

**COMMUNICATION 3628  
CONTEMPORARY PERSUASION THEORY**

**Spring 2022**

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Meeting place & time:  
T Th 9:35-10:55; 371 Journalism

This course is a survey of contemporary theory and research in persuasive communication. Its primary purpose is to enable students to become better analysts and producers of persuasive and deliberative messages. The subject of persuasion has included theories about commercial promotion as well as theories of rhetoric and dialogue. While some see persuasion as propaganda techniques, others see persuasion as the artful creation of desirable identities and situations. While some see persuasion as power and authority, others see persuasion as argument and pathos. And finally, while some see persuasion the result of cognitive processes, others see persuasion the result of linguistic and cultural practices. This term we will discuss a broad range of theories and research organized around three topics. First, we will review the contemporary theories of attitude formation and change. Then we will review the persuasive and deliberative message strategies that are often found to be effective and ethical. Finally, we will engage in a more in-depth discussion of some of the argument forms and practices that shape contemporary rhetorical choices, in consumer culture as well as in our interpersonal and civic lives.

**Course Objectives:**

1. You will learn to demonstrate an understanding of the theories of persuasion.
2. You will learn about and apply ethical principles of persuasive messages.
3. You will learn to demonstrate an understanding of persuasive messages and arguments.
4. You will continue to develop your skills in producing effective written persuasive messages and arguments.
5. You will continue to advance your skills in creating and delivering effective oral persuasive messages.

## Required Readings

Frymier, A. B., & Nadler, M. K. (2017). *Persuasion: Integrating theory, research, and practice*. 4th Edition. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice* (5th Edition). Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Additional readings will be available through the Carmen course website.

To help you master the reading and lecture material:

1. Every reading will have a set of study guide questions available on the course website.
2. For some topics handouts summarizing or amplifying the reading material will be available, either in class or on the course website.

## Assignments

### Examinations (2 at 100 points each = 200)

There will be two examinations in this course that will cover concepts, findings and strategies from the course readings, materials and lectures. The examinations will consist of multiple choice and/or short answer-essay questions. Each examination will be administered in-person. Please bring a #2 pencil on the day of each examination.

To help you prepare for these exams, I will provide study guide questions ahead of each exam and also hold a live review session and powerpoint prior to each exam.

### Group Practice Activities 100 points

We will have several opportunities in class or on discussion posts to obtain expertise in various persuasive skills and strategies.

One group skill activity will be to choose two of Cialdini's "weapons of influence" to create a persuasive media post, press release or public service announcement (i.e., a public service announcement video) about a social issue of your choice. You will present your persuasive media message and the theoretical rationale for the persuasive media message. Information about this assignment will be provided on the course Carmen website.

### Individual Expertise Activities 100 points

We will also have opportunities in class or on discussion posts to develop individual skills and expertise in persuasion, such as engaging in self-presentation or analyzing evidence. Certain

activities are designed for individual and not group work. Sessions marked on the schedule with “expertise” or “practice” may be an individual activity.

### **Explaining Persuasion Theories 100 points**

One important skill is to explain persuasion theories. A first assignment is to analyze two print/digital advertisements.

### **Portfolio Case Project: Persuasive Speech Writing 125 points**

This is your opportunity to apply what you’re learning in this course by preparing a speech designed to persuade a target audience. The essay/speech should be 4-6 pages double spaced, with one-inch margins, APA format, plus a title and reference page. The assignment will be distributed the first/second week of the course.

### **Portfolio Group Project: Persuasive Discourse for Promoting Change 125 points**

The last part of the course is focused on discussing how to promote change regarding issue controversies. Students will learn how to form a policy brief to promote change on a topic with a target audience. In our case, we may also want our policy brief to enact the change we want (e.g., social media posts). We’ll want to conduct brief library research to include on the issue in our briefs (e.g., and if needed perhaps interviews, a short survey, or content analysis). The paper can analyze the arguments of affected audiences, develop best recommendations, and cite course concepts to identify appropriate persuasive message strategies. The paper format should be no more than 5 pages single-spaced with one-inch margins, APA format, plus a title and reference page. Aspects of the recommendations, arguments and/or conflict can be provided in Tables. Each group will present a draft of their report orally to the class.

We will devote time in class to form groups and work on these projects, and I’ll set aside time for office hours for each group. The complete assignment and topic possibilities will be distributed in the fourth week of the course. The topics list will enable us to select a topic we would like to work on; groups will be formed around the topics students choose.

### **Participation 100 points**

You are expected to participate in the lecture discussions, as practicing persuasion involves interacting with others. Besides the lecture-discussions, our sessions will involve class discussions of case studies, and applying course concepts in group activities and tasks that are due at the end of the same day class session, or by the end of the next day.

### **Late assignments**

Late assignments will not be accepted.

### **Grading scale**

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percent</i>
A	93%-100%	C	73%-76%
A-	90%-92%	C-	70%-72%
B+	87%-89%	D+	67%-69%
B	83%-86%	D	63%-66%
B-	80%-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77%-79%	E	<60%

**Please note:** Carmen Canvas, OSU's grading and class management software, does not round fractions up. Please take that into account in computing grades.

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**COVID-specific policies-- Please monitor OSU's website for the latest information:**  
<https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu>

### **Masks and social distancing**

The university requires that everyone on campus wears masks indoors.

### **Attendance**

Given the continued high prevalence of COVID, including breakthrough cases among vaccinated individuals, students should not attend class if they are feeling sick. It is very important that individuals avoid spreading the virus to others. Most students should be able to complete a successful semester despite illness-induced absence. If you are absent due to illness, including but not limited to COVID, I will give you a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work. You do not need to provide a physician's document of illness, but you should advise me via email as soon as you are safely able to do so.

### **Recordings of class sessions**

I intend to post recordings of our class sessions on Carmen but I can't promise that the quality will be the best. These recordings are not a substitute for the in-person learning experience. Instead, they are a tool to help those who are forced to miss class on account of illness to catch up. As such, recordings may fail to capture in-class activities, they may be incomplete in other ways, or they be entirely missing (e.g., in the event of a problem with the recording technology).

**COVID-19 Accommodations.** The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's [request process](#), managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## **COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected at all class sessions and will be taken; beyond four absences is the point that a student's grade may be affected.

**Late Assignments:** Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be submitted as indicated below (see Written Assignments) *no later than 11:59 p.m.* on the assigned due date.

**Written Assignments:** In-class assignments may be handwritten, but all other work must be typed and must conform to APA formatting, citing, and referencing guidelines (see <http://www.apastyle.org/> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). Unless otherwise noted, assignments should be uploaded to Carmen *no later than 11:59 p.m.* on the assigned due date. Assignments that are overdue will be reduced grade-wise by 10% (1 day late), 20% (2 days late), or receive no credit (3 or more days late).

**Communication:** I will post class updates, extra credit opportunities, and/or additional materials as announcements on Carmen. Please check Carmen and read your email regularly (at least 2-3 times per week) because you are responsible for this information, just as you are responsible for information in class.

**Classroom Civility:** We want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for everyone. In a communication class, it is especially important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom, including the instructor and students; (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, they represent the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive learning environment for all concerned.

**Punctuality:** Class begins on time every day to guarantee that all scheduled discussions and activities are completed, particularly on days when your fellow students are speaking or presenting. You are expected to be punctual. If you are late for class, please do not enter the classroom while another student is speaking or presenting. Please wait outside until there is a break between speeches or presentations.

**Technology Policy:** Cell phone use is not allowed in the classroom. Please be sure to put your phones on silent before the start of class.

## **SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**School of Communication Diversity Statement:** 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.

**Academic Misconduct:** Cheating and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3325-23-04) defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process" (p. 2). Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

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://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). If COAM determines you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. If you have any questions about this policy or what constitutes academic misconduct, please contact me or visit <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>.

*Written and oral assignments:* Your written and oral assignments, including discussion posts and speeches, should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow **APA** style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. Any time you use the words of others, this must be indicated as a direct quotation with a citation to the source and page number(s), using APA style to clearly indicate the words in the direct quote. To use the words of others while providing a citation, but without indicating that there is a direct quote from the cited work, still is plagiarism. Simply changing a few words from a source does not make the words your own, and such use can also be considered plagiarism. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in--but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.

*Reusing past work:* In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.

### **Copyright Disclaimer**

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course.

Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

**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.

**Title IX:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu)

**Student Academic Services:** Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website: <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

**Student Services:** The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: <http://ssc.osu.edu>

**Writing Center:** All students, especially those who have difficulty writing, are encouraged to visit the *OSU Writing Center*. Their web address is <https://cstw.osu.edu/writing-center> and their phone number is 688-5865.

## **ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS**

**The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know via email immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu) ; 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu) ; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.**

### **Course Topics Taken from:**

- I. Theories of Attitude Formation and Change
  - A. Exposure, Associative Learning, Conditioning, Role-Models, Social Learning Theory, Trait transference
  - B. Functional Approaches to Attitude Change
  - C. Consistency Theories; Dissonance, Consistency
  - D. Summative Model/Information Integration

- E. Theory of Reasoned Action/Theory of Planned Behavior
  - F. Elaboration Likelihood Model
- II. Influence Tasks and Message Practices
- A. Theories of Credibility, Trust, and Liking: Creating connections through Ethos, Trust, and Liking
  - B. Creating consensus by Discovering and Discussing Exigencies, Needs And Desires
  - C. Deliberating about and Advocating change; Creating Identities
  - D. Creating believable messages: Theories of Argument, Narrative
  - E. Theories of Language and Performance: Creating Impressiveness through Clarity and Style
  - F. Facilitating Behavioral Commitment: Heuristics vs. Theories of Collaboration and Dialogue.
- III. Linguistic, Social, and Cultural Resources that Shape Influence Possibilities and Rhetorical Choices
- A. Systems of meaning and relevance: Using signs and Ideology in persuasive argument
    - 1. Constituting Identities, Gender and Relationships
    - 2. Constituting History, Place, Environment
  - B. Using narrative, symbol, poetics, image, and metaphor to create impressive messages that align with your audience
  - C. Collaboration Practices: Staging and facilitating deliberation and dialogue
  - D. Tailoring, customization, and person-centeredness
  - E. Interactivity online and persuasive effectiveness
- IV. Influence contexts for discussion and study
- A. E-commerce
  - B. Leadership & Management
  - C. Advertising, Sales, Marketing, Service
  - D. Policy discourse, public address, campaign rhetoric
  - E. Interpersonal influence amongst friends, family, community

### **Influence Tasks and Message Strategies Model**

Influence Task #1: Creating connections through Ethos, Trust, and Liking

Influence Task #2: Creating consensus by discussing Exigencies, Needs, Desires Influence Task

#3: Creating believable messages with Argument and narrative

Influence Task #4: Creating impressiveness through clarity, memorability and style Influence

Task #5: Deliberating and advocating change; creating identities Influence Task #6: Facilitating behavioral commitment

### **Additional Readings**

Clark, R. A. (1984). *Persuasive messages*. New York: Harper & Row. Out of print. Selected chapters on Carmen.



O'Keefe, D.J. (2002). *Persuasion theory & research*, 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Chapter 3. Belief-Based models of attitude.

Perloff, R. M., (1993). *The dynamics of persuasion*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. Chapter 3, pp. 57-77.

Warnick, B., & Inch, E.S. (1994). *Critical thinking and communication: The use of reason in argument*, 2nd Ed. New York: Macmillan. Chapters 4-5.

Larson, C.U. (2001). *Persuasion: Reception and responsibility*, 9th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Chapter 12.

O'Hair, Stewart, R., & Rubenstein, H. (2004). *A speaker's guidebook: Text and reference*. Chapter 2, 24.

Hollihan, T.A., & Baaske, K.T. (2005). *Arguments and arguing: The products and process of human decision making*, 2nd Ed. New York: Waveland Press. Chapter 9. Refutation.

### Tentative Schedule

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING(S)	WHAT'S DUE
1	T 1/11	Introductions/Course Overview		
	Th 1/13	The Concept of Persuasion; Classical rhetoric	FN Ch. 1; Clark, Ch. 1	
		<b>I. Theories of Attitude Change</b>		
2	T 1/18	Classical Rhetoric, Conditioning & Modeling Approaches	FN Ch. 2; Classical rhetoric rding	
	Th 1/20	Social Judgment Theory, Functional Theory	Ch. 8; Ch. 2, Functions section	Topic Paper due
3	T 1/25	Belief-based Model of Persuasion	Ch. 2	
	Th 1/27	Cognitive Dissonance Theory/Elaboration Likelihood Model	FN Ch. 9, Ch. 10	Ad Analysis Essays (1-28)
4	T 2/1	Elaboration Likelihood Model/Review		
	Th 2/3	<b>Examination #1</b>		<b>Exam #1</b>
		<b>II. Influence Task Model</b>		
5	T 2/8	Analyzing Audiences/ <b>Influence Task #1: Securing credibility, trust, liking</b>	FN Ch. 4	
	Th 2/10	<b>Influence Task #2: Gaining Consensus on the Problem</b>	FN Ch. 5 Clark, Ch. 6	Self-presentation Essay
6	T 2/15	<b>Influence Task #3 Argument &amp; Narrative Influence Task #4 Advocacy</b>	FN Ch. 5; W& Inch, Evidence Clark, Ch. 7	
	Th 2/17	Argument/ <b>Influence Task #5: Developing Impressive Messages</b>	Clark, Ch. 4 Borchers, language FN Ch. 8	
7	T 2/22	<b>Work on paper/speech/open office hours</b>		Speech essay due (Wed.)
	Th 2/24	Speech #1: Gaining Awareness about a Problem		Speeches
8	T 3/1	Speeches		Speeches
	Th 3/3	Speeches		Speeches
9	T 3/8	Reasoned Action Model/ <b>Influence Task #6: Mobilizing Commitment/Ethics</b>	FN Ch.10, 15	
	Th 3/10	Influence tactics	Cialdini Ch 1, Ch 2	
10	T 3/15 Th 3/17	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
11	T 3/22	Influence tactics	Cialdini Ch. 3, 4	
	Th 3/24	Influence tactics	Cialdini Ch. 5, 6, 7	
12	T 3/29	<b>Presentations</b>		Influence tactic analysis due
	Th 3/31	<b>Presentations/Review</b>		
13	T 4/5	Policy discourse assignment		
	Th 4/7	<b>Examination #2</b>		<b>Exam #2</b>
14	T 4/12	Value arguments and identities		

	Th 4/14	Rebuttal and strategic maneuvering		
15	T 4/19	Policy presentations		Presentations
	Th 4/21	Policy presentations		Presentations
	M 4/25	Policy Persuasion Project due		

There may be updates or changes in order to make the class a better experience for everyone. Any changes will be posted to Carmen and announced in class.