

Theories of Persuasion
 Fall, 2019
 Dr. Woodward

The purpose of the course is to explore persuasion theory and research in its historical and modern contexts. Our focus on persuasion models allow us to predict what may be going on “inside” members of a targeted audience. By the end of this course you should (1) have a greater awareness of persuasion processes, (2) have a vocabulary in place to assess and critique messages, and (3) be able to demonstrate skill in designing messages and understanding their possible limitations. Class attendance is important. Regular attendance is a predictor of a Peitho higher final course grade. Note that the readings add important breadth to your knowledge of persuasion. All concepts covered in the course are in the readings. But some may not be the subject of in-class discussions. Stay current with assigned text chapters and the additional readings.

Syllabus

Meeting	Class Topics	Readings
Aug 27 30	<u>Overview of the Course: Project, Readings, Exams</u> Cases and definitions Persuasion as a subject of study Strategic and Peer to Peer Models Dominance of Minimal Effects & boomerangs Hollywood conceptions of persuasion: "brainwashing," conversion and "subliminal" messages How interest in persuasion developed	WD 1 and 2
Sept 6	<u>Persuasion, and Language</u> Potency of language forms Expressive and Instrumental language Linguistic determinism: Sapir/Whorf	WD 3 ARTICLE: Knowles and Linn “Importance of Resistance” Web: What could possibly go wrong?
10	<u>Audiences, Attitudes and Behaviors</u> Assessing audience norms Demographics and targeting Social learning and the process of persuasion Groupthink, skills and laugh tracks Primary, Secondary and Unintended audiences	WD 7 and ARTICLE: Cialdini, et al, “Managing Social Norms for Persuasive Impact” Web: Grace Under Pressure
13	<u>The Process of Identification</u> Audience models Identification by similarity and ideology Mirroring, the idea of misidentification Identification and film Case Study: Bill Clinton at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial	ARTICLE: Woodward, Idea of Identification: Misidentification
17	<u>Overview of Health Campaign Assignment</u> Inoculation, fear-drive, two step flow, rates of change, and common pitfalls	ARTICLE: Atkin, “Promising strategies”
20	<u>Major Social-Psychological Models of Persuasion</u>	WD 6
24	Dissonance and Induced Discrepant Behavior Theory	Web: Character and

the Confidence to Not Know

Inoculation theory
Social judgment theory
Attribution Theory
Modeling Theory
Elaboration likelihood theory
Motivated Sequence
Theory of Motivated Reasoning
The Mistake of the Logic/Emotion Distinction

- 27 Applications of the Models: anti-drug and anti-tobacco campaigns
- Oct 1 Review of Theories and Models: first part of course
- 4 Exam
- 8 Credibility and Authority **WD 5**
Three meanings of credibility
Measuring source credibility: problems and research
Sleeper effect
Persuasion strategies in high and low credibility settings
The Authoritarian Personality
Credibility and the placebo effect
Web: Questioning Questionable Sources
- 11 Personality, Persuadability and Advocacy
Profiling Effective Persuaders on key variables: Other direction, high self-monitoring, Dialogical responsiveness
Project Parts I and II due. Include project title, Parts 1 and 2, and Bibliography (with sources identified in the paper) Maximum of 5 pages including bibliography
- 15 Persuasion Campaigns in the Mass Media **WD 8 pp. 163-170**
Features of Media-Based Campaigns
Ad and issue campaigns: strategies, problems, examples
Social Marketing Campaigns
Assessing advertising: needs, positioning, targeting
- 18 Message Design and Message Variables **WD 9 Web: Knowing by Seeing**
- 22 Strategic considerations for discursive and non-discursive messages
Voicing written messages/fonts/pull quotes
Visual images/visual persuasion
Ignoring and considering opposition arguments
Message order effects, risks of dilution
- 25 In class feedback session for print ad (Bring hard copies of drafts to class for feedback from the group)
- 29 Interpersonal Persuasion Models **WD 8, pp. 158-163**
Advantages of direct advocacy over mediated messages
Nature of interpersonal power and control
Drug advertising and reverse two-step flow
Web: Are We Losing Our Children to Conversational Silence?
- Nov 1 Overview of Project Message Analysis (Part 4)

- 5 Political Persuasion
 - Major features of political persuasion
 - Current power of oppositional politics
 - Persuasiveness of paid versus free media
 - Advertising: samples and effects of attack ads

WD 8, 170-183
Web: The Oppositional Turn

8 Review of major theories and concepts: second half of course

12 Early Round: Oral summaries of projects

Nov 15 Open

19 Oral summaries of health/lifestyle campaign projects

22 " " " " " "

26

Dec 3

6

Final Exam during finals week.

READINGS: TEXT: Gary C. Woodward and Robert E. Denton Jr., Persuasion and Influence in American Life, Eighth Edition (WD) Note new paper edition. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland) **ARTICLES** (Available on Canvas): Robert B. Cialdini, et al., "Managing Social Norms for Persuasive Impact," *Social Influence*, 2006 1 (1), 3-15; Woodward, "The Idea of Identification: Misidentification and its Sources;" Knowles and Linn, "The Importance of Resistance to Persuasion;" Atkin, "Promising Strategies for Media Health Campaigns." There are also readings on the **WEB** (identified by title) at theperfectresponse.com. They are linked in the *Canvas* course website. You can also use the index, *Published Posts at theperfectresponse.com*, to locate them. Be sure to keep up with the chapters in the text and the readings. The readings and project research work are the work of the fourth hour in the course.

Assignments/evaluations/weighting of final grade:

1. Two Exams, 20% each
2. Class Presentation of Persuasion Concept, 10%
3. Health or Lifestyle Campaign Project Parts I and 2, 20%
4. Health or Lifestyle Campaign Project Parts 1-4, with emphasis parts 3 and 4, 30% of final grade.

Class Presentation of Persuasion Concept: *Prepare and present an informal presentation on the course concept/idea, starting with the text's or reading's description. See description, topics and dates on the last page of this syllabus. Use it to note the topic you have signed up to present.*

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As a subject, persuasion remains an open-ended kind of inquiry. For this and other reasons, we welcome and celebrate the diversity of individuals reflecting different backgrounds and experiences.

HEALTH OR LIFESTYLE CAMPAIGN, ALL PARTS. READ CAREFULLY

The four-part project should include: **Part 1**, a short research paper on the nature and scope of the high-risk behavior or health problem you want to address. (No recycled topics from prior or concurrent work in other Communication Studies)

courses, please.) In **Part 2** identification of the target audience for the messages, and your specific persuasive objective. *Be sure to include the following headings in this part:*

“Action Step of Campaign:” (insert final specific wording of the action step. Shoot for a headline worded as an injunctive norm.)

“Specific Target Audience:” (insert final specific description of the target audience)

“Source:” (the group or organization whose name will be attached to the messages you prepare

First two parts due Mar 15. Part 3: Two campaign messages will be constructed in two different formats: one 6-panel brochure, and one print ad. **Part 4:** An extended analysis of the two messages. In this important section you should worry about message success by applying theories, ideas and models from the course. What do various models and theories predict for these messages and their likely effects on the audience? And why will they work or fail? *No e-mail submissions, please. At the end of the semester submit all four parts of this project in hard copy and in a single folder.*

Success on the project will be measured in how well each of these parts are completed, with special emphasis on clearly presented and explained theoretical justifications in part 4. The final project--including all four parts--should be submitted as a single project with consecutive numbered pages, in a folder or envelope, and with materials not exceeding an 11 X 8 1/2 format. The paper should be no longer than 13 pages, excluding messages and bibliographies. (**Due May 7**).

In addition to all four parts, the final completed project be certain you include a (1) a bibliography of sources used in documenting the problem and (2) a second “messages” bibliography that credits sources of **all** images and text used for your own messages. Do not rely on anonymous online sources. Include research from authored sources, such as journals or high-quality newspapers. Be extremely careful to credit sources used in putting the project together. You are obligated to indicate which facts, quotes, slogans, photos, etc. used from other sources. Use a standard in-text/bibliography citation form for your paper. (For online sources cite author’s name, title of specific article, indicate that it is an online source, and name the sponsoring organization, and date you accessed the source. If the article has no author or title or apparent sponsoring organization, don’t use it.) Papers without bibliographies will be returned.

Oral summaries of projects begin in late April. You will be assigned a date. On that date, in about eight minutes, extemporaneously remind us of the problem you chose, the target audience, and the action step you seek. Show us one of the messages, and using ideas from the course, explain why it may be effective and/or problematic.

A number of preventable diseases and conditions can be viewed via the Center for Disease Control's health topics list at: <http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm>. Please observe the following guidelines for this class: Make every effort to attend all of the class meetings. Superior students attend most sessions and actively participate in the discussion of course ideas. **Note that exams and final oral presentations cannot be made up unless arrangements are made in advance.**

Preferred Topics for the Com 310 Project:

Health and Lifestyle Choices

Stay in (high) school**

Teen sexuality/abstinence/consent

Avoidance of alleged “exploitative”
brands or retailers**

Contribute time as a volunteer

Risks of breast implants/elective surgery

Advocacy of unusual therapies

GMO food is safe

Risks of over-exposure to screens

Conflict management for boys

Advocating for “slow medicine” when
appropriate**

Doping in high school athletes**

Credit card abuse among college students**

Dangers of contact sports for children/teens**

Stopping tobacco use in high risk groups**

FAS pregnancy and drinking**

Removing guns from the home**

Avoiding sweatshop produced goods**

Pet adoption over pet store purchases

Unrealistic weight ideals for wrestlers,

dancers, etc.
Avoid carrying a credit card balance
Excessive exposure to high *db* sound**
Warnings on college binge drinking**
Helping a friend with alcohol or drug dependence
Don't buy war toys
Joining Teach for America
Risks of hormones in U.S. milk/meat**
Contribute to public higher education
Mental health services for men**
Fewer clothes, better clothes
Caution against stereotyping toys for kids
Vaccinate your children**
Become a tutor
Avoid opioids

Advantages of meditation
Avoiding Meat-based diets**
Childhood obesity**
Advocacy of seatbelt use**
Avoiding aggressive driving
Cell phone or texting use while driving**
Levels of use of television, games, or
 other sedentary activities**
Avoiding unprotected sex
Protecting against STDs/HIV**
Opt out of Facebook**
Getting high-school students to stay in school**
Parents should follow AAP advice
 of allowing teens access to the
 “morning after” pill**
Avoiding foods with antibiotics
Have an advocate with you when hospitalized

Don't buy bottled water
Walking/biking as lifestyle alternative
Caution on cell phone addiction
Overuse of Ritalin and Adderall for ADHD**
High fat or high sodium diets
Excessive screen time**
Sedentary lifestyle
Signing up teens for organ donation
Reject store plastic bags
Exercise at 10,000 steps a day
Working your values: one or two
 careers you should consider
Opting children in to early preschool
Risks of diet pills or stimulants
Risks of elective cosmetic surgery**
Parents reading to children
Leaving an abusive relationship**
Motorcycle helmet use in Pa. and
 other states where not required**
Don't buy leather or fur
Don't smoke around your children**
Before meds, try talk therapies first
Control excessive gambling
“Over scheduled” children**
Advantages of home schooling
Support live music
Helmets for families in “Tornado alley”
States or countries to boycott because of
 regressive social policies**
Make a Living Will
Advocating HPV immunization for adolescents**
Help protect local mosques
Buy only sustainable fish

All are the “default” areas for the project. The greater the persuasion challenge, the better. The best topics (***) are those that require a significant change in attitude or behavior in the target audience.

Class Presentation of a Persuasion Ideas and Concepts

Prepare an informal presentation on one course concept/idea, starting with the text's or reading's description. Use examples: from the text, but also add your own. Invite questions. Make the presentation no more than 10 mins. Limit PowerPoints to key words on one slide. (A reminder: there's a difference between ‘showing’ and ‘explaining.’ Work for complete and clear explanations.) The instructor or class may add comments or questions during the presentation. Two can sign up on topics with two spaces. No make-ups. If dates change, they will be announced in class. (C=available on Canvas)

Topics are listed in the sequence, but dates can shift.

China as a partly 'closed society' _____ (Chapter 2) 2/1

Lynn and Knowles Four Forms of Resistance (2) _____ 2/5 C

Polysemy/"All communication is translation" _____ (Chap. 3) 2/5

Fronting _____ (Chapter 7) 2/8

Digital contagion & Digital Peer to Peer persuasion (add some additional examples) _____
_____ (Ch 7)

Primary, Secondary And Unintended Audiences (Chapter 7)

_____ 2/8

Cialdini Research; Injunctive And Descriptive Norms C

_____ 2/8 or 12

Theory Motivated Reasoning _____ (Chap. 6) 2/22

Motivated Sequence _____ (Chapter 6) 2/22

Truth Campaign _____ 2/26 (Research online)

Three Meanings Of Credibility _____ (Ch. 5) 3/12

Knowing by Seeing _____ 3/29 C

Visual Monuments to Loss _____

Are We Losing Our Children to Conversational Silence? 4/9 C

_____ Tannen's Feminine and Masculine Communication Styles _____

The Oppositional Turn _____ 4/16 C