

CMT-310 PERSUASION

Syllabus (Summer 2013), MW 6:00-9:25pm, FA153, CRN 33035

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Course Overview

In this course, we will examine how persuasion happens in a variety of contexts, including face-to-face interaction, on television, radio, and the Internet, in movies and commercials, within organizations, and by politicians, reporters, and CEOs. We will also investigate how certain entities encourage us to act in particular ways, value certain ideas, and believe in particular products, and we will discuss effective ways to evaluate the messages to which we are exposed.

You may find course material challenging, and class conversations might make you uncomfortable. While I do not ask that you accept any ideas discussed, I do ask that you tolerate divergent views, respect each other, and maintain an open attitude for conversation. If you think this may be difficult, reconsider enrolling in this course. Tolerance is the minimal requirement; acknowledging and respecting difference is the norm I hope you embrace.

Course Objectives

- To understand how prominent cultural institutions influence human interaction.
- To understand how persuasion happens in face-to-face and mediated contexts.
- To learn ways of becoming more effective, socially conscious citizens.
- To engage in critical discussions of contemporary social issues.
- To understand elements of message construction and audience analysis.
- To recognize tenets of being an ethical persuader.

Required Texts

Borchers, T. A. (2013). *Persuasion in the Media Age* (3rd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

* I will place additional readings on Desire2Learn.

Assignments

Six Tests (10 points each; 60 points) designed to see (a) if and (b) how well you read. Each test will consist of ten questions about the assigned readings/videos. I will provide eight opportunities to test; I will drop your two lowest test scores at the end of the semester. Tests will occur at the **start** of class. I do not return tests. Tests cannot be made up **regardless of excuse**.

Alternate Tests (“AT”): If you know in advance that you might miss a class/test or if you have a difficult time taking tests, you can complete an alternate test to substitute for any test. Each AT must be turned in **before** the scheduled class period/test (either in class or via email). Each AT must be **two typed, single-spaced pages** (see an example AT on D2L). For each AT, complete the following:

1. Identify five (5) main ideas of all of the assigned readings. Be thorough and specific.
2. Describe five (5) reactions/opinions you have about all of the assigned readings. What did you (dis)like? Why (not)? Be thorough and specific.
3. Identify two (2) questions that you have about any/all of the assigned reading(s)
4. Find and describe two (2) examples that relate to any/all of the assigned reading(s). Do not bring me these examples. Just make sure to (a) describe each example and (b) say why/how it relates to the assigned reading(s). You cannot use examples mentioned in the readings.

Four Podcast Responses (5 points each; 20 points) designed to promote engagement with course concepts. Each podcast contains an assignment. Podcast 1 and 2 responses are due on **July 24** (submit via D2L); Podcast 3 and 4 responses are due on **July 29** (submit via D2L). I do not accept late responses. Be prepared to discuss your responses in class (August 1).

Final Exam (20 points) designed to see how well you understand and can engage course concepts. The exam will consist of four essay questions (I will provide six questions; you must choose four questions to answer; 5 points each). Submit your final exam on D2L.

Course Policies

Class Attendance: I will take attendance every class. If you miss three classes, you will not be able to pass this course; a grade of “F” will be assigned **regardless of existing grades and regardless of excuse**. For more information about class attendance, see the University Catalog.

Academic (Mis)conduct: I have zero tolerance for academic misconduct. Cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable. Such behavior will be handled in accordance with University policy on academic misconduct.

Plagiarism is the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s original work. This includes 1) the paraphrasing of another’s ideas or conclusions without acknowledgment; 2) the lifting of entire paragraphs, chapters, etc., from another’s work without acknowledgment; and 3) the submission as one’s own work, any work prepared by another person. (NEIU Student Code of Conduct)

Academic misconduct also includes falsification, fabrication, submitting another's work, submitting an assignment or parts of an assignment that was/were used for another course, complicity in or aiding the academic misconduct of another student, and misconduct in research.

All forms of non-academic misconduct are prohibited, too. Non-academic misconduct includes furnishing false information, disrupting class, verbally or physically endangering others, damaging property, using or possessing illegal drugs, weapons, or alcohol, obscene conduct, failing to comply with authority, and/or intimidating, threatening, or humiliating others. For more information about non-academic misconduct, visit <http://www.neiu.edu/~saffairs/SRR/index.html>

Academic and non-academic misconduct damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demand for a work-career. Students who violate University rules on academic conduct are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

Classroom Professionalism/Etiquette (10 points): At the end of the semester and after the last class period, I reserve the right to reduce your grade by up to 10 points because of unprofessional behavior and unacceptable classroom etiquette. Unprofessional behavior and unacceptable classroom etiquette includes, but is not limited to, any/all of the following: texting, talking while others are talking, regularly getting up and moving throughout the room during the class, playing games on your phone, using a laptop, being mean or disrespectful to other class members, perpetually showing up late or leaving early, cheating on tests, playing with your phone while in class or while watching videos, etc.

Tips for success: Worry about your grade now, not at the end of the semester; complete assigned readings before class; attend and participate in class discussions; take notes on readings and videos; recognize that your grade is based on your course performance, not on your academic history and not because you need this course to graduate.

Cell phones and laptops are **not allowed** in class. If you use a cell phone or a laptop in class, you will not be allowed to attend future classes.

I do not curve grades, offer extra credit, or allow for "Incompletes."

Accommodations: If you need any accommodations (e.g., taking quizzes, note-taking, physical assistance), please contact me. To the best of my ability, I will create a class equally accessible and comfortable for everyone. If you have a special need(s) that I may not be able to accommodate, contact the Accessibility Center (D-104) at 773-442-5495.

Grading scale: 90-100, A. 80-89, B. 70-79, C. 60-69, D. 0-59, F.

Web Link to Emergency Information: A safe university environment is a shared responsibility of faculty, staff, and students, all of whom are expected to familiarize themselves with and cooperate with emergency procedures. Emergency Procedures and Safety Information can be found on NEIUport on the MyNEIU tab or at http://www.neiu.edu/~neiutemp/Emergency_Procedures/MainCampus/

Course Calendar (Tentative)

- ~~7/1 **Introduction to Persuasion**
The Greatest Movie Ever Sold (in class)~~
- ~~7/3 **Introduction to Persuasion** (continued), **Theories of Persuasion**
Borchers, Chapter 1 (pp. 3-33) and Chapter 2 (pp. 34-38; 57-65)
Meyrowitz, "Multiple Media Literacies"
TEST 1 (over 7/3 readings)~~
- ~~7/8 **Ethics, Audiences**
Borchers, Chapter 3 (pp. 67-73; 83-93) and Chapter 5 (pp. 127-152)
Vidmar & Rokeach, "Archie Bunker's Bigotry"
TEST 2 (over 7/3 and 7/8 readings)~~
- ~~7/10 **Variables of Persuasion: Language**
Borchers, Chapter 7 (pp. 182-207)
American Psychological Association, "Reducing Bias in Language"
Lutz, "The World of Doublespeak"
Luntz, "The Ten Rules of Effective Language"
TEST 3 (over 7/8 and 7/10 readings)~~
- ~~7/15 **Variables of Persuasion: Form, Color, Editing, Font**
Borchers, Chapter 4 (pp. 97-126)
Garfield, "We Don't Serve Your Type," "Legibility and Readability," and "The Worst Fonts in the World"
TEST 4 (over 7/10 and 7/15 readings)~~
- ~~7/17 **Variables of Persuasion: Narrative, Song**
Borchers, Chapter 10 (pp. 285-288)
Gottschall, "The Moral of the Story" and "Ink People Change the World"
Guber, "The Four Truths of the Storyteller"
Bruner, "Music, Mood, and Marketing"
TEST 5 (over 7/15 and 7/17 readings)~~
- ~~7/22 **Visual Images, Advertising**
Borchers, Chapter 6 (pp. 154-181) and Chapter 13 (pp. 352-375)
TEST 6 (over 7/17 and 7/22 readings)~~
- ~~7/24 **PODCAST 1 and PODCAST 2 RESPONSE** due (submit via D2L)~~
- ~~7/29 **PODCAST 3 and PODCAST 4 RESPONSE** due (submit via D2L)~~
- 8/1 **Interpersonal Persuasion**
Discussion of podcast responses
Borchers, Chapter 9 (pp. 239-267) and Chapter 14 (pp. 386-389)
Aune & Aune, "The Effects of Perfume Use"
Crusco & Wetzel, "The Midas Touch"
TEST 7 (over 7/22 and 8/1 readings)
- 8/5 **Image Repair**
Benoit, "Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication"
Kerkhof, Shultz, and Utz, "How to Choose the Right Weapon"
Leary, "Current Social Image"
Shut Up and Sing (in class)
TEST 8 (over 8/1 and 8/5 readings)
- 8/7 **FINAL EXAM** due (submit via D2L)