

# Persuasion & Influence

## COMM 7/8322

### Course Description

This course will survey traditional theories and approaches to persuasion research from social psychology and communication studies. Theories will be applied to various contexts, including public, interpersonal, and health.

### Book

Cialdini, R. *Influence*. (ISBN: 978-0-06-124189-5)

### Assignments and Grading

*Attendance & Participation (20% of final grade for PhD students; 40% for MA students).*

This is a once a week graduate seminar. Therefore, you are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss the week's readings. The material will be more or less familiar to you, depending on your background. It is important to focus on the big picture (major claims and arguments) and not to sweat the small stuff. We can work through the details together in class. *A major component of this grade is that you submit via email a list of questions (both for clarification and discussion) about the week's readings by Monday at noon.*

*Article Summaries (40% of final grade for PhD students; 20% for MA students)*

Each week, two students will present a summary and lead a discussion on a recent research article related to the week's topic. Over the course of the semester, MA students will do one (1) presentation and PhD students will do two (2).

Your presentation date(s) will be assigned by **W 1/28**. The *Tuesday before* your assigned presentation, you should submit your article to Dr. Stewart for approval. Articles will be posted to eCourseware by no later than Thursday before the presentation date.

Your presentation should do the following:

1. Briefly describe who the author is.
2. Summarize the research problem or question the article is addressing—what is it about? What is the purpose of the study?
3. Summarize the methods of the study—What is the general methodological approach? What are the key constructs or variables?
4. Summarize the findings of the study—What is the news here? What do we know now that we didn't know before?
5. Summarize the implications of the study—What does this mean for persuasion theory, research, or practice? What are some new directions for research?

### *Final Paper (40% of final grade)*

Your final paper will be an approximately 25-page (double-spaced) literature review and/or application of a persuasion theory. This paper can (a) select a specific theory and review the scholarly literature developing and applying the theory; or, (b) select a specific theory, outline its details and relevant literature, and then (i) apply the theory to an analysis of some data, or (ii) apply it to a proposed research project.

### **Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

As graduate students, you are becoming producers, not just consumers, of knowledge in communication studies. Therefore, it is very important that you (a) properly acknowledge those who are responsible for the research and ideas that you are drawing upon and (b) do not inappropriately take credit for research and ideas that are not your own. Everyone makes honest mistakes, and I am willing to help correct these mistakes. However, deliberate efforts to represent others' words, ideas, and/or research as your own will not be tolerated. Cheating, academic dishonesty, and/or plagiarism (including submitting the same paper for more than one course without permission) may result in an F for the course and will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

### **Students with Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities. For additional information, please see: <http://www.memphis.edu/drs/>

### **Other Campus Resources**

- Center for Writing & Communication: <http://www.memphis.edu/cwc/>
- Career & Psychological Counseling: <http://www.memphis.edu/cpcc/>

## **Weekly Schedule:**

### **M 1/26: Introductions**

#### **M 2/2: Persuasion fundamentals**

Hogan, J. M. (2013). Persuasion in the rhetorical tradition. In J. P. Dillard & L. Shen (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of persuasion: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 2-19). Los Angeles: Sage.

Miller, G. R. (2002). On being persuaded: Some basic distinctions. In J. P. Dillard & M. Pfau (Eds.), *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 3-16). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rhodes, N., & Ewoldsen, D. R. (2013). Outcomes of persuasion: Behavior, cognitive, and social. In J. P. Dillard & L. Shen (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of persuasion: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 53-69). Los Angeles: Sage.

#### **M 2/9: Automatic Persuasion**

Tversky, A. & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, 185, 1124-1131.

Cialdini, chs. 1-4

#### **M 2/16: Automatic Persuasion**

Cialdini, chs. 5-7 and epilogue

#### **M 2/23: Framing & persuasion**

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1984). Choices, values, and frames. *American Psychologist*, 34, 341-350.

Salovey, P., Schneider, T. R., & Apanovitch, A. M. (2002). Message framing in the prevention and early detection of illness. In J. P. Dillard & M. Pfau (Eds.), *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 391-406). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rothman, A. J., Bartels, R. D., Wlaschin, J., & Salovey, P. (2006). The strategic use of gain- and loss-framed messages to promote healthy behavior: How theory and inform practice. *Journal of Communication*, 56, S202-S220.

#### **M 3/2: Cognitive Dissonance Theory**

Harmon-Jones, E. (2002). A cognitive dissonance theory perspective on persuasion. In J. P. Dillard & M. Pfau (Eds.), *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 99-116). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stone, J. & Fernandez, N. C. (2008). To practice what we preach: The use of hypocrisy and cognitive dissonance to motivate behavior change. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2, 1024-1051.

### **M 3/9: Spring Break**

#### **M 3/16: Theory of Reasoned Action/Belief based models**

Yzer, M. (2013). Reasoned action theory: Persuasion as belief-based behavior change. In J. P. Dillard & L. Shen (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of persuasion: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 120-136). Los Angeles: Sage.

Mattson, M. (1999). Toward a reconceptualization of communication cues to action in the health belief model: HIV test counseling. *Communication Monographs*, 66, 240-265.

Witte, K. (1992). Putting the fear back in fear appeals: The extended parallel process model. *Communication Monographs*, 59, 329-349.

**M 3/23: Dual-process theories**

O'Keefe, D. J. (2013). The elaboration likelihood model. In J. P. Dillard & L. Shen (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of persuasion: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 137-149). Los Angeles: Sage.

Todorov, A., Chaiken, S., & Henderson, M. D. (2002). The heuristic-systemic model of social information processing. In J. P. Dillard & M. Pfau (Eds.), *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 195-211). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kruglanski, A. W., & Thompson, E. P. (1999). Persuasion by a single route: A view from the unimodel. *Psychological Inquiry*, 10, 83-109.

**M 3/30: Message & Media Effects**

Shen, L., & Bigsby, E. (2013). Effects of message features: Content, structure, and style. In J. P. Dillard & L. Shen (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of persuasion: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 20-35). Los Angeles: Sage.

Hosman, L. A. (2002). Language and persuasion. In J. P. Dillard & M. Pfau (Eds.), *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 371-390). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Holbert, R. L., & Tchernevera, J. M. (2013). Media influence as persuasion. In J. P. Dillard & L. Shen (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of persuasion: Developments in theory and practice* (pp. 36-52). Los Angeles: Sage.

**M 4/6: READINGS TBD**

**M 4/13: NO CLASS**

**M 4/20: PRESENTATIONS**

**M 4/27: PRESENTATIONS**