
Communication 318: Principles of Persuasion

PLEASE NOTE: You are responsible for knowing all information contained in this syllabus. Consult this document before emailing the instructors about whether or not a class policy exists, exam dates or deadlines.

Instructor: Dr. Susan E. Morgan

Office: Beering 2274G

Dr. Morgan's office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-2:30, and by appointment

Email addresses, office hours and contact information (contact your TAs with questions first):

Students with last names beginning with A-G: Kaitlin Carmichael (BRNG 2165, Mon 12:30-2:30, Wed 12:30-1:20):

kmcarmic@purdue.edu

Students with last names beginning with H-O: Paula Hopeck (BRNG 2263, Mon 2-3; Tues, 1-3): phopeck@purdue.edu

Students with last names beginning with P-Z: Andy King (BRNG 2129, Mon 1-3; Thurs 2-4): ajking@purdue.edu

Dr. Morgan's email: semorgan@purdue.edu

Who Should You Email About Your Question?

Email your TA with questions about grades, lecture materials/outlines, exams, assignment requirements, attendance, etc.

Email Dr. Morgan to make an appointment to discuss questions about lecture content, theories of persuasion, problems with your TA, career aspirations & trajectories, coursework strategies to attain career goals, cool and interesting thoughts and ideas.

Course Overview

Communication 318 is designed to be an advanced exploration of the theories of social influence which guide much of today's communication research. This class will encourage interaction and exchange between class members; this means that you will be required to keep up with the readings so that you will be able to participate in class discussions.

The sum of what you learn in this class may be one of the ultimate cases of "news you can use." Not only are you subjected to hundreds of attempts at influence every day (in the form of commercials, billboards, print ads, etc.), but you will be expected throughout your life to be competent at persuading others (in business meetings or job interviews, for example). In this class, you will learn what makes an attempt at persuasion successful and how to resist being persuaded when you choose.

Course Objectives:

1. To learn about the major areas of study in the field of persuasion.
2. To provide opportunities for the analysis of persuasive techniques.
3. To understand how theories of persuasion can aid the comprehension of everyday circumstances.

Required Readings*:

- Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and Practice*, 5th Edition. New York: Harper Collins.
- Gass, R.H. & Seiter, J.S. (2010). *Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance Gaining*, 4th Edition. Allyn & Bacon.

*NOTE: These text books are REQUIRED for this course, and you will be expected to have mastery of all material assigned. For both books, test questions and lectures will focus on material contained in these specific editions of each book. I do not recommend buying previous editions of the book. If you do buy a previous edition, please know that neither the TAs nor I have time to figure out what is or is not in the book any longer. The other option is to just not buy the books...and probably fail.

Course Requirements:

Two (non-cumulative) exams (100 points each)	200 points (33.3% of your grade; total 66.6% of grade)
Mini-paper	50 points (16.7% of your grade)
Attendance and participation	50 points (16.7% of your grade)
TOTAL	300 points

Final Grades: The +/- system will divide the number of points according to the following pattern: 97% - 100% = A+, 93%-96.9% = A, 90% - 92.9% = A-; 87 % - 89.9% = B+, 83% - 86.9% = B, 80% - 82.9% = B-, and so on.)

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

The student handbook provides clear guidelines on what constitutes academic integrity:

3.2 Cheating

Cheating is defined by its general usage. It includes, but is not limited to, the wrongful giving, taking, or presenting any information or material by a student with the intent of aiding him/herself or another on any academic work which is considered in any way in the determination of the final grade. Any question of definition shall be referred to the University Appeals Board.

The sanction of punishment for a student who is accused of either plagiarizing or cheating is a minimum of an F grade for the entire course, but it may involve suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the University. As you can see, these are serious measures for academic offenses which we believe are serious. If you have any questions about whether you may be committing either of these academic offenses, be sure to contact your instructor.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: In addition to not plagiarizing from outside sources, you may not turn in a paper (in whole or in part) that you have written for another class. This is self-plagiarism, which is considered an act of academic dishonesty. As such, self-plagiarism will result in a score of zero for an assignment.

Make-up Policies and Emergencies

Class attendance is NOT required. If you are absent from class for whatever reason, however, you are responsible for all material covered in lecture as noted will not be provided online. This means if you want to get notes for a missed class you must get them from a friend or classmate.

THIS PARAGRAPH IS REALLY IMPORTANT

This class is offered every semester, and the dates of all exams and assignments are provided in this syllabus. There will be no make-up exams or assignments given. As such, I recommend that if you cannot take exams on certain days or turn in assignments at the provided deadlines that you drop the class and take it during a future semester when your schedule clears up. Notes or excuses from the dean of students, a doctor, a family member, etc. will not be accepted.

This may seem harsh, but because of the size of this class there will be no exceptions to this policy. If you think you will only miss one exam, however, you can still do so, as you will be taking three exams over the course of the semester and your top two scores will be used in the calculation of your grade. Thus, you can miss one exam—but doing so means you would need to do well on the two other exams. Please do not elect to miss either of the first two exams because you don't feel fully prepared. If you do not take one of the first two exams and then find that you must miss the third exam due to a serious illness or genuine emergency, you will NOT be able to make up the exam and your grade will be based on having taken only one exams. In addition to the exams, the other major assignment is a mini-paper. There is a one-grade deduction for late papers that are uploaded after the start of class. For each additional day the paper is late, there will be an additional one-grade deduction.

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Additionally, please contact your TA if you require any additional accommodations for completing exams or assignments.

Extra Credit for Participating in Research Studies:

The Department of Communication is now using an online program that expedites the process of recruiting, signing up, and granting extra credit to students for participating in research studies. The program is called the **Research Participation System**, and it provides an easy online method for you to sign up for research studies, to keep track of the studies you have completed, and to view how many credits you have earned for each study. You can access the system online at any time, from any computer with a standard web browser. By participating in studies done within the Department of Communication, you can learn first-hand how a study is conducted, you can contribute to the advancement of the field, and you can improve your grade by earning extra credit. Here are the details:

- You earn a **½ percent** credit for every half-hour that you participate in a study. The maximum percent that you can earn for this course is 2%, which will be added to your **total course points (400)**. For example, student A participates in:
- 2 studies (30 minutes each) and receives ½% credit for each study for a total of **1%**
- 2 studies (60 minutes each) and receives 1% credit for each study for a total of **2%**
- If you sign up to participate in a study and fail to show up without canceling your appointment in advance (up to 2 hours before the study), you will be automatically restricted from signing up for any studies for 30 days. You may quickly **cancel** your appointment online using the **Research Participation System**.

- Please review the instructions before you sign up for studies; to view the instructions go to <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/communication/undergraduate/rps.shtml>
- You can sign up to participate in studies by logging in to <http://purdue-comm.sona-systems.com/>.
- **At the end of the semester**, the instructors will receive a list of every student who has participated in extra credit studies and the amount of extra credit they have earned. **You do not have to email us to notify us you have done extra credit.**
- If you are unsure whether you have received proper credit for participating in a study, you must email the researcher who is in charge of the study. **The research participation system is completely separate from all class activities and administration. We cannot mediate disputes about whether or not you have fully completed a study, how much extra credit you earned, etc.**
- If you would like to earn extra credit but do not wish to participate in a research study, you may elect to do an optional project instead of participating in experiments. For example, you can complete an alternative writing activity involving library research by which you can earn the same amount of extra credit in approximately the same amount of time as research participation. For Comm 318, that assignment would be to complete an extra mini-paper. (However, you would not be guaranteed a perfect score; your paper would be graded according to the criteria for that assignment and a corresponding percentage of extra credit points would be assigned.)

Attendance/Participation points

Class attendance is NOT required. As such, if you want to read the newspaper, drink alcohol, chew tobacco, sleep, or chat with your friends (all of which have, yes, happened in class multiple times)—there's not much point to being in class. Walk to the Student Union, find a nice, comfortable spot and do whatever you like.

Although class attendance is not required, at seven times throughout the semester we will be awarding class participation points to students who are in class. Sometimes, this will be done at the start of class; at other times, it will be done at the end of class. Thus, if you intend to **stroll in late or leave early** or not show up the day before break begins, you may miss out on class attendance/participation points. **Each "attendance day" during the course of the semester will be worth five points.** Also, attendance will be taken after the 3rd exam is given. This is our way of rewarding students who take the class seriously enough to be present for the entire class each day. Students who miss class often tend to ask questions about exams and assignments that I have already answered in class, which requires me to repeat this information. This is dreadfully boring to the students who were in class when I originally provided that information and prevents me from spending that time on that day's lecture material. **To mitigate the problem of covering material in the syllabus over and over in class, there will be a 5-point quiz on the syllabus on 1/19.** Although you do not need to memorize the syllabus, you do need to know the types of things that are the most bothersome to (virtually all of!) your instructors:

- Who I am
- Who your TA is
- How many exams there are
- Whether exams are cumulative
- What types of questions will be asked on the exam
- Whether attendance is required
- Whether you have to be here for the start/end of class to get participation points
- Where you may sit in the classroom
- Whether extra credit is awarded (and how you can get extra credit)
- Whether you can copy from your own paper from another class and turn it in for this class
- How you can appeal an exam or paper grade

Fifteen of the 50 points allotted for class participation will be awarded automatically to all students who do not violate guidelines for civil behavior and communication with COM 318 staff members. (We will, of course, adhere to these guidelines in all of our communication and behavior with you.) Naturally, I assume that you were raised to have good manners and that you all understand the importance of being polite to those who are working hard to provide you with the best educational experience possible. However, experience has taught me that I cannot take this for granted which means that I intend to reward people who do not make the work of COM 318 staff more difficult than it has to be.

You will lose all 15 points (almost 4% of your final grade), at our discretion, if you violate any of the following:

- You yell at any member of the staff.
- You use profanity or call anyone names.
- You communicate disrespectfully (by being snarky, insulting, sarcastic, etc.).
- You engage in blatantly manipulative or coercive behavior (including lying).
- You make an appointment with a TA or me and fail to show up without contacting us in advance. Our time is valuable and there are nearly 400 students in the class who need our attention.

The great news is that at least 95% of you will automatically get all 15 points just for being yourself!

Communication with COM 318 Faculty and Staff

You have already been assigned a TA for this class (see the first page of this document). Direct all of your questions about class to your designated TA. When e-mailing your TA, please describe your question, problem or issue clearly and politely, using correct grammar and spelling, and sign your name. (Do not use the type of spelling that you would use to text your friends. Treat the TAs and me as you would your boss in the type of job you aspire to have some day.) You can expect to receive a response within 24 hours (Monday-Friday). Your TA may elect to copy me on a response to your email to “keep me in the loop.” If you have an issue or concern *about* your TA, please email me.

Regardless of whether you agree with a grade or whether you are frustrated by the difficulty of an exam or any other issue, you must behave professionally at all times, per Purdue’s statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities (which can be found on Purdue’s webpage). When communicating with me or the TAs, you will follow the usual standards that you will be held to when you graduate and are working in a professional capacity:

- When *emailing*, please use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Do not use forms of spelling that are commonly accepted when texting with your friends. Unlike your friends, we do judge your intelligence and your level of dedication to your academic pursuits by the way you communicate.
- When emailing, introduce yourself as a COM 318 student and provide your name. The TAs teach other classes in addition to 318 and they need to know which class you are referencing.
- When emailing OR in person, you will demonstrate basic common courtesy and adhere to accepted norms of politeness. Treat the COM 318 staff as though they are your supervisors at a professional job.
- If you engage in highly uncivil behaviors, you will be in violation of workplace harassment guidelines. Just as students have rights that are taken very seriously, all employees of the university have the right to work in a non-hostile environment. If you engage in hostile and unprofessional behavior, you will be reported to the Dean of Students Office and charges may be filed against you that may result in serious disciplinary action.

Class Seating

The entire left-hand side of the classroom will be reserved for those students who feel the need to access electronic communication technologies at any point during a class period and for those who wish to talk to their friends and classmates. If you are bidding on something on eBay, need to tweet about your feelings during class, are expecting an important text message(s) from family, friends, or significant others, want to be able to check Facebook or email, or are simply in need of the extra stimulation provided by these electronic media, please sit on the left side of the classroom (that is, the side of the room that is to my left, as I face the class).

You may sit in the middle of the classroom or on the right-hand side and use your computer to take class notes but **NOT** to use it for any other reason. If you decide to ignore this policy by texting, talking, etc., a TA will ask you to move your seat to the left side of the room. If you register your objection to this policy by being disrespectful (verbally or nonverbally) including arguing with me or the TAs, stomping out of class, slamming the door, or disrupting other students by deliberately jostling them or allowing your backpack to hit others as you leave, you will be asked to leave class for the remainder of that day and you will lose the discretionary 15 points of attendance/participation reserved for adhering to norms of civil behavior. If you choose to violate course policy and are caught, the only acceptable response is a simple, quiet apology and a graceful move to the other side of the room. This policy is in place to allow other students attending class to devote their full attention to course content without the distraction of other students’ activities.

If you NEED to get an A or B in this class:

If you need an A (or B) in the class in order to get into the Communication major or to raise your GPA for whatever reason, I would suggest to you that you should have done better in your other courses so you didn’t have this grade pressure. If your parents will be terribly disappointed in you if you bring home less than a B (or fail to pass the class, etc.), I would strongly suggest that you take all of the assignments seriously rather than resorting to begging me or the TAs for extra points, additional extra credit opportunities, etc. **Here is my best advice for how to get a good grade in this class:**

- If you have writing issues, go to the writing center and get help with organization, editing, proofreading, and general writing to ensure you get the best possible grade on the mini-paper. Follow all of the criteria for the paper requirements to the letter and talk to your TA if you don’t understand any part of the assignment.
- Study hard for ALL of the exams. Studying with another student(s) who is serious about doing well on the exams is often a good strategy.

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- Attend all classes (unless you are genuinely ill and cannot responsibly come to lecture) and pay attention. If you do not come to class, you will miss material that will be on the exam, particularly any material that is not presented in the PowerPoint outlines of lecture.
- Keep up with course readings. I promise that you will learn the material easier and will do better on exams if you come to lecture well-prepared for a more in-depth review of the principles covered in the texts.
- Be professional and civil in all of your communication with fellow students, me, and all of the TAs.
- Take advantage of the extra credit research opportunities **well in advance of the end of the semester**. At the end of the semester, many students are desperate to raise their grades a few points and studies will be full, meaning that you will not be able to do any extra credit. I will NOT offer you any additional extra credit opportunities. Extra credit is not a “right”—it is a generous bonus that I have offered to you as an option for you to either do or not do, as you choose.
- Finally, do not assume that because this is a communication class, it will be an easy course. You will be very disappointed at the end of the semester when you receive your final grade.

Course Assignments

Exams (100 points each):

Exams will be multiple-choice and are likely to consist of 33-40 questions each. There are three exams but **only your top two scores** will be counted. **THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER.** If you miss an exam, your scores from the other two exams will be used. If you take the first two exams and you are happy with your grade, you may elect to skip the third exam. If something truly catastrophic happens and you must miss two of the three exams, you must provide full documentation for the reasons why it was impossible for you to take BOTH exams in order for you to be able to make up one exam. Both absences must be documented as true, unavoidable emergencies.

Questions are never designed to be “trick” questions. However, to do well on exams, you will likely need to attend class regularly and read all of the assigned material in time for class. Cramming rarely works (at least not for the exams I write). If you wish to contest a specific question on an exam, you must submit your appeal **in writing** to your TA within 3 days of the return of exam scores. You must cite *evidence* for why your answer is correct. Use principles of persuasion when making your appeal!

Mini Paper (50 points, 3-4 pages double-spaced)

- Describe a principle of persuasion. Do not just state which principle or theory you are using. You must demonstrate a thorough understanding of it by describing it in detail.
- Cite at least 3 sources for the information you use in your paper using APA format.
- Describe what you did to put this principle of persuasion into practice. This part of your paper should be no more than one full page.
- Evaluate the success of your attempt. Describe why it did or did not work, according to the theory/principle.
- Write no more than 4 pages and no less than 3 pages. Write them well.

Your paper **MUST** be well-written and well-organized and adhere to the assignment requirements in order to receive a good grade. You must demonstrate good writing skills as well as a solid understanding of the concepts covered in class. Emailed papers will NOT BE ACCEPTED. **You must turn in your paper via Blackboard.** If your paper is late, you will lose one letter grade for each day that it is late, beginning 5 minutes after the start of class. Again, emailed papers will not be accepted.

If you do not agree with your grade and **would like to appeal you must provide the appeal to your TA in writing and submit it within three days after the return of your paper.** Because this is a class in persuasion, telling us that you worked hard on the paper and “deserve” (or “need”) a better grade will be a highly ineffective appeal. If, however, a TA deducts points from your grade because you inaccurately described a principle or theory of persuasion and you believe that you did it correctly, in your written appeal you should reference the appropriate textbook and page number or the date of class lecture on which you based your description.

The following is the exact grading rubric that your TAs will follow when grading your paper:

Grading Rubric for Mini-Paper

Theory: 20 points (each of the criteria are worth 4 points—you get all points or you get no points)

- ☐ Accurately identified a theory or principle of persuasion
- ☐ Accurately described the theory or principle of persuasion
- ☐ Went into appropriate depth in the review of the theory or principle
- ☐ Used only one theory or principle of persuasion
- ☐ Used a minimum of three outside sources

Points: _____

Analysis of persuasion event: 15 points (each of the criteria are worth 5 points—same scoring as above)

- ☐ Did not exceed page limit for description of event or situation
- ☐ Accurately applied the principles of the theory selected to the event or situation described in sufficient depth.
- ☐ Demonstrated understanding of the persuasion theory or principle in action

Points: _____

Quality of writing & adherence to other guidelines: 15 points (each of the criteria are worth 3 points—same scoring as above)

- ☐ Adhered to page requirements
- ☐ Used APA format accurately
- ☐ Used proper spelling, grammar, and sentence construction
- ☐ Wrote in full sentences and wrote in correct paragraph form
- ☐ Paper was well-organized

Points: _____

Point deductions:

- ☐ Paper was late: _____ days past 11:35 on due date * 5 points per day = _____ points
- ☐ Paper was emailed to TA: (-5 points)
- ☐ Paper was emailed to Dr. Morgan (-10 points)
- ☐ Paper did not have your name on it (-5 points)

Points deducted: _____

Total points for paper: _____/50 points

45-50 = A; 40 -44 = B; 35 – 39 = C; 30 – 34 = D

Schedule of Classes (Subject to Change)

Date	Topic	Readings	DUE
Jan 10	Definitions of persuasion		
Jan 12	Overview of Persuasion; definitions and boundary conditions	Gass & Seiter, Ch. 1 Cialdini Ch. 1	
Jan 14	Overview, continued	G&S Ch. 2	
Jan 17	MLK Holiday—no class		
Jan 19	Compliance gaining	G&S Ch 11	Quiz on syllabus
Jan 21	Compliance gaining		
Jan 24	Attitudes	G&S Ch 3	
Jan 26	Attitudes and consistency		
Jan 28	Cognitive dissonance theory		
Jan 31	Cognitive dissonance theory, continued		
Feb 2	Theory of reasoned action	Cialdini Ch. 3	
Feb 4	Theory of reasoned action		
Feb 7	Elaboration likelihood model (ELM)		
Feb 9	Reciprocity	G&S Ch. 10	
Feb 11	Reciprocity	Cialdini, Ch.2	
*Feb 14	Social normative influences	G&S Ch. 6	
Feb 16	EXAM 1 (Covers topic through Reciprocity)	EXAM 1	EXAM 1
Feb 18	Social proof	Cialdini Ch. 4	
Feb 21	Social proof		
*Feb 23	Persuader characteristics: Credibility	G&S Ch. 4	
Feb 25	Persuader characteristics: Sociodemographics	G&S Ch. 5	
Feb 28	Persuader characteristics: Liking	Cialdini Ch. 5	
*Mar 2	Persuader characteristics: Authority	Cialdini Ch. 6	
Mar 4	Persuader characteristics: Authority, continued		
Mar 7	Persuasive messages: Effects of language	G&S Ch. 7	
Mar 9	Persuasive messages: Effects of language, cont'd		
Mar 11	Structuring and ordering messages	G&S Ch. 9	
Mar 14 -18	Spring Break		
Mar 21	FILM: The Persuaders		
Mar 23	The Persuaders, continued		
Mar 25	EXAM 2 (Covers topics from social normative influences through The Persuaders)	EXAM 2	EXAM 2
*Mar 28	Scarcity effect	Cialdini Ch. 7	
Mar 30	Psychological reactance		
Apr 1	Reactance, continued		
Apr 4	Nonverbal communication MINI-PAPER DUE BY BEGINNING OF CLASS	G&S Ch.8	MINI-PAPER
Apr 6	Nonverbal communication		
*Apr 8	Deception	G&S Ch.12	
Apr 11	Deception		
Apr 13	Motivational persuasion	G&S Ch. 13	
Apr 15	Motivational persuasion		
*Apr 18	Visual persuasion	G&S Ch. 14, 15	
Apr 20	Persuasion and Ethics	G&S Ch. 16	
Apr 22	EXAM 3 (Covers topics from Scarcity through Ethics)	EXAM 3	EXAM 3
Apr 25	Ethics, continued	G&S Ch. 16	
Apr 27	Effects of automaticity	Cialdini Ch. 8	
Apr 29	Last day of class		