

## Communication Studies 3400--Persuasion

### General Information

Instructor: Dr. John S. Seiter

Office: Main 308

Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:30-11:30 and by appointment

Office Phone: 797-0138

To leave message: 797-1209 or email: john.seiter@usu.edu

Text: Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2014). Persuasion, Social Influence and Compliance-Gaining (5th edition). Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Class meets: TTh 10:30-11:45 in Old Main 201

### Goals of the Course

The primary goal of this course is to provide you with an introduction to theories, principles, and strategies of social influence as they apply to everyday, interpersonal, face-to-face contexts in which influence attempts take place. You should gain familiarity with findings from empirical investigations on persuasion, social influence, and compliance-gaining, and will learn about strategies and techniques of persuasion relating to a wide variety of real-life communication contexts, situations and settings.

### Graded Assignments

1. Exams (3 of 'em) which will consist of true/false, multiple choice and essay questions. Each exam will be worth 50 points. Please bring a blue book.
2. Persuasion awareness paper. Your paper should examine the ways in which some persuasion variable has affected you. It should also examine how you have tried to persuade others. 2 pages. Details to follow. Worth 15 points.
3. Group project. In groups you will write a paper about persuasion while pretending to be consultants. After reviewing the literature, write a 6-8 page paper illustrating how some person or group can use persuasion in some applied context. Worth 75 points. (Your group members will be responsible for assigning 5 of your possible points).
4. Participation. You should be prepared to ask and answer questions, provide thoughtful commentary, and engage in meaningful discussions of the assigned readings by the due dates listed in the syllabus. this will require that you do more than "skim" the reading material. A consistent pattern of lack of preparation to discuss assigned reading will result in a poor participation grade. You may miss up to 2 class meetings, for any reason, without penalty. Additional absences will hurt your grade. Worth 10 points.

### Grading Policy

Total point possible=250

Grades will be assigned according to the following distribution of total course points: 0-59%=F; 60-62%=D-; 63-66%=D; 67-69%=D+; 70-72%=C-; 73-76%=C; 77-79%=C+; 80-82%=B-; 83-86%=B; 87-89%=B+; 90-92%=A-; 93-100%=A.

## **General Policies**

1. **Deadlines:** all assignments will be announced sufficiently in advance to allow for thorough preparation and timely completion. All assignments must be turned in ON or BEFORE the due dates. Late assignments will be accepted for full credit only where serious, compelling and verifiable cause can be shown--such determination to be made by the instructor. Late assignments will be penalized severely.
2. **Make up exams** are usually not an option. A make up exam must be arranged before the test date. Be prepared to document your excuse.
3. **Attendance.** Absences do not excuse students from assignments due on the dates of their absences. If you are tardy and do not sign the roll sheet, you will be counted as absent.
4. **Writing style:** All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced and proof-read for typographical and spelling errors. You should pay proper homage to syntax and grammar. You will be graded on the quality of your writing style as much as on the substance of your ideas since, for me, the meaning and importance of ideas are inseparable from the language through which they are conveyed. A complete reference must be provided whenever you refer to the words, ideas, statistics or other information provided by an author. Failure to do so counts as plagiarism.
5. **Academic Integrity Policy:** The department is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on exams or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course.
6. **Electronic copies of papers** will not be accepted.
7. **Students with ADA-**documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435)797-2444 voice, (435)797-0740 TTY, (435)797-2444 VP, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with advance notice.

## **Tentative Schedule**

| <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>Topic</u></b>                               | <b><u>Readings</u></b> |
|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| 8/26               | Intro to Course/Why Study Persuasion              | Chapter 1              |
| 8/28, 9/2          | What Constitutes Persuasion?/Ethics               | Chapter 2              |
| 9/4, 9             | Attitudes and Attitude Measures/Learning Theories | Chapter 3 (pp. 43-57)  |

|              |   |                       |
|--------------|---|-----------------------|
| 9/11, 16, 18 | Congruity and Dual Process Theories                           | Chapter 3 (pp. 58-69) |
| 9/23         | Midterm prep  |                       |
| 9/25         | <b>Midterm</b>  |                       |
| 9/30, 10/2   | Source Credibility/Communicator/<br>Receiver Characteristics  | Chapters 4 & 5        |
| 10/7, 9      | Conformity and Influence in Groups                            | Chapter 6             |
| 10/14        | Language and Persuasion                                       | Chapter 7             |
| 10/16        | Attend Friday classes   |                       |
| 10/21        | Language and Persuasion continued                             | Chapter 7             |
| 10/23, 28    | <b>Papers due</b> (on 28 <sup>th</sup> ). Nonverbal Influence | Chapter 8             |
| 10/30        | Structuring and Ordering Messages                             | Chapter 9             |
| 11/4         | Midterm prep  |                       |
| 11/6         | <b>Midterm</b>  |                       |
| 11/11, 13    | Compliance gaining/Sequential Persuasion                      | Chapters 10 & 11      |
| 11/18        | Deception   | Chapter 12            |
| 11/20        | No class--John is at a conference                             |                       |
| 11/25        | Deception   | Chapter 12            |
| 11/27        | Happy Thanksgiving!   |                       |
| 12/2         | Motivation, Visual, Esoteric                                  | Chapters 13, 14, 15   |
| 12/4         | <b>Group projects due.</b> Ethics-Wrap up                     | Chapter 16            |
| 12/10        | Final Exam 11:30-1:20 am                                      |                       |