

COM 6504 - PERSUASION

Syllabus

(Tuition refund cannot be made on dropped classes after the first week of class.)

Course Instructor

Merle Wm. Ziegler

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Course Description

The course is a study of the communication principles and techniques for attitude and behavioral change of groups and society. The course examines persuasion techniques used in all forms of communication: interpersonal, group, and media.

Course Rationale

Persuasion is conceived as the co-creation of options for meaningful action by the use of symbols. The college catalogue describes this course as “a study of the principles and techniques for attitude and behavioral change of groups and society.” Indeed, this course examines persuasion as a means of changing attitudes and actions of others. But people may relate to persuasion in at least two ways: as one who attempts to change another’s thinking or doing or as one who analytically evaluates and responds to the persuasive attempts of others. This course focuses attention on both of these approaches.

Text

Dillard, James P & Shen, Lijiang (2012). *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice.* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Course Objectives

1. Students will increase their understanding of the pervasiveness of persuasion in our modern world.
2. Each student will understand several ethical approaches to persuasion and begin at developing their own ethical standards.
3. Each student will be able to implement Rank’s model as a critical receiver of persuasive messages.

4. Each student will cite theoretical approaches to persuasion as derived from quantitative and qualitative research.
5. Each student will be able to explain the thesis of several theories of language and symbol use.
6. Each student will be able to identify the three process premises: needs, attitudes, and consistency.
7. Each student will be able to identify the content premises.
8. Each student will be able to identify cultural premises.
9. Each student will be able to identify and develop persuasive messages and campaigns.
10. Each student will be able to identify media and advertising's use of persuasion and propaganda.

Instructional Procedures

- Study and class discussion of the principle of persuasive communication as presented in assigned reading.
- Written and oral reports on specific applications of persuasion.
- Lecture, which imparts theoretical and cognitive aspects of persuasive communication.
- Practical activities that provide the student with opportunity to apply persuasion.

Policies

Participation Policy:

- Active and thoughtful participation is expected in all class meetings. The expectation is that you have read and digested all assigned readings prior to the class period.
- It is expected that students maintain high moral integrity. The official university policy is, *“Mississippi College students are expected to be scrupulously honest. Dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism . . . or furnishing false information, including forgery, alteration or misuse of College documents, records, or identification, will be regarded as a serious offense subject to severe penalty, including, but not limited to, loss of credit and possible dismissal.”* (Consult the recent issue of the *Mississippi College Student Handbook* or University Policy 2:19 for specific information regarding academic honest.)

Special Accommodations:

In order for a student to receive disability accommodations under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, he or she must schedule an individual meeting with the Director of Student Counseling Services **immediately upon recognition of their disability** (if their disability is known they must come in before the semester begins or make an appointment **immediately** upon receipt of their syllabi for the new semester). The student must bring with them written documentation from a medical physician and/or licensed clinician that verifies their disability. If the student has received prior accommodations, they must bring written documentation of those accommodations (example Individualized Education Plan from the school system). Documentation must be current (**within 3 years**).

The student must meet with SCS **face-to face** and also attend two (2) additional follow up meetings (one mid semester before or after midterm examinations and the last one at the end of the semester). Please note that the student may also schedule additional meetings as needed for support through SCS as they work with their professor throughout the semester. Note: Students must come in **each semester** to complete their Individualized Accommodation Plan (example: MC student completes fall semester IAP

plan and even if student is a continuing student for the spring semester they must come in again to complete their spring semester IAP plan).

Student Counseling Services is located in Alumni Hall Room #4 (near the Post Office) or they may be contacted via email at mbryant@mc.edu. You may also reach them by phone at **601-925-7790**. **Dr. Morgan Bryant is director of MC Student Counseling Services.**

Syllabus modifications:

Every effort is made to adhere to the published course syllabus however; the professor reserves the right to make any needed changes so as to facilitate the overall progress in the course and/or needs of the students taking the course.

Assessment:

Attendance	10%
Participation grade	10%
Précis and class presentation	15%
Premise Paper/Reports	10%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological premise • Logical premise • Cultural premise 	
Persuasive speech analysis	15%
Research Paper	20%
Examinations	20%

Description of assignments:

Examinations: Examinations will be essay in nature.

Premise Reports: Review of advertisements and editorials to discover appropriate and inappropriate use of persuasive premises. A psychological, logical, and cultural premise will be presented orally and in writing.

Précis: Each student will read and review a section of the text and provide a written summary to each member of the class. The written summary will take the form of a précis that is a summarization of the entire article (or section). The student will be responsible for presenting and leading the discussion on this section of the text during the assigned time during the semester. Essentially it is your task to make sure the entire class understands the article and the underlying theories and assumptions. You should consider the oral presentation of your work as very important. Do not rely on simply reading your précis to us.

Persuasive Speech Analysis: Each student will select a significant public speech to analyze. The analysis will take the form of a rhetorical analysis of the speech in which the student demonstrates the persuasive tools used by the speaker to motivate his/her audience in the particular rhetorical context. Concepts and theories discussed in class should also be incorporated into the analysis.

Research Paper: Each student will write a research paper, which investigates the relationships between at least two variables persuasion they find particularly compelling. The paper must be at least fifteen pages of text and follow the appropriate APA style manual.

Grading Scale:

91-100	A	71-78	C
89-90	B+	67-70	D+
81-88	B	61-66	D
79-80	C+	0-60	F

	Topic/Chapter/Class Activity	Presenter
	FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES	
1.	Persuasion in the Rhetorical Tradition	Professor
2.	The Effects of Message Features: Content, Structure and Style	
3.	Media Influence as Persuasion	
4.	Outcomes of Persuasion: Behavioral, Cognitive, and Social	
5.	On Being Persuaded: Some Basic Distinctions	
	THEORIES, PERSPECTIVES, AND TRADITIONS	
6.	Discrepancy Models of Belief Change	
7.	Functional Attitude Theory	
8.	Reasoned Action Theory: Persuasion as Belief-Based Behavior Change	
9.	The Elaboration Likelihood Model	Professor
10.	Affect and Persuasion	
11.	Reactance Theory and Persuasion	
12.	Fear Appeals	
13.	Narrative Persuasion	Professor
14.	Inoculation Theory	
15.	Supportive and Persuasive Communication: Theoretical Intersections	
	CONTEXTS, SETTINGS, AND APPLICATIONS	
16.	Political Persuasion	
17.	Persuasive Strategies in Health Campaigns	
18.	The Siren's Call: Mass Media and Drug Prevention	
19.	Persuasion in the Marketplace: How Theories of Persuasion Apply Marketing and Advertising	
20.	Persuasion in the Legal Setting	
21.	Persuading in the Small Group Context	
22.	When Presumed Influence Turns Real: An Indirect Route of Media Influence	
23.	How Does Technology Persuade?: Theoretical Mechanisms for Persuasive Technologies	
	Speech Analysis Presentations	

	Topic/Chapter/Class Activity	Presenter
	Paper Presentations	
	Final Exam (Comprehensive)	

Key Dates: <http://www.mc.edu/offices/registrar/calendar/>