COMM-3330.B01
PERSUASION

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Fall 2014; Office Hours TBD

This is a Web-Blended Course.
Most content will be delivered online and it is your responsibility
to prepare before class in order to participate and earn points!
There will be little to no lecturing in this course.
Class time is devoted to active learning.

Important note on course communication and personal responsibility:

Welcome to Persuasion! I am thrilled to have you in my class and I look forward to growing and learning with
you this semester. Your questions and comments are very important to me. For record-keeping purposes, please
contact me regarding class business via the Blackboard message function only. I
will respond to your messages in a timely manner during normal business hours
(Monday-Friday 8-5 p.m.). Please use email only in case of emergency, or if the
Blackboard system is down.

Because you are a problem-solving, critical-thinking, upper-division college student,
please consult the syllabus, Blackboard, or your fellow classmates for course
information before contacting me with a question. I am always happy to help, but
you will likely find your answer more quickly among the other resources available
to you.

Many students in this class intend to make an A, and will work very hard to do so throughout the semester. This is
a wonderful goal and I am here to help you achieve it! However, if your intention is to ace this course, then I
strongly advise you to start actively working toward this goal TODAY! Read the chapters, earn A’s on your
reading quizzes, be on time with your assignments, participate in class, and perform well on your exams and
presentations. It’s that simple!

A’s are achieved by consistently exceeding the expectations of the course. A’s are not achieved by frantically
visiting me at the end of the semester because you failed to read the material, made a C on the midterm, fell short
of the time limit on your final presentation, and are now explaining to me that you “really need an A in this
class!”

Finally, I realize life happens, and that circumstances out of our control can skew our planned schedules.
However, Monday night messages with excuses about why you can’t present/show up/take a test on Tuesday are
weak! You are not weak! Absences will only be excused with proper documentation that relate to medical issues
or other University-approved reasons. Your syllabus provides more detail regarding our class attendance policy.

We are going to have a wonderful semester together, and I look forward to working with you and helping you
achieve your academic goals! To succeed in this course, please be prepared, think ahead, and conduct
yourself with professionalism during class and on all of your assignments!
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Throughout the semester, we will focus on the persuasive process of communication in everyday personal and professional life. We will discuss various theories and forms of rhetorical persuasion. Topics include, but are not limited to, practical reasoning skills, psychological theories of persuasion, and critical responses to persuasive messages. In addition to the content presented and discussed in class, students will research relevant theories, present their findings, and employ the discussion forum on Blackboard to post their own reflections.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and implement strategies to critically evaluate persuasive communication in various contexts;
2. Apply theoretical principles for effective persuasion in various contexts;
3. Create and execute a persuasive presentation that demonstrates persuasive techniques studied in the course; and
4. Demonstrate synthesis of information through analysis of scholarly journal articles pertaining to theories of persuasion.

REQUIRED TEXT: Gass, R.H. and Seiter, J. S. (2013) Persuasion: Social influence and compliance gaining. 5th edition, Pearson Education. This text will provide the beginning of our in-class discussions and will be supplemented with other materials the instructor will present. Students are required to actively read the text assignments prior to class (see schedule).

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION: Students must read before class. Discussions of material in the text – professor and students; presentation of additional material – professor and students; in-class activities (involves some group work) – students; out-of-class activities (some group work) – students; exams – instructor and students; in-class presentations – students and instructor; online discussion posts via Blackboard- students; and written analysis – students and instructor. This course requires students to make presentations in front of the class.

METHOD OF EVALUATION: The instructor will grade all exams, activities, presentations, and assignments. Students will be given criteria that will be used to grade all assignments and information below shows how each assignment fits into the final grade for the course. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss grades on assignments as grades are given and not wait until the end of the semester.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. READING QUIZZES (200 points) In order to facilitate a robust discussion during our meetings, students must read actively before class. You will be quizzed over most chapters in the book and also the course syllabus! Reading quizzes throughout the semester will add up to 200 points worth of your total grade.

2. CLASS PARTICIPATION (200 points) Students will have opportunities to participate in in-class and out-of-class activities; some involving group work. Your participation in the class throughout the course of the semester is worth 200 points of your total grade. Participation in class requires attendance in class, so be mindful that your attendance will affect your grade! (see attendance policy below).

3. Research Executive Summary (50 points) During this course, you will present an overview of one scholarly research article that is relevant to the theories or content discussed during the week in which you are scheduled. This presentation is worth 50 points of your grade. In addition to the material presented, you are required to post your executive summary to that week’s class discussion forum before class begins. The information provided in this thread will equip other students in the class with the information necessary to formulate their own conclusions or connections between the course content and outside research.
4. **ONLINE DISCUSSIONS (100 points)** Student will comment on the weekly executive summary presentations. Your discussion topic is an analysis of a fellow classmate’s research, a reflection on our class activities, or both. Your assignment includes creating a new thread to discuss your thoughts, and also replying to two other threads with your **astute, relevant, and thoughtful comments**. Online discussions are worth a total of 100 points.

5. **FINAL GROUP PRESENTATION (150 points)** Students will make a small group persuasive presentation (3-4 members per group) using all available strategies for effective speaking. The presentation should be 7 minutes long and be accompanied by an outline. Total points 150. The topic for this presentation must be approved by the instructor prior to the presentation date. Students are urged to select a topic early in the semester. Students are expected to remain in class to listen to their colleagues make their presentations. **Students MUST make their presentation on the scheduled day at the end of class. Missing your presentation will result in a ZERO grade for this assignment. BE PREPARED TO MAKE YOUR PRESENTATION.**

6. **EXAMS (300 points)** You will be graded on **2 examinations** with each covering approximately ½ of the text and course material, i.e. a midterm and a final. The exams will be objective (true/false and multiple choice) and subjective (short answer and list) and are worth 150 points each.

**GRADE CALCULATION:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes (due before class)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Executive Summary</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Discussions</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Persuasive Presentation</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade Calculation:

- **A** 90% of the total points
- **B** 80% of the total points
- **C** 70% of the total points
- **D** 60% of the total points
- **F** Lower than 60% of points

**ATTENDANCE POLICY** Attendance will be recorded every day. According to the TAMUCC Undergraduate Catalog, “Students are held responsible for attending class.” Students who attend this class will be rewarded with class participation points and online discussion assignments (worth 300 points). These two components together essentially account for 30% of your final grade! Students who miss class will not have the opportunity to engage in these important assignments.

There will be no make-ups on any assignments (including exams, presentations and online discussions) except for students with university-approved absences and medical excuses from a doctor. These students will have opportunities to make-up missed work, but it is the student’s responsibility to see the instructor.

**STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED ONE UNEXECUSED ABSENCES WITHOUT PENALTY.**

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY** As professors and students, we all want to treat each other with respect. Examples of being disrespectful are talking on a cell phone or text messaging during class; playing games on a computer or answering email; reading assignments for other courses; interrupting students or the professor; talking when someone else is talking (student or professor); walking into the room and disrupting a student when they are speaking; being overly argumentative in class with another student or professor; and using inappropriate language in class. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct,
classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom.

If you arrive late for class and we are hearing student presentations, please remain outside and enter when the student/s have finished.

**DROPPING A COURSE** I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY** Students unaware of the university’s statement on academic honesty should review it in the *Undergraduate Catalog* or *Student Handbook*. Examples of academic dishonesty and plagiarism are using someone else’s ideas and not giving them credit; presenting a paper or speech that is not originally yours; handing in assignments that are not originally yours; presenting “facts” or lifting ideas from sources without crediting the source; presenting falsified opinions and figures; cheating on an exam; or not participating in group activities, but taking credit for the product. If you are uncertain as to what actions constitute plagiarism or dishonesty, please ask your professor. Students who violate the code of honesty in this class will receive a “0” on that assignment. Any student receiving more than one “0” for academic dishonesty or plagiarism will fail the course. Note: All violations of academic honesty are reported to the dean and Office of Students Affairs who maintain documentation of such offenses for at least 5 years.

**GRADE APPEALS** Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

**BLACKBOARD ACCESS** A large portion of materials in this class will be posted and executed through Blackboard. Please familiarize yourself with the course’s Blackboard pages and make sure you know how to navigate through them. If you have difficulty, call the university’s Help Desk at 825-2825 or long distance 866-353-2491.

**EQUITY STATEMENT** All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, nationality, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this class. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially with your professor or department chair.

**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 believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.

**RETURNING VETERAN** If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services Office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING** TAMUCC colleges require that students meet with an academic advisor as soon as they declare a major in the college. The advisor will work with the student to set-up a degree plan and in the College of Liberal Arts must be signed by the student, major department faculty mentor, and department chair. CLA’s Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at 825-3466.