Persuasion

Course Description

Persuasion is designed to be an exploration of the theories of social influence, which guide much of today’s communication research. This class will encourage interaction and exchange between class members; this means that you will be required to keep up with the readings so that you will be able to participate in class discussions. Lecture recordings and PowerPoint slides that elaborate on the readings and weekly content will be posted for your academic consumption.

The sum of what you learn in this class may be one of the ultimate cases of “news you can use.” Not only are you subjected to hundreds of attempts at influence every day (in the form of commercials, billboards, print ads, etc.), but you will be expected throughout your life to be competent at persuading others (in business meetings or job interviews, for example). In this class, you will learn what makes an attempt at persuasion successful and how to resist being persuaded when you choose.

Course Objectives

1. To learn about the major areas of study in the field of persuasion.
2. To provide opportunities for the analysis of persuasive techniques.
3. To understand how theories of persuasion can aid the comprehension of everyday circumstances.

Required Materials:

Computer with Internet access and word processing software


Major Course Requirements:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five (non-cumulative) exams</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-paper</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
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Mini Paper—50 points

You will be asked to write a 3-4 page (double-spaced) paper adhering to the following criteria:

- **Describe** a principle of persuasion. Do not just state which principle or theory you are using. Use only one theory. You must demonstrate a thorough understanding of it by describing it in detail.
- **Cite** at least 3 scholarly sources for the information you use in your paper using APA format (textbook does not count).
- **Describe** an instance where you put this principle of persuasion into practice. This part of your paper should be no more than one full page.
• Evaluate the success of your attempt. Describe why it did or did not work, according to the theory/principle.
• Write no more than 4 pages and no less than 3 full pages of text in APA format (extra spacing and headers will be removed). Write them well.

Exams—250 points
There will be an online test at the end of every unit. These will be considered open-book, open-note, but limitations will be set in Blackboard to minimize time spent searching for answers and/or collaboration.

Activities—200 points
Throughout each unit you will be asked to complete supplemental activities (e.g., discussion board posts, short written assignments, Internet searches for example material, etc.) designed to help you engage with your classmates and gain a deeper understanding of course material.

Final Grading Scale: This scale is based on a point system and not a percentage; therefore, grades will not be rounded up. If a student earns 399 points they receive a “C” in the course not a “B”. All grades are final unless a miscalculation has occurred. Grades will be regularly updated on Blackboard throughout the session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>500-450</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>449-400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>399-350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>349-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>299 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will be held to a high standard of performance in all sections. To receive an "A" in this course, your work must be significantly better than that which passes for acceptable work. This course is academically rigorous and time-consuming, and it will require a lot of you to do well. You must do all the work that is required of you according to the instructions provided in order to be successful in this class.

The professor will not hold grade negotiation conversations with students. Often students state that they “need” a particular grade in a class in order to maintain scholarships, financial aid, membership on teams or in organizations, etc., and ask for extra points to raise their grades. This is unfair to the other students in the course who have earned their grades without being offered extra points, and it also detracts from the integrity of the grading scale in the course. An A holds little to no value when it is given to students who did not submit A quality work. It hurts your future job prospects when employers see As on your transcript, expect you to deliver A work using related skills, and you can’t do it because you didn’t actually earn those As (for further information, see Grade Appeals.)

Online Policies

Online courses can at times present unique challenges to both students and instructors in terms of building rapport, communicating with clarity, and ensuring that course obligations can be met via the use of (sometimes troublesome) technology. As such, it will be your responsibility to ensure the following:

• Have consistent access to a reliable computer and Internet connection. Without access to Blackboard, you will not be able to access the course and/or complete assignments. Lack of access to BB or the Internet is not an excuse for incomplete work. *Please note: Blackboard can be fickle at times, and often the Internet browser you are using can interfere with its functionality. If you are having
difficulty accessing BB or getting it to work properly, use a university computer and/or a different browser (e.g., Firefox, Chrome, or Safari – NOT Internet Explorer).

- Contact your professor ASAP if you do not understand any part of the course content and/or assignment specifications. It is better to ask before you proceed than to work for a long time and find out later that you were doing something incorrectly.
- Keep a close eye on the course calendar and what is due each week. Since we are on a weekly schedule and will not meet in person, it will be to your benefit to make a weekly to-do list of class assignments, activities, etc.
- If you know you will be traveling, working, or otherwise occupied around the due date/time for the week’s work, plan accordingly to submit early. No extensions will be granted for students’ inability to get online and submit work by the deadline.

The professor will make every effort to do the following:

- Answer emails within 36 hours (or sooner), and offer the option to call if student needs additional clarification about course materials.
- Provide detailed instructions for each course assignment and explain how coursework is graded.
- Write BB announcements to update students about what is happening in the class.

**Attendance**

Given that this is an online class, there is no formal attendance policy in terms of “you must be here, at this time, on these days.” Class attendance will be accounted for by your active participation in all course assignments. You will be expected to complete several activities each unit, thus your attendance will be noted via participation points and turning in assignments. Additionally, there are no make-ups for assignments, as you may complete the work at your own pace, on your own schedule for each unit. You always have until 11:59 p.m. at the end of a unit to complete that unit’s work (unless instructed otherwise).

**Class Behavior**

The professor expects each individual student to show their classmates the utmost respect at all times. The professor intends to treat each student with the highest levels of courtesy and respect and expects that behavior in return. If you have further questions about these expectations, please refer to the Code of Student Conduct. Offensive remarks posted within group discussion environments (i.e., racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise hateful remarks) will result in a report to the Dean of Students.

**Communicating with Professor**

Communication will be very important in this class, as we will interact solely online. You are expected to communicate primarily via university email. If you do not wish to use your university email, please ensure that you are having your messages forwarded to another reliable email account. You are responsible for receiving and reading any and all email messages the professor may send; using a non-university email account is not an excuse for not receiving an email. You should generally expect a response to emails within 36 hours. Phone calls may be scheduled on a case-by-case basis if the need arises.

Regardless of whether you agree with a grade or whether you are frustrated by the difficulty of an exam or any other issue, you must behave professionally at all times, per University policy.

- When emailing, please use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Do not use forms of spelling that are commonly accepted when texting with your friends.
- When emailing, introduce yourself as a student and provide your name.
- When emailing OR in person, demonstrate basic common courtesy and adhere to accepted norms of politeness.
Using Technology

For any technology related issues, please contact the IT help desk at (361) 825-2825. Your professor, although knowledgeable about course-related technology, is unable to assist you with account lockouts, expired passwords, incompatible equipment and/or software, etc. Please contact the IT help desk FIRST with these issues, and notify your professor if you are unable to access course materials after contacting IT.

Late Work
There are NO makeup opportunities for late work.
Failure to complete and submit assignments by 11:59 p.m. at the end of a unit will result in a zero.

Assignments can be found on the course schedule. The professor will also post on Blackboard detailed Assignment Specifications for each major assignment, and shorter notes about participation exercises. It is your responsibility to know what is expected from you each unit. Assignments must be turned in according to the instructions provided by the professor.

*Note: Computer/printer/software malfunction is not a valid excuse for late or missing assignments. The college provides computers that are available for your use and are compatible with most assignments you are given.

Absolutely no coursework will be accepted past the final due date for the course (August 9, 11:59 p.m.), and no Incompletes will be issued unless the student presents with a university-approved reason for taking an Incomplete.

Academic Integrity:

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism.

In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/, and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in penalties ranging from a zero on that assignment up to and including a report filed with the Dean of Students.

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.

Dropping a Class:

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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** 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. (July 29) is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Grade Appeals:

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, **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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, **Student Grade Appeals**. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

For grade concerns in this class, students must discuss the issue with the professor no less than 24 hours after a grade is issued, but no more than up to the date the next major assignment is due. Grade concerns should include specific questions about feedback given, questions about opportunities for improvement on future assignments, and/or evidence that the numeric value of the grade was added up incorrectly. Grade concerns should NOT include whining about how “hard” the grading in the course is, how a student’s grade differs from another’s, or complaints that information on how to complete the assignment wasn’t given. You will be given detailed assignment specifications for each major assignment that include a grade breakdown in the form of a rubric and/or evaluation form. Failure to read and follow these instructions does not constitute an excuse to complain about a grade. You must read everything that is provided for you in this class in order to understand exactly what you are being asked to do for each assignment. Failure to read information is a sure way to do poorly in the class.

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 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.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Right of Revision:**

This syllabus and the information contained within it are subject to change without notice. The instructor always reserves the right to modify the course at any time.

**Schedule of Classes**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Dates</th>
<th>Book Chapters</th>
<th>Related Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Chapters 1-3</td>
<td>Unit 1 Activities and Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8-7/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Chapters 4-6</td>
<td>Unit 2 Activities and Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/15-7/22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Chapters 7, 9-10</td>
<td>Unit 3 Activities and Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/22-7/29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Chapters 8, 12</td>
<td>Unit 4 Activities and Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/29-8/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>Chapters 13-15</td>
<td>Unit 5 Activities and Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/5-8/9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL 8/9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mini Paper Due by 11:59 p.m.</strong></td>
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