

Communication Studies 5400: Advanced Persuasion

General Information

Instructor: Dr. John S. Seiter

Office: Main 308

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

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Text: Seiter, J. S., & Gass, R. H. (2004). *Perspectives on Persuasion, Social Influence and Compliance-Gaining*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Class meets: T/TH 9-10:15 a.m. Old Main 006

Prerequisite

Speech 3400: Persuasion (or equivalent course)

Course Aims & Goals

The primary goal of this course is to provide students with a solid grounding in theories, principles, and strategies of persuasion as they relate to everyday life. Although we will review some material from Speech 3400, Advanced Persuasion departs from the earlier course in several ways. First, while the earlier course was designed to provide a broad and general view of the field of persuasion, this course is designed to provide depth. Selected theories that were merely skimmed in the earlier class will be carefully examined and evaluated. Second, some newer, cutting edge special topic areas will be discussed. Third, compared to the earlier course, this one will focus more on the importance of context in producing and responding to persuasive messages. Fourth, to cover more material, there may be less correspondence between lectures and the book material so students will have to rely less on lectures to understand the book (If you have trouble understanding, I am available during office hours though). Finally, this course serves as a bridge to applications in the real world and/or to graduate level work in the area of persuasion. As such, students will play a large role in presenting much of the material.

Graded Assignments

1. "Theories on Parade" presentation: A brief presentation (either alone or with other class members, depending on the size of the class) explaining a theory or model of persuasion to the class. The presentation should explain the nature of the theory, its origin, scope, tenets, strengths, and weaknesses. The report should review existing research on the theory. The report should also be accompanied by a handout for each class member that includes a summary of the theory. The report should be 8-10 min. long, depending on the size of the class. See the separate assignment sheet that provides details on the requirements for the report. Worth 25 points.

2. Protest Music as Persuasion presentation: Either alone or with partners (depending on the size of the class), you will select a protest song, play it for the class, and analyze the ways in which it functions persuasively. The presentation will be 8-10 minutes. Worth 10 points.

3. Group presentation persuading the class to donate to some a charity or cause: A presentation trying to persuade the class on why money (provided by the instructor) should be

donated to a particular charity or cause. Each group will “compete” for the donation. For this assignment, you will do the following: 1) identify a charity or cause that you believe is worthy; 2) prepare a presentation using what you’ve learned about persuasion and the charity/cause; 3) deliver a presentation, no longer than 10 minutes, to the rest of the class, trying to convince your audience that your charity is a good one (note: do not argue against the other charities in your presentation. Only focus on your own charity); 4) turn in a one page summary that explains what theories or principles of persuasion helped you create your case; 5) if you “win,” you must make sure the money gets delivered to the charity. (After you present, the rest of the class will vote on which charity most deserves the money. Scores will be averaged since some groups may contain more members). Worth 50 points.

5. Paper: Each student will turn in a 5-6 page paper 1) exploring how persuasion operates within a specific context or arena; 2) reporting on some variable related to persuasion; or 3) describing an original educational activity or exercise designed to teach a concept from the field of persuasion. Worth 50 points.

6. Exams: (3 of 'em) Each exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice and essay questions. Each exam will be worth 100 points.

7. Participation and Peer evaluation: Participation is an essential part of your success in this class. Showing up (on time) is step one, but simply being in class is not enough. I also expect you to be engaged, which includes resisting distractions (e.g., cell phones, cheeseburgers), listening effectively to others, participating in class activities, asking helpful questions, and offering examples of content. Indeed, participation, I suspect, is often confused with talking a lot in class. While I do hope you will be prepared to ask and answer questions, provide thoughtful commentary, and engage in meaningful discussions, I hope you’ll also realize that participation sometimes means monitoring your own “talking time” in a way that allows and helps others become involved as well. You may miss up to 2 class meetings, for any reason, without penalty. Additional absences will hurt your grade as will excessive tardiness. Scores from group members on your group project can also affect your participation points. Worth 15 points.

Grading Policy

Total point possible=450

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+; 70-67%=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. Written work should reflect upper level writing ability. I only want your best work. Your writing style should display your thinking ability, your ability to understand theories and concepts, and your ability to read and comprehend published empirical studies. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and carefully proof-read for typographical and spelling errors. All papers should be free of obvious grammatical and syntactical errors. A complete reference must be provided whenever you refer to the ideas, words, data, or other information from published sources. Failure to do so constitutes an act of plagiarism. References must conform to A.P.A. Style Manual guidelines.
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.

Tentative Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1/8	Intro to Course/Why Study Persuasion What is persuasion? History of Field	Preface, pp. 9-11, Chapters 1, 2, 3
1/10, 15, 17	Compliance Gaining and Persuasion in Selling Contexts/Assign Theories on Parade topics	Chapters 12 and 19
1/22	Film	
1/24, 1/29	Theories on Parade	Chapters 11 and 4
1/31	Prep for Exam	
2/5	Exam 1	
2/7	Elaboration Likelihood Model Unimodel of Persuasion	Chapter 5
2/12, 14	ELM/Credibility and Accounts	pp. 91-93, Chapter 6
2/19	Argumentation and Communicator Characteristics	Chapters 7 & 8
2/21	Language	Chapters 9

2/26	Nonverbal Influence	Chapter 10
2/28	Music as Persuasion	None
3/5	Prep for Exam	
3/7	Exam 2	
3/11-15	Spring Break!	
3/19, 21	Protest Music Presentations	
3/26, 28	Extended Parallel Process Model	pp. 181-183, Chapter 13
4/2, 4	Deception, Papers due (4th)	pp. 239-247 (the rest of the chapter is optional)
4/9, 11	Resisting Persuasion and Propaganda	pp 265-268, 273-280
4/16, 18	Charity Presentations	pp. 287-288, Chapters 16, 17, & 18
4/23	wrap up and exam prep	
4/25	Final exam at 9:30 to 11:20 am	