COMM-3330.B01
PERSUASION

Professor Kellie Smith
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Office: BH 223  Ph: 825-5750
Office Hours: Available by appointment

Spring 2017 Meeting Times: Mondays 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. OCNR 145

THIS IS A BLENDED COURSE. 50-84% of the content will be delivered online. Students must manage time and work independently outside of class to succeed in this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is a blended (face-to-face and online) 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 regularly 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.
1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION and Group Work (100 points)** Students will have opportunities to participate in in-class and out-of-class activities; mostly involving group work. You will be assigned a group at random at the beginning of the semester, and will conduct activities and homework with this group until the end of the semester. Your participation in the class throughout the course of the semester is worth 100 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)

   To identify your group members, visit our course in Blackboard. Select groups from the left hand menu. Your group member names will be listed and you have several tools to contact and communicate with them such as group messages, tasks, a discussion forum, etc. Please exchange other contact information such as email and phone numbers to ensure connection throughout the semester. You will generally sit with your group in class during the semester for presentations, in class assignments, etc.

2. **Theory Research Paper (100 points)** During this course, you will research several theories that are relevant to the persuasive topics and content discussed that week. Late in the semester, you will choose one of these theories and conduct an in-depth study of this theory. Your primary sources must be 3-5 scholarly journal articles and you must use proper APA formatting and citations for this paper. This theory research paper should be 3-5 pages long and is worth 100 points of your grade. You will post your paper to the theory research discussion forum by the provide deadline date and time. You will be graded on the thoughtfulness, quality, and formatting of your paper.

   For a comprehensive overview of proper APA formatting, visit [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/)

3. **Theory Thursdays - ONLINE DISCUSSIONS (200 points)** Every Thursday you will explain a new theory that pertains to the persuasion content that we covered in class that week. You may choose a theory from the textbook readings, or from an outside source. Your post must include 1) an introduction and explanation of the theory as it pertains to persuasive communication and 2) an example of a scenario that employs this theory.

   You are responsible for replying to THREE OTHER STUDENTS with your astute, relevant, and thoughtful comments. Each original theory posting must be approximately FIVE well-developed paragraphs to receive full credit. Responses should be approximately 3 well-developed paragraphs. Grades will be assigned based on quality of original post and quality of responses to other students.

   There will be little tolerance for laziness or informality in these posts. Check your spelling, capitalize proper words, and pay attention to how your writing reflects your work ethic. Your grades will reflect the quality of your thoughts and the quality of your writing.

4. **FINAL GROUP PRESENTATION (200 points)** Students will make a group persuasive presentation using all available strategies for effective speaking. The presentation should be approximately 15 minutes long and be accompanied by an outline. Total points 200. 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 attend class to listen to their colleagues make their presentations. Because of the large number of students in this class, students MUST make their presentation on the day they are scheduled. Missing your presentation will result in a ZERO grade for this assignment.

5. **EXAMS (400 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 200 points each.
GRADE CALCULATION:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Discussions</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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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 worth 100 points. 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 THREE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WITHOUT PENALTY. Students with more than three unexcused absences will lose one percentage point off their final grade average for every unexcused absence beyond the third.

For example, at the end of the course, Pat has earned 910 points, or a 91% average in the class. However, Pat had four unexcused absences during the semester and missed two of the online discussion assignments (which count toward Pat’s attendance). Therefore, Pat has a total of SIX unexcused absences, which is three beyond the allowed. Pat will lose 3 percentage points off the final grade, resulting in an 88%. Unexcused absences will affect your grade!

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** As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf ). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean's Office.

**DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATIONS** 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 Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

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.

**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.

**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** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>Class Discussion &amp; Activity</th>
<th>HOMEWORK FOR NEXT CLASS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 23</td>
<td>Syllabus &amp; Intro to class</td>
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| January 30  | Chapter 1: Why Study Persuasion?  
Chapter 2: What Constitutes Persuasion?                                                         |                          |
| February 6  | Chapter 3: Attitudes & Consistency,  
Chapter 4 – Credibility                                                                       |                          |
| **February 13** | No Class Meeting on this day – prepare for Chapter 5 Communicator Characteristic Challenge with group |                          |
| Feb 20      | Chapter 5: Communicator Characteristics                                                     |                          |
| Feb 27      | Chapter 7: Language & Persuasion  
Chapter 8: Nonverbal Influences                                                               |                          |
| March 6     | **MIDTERM EXAM**                                                                            |                          |
| March 20    | Chapter 10: Sequential Persuasion  
Chapter 11 Compliance Gaining                                                                |                          |
| ***March 27*** | TBD                                                                                       | **COMM WEEK**             |
| April 3     | Chapter 13 Motivational Appeals  
Chapter 14: Visual Persuasion                                                                |                          |
| ***April 11*** | **COMM WEEK**                                                                                | **STUDENT PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS** |
| ***April 17*** | Planning Final Persuasive Presentations.                                                    | **STUDENT PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS** |
| April 24    | **STUDENT PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS**                                                        |                          |
| May 1       | **STUDENT PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS**                                                        |                          |

Tuesday May 12