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	Overview of the Course: Project, Readings, Exams	**WD 1 and 2**
30	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	
Sept 6	Persuasion, and Language	**WD 3**
	Potency of language forms	**ARTICLE: Knowles and Linn**
	Expressive and Instrumental language	**"Importance of Resistance"**
	Linguistic determinism: Sapir/Whorf	**Web: What could possibly go wrong?**
10	Audiences, Attitudes and Behaviors	**WD 7 and ARTICLE:**
	Assessing audience norms	**Cialdini, et al, "Managing Social Norms**
	Demographics and targeting	**for Persuasive Impact"**
	Social learning and the process of persuasion	
	Groupthink, shills and laugh tracks	**Web: Grace Under Pressure**
	Primary, Secondary and Unintended audiences	
13	The Process of Identification	
	Audience models	**ARTICLE: Woodward, Idea of**
	Identification by similarity and ideology	**Identification: Misidentification**
	Mirroring, the idea of misidentification	
	Identification and film	
	Case Study: Bill Clinton at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial	
17	Overview of Health Campaign Assignment	**ARTICLE: Atkin, "Promising strategies"**
	Inoculation, fear-drive, two step flow, rates of change, and common pitfalls	
20	Major Social-Psychological Models of Persuasion	**WD 6**
24	Dissonance and Induced Discrepant Behavior Theory	**Web: Character and**

Inoculation theory   **the Confidence to Not Know**
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   **Web: Questioning Questionable Sources**
Measuring source credibility: problems and research
Sleeper effect
Persuasion strategies in high and low credibility settings
The Authoritarian Personality
Credibility and the placebo effect

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   **Web: Are We Losing Our Children to**
Nature of interpersonal power and control   **Conversational Silence?**
Drug advertising and reverse two-step flow

Nov 1   Overview of Project Message Analysis (Part 4)

5	Political Persuasion	**WD 8, 170-183**

   5   Political Persuasion   **WD 8, 170-183**
      Major features of political persuasion   **Web: The Oppositional Turn**
      Current power of oppositional politics
      Persuasiveness of paid versus free media
      Advertising: samples and effects of attack ads

   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.

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READINGS: **TEXT:** Gary C. Woodward and Robert E. Denton Jr., <u>Persuasion and Influence in American Life</u>, **Eighth Edition** (WD) <u>Note new paper edition.</u> (Long Grove, Il: Waveland) **ARTICLES** (Available on Canvas): Robert B. Cialdini, et al., "<u>Managing Social Norms for Persuasive Impact</u>," Social Influence, 2006 1 (1), 3-15; Woodward, "<u>The Idea of Identification: Misidentification and its Sources;</u>" Knowles and Linn, "<u>The Importance of Resistance to Persuasion;</u>" Atkin, "<u>Promising Strategies for Media Health Campaigns</u>." 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, <u>starting with the text's or reading's description</u>. 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 s*ubmit 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

	Advocating for "slow medicine" when
Stay in (high) school**	appropriate**
Teen sexuality/abstinence/consent	Doping in high school athletes**
Avoidance of alleged "exploitative"	Credit card abuse among college students**
brands or retailers**	Dangers of contact sports for children/teens**
Contribute time as a volunteer	Stopping tobacco use in high risk groups**
Risks of breast implants/elective surgery	FAS pregnancy and drinking**
Advocacy of unusual therapies	Removing guns from the home**
GMO food is safe	Avoiding sweatshop produced goods**
Risks of over-exposure to screens	Pet adoption over pet store purchases
Conflict management for boys	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, <u>starting with the text's or reading's description.</u> Use examples: from the text, <u>but also add your own.</u> Invite questions. Make the presentation no more than 10 mins. <u>Limit PowerPoints to key words on one slide.</u> (A reminder: there's a difference between 'showing' and 'explaining.' <u>Work for complete and clear explanations</u>.) 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**