Practice: You will have the opportunity to select one of the emotions/human experiences from *Atlas* that you would like to explore with greater depth. Following the model of the *Greater Good in Action Practice* (from the Greater Good Science Center), you will research your emotion and invent your own tangible practice to support someone else in navigating that emotion. You will turn in a complete and organized one-page document (front and back) that describes how to complete the practice and evidence (research and sources) for why it works. We will share our Compassion Practices on a discussion board, as well as through mini presentations in groups.

10 Learnings from Compassionate Communication: Throughout this course, please keep track of important or memorable ideas, concepts, and quotes that will later form your “top ten” learnings from *Compassionate Communication*. Think of this as a map for yourself or others that traces your journey of important stops from the course. Your Road Trip Playlists will prepare you for this work, and I encourage you to start a Google Doc early in the class to gather insights that are sticking with you. At the end of the course, you will create a one-page document that clearly communicates your 10 Learnings, along with well-crafted visual design (font, color, and images) to enhance the overall message. We will share these documents in mini presentations on the final day of the course.

In-Class (or Canvas) Assignments: At times, you will be given short assignments or exercises in class (or on Canvas) that are worth points toward your final grade. These assignments may include written responses/reflections, collaborations, etc. The point value for these assignments may vary, but will be clearly designated on the assignment.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Grade Scale (% to Letter):

93-100	A	73-76.9%	C
90-92.9%	A-	70-72.9%	C-
87-89.9%	B+	67-69.9%	D+
83-86.9%	B	63-66.9%	D
80-82.9%	B-	60-62.9%	D-
77-79.9%	C+	0-59	F

Rounding: Typically, grades follow the scale above and are not rounded up. Rounding of grades is only done in rare circumstances when the percentage point after the decimal is extremely close to the next grade and the student has demonstrated exemplary participation and effort in the course. **Any possible changes are made by instructor discretion; please do not request that your grade be rounded up.**

Point Distribution

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	Number of Points AVAILABLE	Number of Points I EARNED
Knowledge Pit Stop (10 pts each x 3)	30	
Road Trip Playlist Discussion Board (15 x 3)	45	
Advanced NVC Journals (20 pts each x 3)	60	
Awe Walk Project/Presentation	75	
Compassion Practice	100	
10 Learnings from Compassionate Communication	30	
In-Class (or Canvas) Assignments	60	
TOTAL	400	
- Absence/Tardy penalties (10 pts. per absence after 2 absences)	(e.g., 3 absences = -10)	

NOTE: There may be adjustments made to the point values/totals listed above. Each assignment will be clearly marked with the point value when assigned in class or on Canvas.

Student grades will be posted in the Canvas grade book after each assignment has been graded. It is important to read the comments written on your assignment or posted on Canvas as these comments are intended to help you improve your work.

COM 4090 Course Schedule

- Subject to change with fair notice.
- Please complete reading prior to arriving at class on the assigned due date.

WK	Date	In-Class	Reading/Assignments Due
1	M 1/13	Welcome/Course Intro	Introductions and review of the course syllabus & schedule
	W 1/15	Community-building Co-create community values & intentions	Submit photograph of a moment of happiness to Canvas by Tues 1/14 @ noon.
	F 1/17	Introduction to <i>Atlas of the Heart</i> and emotional granularity	Atlas: Introduction Submit responses to Introduction DQ's before class.
2	M 1/20	<i>MLK Holiday</i>	<i>No Classes</i>
	W 1/22	What is Compassion?	
	F 1/24	Introduction to Self-Compassion	
3	M 1/27	Unit 1: Places We Go When Things Are Uncertain or Too Much Unit 1 Knowledge Pit Stop Introduce 10 Learnings	Atlas: Chapter 1

	W 1/29	Unit 1 (cont.)	
	F 1/31	Unit 1 (cont.)	
4	M 2/3	Unit 2: Places We Go When We Compare Unit 2 Knowledge Pit Stop	Atlas: Chapter 2
	W 2/5	Unit 2 (cont.)	
	F 2/7	Unit 2 (cont.)	
5	M 2/10	Unit 3: Places We Go When Things Don't Go as Planned Unit 3 Knowledge Pit Stop	Atlas: Chapter 3
	W 2/12	Unit 3 (cont.)	
	F 2/14	<i>NVC Advanced Practice: Introduction</i>	
6	M 2/17	Unit 4: Places We Go When It's Beyond Us	Atlas: Chapter 4
	W 2/19	Introduction to the Awe Walk	
	F 2/21	Awe Stories/Taxonomy of Awe	Due before class to Canvas: Awe Stories
7	M 2/24	Unit 5: Places We Go When Things Aren't What They Seem	Atlas: Chapter 5 Submit: Road Trip Playlist 1 DB (including TTAT to Canvas - 11:59 pm)
	W 2/26	Unit 5 (cont.)	
	F 2/28	<i>NVC Advanced Practice: Empathy for Our Inner Life</i>	Peer responses due for Road Trip Playlist
8	M 3/3	Unit 6: Places We Go When We're Hurting	Atlas: Chapter 6
	W 3/5	Unit 6 (cont.)	Read: "Keening (anguish)" by Amanda Opelt and respond to discussion questions on Canvas before class.
	F 3/7	<i>NVC Advanced Practice: Empathy for Self AND Other</i>	Submit: Journal 1: Attuning to My Inner Life to Canvas before class.
9	3/10-3/14	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>No Classes</i>
10	M 3/17	Awe Walk Presentations in class	
	W 3/19	Awe Walk Presentations in class	
	F 3/21	Awe Walk Presentations in class	
11	M 3/24	Unit 7: Places We Go with Others	Atlas: Chapter 7 Submit: Road Trip Playlist 2 DB to Canvas before class.
	W 3/26	Unit 7 (cont.)	
	F 3/28	<i>NVC Advanced Practice: Empathy for One Another</i>	Submit: Journal 2: Attuning Intra- and Inter-personally to Canvas before class.

			Peer responses due for Road Trip Playlist
12	M 3/31	Unit 8: Places We Go When We Fall Short	Atlas: Chapter 8
	W 4/2	Unit 8 (cont.)	
	F 4/4	<i>NVC Advanced Practice: Empathy for Community & Creation</i>	Submit: Journal 3: Attuning Ecologically to Canvas by Sun 4/6 @ 11:59 pm.
13	M 4/7	Unit 9: Places We Go When We Search for Connection Introduce Compassion Practice Project	Atlas: Chapter 9
	W 4/9	Unit 9 (cont.)	
	F 4/11	Unit 10: Places We Go When the Heart is Open	Atlas: Chapter 10 Submit: Greater Good in Action Practice Reflection to Canvas before class.
14	M 4/14	Unit 10 (cont.)	Submit: Road Trip Playlist 3 DB (including Trust Statement to Canvas by Sun 4/13 @ 11:59 pm)
	W 4/16	Unit 11: Places We Go When Life is Good	Atlas: Chapter 11 Peer responses due for Road Trip Playlist
	F 4/18	<i>Easter Break</i>	<i>No Class</i>
15	M 4/21	<i>Easter Break</i>	<i>No Class</i>
	W 4/23	Unit 11 (cont.)	
	F 4/25	Unit 12: Places We Go When We Feel Wronged	Atlas: Chapter 12
16	M 4/28	Unit 13: Places We Go to Self-Assess	Atlas: Chapter 13
	W 4/30	Mini Presentations of Compassion Practice – shared in small groups	Due: Compassion Practice – submitted to Canvas before class
	F 5/2	Cultivating Meaningful Connection	Atlas: Cultivating Meaningful Connection
17	Finals Week	Mini Presentations of 10 Learnings from Compassionate Communication 10:30 am – 1:00 pm Monday, May 5 th	Due: 10 Learnings Our final exam time will be spent sharing mini presentations of our “10 Learnings” from the course. Mini presentations cannot be given early or made up. Please arrange any activities or transportation for the break around this finals schedule so that you can present at the assigned time.