

COMM 3628: CONTEMPORARY PERSUASION THEORY

Instructor

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Office Hours

Thurs. 1:00-2:00 PM
& by appointment

Class Time

2:20-3:40 PM T/Th
235 Stillman Hall

**Please review the topic
module in Carmen before**

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will introduce you to the major concepts and theories of persuasion, as well as key methodologies in persuasion research. We will explore the factors that make messages more or less persuasive, and use theories of persuasion to design persuasive messages. You will also gain experience identifying and evaluating messages to persuade audiences to adopt certain beliefs or behaviors.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The following is a list of assignments for this course. Updated grade information is always available on Carmen. I use the standard OSU grade percentages.

Exams (100 points)

There will be a midterm and final exam in this course. You will be tested on information from all aspects of the course (course readings/materials, and lectures). To help you prepare, I will provide a study guide and an in-class review to help you prepare. Each exam will be worth 50 points and will include multiple choice and true/false questions.

Final Paper (75 points)

You will write one 5-6 page paper where you will be asked to describe a theory from the course and use that theory to analyze a mass or social media attempt at persuasion. You will describe the media attempt fully (including images and materials) and discuss how it illustrates concepts or aspects of the theory you picked. Then, you will be asked to discuss how well the media attempt worked (based on theory) and how it might be improved to become even more persuasive.

Weapons of Influence Proposal (50 points)

You will be asked to design a persuasion campaign for a non-profit organization of your choosing, using two of Cialdini's "weapons of influence" that you are randomly assigned. Your group picks the organization/issue, as well as the beliefs/behaviors you want to target. You will produce a "mock up" of the campaign and incorporate it into a formal presentation. The class will respond to your ideas as board members of the organization.

Class Activities & Quizzes (50 points)

You are expected to come to complete the assigned readings and to participate fully in class discussions and activities. To help you, I will assign several online activities and quizzes over reading material, as well as class activities. Please be sure to check the class module prior to coming to class. Out of class activities and quizzes

will appear in the class modules ahead of time (due at class time) or they will be distributed in class. Students **must be in class** to receive points for participating in classroom activities, but not online quizzes. Unless you have a university-excused or unavoidable absence (e.g., deaths, personal/family illness and emergencies) and let me know before or within 48 hours of your absence, you will not be allowed to make up quizzes or activities at a later date. However, I will include some “extra credit” activities to help make up points that you lost.

READINGS

Textbook

Gass and Seiter (2018). *Persuasion: Social Influence and Compliance Gaining* (6th Edition). New York: Routledge

Cialdini, R. (2008). *Influence: Science and Practice* (5th Edition). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Additional Required Readings

Readings are available on Carmen and are noted on the course schedule or in the course modules. These readings are scientific journal articles, designed to provide an applied context for the theories discussed in class.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

You are expected to attend each class and participate fully. I do not take attendance in this course, but I will regularly discuss concepts and materials that are not provided in the textbook. Failure to attend class could negatively influence your exam and assignment grades.

Make-up Exams and Presentations

Make-up exams and presentations will be arranged for university-excused or unavoidable circumstances (e.g., deaths, personal/family illness and emergencies) with prior notification or written verification, within 72 hours of your absence. If you are not present in a class during an exam or presentation, and the absence is not excused, you will not be allowed to make it up. Make-up exams will be taken in the OSU testing center.

Late Work Policy

If you turn in assignments more than a day late I will grade them for full credit in situations where (1) the assignment was late due to an unavoidable circumstance or illness and/or (2) you let me know about your situation within 48 hours of missing the deadline. If you do not turn an assignment in and don't communicate with me within 48 hours of missing the deadline, you will receive zero points on the assignment.

Grade Disputes

Should you have any questions or concerns about assignments or your grade, please stop by office hours or

make an appointment to talk with me. I am happy to revisit grades and to discuss my evaluation of your work with you. Be ready to discuss where/why you believe you should have received additional points. I will also set aside class time to review exams with you.

Technology Use

Technology is allowed in this course. I understand the value of having computer access in the classroom, and may even ask you bring a computer on occasion. I do reserve the right to institute a technology policy if your usage becomes problematic or to call on you in class in you are not participating. I may also ask students to “unplug” or put away technology if it is being used for non-class purposes.

Plagiarism

All work in this course is to be individually developed. When grading in Carmen I use Turnitin, which will alert me to potential plagiarism. Plagiarism includes using another person’s writing without giving them credit, using large verbatim sections of the work of another person or online source (even a public source) or submitting something you have written for another class. If you unsure, please give credit to your source or talk to me about it. Students who plagiarize will be penalized and reported to university officials. You will also receive a grade of zero for the assignment where plagiarism occurred.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Statement on Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities will be appropriately accommodated. Please inform me as soon as possible of your needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

CLASS TOPIC SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Week	Dates	Topic	Assignment
1	1/8	Course Overview	
	1/10	What is persuasion? Why study persuasion?	G&S 1 and 2
2	1/15	Understanding Attitudes & Beliefs	G&S 3, p. 51-58
	1/17	Attitudes & Behaviors (TRA/TPB)	G&S 3, p. 59-71
3	1/22	Attitudes & Behaviors Workshop	
	1/24	Cognitive Dissonance	G&S 3 p. 71-75, S&S 2003
4	1/29	Source & Receiver Factors	G&S 4
	1/31	Source & Receiver Factors	G&S 5
5	2/5	Message Factors (structure/order)	G&S 9
	2/7	Message Factors (sequence)	G&S 11
6	2/12	Message Factors (emotion/motivation)	G&S 13
	2/14	"Thank you for Smoking" Discussion	video link in module
7	2/19	Narratives & Visual Persuasion	G&S 14
	2/21	Wrap-Up/Exam Review	
8	2/26	Midterm Exam	
	2/28	Paper Workshop	
9	3/5	Paper Workshop	
	3/7	Interpersonal Influence & Conformity	G&S 6
10	3/12	Spring Break	
	3/14	Spring Break	
11	3/19	Ethics of Persuasion	
	3/21	Dual Process Theories	G&S 2 (p. 43-47) & Paper Due
12	3/26	Cialdini Weapons of Influence Introduction	Cialdini 1
	3/28	Reciprocity & Commitment/Consistency	Cialdini 2 & 3
13	4/2	Social Proof & Liking	Cialdini 4 & 5
	4/4	Authority & Scarcity	Cialdini 6 & 7
14	4/9	Weapons of Influence Group Work Day	
	4/11	Narrative Resistance/Boomerang Effects	G&S, p. 74
15	4/16	Group Presentations	Presentation Slides Due
	4/18	Group Presentations & Exam Review	
FINAL	4/24	FINAL EXAM (2-3:30 PM)	