

Speech 312
Persuasion
Fall 12

Professor: Dr. R. John Ballotti, Jr. **Office:** 128 PAC *
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Office Hours: W: 1.30-2.00PM @ TR: 10.45 - 12.00 AM, **
**By appointment

Goals of the Course The primary goal of this course is to provide students with a solid grounding in theories, principles, and strategies of social influence as they apply to everyday contexts in which influence attempts take place. Students should gain familiarity with findings from empirical investigations on persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining, and will learn about strategies and techniques of persuasion relating to a wide variety of real-life communication contexts, situations, and settings.

Text

Larson, C.U. (2013). *Persuasion: Reception and responsibility*. United States: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Graded Assignments

1. **Exams:** 3, will consist of true/false & multiple choice, (each exam will be worth 50 points)
2. **Paper #1:** Your first paper should examine the ways in which a specific variable affects the process of persuasion (e.g., the effect of physical attractiveness on credibility, or the effect of peer pressure on conformity, or the effect of fear appeals on compliance with health messages). You should analyze and integrate findings of past research that explore the relationship between the variables you select. (worth 25 points)
3. **Paper #2:** Your second paper should consist of a context-based analysis of compliance gaining. You should select a specific context or setting in which compliance gaining occurs and examine the range of strategies and tactics used both by those seeking to influence and those seeking to resist influence attempts. Some examples of suitable contexts or settings for compliance gaining include:

adolescent peer influence
charitable fund-raising and philanthropic giving
classroom compliance gaining
cult conversion and deprogramming
food server-restaurant patron relationships
intimates and compliance gaining
intercultural or cross-cultural compliance gaining
organizational compliance gaining
physician-patient influence
police interrogation and custodial interviews
retail sales transactions
support groups and self-help organizations
public health awareness campaigns (D.A.R.E., condom use, Just Say No, etc.)
product placement, product planting (TV, cinema)
viral marketing (grassroots, word of mouth)
shock ads, subvertising
social movements (pro-choice/pro-life, animal rights, promise-keepers, etc.)
Web advertising, online marketing

Your task is to identify the primary strategies, tactics, and forms of influence that characterize or typify compliance gaining in the particular context. You should also demonstrate that you have a solid grasp of the literature in the particular context. Your paper should reflect your understanding of theories, concepts, and processes central to the context you've chosen. You are encouraged to use your own insights, analysis, or perspective on how compliance gaining functions in the context you've chosen, but only after demonstrating a thorough knowledge of the literature. Indeed, if your approach is entirely descriptive in nature (e.g., you just reiterate what the research shows), you probably will not receive an "A." The length of your paper will depend upon the context you select, the amount of previous research, etc. I'll be reading the papers, not weighing them, to determine grades. Note: Both papers should demonstrate that you possess upper-division writing skills. Your writing should also display your thinking ability; the ability to understand theories, grasp complex concepts, discover interrelationships, and generate your own insights. Naturally, you should proofread your paper for grammatical and syntactical errors. You should pay proper homage to published authors by citing their works whenever you refer to their words, ideas, or data. Your paper should conform to A.P.A. guidelines. (worth 50 points)

4. **Group project:** In groups you will conduct a study on some topic of persuasion. As a group, you should decide on a topic, generate a hypothesis or research question, carefully research what has been written on the topic, collect data, analyze the data, and write up a report (8-10 pages). Along the way, each member will be required to turn in: 1) a list of 15 academic references on your topic; and 2) an annotated bibliography on 10 of those references. You will also present your findings to the class in a 10-minute session the day before the final. (worth 75 points)
- 5 **Persuasion Observation Journal.** You are responsible for completing 6 short written assignments (2-3 pages, typewritten, double spaced) based on your observations of certain persuasive events as assigned by your instructor. These are to be recorded in a separate notebook and handed in at requested times during the semester (60 points)
- 6 **Class Business.** Class business is a time at the beginning of each class for members to discuss persuasive communication events related to observations, personal experiences, news items, films, and television. If you wish to participate in Class Business you should bring to class a cut out example and affix it to the top of a report that is a typed paragraph of your experience and present it to the class. (3 X 10 = 30 points)
- 7 **Participation:** You should be prepared to ask and answer questions, provide thoughtful commentary, and engage in meaningful discussions of the assigned readings by the due dates listed in the syllabus. This will require that you do more than "skim" the reading material. A consistent pattern of a lack of preparation to discuss assigned reading will result in a poor participation grade. You may miss up to 2 class meetings, for any reason, without penalty. Additional absences may result in a reduction in your course grade. (worth 10 points)

Grading Policy Grades will be assigned according to the following distribution: 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D; 0-59% = F.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

ABSENCES

If you know you will be absent for an extended period of time contact your Professor. If you are taking part in University-sponsored activities notify your Professor well ahead of absence. If you are absent for evaluated activities such as exams, papers, and presentations, you must have documentation for your absences. (Undocumented excuses will not be accepted.) When your absence is clearly beyond your control, and is documented, there is no penalty for make-ups. If papers are due, turn them in before you leave. **NOTE:** if you are absent for any reason, you are responsible for material covered and any announcements made while you are gone. If you are absent on a day when reports are presented there will be a 10 percent reduction in your grade for that report. **You are allowed to miss class three times. The fourth absence will lower your grade to a D. After the fifth absence, F, you will fail the course.**

This is a classroom, not a cafeteria, restaurant, or fast food business. Therefore, no food or drink will be permitted in the classroom during class.

TARDY POLICY

You will be considered tardy if you are not in your seat when the professor starts calling roll. You will be considered tardy if you are talking while the professor is trying to call roll or begin class. If you are not in the classroom when the professor closes the classroom door you are absent. **Do not knock on the door. You are allowed to be tardy three times on the fourth time your grade will be lowered to a D. After the fourth time, F, you will fail the course.**

Nobody leaves the class before me.

It is your responsibility to drop the course

NOTE: Hats, Caps and Head Coverings of any type are not permitted on your head during class!!! Failure to remove your head covering upon request of the Professor results in an absence for the class.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Turn off all cellular phones, pagers, CD players, lap top computers, and any other electronic devices that might in any way disrupt class or disturb others. There will be a box to place these devices in when you enter the classroom. You may pick them up when you leave. **If I see one of these devices in your hands or on or about your body during class time or hear one you will immediately fail the course.**

PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE

It is your responsibility to come to class and come to class prepared. If your printer does not work that is your problem not mine. If you are not ready to present do not blame your printer. See attendance policy above. I do not care if your best friend has a pet that died that is no reason for you to miss class. I do not care if your best friend or roommate needs a ride to the doctor, someone else can take them that is not your responsibility and an excuse for missing class. I do not care if you have been arrested and have to go to court that is your problem not mine and not an excuse for missing class. See attendance policy above. All papers will be typed on 8 ½ x 11 inch white paper. Margins will be 1 inch, lines double spaced, with size 12 Times New Roman Font. Spelling and grammar will be graded.

It is your responsibility to come to class prepared. If you need to go to the library to print your papers then do that before class begins. If you need to use a printer of a friend then do that before class begins. I am interested in results not excuses. **There will be no late papers accepted. Failure to turn in a paper on the due date results in an F for the assignment.**

Special Accommodations for Disability: Students requiring special accommodations for learning are encouraged to share their concerns or requests with the professor as soon as possible.

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Tentative Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings
1.	Persuasion In Today's Changing World/Perspectives on Ethics in Persuasion	Chapters 1 & 2
2.	Traditional, Artistic, and Humanistic Approaches to Persuasion	Chapter 3
3.	Social Scientific Approaches to Persuasion	Chapter 4
4	Prepare for group project	
	Midterm	None
5	The Making, Use, and Misuse of Symbols	Chapter 5
6	Tools for Analyzing Language and Other Persuasive Symbols	Chapter 6
7	Psychological or Process Premises: The Tools of Motivation and Emotion/ Content or Logical Premises in Persuasion	Chapters 7 & 8
8	Cultural Messages in Persuasion Midterm Review	Chapter 9
9	Midterm	None
10	Nonverbal Messages in Persuasion/The Persuasive Campaign or Movement	Chapters 10 & 11
11	Becoming a Persuader	Chapter 12
12	Modern Media and Persuasion	Chapter 13
13	The Use of Persuasive Premises in Advertising and IMC	Chapter 14
14	Group Presentations	
15	Last Exam	

Information Sheet For Instructor

Name _____

Phone # _____ Class Level _____

What are some other communication classes you have taken, and where have you taken them?

What are your career objectives, and what do you hope to gain from this course to meet those objectives?

Do you have any concerns about completing this course?

What grade will you be working towards?

Do you understand the policies set forth in the syllabus? If you do and you agree to abide by them, please sign below. If you have any questions or concerns, please see your instructor as soon as possible.

Signature

Date

Note: Complete this form and give it to your instructor during the first two weeks of classes. If your instructor does not have this sheet signed and in his files NO GRADE will be given for the course!