Comm 8970:  
Seminar in Persuasion and Social Influence

**Instructor**  
Nancy Rhodes  
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Office: 3045A Derby Hall  
Office Hours: 10am-Noon Weds. and by appointment

**Class Time and Location**  
Tues & Thurs 12:45 – 2:05 pm  
3116 Derby Hall

**Course Overview:**  
From the catalogue: Advanced seminar on current research cutting across sub-fields of communication.  
From the instructor: In this course we will review the major theories of persuasion and social influence, focusing on both the historical development of these theories as well as contemporary research and innovations.

**Readings:**  
All readings will be available on Carmen.

**Course Objectives:**  
At the end of this course, students should:  
1. Understand and be able to explain the major theories of persuasion and social influence.  
2. Understand and be able to implement the main research paradigms in persuasion research.  
3. Understand and apply theory and research findings in persuasion to practical problems.

**Course Requirements:**  
1. **Attendance and Participation:** This is a seminar. You are required to read the material and actively participate in the discussion during class time.  
2. **Reaction Papers** (25% of final grade): The reaction papers are intended to structure your thoughts about the readings for the week. To facilitate your thinking about the material, and to give me time to look at your papers prior to class, the reaction paper will be due each week on Monday at noon (see exceptions in the course schedule). I will provide comments and feedback by Tuesday morning, and the questions and comments you have will form the discussion starters for class during the week.  
   
   To get the most out of the readings, I ask that you structure the paper in the following way. The first paragraph is to be a brief summary of the articles. Focus in particular on what was done in each study (the method), and what the main findings were (the results). The second paragraph is to be an integration of all articles that are due for that day. In your integration paragraph, I want you to talk about what generalizations or conclusions can be made across the readings. How would you succinctly summarize this group of articles? Are there important areas of discrepancy among the articles? If so, can you succinctly identify these? The third paragraph is to be your reaction. In your view, what is the most important contribution from these readings, either to theory and basic knowledge, or to applications of knowledge? What limitations do you see in these readings? The final part of the paper is in
many ways the most important. I want you write at least two questions for discussion. These can focus in general on what questions remain to be answered in this area, or the questions can focus on any questions you have about the readings – what remains unclear to you about these studies?

Reaction papers should be typed, double spaced, with one inch margins. Papers should be approximately one to one and a half pages in length and should never exceed 2 pages in length. Papers MUST be submitted through the dropbox tab in Carmen.

Each reaction paper is worth a maximum of 10 points. Points are broken down as follows: Summary – 2 pts; Integration – 3 pts; Reaction – 2 pts, Questions – 3 . Maximum points will be earned by presenting a thoughtful, thorough, and concise treatment of the topic. The lowest grade will be dropped.

3. **Article Presentations.** Each student will present TWO research articles during the semester. These presentations will cover an article chosen by the student from the list of supplementary readings for each topic. This presentation will be approximately 15-20 minutes in length, will provide a summary of the article, as well as a discussion of the relevance of the article to the other readings for the week. The student presenter will serve as the “resident expert” in the reading, and formulate discussion questions to lead the group through the important issues raised in the readings.

4. **Research Proposal.** A research paper will be due on the date of the scheduled final exam. In this writing project the student will choose either a practical problem or theoretical issue related to persuasion, conduct a review of the research literature related to that problem or issue, and propose a research study that will advance knowledge in this area. Proposing to study the effectiveness of a persuasive intervention, or a study to test a theoretical model would both be appropriate.

5. **Paper Presentation.** Students will make an oral presentation of their papers to the class during the scheduled presentation days. This presentation should be accompanied by a PowerPoint or other visual aid and should be of the quality of a conference presentation. The presentation should give a justification for the proposed research, a description of the methodology, and a discussion of how this study will advance knowledge in the field.

6. **Student feedback (-5% for not completing):** For each of the days in which students present their research papers, students in class will submit the following: identify the presentation you thought was best and explain what you liked about the presentation (self-nominations are acceptable, but justify it). Make a suggestion to at least one of the presenters that you hope will help them improve their project. The feedback will be supplied to the students but your name will not be identified with the feedback. These are due by the end of the following day. The combined feedback should be no less than 1 page.
Grade assignment
Final grades will be computed thusly:

- Attendance and participation: 10%
- Reaction Papers (Lowest grade dropped): 25%
- Article presentations (1@ 15% ea.): 15%
- Research Proposal: 40%
- Paper Presentation: 10%

Grades will be assigned using the following percentage system.

\[
\begin{align*}
93\% & = A & 90\% & = A- \\
87\% & = B+ & 83\% & = B \\
77\% & = C+ & 73\% & = C \\
67\% & = D+ & 63\% & = D
\end{align*}
\]

Disability Services
This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking assistance in a timely manner. Any student who feels he/she may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs, or contact the office for disability services at 292-3307 in Room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate your documented disabilities.

Academic Misconduct
Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. 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. All instances of alleged academic misconduct will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct, which is responsible of investigating or establishing procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Timeliness
Reaction papers are due at noon most Mondays (but see course schedule for exceptions). Late reaction papers will not be graded. All other assignments will be penalized at a rate of -10% per day it is late. For example, if you received a 92 on your research proposal, but it was turned in on Dec. 17 your grade for the paper will be an 82.

APA Format
All papers should follow the APA Publication Manual guidelines.

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any point during the semester. Modifications will be posted on Carmen and announced in class.
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<td>9/16-9/18</td>
<td>Attitude-Behavior 1</td>
<td>Required:</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9/23-9/25</th>
<th>Attitude-Behavior 2: Theory of Reasoned action/Theory of Planned Behavior</th>
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| 5  | 9/30-10/2 | Message Learning to ELM | **Draft bibliography and project abstract due 10/3.**  
**Required:**  
**Supplemental:**  
| 6  | 10/7-10/9 | Beyond ELM | **Required:**  
**Supplemental:**  
| 7 | 10/14-10/16 | Message and Source Effects | **Required:**  
**Supplemental:**  
**8** | 10/21-10/23 | Fear appeals and persuasion | **Required:**  
**Supplemental:**  
| 9 | 10/28-10/30 | Resistance to persuasion | **Required:**  
**Supplemental:**  
| 10 | 11/4-11/6 | Social Influence | **Required:**  
**Supplemental:**  
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<tr>
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<td>12/2 12/4 12/9</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Upload PowerPoints to Carmen prior to presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/16 2:00pm</td>
<td>Scheduled final</td>
<td>Papers due</td>
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