

Syllabus COMM 4010-01 Persuasion Dixie State College Fall, 2006

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Office: Eccles, 104

Office Hours: 12:00-2:00pm, M/W/F, or by Appointment

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Textbook: Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility, 11th ed. Charles U. Larson.
Thomson/Wadsworth. Belmont, CA. 2004

Readings: Special readings will be assigned occasionally during the semester. Copies of these will be on closed reserve in the library. You will be notified of their availability.

NOTE: “If you are a student with a medical, psychological, or learning disability or think you might have a disability and would like accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center (652-7516) in the Student Services Center. The Disability Resource Center will determine eligibility of the student requesting special services and determine the appropriate accommodations related to their disability.”

General description of the course:

There is widespread agreement among experts from a variety of disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, anthropology, business, public relations, and communication) concerning the importance of Persuasion, how to achieve it, how to recognize it, how to employ it ethically. For many individuals the most significant moments and events of their lives revolve around persuasion. Whether it's buying a car, or selling one, or asking your professor to change your grade, or to excuse you from an exam (students are never successful at this), or where to go with a significant other, or when to leave, or what to do while you're there.....the list is endless. The role played by persuasive communication in the initiation, development, maintenance, and deterioration of our lives cannot be minimized. This course is designed to give you practical and theoretical insights into the role played by persuasive communication by making your personal behaviors, thoughts, and talk more effective and ethical. The primary goal for the semester is to understand the effects of persuasion on you as well as how you persuasively affect those around you and to learn to effectively apply the theories and concepts that you will study in the weeks ahead.

Course Goals:

1. Understand the importance of attending and listening to the other person, and portray listening behaviors that demonstrate your understanding.
2. Transfer an understanding of communication fundamentals to the social contexts experienced in everyday life.
3. Recognize the important, meaningful roles that non-spoken behaviors fulfill during our communication interactions.

4. Understand the axioms of persuasive communication and its principles and ethics.
5. Evaluate the interplay between the persuasive source and the responsive audience.
6. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the perceptual process of communication.
7. Apply active listening and its principles in your persuasive communication.
8. Explain the nature of trust and be able to define and build that trust.
9. Distinguish between different audiences by correctly analyzing their needs, values, general tendencies, and all ethical considerations applicable to a specific audience.

1. Class Activities: Class time will be a combination of lecture and discussion. My lectures are usually based on our text and other assigned readings but I will often refer to material and/or personal life experiences not discussed in either of them. It is vitally important that you keep up with the readings for each assigned day and be prepared to participate in the discussions. I will talk about specific theories from the assigned readings (and additional sources, as well) during the first 20 minutes or so of each class. I will **assist** you in applying those theories, concepts, etc. to relational settings, developments, and predictions during the class discussions by bringing in appropriate examples from my own life. *It is important to be able to apply the theories to your everyday lives.* In addition, we will engage each other in a number of experiential activities that are designed to provide you with an immediate, practical opportunity to understand how these theories/concepts play out. These activities are part of your participation grade and will frequently be accompanied by a short, written homework assignment.

2. Class requirements:

- a) **Exams:** There will be three exams given this semester – 2 ‘content to date’ (CTD), and a *final that will be cumulative*. The exams **may** be a combination of true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short written answer. Review time and study sheets will be provided prior to each exam.
- b) **Persuasive Message:** Each person in class will design, develop, and apply [as well as test for effects] a major, persuasive effort (your choice) aimed at a specific audience (your choice). The persuasive effort will demonstrate success or failure based upon a post-application analysis of the target audience. This assignment will be articulated in depth and detail later in the semester.
- c) **Practice Analysis:** Each student will attend to and analyze at least one influential message as presented by a current politician or other person attempting persuasion. Being able to analyze persuasive messages is a critical thinking skill. Successful persuasion is the life-blood of a politician. What makes some of their messages more influential than others? What makes some politicians more persuasive than others? (More detailed information will be forthcoming as we move through the semester).
- d) **Class attendance and participation:** Each student is expected to attend class regularly. There is no such thing as an "excused absence", but if you let me know ahead of time, I tend to be more understanding should you choose to be absent. Also, you are required to

orally participate in the daily classroom proceedings. Your contributions can be anecdotal, theoretical, conceptual, poignant, angry, and even funny; **but plan on being actively involved!** Since this is a communication class and because I am a firm believer in the educational philosophy that we can **all** learn from one another, everyone is expected to participate in class. Please don't be shy. Also, if you don't show up for class, you can't very well participate. **There is no such thing as turning something in late.** It just won't happen!

The second component of your **Participation Grade** involves the occasional **POP QUIZ** that will be drawn from the chapter we are currently investigating. These are unannounced and serve to reveal the extent of your reading comprehension as well as areas that might need more attention.

3. Extra Credit: You may have a desire or need to explore options for extra credit during the semester. If at any time you find that you would like to pursue an area of interest directly related to Persuasion, please talk to me about your interest and we will arrive at a mutually acceptable topic/project and determine a point value for your work.

Graded Assignments: CTD Exams = 30%; Final = 15%; Persuasive Effort = 30%; Persuasive Message analysis = 10%; Attendance/Class Partic = 15%. (These are approximate).

Point Value (all values are approximate) Scale: CDT Exams = 70pts ea.; Final = 125pts; Persuasive Effort = 150pts; Persuasive Message analysis = 50pts; Attendance/Class Partic = 3pts per day in class (approximately 16 X 3 X 3 = 144pts).

Grading Scale: A = 600+ to 540; B = 539 to 480; C = 479 to 420; D = 419 to 360; F = 0 to 359. (Again, all values are approximate)

SCHEDULE OF ALL THE IMPORTANT EVENTS:

(The dates include a two-week block and begin with a Monday, ending on a Friday)

WEEKS 1 & 2: 8/22-9/1 Orientation to the course. Basic Comm Models.
Read Chaps 1 & 2 in your text.
Discussion of readings. Possible political message to discuss.
Labor Day: 9/4: No classes!

WEEKS 3 & 4: 9/4-9/15 Read Chap 3 in your text. Discuss readings.

WEEKS 5 & 6: 9/18-9/29 Read Chaps 4 & 5 in your text. Related exercises and discussion. **Semester Break, October 12 & 13: No Classes!**

- WEEKS 7 & 8: 10/2-10/13 Read Chap 6 in your text. “What did you mean by that Behavior.” Related exercises and discussion. **The 1st CDT Exam! – 10/13**
Exam to cover Chaps 1-6 & assigned outside readings.
- WEEKS 9 & 10: 10/16-10/27 Read Chap 7 & 8 in your text. Related exercises. **Persuasive Message Analysis Due! – 10/27**
- WEEKS 11 & 12: 10/30-11/10 Read Chaps 9 & 10 in your text. Related exercises and discussion. **The 2nd CTD Exam – 11/10!**
- WEEKS 13 & 14: 11/13-11/24 Read Chaps 11 & 12 in your text. “The Dark Side of Relationships!” Related exercises and discussion.
All Extra Credit is Due!
Thanksgiving: November 22-24! No Classes!
- WEEKS 15 & 16: 11/27-12/8 Read Chap 13 & 14 in your text. Related exercises and discussion.
Persuasive Effort & Analysis Due! – 12/8!!
- WEEK 17: 12/11-12/15 **Final Exams! Final Exam (cumulative)...**Please check the Fall Schedule, page 5, for the time/day of the Final Exam for this class.

The preceding syllabus represents a general, goal-oriented, intention on our part. We may speed things up, or slow them down, depending upon our progress as the semester unfolds. You can rest assured that we will cover all the material by the end of the semester, and that means you are responsible for it.

NOTES:

- 1) If you would like to hand in example pages of any written assignment at any time during the semester in order that I might provide feedback on your progress, please feel free to do so! Bring them by my office for discussion, or email (an attachment) a copy of them to me.
- 2) All electronic devices must be inoperable during class time. “Inoperable” means just that: no vibrate, tickles, clicks, etc. These include, but are not limited to: cell phones, pagers, digital cameras, head phones/music, chainsaws, jackhammers, etc. I will, however, allow my lectures to be taped using an audio tape recorder. Please ask for permission.
- 3) **Plagiarism** will not be tolerated! Plagiarism is defined as the use of scholarly work by other researchers/writers where you claim that work as your own. Any assignment containing plagiarized info will receive an “F” as the least severe level of punishment. More severe instances could result in failing the class and/or expulsion from the College. Please don’t do it! If you’re having difficulties with time, etc., please seek me out and I’m sure that I will be able to recommend an appropriate course of action to enable you to meet the needs of the assignment.
- 4) I will place an occasional reading assignment on reserve in the library. You will have to go

to the library, check out the item, read it, and return it within a specified time. In every case, you will be responsible for the content of the reserved items because it will appear on your scheduled exams.

5) The study of Human Communication includes, of course, developing competency in written, spoken, and behavioral instances. Typos, misspellings, unprofessional or sloppy written work are not qualities of a competent communicator. Vulgar language in class, or any disrespectful behavior directed towards anyone will not be tolerated! You are an adult and will be treated as such. Please reciprocate adult treatment to others at all times.

I'm looking forward to a terrific class! **Good Luck!**