



Course theme:

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade" is what's called an **antagonog** (an'-ta-na'-go-gee), a figure of speech that counteracts something (typically, something negative!)

OUR SYLLABUS

COMA 101: Introduction to Communication

Class Date/Time/Location: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9:15 - 10:20 AM, in Ingram 109	Instructor: Dr. Marnie Ritchie , Assistant Professor of Communication, mmritchie.com
Student Hours: Monday 2-4 in person (Ingram 129) or over Zoom (email me to set up a Zoom). Also available by appointment (email me).	Email: ritchiem@plu.edu Email is the best way to reach me. I try to respond within 24 hours. I do not correspond weekdays after 5 PM nor weekends.

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ABOUT COMA 101

Masking

Masking is strongly recommended in our space! Thank you!

Course Description

Communication matters because communication is about relations. If you have ever tapped your foot to an unfamiliar tune, responded to a request for a walk from a dog, gave a public speech to an audience, tried to convince a friend of something, or watched a news program that made you queasy, you felt the visceral importance of communication as a form of connecting with and responding to others. This class introduces students to the fundamentals of the field of communication, in order to provide a foundation for future learning. Students will hone their written and oral communication skills in this course.

Course Objectives

1. Apply various theoretical lenses to the study of communication
2. Learn how to address conflict in teams and interpersonally
3. Develop more advanced writing and presentational skills
4. Become more aware and effective communicators in everyday life

Required Materials*

- Articles and Book Chapter pdf's posted on Sakai under Resources. Please bring the reading to class with you. There is no textbook.
- Access to a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet to take notes, log on to Sakai, and complete projects

* If you do not have access to these materials, please contact me or Tech Support (helpdesk@plu.edu).

COURSE POLICIES

Land Acknowledgement

We are on the traditional lands of the Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, and Steilacoom peoples. We acknowledge and respect the traditional caretakers of this land. This class recognizes the insufficiency of a land acknowledgement, and that Native populations are still leaders in their communities within this region. As [Keely Toledo writes](#), “Decolonization is about power and a transfer of power... [P]ut your money where your land acknowledgment is.”

Attendance

There is no attendance policy for this class, because I find attendance policies ableist. Please email me if you need to be absent (No excuse needed). I ask for an email so I can mark it down in my planner so I remember to follow up with you. Come to class because you want to and you can, not because you have to. It is recommended you come to class regularly, as you can, so that you can follow along with the class. If you are absent for more than two days, I will try to check in to see what support you need.

Self Care

Your personal well-being is essential and not just to your performance in college. Learning to manage stress is a process. Asking for help is a skill. If you need additional resources or feel that you might fall behind in work, I ask that you come speak with me earlier rather than later.

I encourage you to contact the Center for Student Success, which can connect you to resources on campus like the Counseling Center, Health Center, Campus Ministry, and Center for Gender Equity. The main hub of the CSS is located on the first floor of the Mortvedt Library building. You can contact them by email (success@plu.edu) or phone (253-535-8870)

Laptops, Tablets, Technology

I allow laptops and tablets in class, and I put trust in you to use them responsibly.

Add/Drop

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, and similar topics.

Academic Integrity

All graded work must be the original work of the student claiming credit for it, with proper credit given to outside sources via citations. Students who use unoriginal work or permit another student to use their work will not receive a grade for that work in the course. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult with me. For more information, please see PLU's statement on [academic integrity](#).

Accommodations

If you need academic accommodations because of a documented disability, have emergency medical information to share with me, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. If you have questions concerning the services available for students who need reasonable accommodations, contact the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation at 253-535-7073 or aaa@plu.edu.

Religious Accommodations

I will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for all students who, because of religious observances, may have conflicts with scheduled assignments or required attendance in courses. Please review the course schedule at the beginning of the semester to determine any such potential conflicts and let me know about the need for a religious accommodation. If you could do so at least three weeks in advance of the date when the conflict occurs, that would be ideal. While I am happy to provide such accommodations, I understand that asking a faculty member for assistance can be intimidating; if that's the case, you can contact PLU's University Pastor Jen Rude (rudejl@plu.edu or 253-535-7465) for support in making this request.

Pronoun Use

We will use one another's personally designated pronouns. Do not assume anyone's gender in the course. Normalize designating pronouns. Some of our readings use "she and/or he" to the exclusion of a more inclusive "they." I encourage you in your reading to note these exclusions and normalize using gender neutral language in your writing and language.

Title IX

I am a mandatory reporter under Title IX. This means that if you disclose sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or gender-based discrimination to me related to the Pacific Lutheran University community, I must report it to Campus Safety, Students Rights and Responsibilities, Human Resources, and/or a member of the University Dispute Resolution Committee.

If you would like to confidentially submit a disclosure, meaning one that does not activate Mandatory Reporting, you can do so via the following resources:

[Advocacy Services in Center for Gender Equity](#) (253-538-6304)

[PLU Health Center](#) (253-535-7337)

[PLU Counseling Center](#) (253-535-7206)

[PLU University Pastor](#) (253-535-7464)

Inclusive Learning Environment

Pacific Lutheran University is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). We mark this so that we can name and challenge whiteness in our class's collective imaginary.

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course and that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity across all dimensions, including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students.

We will strive to make this class an inclusive space, which means we will actively contest exclusionary practices. Here are a few best practices for ensuring our space is actively more just: avoid words with exclusionary histories; do not minimize marginalized identities' negative feelings and need to process; take responsibility for the impact of our beliefs. If you are unsure what might constitute an exclusionary impact in class, let's chat in Student Hours.

Respectful Learning Environment

The University holds as basic the integrity and well-being of every person in the community. I am committed to providing a living, learning and working environment that is fair, consistent, caring, and supportive of intellectual and personal growth. Further, PLU is committed to protecting the rights of its community members to engage in dialogue and express ideas in an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and exploitation. This freedom of expression does not, however, entail the freedom to threaten, stalk, intimidate, harass, or abuse.

Students are therefore expected to treat every individual with respect. The University prohibits any activities that cause or threaten physical or mental harm, suffering or exhaustion, that demean the dignity of any individual, and/or that interfere with one's academic progress, living environment, or employment responsibilities.

ASSIGNMENTS

Soft Deadlines

Projects 1 and 3 have soft deadlines, so you can turn them in up until the final day of class (Friday December 9th).

Project 1: Slang Website

Point Value: 150

More information will be available on Sakai > Assignments > Project 1.

For this assignment, I ask each student to produce a web page in which they analyze the slang in one song of their choice, e.g. the use of the term “stan” in Eminem’s “Stan.” Each student will create their web page using Adobe Spark, a free online desktop software.

Project 2: Intersectionality Resource

Point Value: 150

More information will be available on Sakai > Assignments > Project 2.

For this assignment, I ask students to work in assigned teams to create a resource that explains to a target audience what intersectionality is and how to incorporate it as a framework in everyday life. Students will learn to address conflict. Each student is asked to turn in a self-reflection about conflict within their team.

Project 3: Family Communication Mini-Essay

Point Value: 100

More information will be available on Sakai > Assignments > Project 3.

For this assignment, I ask each student to write a short essay (2-3 pages double-spaced) that reflects on the patterns of communication within their family using the interpersonal and family communication theories we will learn. If you do not feel comfortable writing about your family, there will be an alternative assignment available.

Project 4: Sound Argument

Point Value: 150

More information will be available on Sakai > Assignments > Project 4.

For this assignment, I ask each student to use free software to make a “sound argument,” in other words, an argument in the form of sound. Each student is asked to write an assessment of why your sound argument is persuasive, using an article that we will read together.

Close Readings

Point Value: 150 (10 points each; 14 available and 1 freebie)

This class asks you to engage in “close readings” of the assigned readings using hypothes.is. Click the Close Readings tab in the left-hand menu on Sakai.

To receive full credit, each close read should have the following:

1. **TWO substantive comments on the reading.** These can be a critical question, a reflection on why a sentence stuck out to you, a reference to other relevant sources, and/or a critique of something the author wrote.
2. **AND ONE reply to a peer.** This can be a specific compliment, a question, and/or a complication. If no one has responded to the reading yet, please make a third comment.

Discussion

Your perspective is important to the critical discussions that we will have.

How I assess discussion:

- 180-200 points: Creative insights and questions, risked contributing in class/small groups on a regular basis (2-3 times a week), consistent evidence of preparedness, generous openness to other perspectives, excellent insights and questions, took an active role in their own success, evidence of listening to peers (references to peers’ comments on hypothes.is and/or in class comments)
- 160-179: Adequate class participation, reliable evidence of preparedness, curiosity concerning other perspectives, was present
- 140-159: Present in class, adequate preparedness, acknowledgment of differing perspectives
- 120-159: Unpreparedness that disrupted others’ learning, no acknowledgement of differing perspectives
- 0-119: Student interfered with peers’ learning, disrespectful of class atmosphere, consistent unpreparedness

GRADES

Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Point Value
Project 1	150
Project 2	150
Project 3	100
Project 4	150
Peer Review (2)	100 total (50 each)
Close Readings	150
Discussion	200
Total	1,000

Grading Scale

See [here](#) for the scale.

CITATIONAL ETHICS

I am indebted to Amy Young's considerable contributions from her "Introduction to Communication" syllabus. I also thank Peter Ehrenhaus, Kate Hoyt, and Justin Eckstein for inspiration from their syllabi.



OUR COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note: the course schedule is subject to change at instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced over email and reflected in this "live" schedule.

COURSE INTRODUCTION			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class
W 09/07	Introduction to the Course	Look over the Course Syllabus and Course Schedule (the document you are in)	Please introduce yourself in our Slidedeck (Optional) Complete this Anonymous Presemester Survey
F 09/09	Our Learning Community Agreement	---	In class, we'll draft a document together about how we want our classroom space to look and feel. Please come with an idea of what works best for your learning in a classroom setting!
MODELS OF COMMUNICATION AND TROPES			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class

M 09/12	No Class: Professor travel issues. Thanks for your understanding.		
W 09/14	Slang Introduce Project 1	<p><u>“The Largest Vocabulary in Hip Hop”</u> by Matt Daniels (CW: Some curse words)</p> <p>(Optional) Check out <u>this article</u> that shows lyrical similarity between artists!</p>	<p>Watch <u>“Rapping, Deconstructed: The Best Rhymers of All Time,”</u> Vox (13 min) (CW: Some curse words)</p> <p>Close Reading 1</p>
F 09/16	Workshop Day	---	<p>Please come to class prepared to work on Project 1.</p> <p>Bring a laptop to class if you have one. The computer lab in Ingram 115A will also be open.</p>
M 09/19	Tropes	<p>Excerpt of <i>Metaphors We Live By</i>, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson</p>	Close Reading 2
W 09/21	Models of Communication	<p>“Thinking About Communication,” from <i>Introducing Communication Theory</i> by Richard West and Lynn Turner</p>	Close Reading 3

F 09/23	Communication and Ableism	“In Search of Good Humans, Speaking Well” by Vanessa B. Beasley	Close Reading 4
M 09/26	Presentation Day 1	---	Please come prepared to present and to be a good audience for your peers!
W 09/28	Presentation Day 2	---	Please come prepared to present and to be a good audience for your peers!
F 09/30	Presentation Day 3	---	Please come prepared to present and to be a good audience for your peers! Everyone’s Project 1 Due through Sakai

COMMUNICATION IN TEAMS

Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class
M 10/03	Intersectionality Introduce Project 2	“Intersectionality” by Gust A. Yep and Nicholas T. Chivers	Watch: “The Urgency of Intersectionality” by Kimberlé Crenshaw (CW: Discussion of police brutality in beginning, sexism, and racism) Close Reading 5

W 10/05	Team Work Day for Project 2	---	Please come to class prepared to work with your teammates!
F 10/07	Team Communication	“Groupthink” from <i>Introducing Communication Theory</i> , Richard West and Lynn Turner	Close Reading 6
M 10/10	Addressing Conflict	“Productive Conflict Management” from <i>Small Group and Team Communication</i> by Thomas E. Harris and John C. Sherblom	Close Reading 7
W 10/12	No Class: Professor at Public Address Conference		
F 10/14	No Class: Professor at Public Address Conference		
M 10/17	Managing Identity and Interculturality	“Intercultural Teams” in <i>Constructive Intercultural Management</i> by Christoph Barmeyer et al	Close Reading 8
W 10/19	Team Work Day for Project 2	---	Please come to class prepared to work with your teammates!
F 10/21	No Class: Fall Break		

M 10/24	Team Presentations	---	Please come prepared to present with your teams and to be a good audience for your peers!
W 10/26	Team Presentations	---	Please come prepared to present with your teams and to be a good audience for your peers!
F 10/28	Team Presentations	---	Please come prepared to present with your teams and to be a good audience for your peers! Everyone's Project 2 Due through Sakai

INTERPERSONAL AND INTERANIMAL COMMUNICATION

Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class
M 10/31	Interpersonal Communication Introduce Project 3	“Interpersonal Communication,” from <i>Human Communication</i> by Judy Pearson et al	Close Reading 9
W 11/02	Family Communication	“Communication and Families,” from <i>Communication in the Real World</i>	Close Reading 10
F 11/04	Workplace Communication	“Workplace Communication,” from	Close Reading 11

		<i>Human Communication</i> by Judy Pearson et al	
M 11/07	Interanimal Communication	“Some Reflections on the Limit” by Diane Davis	Close Reading 12
W 11/09	Peer Review Day	---	Please come prepared with a draft of Project 3 (printed out)
F 11/11	Check-In Day and Chat	---	Project 3 Due through Sakai
ARGUMENTATION AND PERSUASION			
Date	Topic	Readings To Do Before Class	Assignments Due at Start of Class
M 11/14	Argumentation Introduce Project 4	Justin Eckstein, “Sound Arguments”	Close Reading 13
W 11/16	Workshop Day	---	Please bring a laptop and headphones to class if you have them. The computer lab in Ingram 115A will also be open.
F 11/18	No Class: Professor at National Communication Association Conference		
M 11/21 - F 11/25	No Class: Thanksgiving Break		

M 11/28	The Means of Persuasion	Aristotle, Excerpt, On <i>Rhetoric</i>	Close Reading 14
W 11/30	Peer Review Day	---	Please bring a laptop and headphones to class if you have them. The computer lab in Ingram 115A will also be open.
F 12/02	Presentation Day 1	---	---
M 12/05	Presentation Day 2	---	---
W 12/07	Presentation Day 3	---	---
F 12/09	Any Spillover Presentations and Final Class Day	---	Project 4 Due through Sakai Soft Deadlines for Projects 1 and 3

*There is no midterm or final for this course.