COURSE DESCRIPTION: Persuasion is a symbolic act designed to influence others and often to move them towards taking an action of some kind. *Advertising Age* estimates that the average American is exposed to more than 4,000 persuasive messages a day. We can allow ourselves to be mindlessly persuaded, or we can become mindful, making informed choices – choices about whom to vote for, what to purchase, what ideas and policies to support, which organizations and/or people to donate money to, and so on. Being mindful means becoming critical observers and judges of the persuasive attempts aimed at us, knowing that messages that seem purely informative typically involve attempts to persuade.

In this course, we will explore the degree to which persuasion dominates our lives, how persuasion has and can be defined, discuss the ethical dilemmas in persuasion, examine various models of persuasion, explore both quantitative and qualitative research in the field of persuasion, and then examine the raw materials of creating persuasive messages. A final project will involve student teams in researching and designing a persuasive campaign.


STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
*Upon completion of this course, students who conscientiously perform their work will be able to:*

1. Explain the degree to which persuasion dominates our lives and its role in every day decision-making.
2. Demonstrate understanding of persuasion theory and research.
3. Articulate the ethical issues persuaders face, and how audiences should critically evaluate the ethical dimensions of persuasive messages.
4. Apply effective and ethical persuasive strategies by creating a persuasive campaign.
5. Work effectively on a persuasive campaign team.
6. Use focus groups to develop a persuasive campaign.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND POINT ALLOTMENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion Journal</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion Project Presentation</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion Chapter Review</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

**Persuasion Journal** – Persuasion scholars argue that persuasion is a pervasive phenomenon, happening continuously throughout our daily lives. You will evaluate this claim with data from your own life. For one week, keep a daily journal of all the instances of persuasion or influence you experience. Do this nightly so you can remember what happened to you each day. This can include interpersonal situations, like a friend trying to get you to see a movie he or she wants to see, a parent trying to induce you to help out at home, a roommate or workplace negotiation, a political argument, print advertising, TV, Internet, billboards, movie previews, professors encouraging you to work hard this semester, and symbols you see (like logos), the clothes people wear, and/or anything else you notice that you believe is an attempt to influence behavior. It can also include all your attempts to persuade another person. For each day, write the date, the persuasion attempt, and its outcome. Identify the top two persuasion attempts and explain what made them persuasive. Identify the two least effective attempts and explain what made those attempts so weak. Based on your own experience, write down your own claim about how pervasive persuasion is in your life.

**Persuasive Projects** – The projects are designed to engage you in applying the material to the analysis of persuasive messages. Three times during the semester, you will analyze persuasive message and write a two-page paper describing the messages, the audience, and the persuasive strategies used. You will share these examples with the class on the day they are due.

**Chapter Review Paper** - The primary purpose for this 2-3 page review paper is for you to analyze, process, and apply concepts and/or theory to your personal experience and observations. Your paper should:
--Summarize the reading. Summarize the chapter. Also, describe how you felt about what you read.
--Describe the theory/concepts that resonated particularly with you and how it/they apply to something you have seen or experienced.
--If appropriate, describe something in the reading that you struggled with, and explore possible meanings for or applications of the concept or theory.

**Persuasive Campaign Proposal** – With a team to which you are assigned, you will write a two-page description of a persuasive campaign you will be conducting. The focus of each campaign is to identify one perceived challenge/problem on the TAMUCC campus. This can include issues ranging from facilities to student success post graduation to services offered.

**Persuasion Campaign** – Class teams will propose and design a persuasive campaign project using the strategies discussed in class. Your target audience will depend on the challenge/problem you address. The focus of each campaign is to identify one significant challenge/problem on the TAMUCC campus. This can include issues ranging from facilities to student success post graduation to services offered.
Tests – There will be four tests in this course. The first three tests will cover the material that is covered prior to each test. The final test will be cumulative. These tests will consist of multiple choice and true-false questions.

Classroom Participation - Classroom attendance is critical for success in this class. As a further incentive for classroom attendance, there will be 10 occasions during the semester where there will be specific group time for discussion questions. On that day, you will be awarded ten points for being a part of that discussion.

COURSEWORK EVALUATION: I grade using a point system. The total number of points for the class is 800. Each category of assignment gets the amount of points indicated above. Final grades assigned are A-F. You earn the points and I assign them. I do not “give grades.” Therefore, please do not expect nor ask me to change your grade from a C+ to B- because you feel like you deserve it, your participation was strong, or you put in a lot of effort. I will use the grading scale listed below using the assignments listed in this syllabus to be consistent and fair to all students.

GRADING SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 – 100%</td>
<td>Excellent: far exceeded all standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 – 89.4%</td>
<td>Above average: exceeded all standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79.4%</td>
<td>Average: fulfilled all standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69.4%</td>
<td>Pass: fulfilled most standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 59.5%</td>
<td>Fail: did not meet several minimum standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEAMWORK: This class involves a substantial amount of teamwork. This replicates many workplace situations, particularly in persuasion professionals like advertising, marketing, fundraising, development, and PR. It is expected that you will work as an effective team. This involves listening to each other, considering everyone’s ideas in decision making, negotiating differences respectfully, sharing power, documenting all decisions, creating written plans, noting all team members’ responsibilities, doing your fair share of all parts of a project in a timely fashion, creating and sticking to time lines, and resolving any conflicts that arise constructively. Teamwork can be the most exciting aspect of a job, or it can be draining. It’s the quality of each team member’s contribution that makes or breaks the experience. Because a considerable portion of your coursework involves teamwork, you have the power to fire a team member who does not cooperate for the following reasons: failure to attend meetings, failure to complete assignments in a timely fashion, or lack of cooperation at team meetings. To fire a team member, you must follow this procedure: (1) call a meeting to discuss the problematic group dynamics. (2) If you can’t resolve the issue as a team, you must schedule a meeting with me, your professor, and I will facilitate a group problem-solving session. (3) If the problem persists, the team must produce a written document stating the reasons for firing a group member, and there must be a signature from all team members (other than the person being fired) to indicate a unanimous decision. A person fired from a team must complete an alternative
assignment, which consists of a 15-page paper analyzing a persuasive campaign and will earn no more than a C on this assignment.

**WRITTEN WORK:** As a college course, it is expected that you will adhere to professional academic writing standards. All written work must be typed in 12-point font Times New Roman, black ink, double spaced, one-inch margins on all sides, and stapled on the top left-hand corner. All assignments for this class will conform to APA 6th edition style conventions. It is your responsibility to obtain the style guide and make sure you know how to cite sources appropriately both in the text and in the reference section. The Bell Library has APA style guides. Some online sources include:

- [http://rattler.tamucc.edu/elecre/resourceguides/citationstyleguides/CitationStyleGuidesRG.pdf](http://rattler.tamucc.edu/elecre/resourceguides/citationstyleguides/CitationStyleGuidesRG.pdf);
- [http:apastyle.apa.org/](http:apastyle.apa.org/);
- [http://citationmachine.net](http://citationmachine.net);
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/)

You are also responsible for editing your work and using correct grammar, style, and spelling. When I grade your work, I may circle errors, but it is your responsibility to use writing resources to understand and/or correct the errors so you don’t repeat them in future work. Please remember that I am a communication professor, not a writing instructor. If you want help with your writing, I encourage you to utilize the TAMUCC Writing Center. It is located in the Tutoring and Learning Center, 2nd floor of the Bell Library, room 216. An excellent free source for online writing help is [http://www.sentenceworks.com/](http://www.sentenceworks.com/)

**Attendance Policy**

**Attendance is mandatory.** You begin the class with 100 points for attendance. The first two absences will not penalize you (other than assignments due for the day’s missed). After two absences, you will be deducted 25 points per absence for the next two absences. Subsequent absences will cost you 50 points per absence.

- Each instance of an absence is considered unexcused unless you can provide documentation verifying one of the following:
  - required military service
  - you are hospitalized
  - funeral attendance for a member of your immediate family
  - a doctor’s note indicating a valid reason for your absence
- In order to receive credit for attendance, students must be on time and must remain in class for the entire class period. Attendance may be taken at the beginning, during, or at the end of class. If you do arrive late or leave early, it is your responsibility to see that the records accurately reflect your attendance on that day.

**LATE ARRIVAL TO CLASS:** I will start this class on time and expect you to be here when it starts. Late arrival disrupts class, distracts your classmates and professor, and deprives you of the course material you missed.

**WORK SUBMISSION:** A hard copy of your work is due at the beginning of class. The copy you submit should be free of printing errors. Be sure you leave adequate time to make sure your computer and printer are working properly. Make multiple backups of all your work and save frequently to avoid emergencies. I recommend
some form of portable memory so you can bring your work to campus and print it out if necessary.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**: Late assignments will NOT be accepted unless you have a documented illness or emergency. I suggest you print out your work 24 hours in advance to leave adequate time to resolve any printing issues.

**MISSING COURSE WORK**: If you miss an exam or fail to turn in an assignment on time, I will work with you to make up the work only if you have an excused absence. If you have a required court appearance, you can still turn in the assignment on time, or email it to me before the due time and date. To make up an assignment or test, you must have written documentation from the relevant authority. If you must attend a funeral, bring a copy of the funeral program and/or obituary from the paper. If you are arrested, bring the paperwork to prove it. If you are facing serious personal challenges that interfere with your work, please come talk to me and bring documentation to see if the course is manageable for you this semester, or if it is best for you to withdraw or take an incomplete.

**COMPETING TECHNOLOGY**: No competing audio/visual technology in class. Absolutely no cell phone or iPod use.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**: Plagiarism is not tolerated. Plagiarism will result in failing the class and possible expulsion from the university. If you copy three words in a row from a source, Internet, or print, you must cite the source using APA guidelines. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, come see me.

**EMAIL**: We will use official TAMUCC email addresses. Email is very convenient, but it is not foolproof. If you do not get a response to an email you sent me, I may not have received it. I often respond the same day, but please allow for a 24 hour response time, as I have many responsibilities away from my computer. Additionally, I do not respond to email during evenings or weekends when I am off work. Please plan ahead rather than emailing me the night or weekend before an assignment is due.

**STUDENT-PROFESSOR COMMUNICATION**: I have an open-door policy regarding student-professor communication for academic or classroom interaction concerns. My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus and I also make appointments when my hours conflict with your schedule. You can also email me to set up an appointment. Whenever concerns about class, assignments, or your performance arise, I prefer to address them face-to-face rather than through email, as many misunderstandings can develop through email exchanges. Thus, whenever you want to communicate with me, you can email me to set up an appointment, but please wait until we sit down together to express your concerns.

**CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION**:
- Everyone, including your professor, will speak using respectful language.
- Everyone will listen with both heart and mind, and respond accordingly.
- To support full attention on class participation, no electronic devices, including computers, cell phones, or iPods are allowed.
- Be prepared to speak at all times.
- Sleeping, reading, and side conversations are **not** allowed in class.

**GETTING SUPPORT WHEN YOU HAVE A TOUGH SEMESTER**: 
Personal or Emotional Support: Any one of us can have a problem that comes up that interferes with our ability to concentrate on our work. Fortunately, we have a great support system here at A&M, offering students free counseling. Counselors are professionals paid to listen and understand problems, and help you come up with your own solutions. They are problem-solving facilitators who empower you. They do not tell you what to do. They coach you to make your own decisions. The process of talking about an issue with a concerned professional who maintains the strictest confidentiality can be a great relief all by itself. Finding strategies to manage life’s challenges is a bonus.

I highly recommend you see a counselor if any of the following affect you:
- Mental health issues (depression, anxiety, stress, insomnia, alcohol/substance abuse, etc.)
- Time management issues
- Career dilemmas
- Relationship conflicts, abuse, breakup
- If anyone close to you has any of the above issues or problems, I would also recommend you see a counselor if their problem worries or affects you in any way.

University Counseling Center
Phone: 361.825.2703
Website: http://counseling.tamucc.edu

Academic Support: TAMUCC has a nationally-recognized Tutoring and Learning Center that offers free peer tutoring on a walk-in basis to current students and assists students with questions and difficulties in a wide variety of different courses and subject matters. The TLC also offers assistance to TSI-liable and at-risk students and houses a computer lab with print stations and scanners.

Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC)
Phone: 361.825.5933
Website: http://tlc.tamucc.edu

Career Choice Support: During college years, some of us worry about making the right career choice. We have an excellent career center to support you with these choices.

Career Services
Phone: 361.825.2628
Website: http://career-services.tamucc.edu

Career Services provides employment services such as professional resume development, opportunities to participate in on-campus interviews, workshops to develop job search skills, changes to meet and network with professionals in a particular field of study, job and career fairs, one-on-one career counseling, and an online database of job openings.

NOTICE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood
101, at 361.825.5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 361.825.3466.

**GRADE APPEAL PROCESS:** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Website at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING/ASSIGN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>Introduction/Syllabus</td>
<td>Chapter 1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Defining Persuasion/Why Study Persuasion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>Ethics and Persuasion</td>
<td>Chapter 12,16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>Ethics and Persuasion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Journal Due</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td><em>Persuasion Project Presentation</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>Laws of Persuasion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Credibility in Persuasion</td>
<td>Chapter 4, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>Nonverbal Influence</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/22</td>
<td><em>Test One</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/27</td>
<td>Language and Persuasion</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/29</td>
<td>Language and Persuasion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10/4  Persuasion Models  Chapter 3
10/6  Persuasion Models
10/11  Persuasion Project Presentations
10/13  Compliance Gaining  Chapter 11
10/18  Reasoning and Fallacies  Chapter 9, 10
10/20  Test Two
10/25  Motivation Appeals  Chapter 13
10/27  Advertising and Persuasion  Chapter 3, 14
11/1  Advertising and Persuasion
11/3  Social Media  Chapter 15
   Chapter Review Due
11/8  Social Media
11/10  Conformity and Influence in the Group  Chapter 6
11/15  Persuasion Project Presentation
11/17  Test Three
11/22  Using Persuasion in Organizations
11/29  Student Presentations
12/1  Student Presentations
12/6  Student Presentations
12/13  Final Exam (8-10:30am)

* Italics represents all due dates for semester assignments.