Course Syllabus
COM 464
Theory and Practice of Persuasion
Summer 2018

Instructor: Dr. Sang-Yeon Kim
Email: sangyeon@uwm.edu

(https://www.amazon.com/gp/offer-listing/0205698182/ref=dp_olp_all_mbc?ie=UTF8&condition=all)

Description: This class introduces introductory theories and practices of persuasion and compliance gaining. Three major goals of this class involve (a) familiarizing with persuasion theories in general, (b) enabling students to use theories in explaining and analyzing real life incidents of persuasion/compliance gaining, and (c) empowering to create theory-driven persuasion/campaign strategies/messages in the domain of student’s interest.

Course Objectives: Through course readings and quizzes, students will learn to (a) understand the fundamentals of diverse persuasion theories and the mechanisms through which those theories operate in reality. Essays and class discussions will provide students with the opportunity to (b) analyze various social events where persuasion theories are in action (e.g., compliance gaining, TV commercials, public campaigns dealing with health, corporate, or political issues), (c) apply the theories to formulate a defensible public campaign in the issue domain of the student’s interest.

Assessments
(a) Understanding: Quizzes 1-6
(b) Analysis: Essays 1-6
(c) Application: Individual Projects

Learning Outcomes: In general, the quizzes are to promote student’s theoretical knowledge. The essays and class discussions are intended to improve critical/creative thinking and effective written communication skills.

Basic Course Structure: This course comprises six learning modules, each of which is completed in one week. Each module requires student to (a) read assigned chapters, (b) take a quiz, (c) write a short essay in relation to the assigned readings, and (d) provide feedback on essays written by classmates. (a) and (b) will complete by Wednesday, and (c) and (d) will be completed by Friday each week (see Course Schedule). All daily assignments will be posted on D2L by the first day of class. Five drafts of Individual Project (IP) are due Tuesday each week except Week 5. All daily assignments will be posted on D2L by the first day of class.

(a, b) Readings and Quizzes: Students read a chapter and take a quiz by Wednesday of each module. Students may decide to read chapters ahead of time. But it should be noted that content-specific questions may appear in quizzes and inability to memorize details may lead to a lower grade.
(c, d) Essays and Responses: By Friday of each module, students write a short essay in relation to the assigned reading and posts it on a designated discussion board. Each essay should exceed 300 words in length. The essay must represent a thorough understanding of the given topic. Arguments must be fully elaborated yet presented succinctly.

Student then reads at least two essays written by other classmates and leaves comment longer than 200 words each. Essays and responses must be posted on the discussion board directly, NOT as an attachment. Comments, whether they be an agreement or a disagreement, must be content-specific. Responses containing no arguments, just summarizing the target essay, or just being nice e.g., ‘I liked your essay’ or ‘I liked how you wrote’ will be considered as non-response.

(e) Individual Project: The most prominent goal of persuasion would be to ‘change’ whether it be one individual’s behavior or attitudes, social norms, or legal system. Society is being changed constantly toward more positive directions (e.g., reduced smoking population, fair treatment of people of color, spread of pro-environmental attitudes) thanks to those who practice persuasion with good will. Still, there remains much room for our society to improve; racism, continuing unhealthy eating habits, etc. This course requires students find one such problem of our society and come up with a theory-based campaign plan. Individual Project (IP) comprises four interim phases, and each student submits the fifth or the final draft by integrating the works done in the previous four stages and instructor’s suggestions. The scope of IP encompasses 1) electing one most serious social problem which can be addressed using public campaigns (opp. laws, regulations), 2) speculating potential causes of the problem, 3) documenting factual data regarding what has been done to solve the chosen problem and what has NOT been done so far, 4) coming up with a theory-driven campaign plan, including specific messages and execution strategy, that can lessen the severity of the problem. From the second draft, students are required to locate and cite at least one supporting scholarly source. Secondary online sources lacking in authority or expertise (e.g., Wikipedia, etc.) will be considered illegible. It is student’s responsibility to acquire skills necessary to locate scholarly journals in the main library. All five IPs are due by Tuesday from the second week.

Evaluation: Student’s performance will be evaluated using the following criteria.

1. 6 Quizzes: Each quiz contains up to 30 questions from readings assigned for each module. Regardless of the number of questions, each quiz will be graded such that the maximum score becomes 30. Quizzes will be given in a mixture of true-false and multiple choice questions. Each quiz will remain posted on D2L throughout the week. Quizzes submitted after due will be ignored. A time limit will be enforced such that students use one minute per question. In case of a 30-question quiz, 30 minutes will be given for example. At end of each module, quiz scores will be curved such that the top student receives full 30 points.

2. 6 Essays and Responses: Students can earn up to 30 points from each class participation. 15 points will be assigned to the essay and the rest 15 points to the two responses. Good essays and responses are (a) to the point, (b) well elaborated, (c) content-specific, and (d) conforming to the word limit (i.e., 300 and 200 for essays and responses, respectively), (e) logically sound, and (f) creative. Failure to meet these criteria may result in a lower grade. Essays or responses submitted after due will be ignored unless accompanied with verifiable emergent situations.

It is beyond instructor’s ability to read and grade all essays and responses considering the volume of the class. Instead, instructor randomly selects and reads 5 essays each week for grading and providing
written feedback. Essays and responses NOT selected will receive the whole 30 points each week. The random selection will be conducted with replacement, meaning one student’s essays can be selected multiple times or consecutively.

3. **Individual Project (IP):** A maximum of 200 points will be awarded for IP. The 200 points will be allocated as follows:

   - Draft 1: 20 pts
   - Draft 2: 30 pts
   - Draft 3: 40 pts
   - Draft 4: 50 pts
   - Final: 60 pts

Specific guidelines regarding contents to be included and page limits will be announced on Monday of the week each module begins. The instructor may not accept papers that were submitted late or failed to follow the format specified below.

**Paper Format:** Each draft of Individual Project (IP) must be SINGLE-spaced, has 1-inch margin on all four sides, be written in 12pts Times New Roman font. Written works violating any of these formatting guidelines may not be accepted for grading. As English composition is a prerequisite for this course, the grader will expect that each submitted paper includes few grammatical errors and is properly organized. Papers disallowing for a smooth reading will subject to low grades without regards to the quality of the contents. **It is strongly recommended that students consult with tutors at the writing center (http://www4.uwm.edu/writingcenter) before submitting written works.**

**Time Commitment:** It is anticipated that students spend a minimum of 144 hours to complete this course. At least 24 hours are to be committed to complete each module; 7 hours for reading assigned essays, preparing and taking the quiz; 7 hours to comprehend, and generate answers (including independent literature search) to, essay questions; 3 hours to produce a minimum of two peer reviews; and 7 hours on average working for the IP (e.g., idea development, independent research, writing).

**Discussion Etiquette:** Findings from empirical studies indicate that, in online conversations, people tend to feel less inhibited to engage in undesirable communication behaviors (e.g., using derogatory terms, name calling, etc.). This course will NOT tolerate any of those communication misconducts. Particularly, (a) criticisms toward peer writers instead of their written product or (b) use of racism-laden comments will result in a substantial point deduction from the participation score AND a warning from the instructor. **Discussants who received a second warning will be excluded from, and fail out of, the entire class.**

**Important Rules**

1. Student initiates communication with instructor through Q/A Board on D2L. Please refrain from emailing instructor unless it is an emergency.
2. Questions posted on Q/A Board will be answered within 24 hours.
3. Instructor assumes that student read the syllabus thoroughly on Day 1. Point deductions resulting from NOT reading the syllabus is student’s responsibility and may be considered unreasonable excuse.
4. **Submitting quizzes, essays, or responses after due because of technical problems (e.g., not having access to the Internet or D2L at the moment, problems with computer) may NOT be**
excused as an exception. It is student’s responsibility to have all necessary tools and access to D2L up and running throughout the semester. Please contact UWM helpdesk at 414-229-4040 should you need assistance.

5. Academic misconduct including cheating and plagiarism will be tolerated under no circumstances, and students involved will fail out of the course immediately.

Course Policies

1. The Communication Department’s Grievance/Grade Appeal policy is available at http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/communication/policies/ under “Course Grade Grievance Procedure.” Consistent with Letters and Science policy, a student has 30 working days after the action that triggered the appeal to file with the Department’s Grievance Officer Nancy Burrell (nburrell@uwm.edu).

2. This course observes all university policies. (https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/1895R3_Uniform_abus_Policy.pdf)

Point Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points per each</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Quizzes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Essays and Responses</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Individual Project Drafts</td>
<td>20, 30, 40, 50, 60</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Grading Scheme

- **A** 93% and above
- **A-** 90%~92.9%
- **B+** 87%~89.9%
- **B** 83%~86.9%
- **B-** 80%~82.9%
- **C+** 77%~79.9%
- **C** 73%~76.9%
- **C-** 70%~72.9%
- **D+** 67%~69.9%
- **D** 63%~66.9%
- **D-** 60%~62.9%
- **F** 59.9% and below
# Tentative Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 0      | **Course Introduction**  
  Greetings  
  Technology Test |
| 1      | **Why Study Persuasion?**  
  **What Constitutes Persuasion?**  
  Agenda 1 posted (Read CH. 1, 2; pp. 1-40)  
  Quiz 1  
  Discussion 1 posted  
  **Essay 1 Due**  
  **Response 1 Due**  
  **Individual Project Draft 1 Due** |
| 2      | **Attitudes and Consistency**  
  **Conformity and Influence in Groups**  
  Agenda 2 posted (Read CH. 3, 6; pp. 41-71, pp. 116-140)  
  Quiz 2  
  Discussion 2 posted  
  **Essay 2 Due**  
  **Response 2 Due**  
  **Individual Project Draft 2 Due** |
| 3      | **Credibility**  
  **Communicator Characteristics and Persuasibility**  
  Agenda 3 posted (Read CH. 4, 5; pp. 72-115)  
  Quiz 3  
  Discussion 3 posted  
  **Essay 3 Due**  
  **Response 3 Due**  
  **Individual Project Draft 3 Due** |
| 4      | **Language and Persuasion**  
  **Nonverbal Influence**  
  **Structuring and Ordering Persuasion Messages**  
  Agenda 4 posted (Read CH. 7-9; pp. 141-203)  
  Quiz 4  
  Discussion 4 posted  
  **Essay 4 Due**  
  **Response 4 Due**  
  **Individual Project Draft 4 Due** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5      | **Sequential Persuasion**  
          **Compliance Gaining**  
Agenda 5 posted (Read CH. 10, 11; pp. 204-247)  
Quiz 5  
Discussion 5 posted  
**Essay 5 Due**  
**Response 5 Due** |
| 6      | **Deception**  
          **Motivational Appeals**  
Agenda 6 posted (Read CH. 12, 13; pp. 248-291)  
Quiz 6  
Discussion 6 posted  
**Essay 6 Due**  
**Response 6 Due**  
**Final Individual Project Due** |