DRAFT V.2
Subject to change. Final syllabus available in Canvas week of January 13, 2027.

Loyola Institute for Ministry
Loyola University New Orleans

Religious Communication
LIM-G885-Y1G0E

Spring 2027

Important! You will be notified by email when your course is available (normally the week before class begins). Please check your *Loyola Gmail* account for instructions. ***Please reply*** to the instructor's email when you receive it.

Course Description

This course explores communications for religious entities, with a focus on the challenges posed by today's information and communication technology. The course aims to provide the student with a solid theological, spiritual, and historical foundation for church or religious communication coupled with practical strategies for pastoral and evangelizing communication.

Required Readings

Please order the book by Daniella Zsupan-Jerome as soon as possible from a bookseller of your choice.

Eilers, Franz Josef. *Communicating in Ministry and Mission: An Introduction to Pastoral and Evangelizing Communication*. 4th edition, Logos (Divine Word) Publications, 2019.
This book is not available in the United States. Relevant chapters will be included as PDF files in Canvas.

Le Duc, Anthony, ed. *Church Communication in the New Normal: Perspectives from Asia and Beyond*. Bangkok: Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication, 2022.
Available online. Relevant chapters will also be included as PDF files in Canvas.

Chaiyadej, Joseph. *Pastoral Communication in the Digital Age: Reality, Reflections and Response*. Bangkok: SIGNIS, 2023. This 43-page booklet by the SIGNIS (World Catholic Association for Communications) provides an excellent overview of the *sitz im leben* of religious communication today (Reality), the foundational theology of communication (Reflections) and practical pastoral responses for church

communicators (Response). Available online. Relevant chapters will also be included as PDF files in Canvas.

Zsupan-Jerome, Daniella. *Speak Lord, Your Servant Is Listening: Reflections on Faithful Communication in a Digital Age*. Liturgical Press, 2025. paperback $19.95 ISBN-13: 9780814689103, 8910 / eBook $17.99 eISBN: 9780814689110, E8911 Available as an ebook through Loyola's Monroe Library.

Additional readings and media as included in the Canvas course.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments

Below is our course schedule. For the first week, all postings and activities are due by 11:59 am on Sunday, January 24. For each week thereafter, all work must be submitted by 11:59 am CT on Monday, with the new work week beginning at noon on Monday.

Session	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 1/18 – 1/24	Introductions, Experiences and Desires	Introduce self, complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 2 1/25 – 1/31	What is Religious Communication?	Complete readings, media, discussion question or attend synchronous course meeting (optional)
Week 3 2/1 – 2/7	The Current Context of Religious Communication	Complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 4 2/8 – 2/14	Mardi Gras Break, No class	
Week 5 2/15 – 2/21	The Communicative Nature of God: Ideal Communication	Complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 6 2/22 – 2/28	Christ, the Perfect Communicator	Complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 7 3/1 – 3/7	The Holy Spirit and Communication	Complete readings, media, discussion question; meet with small group (required); complete small group assignment #1
Week 8 3/8 – 3/14	The Church is Communion	Complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 9 3/15 – 3/21	A History of Church Communication	Complete readings, media, discussion question or attend synchronous course meeting (optional)
Week 10 3/22 – 3/28	Holy Week / Easter Break, No Class	

Week 11 3/29 – 4/4	Religious Communication and the Sacramental Imagination	Complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 12 4/5 – 4/11	The Future of Religious Communication	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 13 4/12 – 4/18	Dialogical Religious Communication	Complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 14 4/19 – 4/25	Revelation and Selected Letters	Complete readings, media, discussion question; meet with small group (required); complete small group assignment #2
Week 15 4/26 – 5/2	Media Literacy and Religious Communication	Complete readings, media, discussion questions or attend synchronous course meeting (optional); submit spiritual formation synthesis and evaluation
Week 16 5/3 – 5/7	Pastoral Leadership in Religious Communication	Complete readings, media; submit final paper

Final Paper Due: Monday, May 3, 11:59 PM CT
Final Grades Due: Tuesday, May 18, 11:59 PM CT

Week One Assignments

1) Complete Week 1 module in Canvas, including
   - Watch introductory video
   - Complete assigned readings
   - Read the Introduction to the course's spiritual formation
2) Participate in Discussions on Canvas
   - Introduce oneself and greet one's fellow students
   - Complete Discussion Question 1

Assessment

Each student's final grade will include the following parts:

		Percentage of Grade	
		Graduate	CEU
1	Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings	40%	80%
2	Final Assignment, 12-15 page paper	40%	–
3	Spiritual Formation Journals	20%	20%

1) Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings (40% of graduate student evaluation; 90% of CEU evaluation)

Please note that credit for the course for certificate (CEU) level students is based in large part on participation in each session's discussion board. If you are a CEU student, this is 90% of your grade for credit.

Each week of this course includes assignments for reading, audio segments (where applicable), videos, and discussion questions. These are provided in the weekly modules in Canvas. In addition to reading all the materials assigned and watching assigned videos, all students will also be expected to participate in the class discussions.

This course also offers a combination of the traditional asynchronous online course and synchronous webinars using Zoom. The majority of interaction will take place through threaded discussion, with a number of occasions for live webinars for all students over the course of the semester. Several times throughout the course, you will be invited to enter into a video class discussion in lieu of the written discussion board postings. Note: participation in the whole class video discussions are optional. You are also asked to participate in two required small group sessions, which is part of the participation grade.

Small Group Meetings (required):

During our class you will be organized into smaller groups to host your own virtual learning sessions in Weeks 4 and 10. This is a wonderful way to help build community, and contextualize our discussions. You will meet within the same small group two different times during the semester. Small group assignments will be announced during Week 3 and also posted in Week 3 on the groups and discussions page.

You should plan to meet for at least one hour with other members of your group to discuss this week's assigned material in light of the discussion questions on Canvas. Once you have met, you should complete the Small Virtual Group Assignment and submit it by Monday night of the weekly session.

Synchronous Virtual Classes (optional):

There will be **three** optional opportunities to meet synchronously as a whole class through Zoom, available through Canvas during the course of the semester. These will be scheduled in weeks 3, 8, and 13. Plan for each session to last 1 ½ hours. In a following page in this week's module you are invited to fill out an availability survey so that we can find times that work for the majority of the class. After the surveys are complete I will send out an announcement to share the exact dates and times for these sessions.

If you attend the synchronous virtual class, you do not have to write your weekly major/minor posts on discussion board. Attendance and active participation in the virtual class will count for your weekly participation grade.

2) Final Paper (40% of graduate student evaluation; not required of CEU students)

Students will explore an important or cherished symbol, a religious or civic space not their own, a non-religious ritual, or a liturgy not their own as a way of gaining insight into the function of symbolic activity. Full assignment details can be found in Canvas.

3) Spiritual Formation (20% of graduate student evaluation; 20% of CEU student evaluation)

The final assignment will be a reflective essay on the subject of communication in faith communities which you will formulate and develop over the course of the semester. Full assignment details are found in Canvas.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	**B-**	80-82.9
A-	90-92.9	**C+**	77-79.9
B+	87-89.9	**C**	70-76.9
B	83-86.9	**F**	0-69.9

Please note that the LIM grading scale uses B as the standard for graduate-quality work. A and B+ indicate graduate work done with distinction, with B- and below signifying levels below graduate standards.

Course Policies

Incomplete Grade Policy

Students are subject to the university policy regarding incomplete grades with the following additions to university policy. Grades of Incomplete are given at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources » Policies, Forms, & Services section of their Canvas course. Students should first inquire of their instructor whether or not they are eligible for an incomplete; this must occur with sufficient time to complete the process explained here. To be eligible, students may not have received an Incomplete in the previous semester, must have completed at least 75% of the course work to date, and must have at least a C or above in the course. After the instructor makes an initial assessment of eligibility, including checking with the LIM Office to ensure there was no Incomplete in the previous semester and finds the student eligible, by the due date of the course's final assignment, a student must complete and obtain all signatures for LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources section of their Canvas course and submit it to their instructor, who will forward a copy to the LIM Director. LIM graduate students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in

consecutive semesters.

Attendance & Participation

Students are subject to the university policy regarding attendance found online in the Bulletin. Students in online courses communicate their presence by active participation in weekly discussions. Each course's instructor sets requirements for how many times students must post on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Failing to post during the first week of class may result in removal from the course. If you foresee that you will be unable to post in a given week, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Extensions for posting are given at the instructor's discretion and for a valid reason may be granted if arranged ahead of time. In extraordinary circumstances, students may arrange with their instructor to post up to two weeks after a deadline, though this may entail a grade reduction. Posts and other assignments submitted more than two weeks late may be subject to a grade of zero. If students do not post in a given week, they are considered absent. Absence for more than one week without contacting the instructor may result in removal from and failure of the course.

University Policies

Please read Part 2 of the syllabus (located in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, AI, accessible education, and more.