

**COMMUNICATION STUDIES 4160: PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION
FALL 2014**

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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE

REQUIRED TEXTS

Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice (5th edition)*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

O'Keefe, D. J. (2002). *Persuasion: Theory & Research (2nd edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wilson, S. R. (2002). *Seeking and resisting compliance: Why people say what they do when trying to influence others*. Sage.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

CMST 4160, *Persuasive Communication*, explores how communication helps form, transform, repair, maintain, and dissolve attitudes. In particular, this course will focus on interpersonal influence, but other forms of persuasion will be discussed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Welcome to *CMST 4160: Persuasive Communication*! This class is designed to provide students with a theoretically-based understanding of persuasion. The objectives of this course include (1) acquainting you with the conceptualization of persuasion as a communication phenomenon, (2) increasing your awareness of the role persuasion plays in daily life, (3) helping you improve several of your communication skills that are relevant to successful persuasion, and (4) developing your appreciation for scholarly research in the field of persuasive communication.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation (25%)

This course will rely on a “seminar” style of teaching that emphasizes discussion over lecture. Students should come to class prepared to ask questions about and critique relevant readings. I reserve the right to give “pop-quizzes” on days where it appears students are not fully engaged or have not fully prepared and on days where the majority of students prioritized some other aspect of their lives.

Quizzes can:

- test you on the reading you were supposed to do prior to coming to class.
- test you on the material we have covered to date.
- occur at the end of a particular class and test you on the material covered in that class.
- test your retention of information presented by a classmate.

So, on each day of class you will be assigned a letter grade corresponding to your overall participation for that day. My judgment of this will be based on your participation in class discussions (i.e., saying something relevant or asking an interesting question) and, if applicable, your score on any quiz given that day.

In terms of your participation in class discussion, grades will be assigned as follows:

- F = not coming to class
- D = coming to class and dozing off, playing on an electronic device, doing a crossword puzzle, or otherwise doing something that is not directly relevant to class; if group work, not fully participating as a group member
- C = coming to class and sitting quietly, taking notes, and seeming to pay attention; if group work, being a participant but more of the silent type than of the “I have an opinion” type
- B = coming to class and fully participating in any group related activities
- A = coming to class and saying ONE interesting thing or asking ONE interesting question; if group work, fully engaging and presenting at least one of the ideas of the group when called upon, critiquing other groups’ ideas

Your final participation grade will be an average of all your daily participation grades. At any point in the semester if you have questions about where you stand with regard to participation, please see me.

Analysis and Application of a Persuasion Concept (15%)

At one (1) point in the semester you are to bring to class an example of some concept and to present how that concept is applied in some context. These examples can be media-based like advertisements, television shows, and movie clips; interpersonally-based like your friends

attempting to gain your compliance or an overheard conversation; or your own hypothetical and informed reflections.

The example can be based on any material we have discussed to that point in the semester. Presentations will consist of a one-minute introduction of the concept, a 2-3 minute presentation of the material, and a one-minute commentary of how it is a relevant application of your chosen concept.

On the day you present, you must have a grading rubric (printed from Moodle) to receive a grade. No more than two students can present per class period. Failure to complete this assignment because you procrastinated is no excuse – students have failed this assignment because the proverbial clock ran out. Please do not be that student.

Analysis and Application of a Persuasion Theory (30%)

This assignment will focus on a single theory of persuasion in the health communication context. This theory, called the Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM), extends from prior theory, has a great deal of research support, and is extremely practical in its focus.

The assignment is divided into four essay assignments, each comprising no more than 2 pages, typewritten and double-spaced, will require that you (1) explain the EPPM, (2) summarize a study that tested the EPPM, (3) apply the EPPM to critique a health campaign, and (4) compare the EPPM to another theory of persuasion. Details for each of the essays is provided in a document posted on Moodle, and due dates are given below. Your best 3 grades on the essays will each be worth 10%. If you are happy with the first three grades, you can skip out on the fourth essay.

Essay	Due Date
1	Sept. 29
2	Oct. 20
3	Nov. 7
4	Nov. 17

Note: These dates are the last day I will accept the assignment. Don't feel you have to wait until them – I really like early work!

Semester-Long Project (30%)

You have two choices for your semester-long project.

1. Design a research study to explore some aspect of persuasive communication and turn in a 10-15 page paper.
2. Apply concepts and theories to your potential career choice and turn in a 10-15 page paper.

Final papers are due in class the Wednesday after Thanksgiving (i.e., Dec. 3). The grade you earn on the final project will be reduced a half a letter grade for each 24 hour period the paper is late. No exceptions outside of the list of “valid” excuses listed on the syllabus.

All students are required to consult with me at least once by the week of September 29 - October 3rd by making a formal appointment that will last a minimum of 15 minutes. For the first option,

students may choose to work in groups of up to 5. All students choosing the second option must work independently.

TWO “EXTRA CREDIT” OPTIONS

1. You may choose to write a fourth essay (remember, for the essay assignment your best 3 of 4 count) and count that as “extra credit.” The essay will be graded as normal (i.e., doing it does not equal getting extra credit). The grade you earn will be multiplied by 3%, and the resulting product will be added to your course GPA.

Please note that if you choose to write the fourth essay for “extra credit” your other three essays will necessarily count toward your final course grade, at 10% each. So, the fourth essay can either be used to replace an essay grade OR can act as extra credit.

2. If you need to use your fourth essay as a replacement grade, you may choose to take an essay-based final examination and count that as “extra credit.” The grade you earn will be multiplied by 3%, and the resulting product will be added to your course GPA.

The exam will be take home and will consist of your answering 5 essay questions that cover topics discussed in class during the semester. Please note that “take home” does not mean “easy” or “non-stressful”. If anything, my expectations are higher for a take home examination than if I were giving an in-class final. You must indicate that you will opt for this replacement and the percentage you wish to allocate toward the final exam (and thus take away from the final project) in writing by November 17th. By writing I mean a piece of paper with the words “I am opting to take the take home final examination, and I wish that examination to count as extra credit” to be turned into me no later than November 17th at 12:31 pm. This piece of paper must be hand delivered. No emails or papers turned in by classmates or friends will be accepted. For those that opt into the take home final, it will be posted on Moodle no later than November 26, and it will be due during the designated final examination time through Moodle. As a normal expectation, all students are required to work ALONE on the take home final. Any suspicion of cheating will be reported directly to the Dean of Students in accordance with LSU policy.

Please note: You may choose only one of these two options.

Suppose, for instance, that after completing all assignments you have a 3.56 (B+).

- A on the fourth essay or final exam = $4.0 \cdot .03 = .12$; $3.56 + 0.12 = 3.72 = A-$
- A- on the fourth essay or final exam = $3.67 \cdot .03 = .11$; $3.56 + 0.11 = 3.67 = A-$
- B+ on the fourth essay or final exam = $3.33 \cdot .03 = .10$; $3.56 + 0.10 = 3.66 = B+$

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

The grade you EARN for this class will be based on a formula that weights the assignments by their respective percentages. **For all assignments, you will earn a letter grade** that corresponds to the “meaning of grades” found below. These letter grades will correspond to a traditional 4.0 scale, where a 4.0 equals and grade of “A” as follows:

A+ = 4.33	C = 2.0
A = 4.0	C- = 1.67
A- = 3.67	D+ = 1.33
B+ = 3.33	D = 1.0
B = 3.0	D - = .67
B- = 2.67	F+ = .33
C+ = 2.33	F = 0.0

As a rule grades will not be discussed until at least 24 hours has passed since the examination period. During this time you are to review the material in an effort to figure out why you did better or worse than you anticipated. **The purpose of this rule is to encourage an intellectual rather than a strictly emotional discussion of your grade.**

As an example suppose you earned the following grades:

Class Participation	A
Analysis/Application of Concept/Theory	A
Analysis/Application of Theory	B+
Semester-Long Project	A-

Your final grade would be calculated in the following manner:

$$(4.0)(.25) + (4.0)(.15) + (3.33)(.30) + (3.67)(.30) = 3.7 = \mathbf{A-}$$

If you need help figuring this out at any point in the semester, please see me!!!

THE MEANING OF GRADES

- A - Excellent work.** The student went above and beyond assignment expectations. Furthermore, the student has represented mastery of course material, both conceptually and pragmatically.
- B - Above average work.** The student completed the assignment with more effort than average. B work is good work, but still has room for improvement.
- C - Average work.** The student completed the assignment as specified by the assignment description. No more than “effort as expected” was achieved. Minimum requirements were met, minimum effort was put forth.
- D - Below average work.** The student seemed unsure of assignment specifics and did not complete said assignment in a satisfactory manner. There were both conceptual and pragmatic holes in the presentation.
- F - Poor/Failing work.** Student was not prepared for and/or did not execute the assignment properly. There are large holes or missing information.
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AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office for Disability Services (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Reading
1	I. Key Questions A. What is persuasion? B. What is the focus of persuasion? C. How is persuasion possible? D. Is persuasion ethical? E. Why study persuasion?	O'Keefe, Ch. 1, pp. 1-5
2-3	II. Statistical and Methodological Issues in Persuasion Research A. A primer on methodology in the study persuasion B. Statistics as informed argument C. How to read an academic article	O'Keefe, Ch. 7
4	III. Receiving and Processing Persuasive Communication A. The Concept of Attitude (Chapter 1, pp. 6-28; Chapter 2; Chapter 3)	O'Keefe, Ch. 1, pp. 6-28; Ch. 2; Ch. 3
5-12	B. Primary Theories in the Study of Persuasion 1. Theories of Behavioral Intention (Chapter 5) 2. Inoculation (Chapter 10, pp. 246-253) 3. Cognitive Dissonance (Chapter 4) 4. Dual-Process Framework (Chapter 6) C. Message Factors (Chapter 9) D. Source Factors (Chapter 8) E. Heuristics (Cialdini)	O'Keefe, Ch. 5 O'Keefe, Ch. 10 O'Keefe, Ch. 4 O'Keefe, Ch. 6 O'Keefe, Ch. 9 O'Keefe, Ch. 8 Cialdini
13-15	IV. Persuasion as Engaged by a Source A. Persuasive Message Production (Wilson, Chapter 1) B. Compliance Gaining (Wilson, Chapter 2; Chapter 3)	Wilson, Chs. 1-3

Notes: This is a tentative outline. I do not promise to follow it strictly. Announcements about required readings will be made in class and will not be posted. Students who do not come to class will have to gather this information from those who do (or be uninformed).