

COMS 342 Communication and Persuasion B-Summer 2003

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➤➤ Text

Gass and Seiter, Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance Gaining, 2 nd Ed.

➤➤ Objective

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Provide concise, accurate explanations of major theories and their relevance to the everyday practice of persuasion as a means of influencing others.
2. Understand how and why to conduct research beyond that provided in the text in offering explanations of theories--what they are, how they are constructed, and what their strengths and weaknesses are in accounting for communication practice.
3. Use theory in explaining selected persuasion events or practices.

➤➤ Course Procedures

1. Communication channel: I plan to use the University = s Blackboard system to manage this course online; for the initial week of the class, we will work through regular email contact to get questions answered, and determine whether Blackboard will work for the remainder of the term. I will establish an initial A distribution list @ that will allow me to contact all class members via your email accounts (the Blackboard system requires that we use your OAK ID to log in C one reason for waiting until we are organized to switch over to that system.
2. Communication times: I will check my e-mail messages related to the course on Monday - Friday mornings by 12 noon. Given the time difference, if you write in the evening (during what would be A regular @ class-time if I were at HKBU), I should receive the message the following morning here and respond. I will establish more specific office hours during the first week C once I hear back from you as to the best times for us to communicate.
3. Participation will be expected ; non-responsiveness or chronic lateness with respect to turning in specific assignments as the course moves along without cause will work against your final grade (as in dropping from a B to a B- or B- to a C+).
4. Cheating is not an option in this course. Plagiarism involves the submission of the words/ideas of others without appropriate attribution. This includes quoting a source without identifying the material used, borrowing phrases, key terms or ideas without attributing these to a source, using fictional resources, or submitting the work of another person as your own. Penalties for cheating and plagiarism will be addressed on a case by case basis; but may range from an A F @ on an assignment/exam to expulsion from the university.
5. Reading Assigned Material will be an expectation. You will be expected to have the

material read in a timely manner.

6. Class interaction will be more difficult due to the on-line nature of the course; however, you will be expected to respond to the group with respect to questions and answers as discussion of ideas moves forward via email exchanges or Blackboard site-based discussions (assuming we can utilize that resource).
7. Writing Guidelines: All written work will be submitted in readable (typed, double-spaced) form; papers will have been proofread for common errors (sloppy work will be discounted grade-wise). Cite references in brief form in the body of the text (Gass & Seriter, 45), and include reference list if you go beyond text at the end of the essay. Front cover pages are not essential, so long as the first page contains author identity. one level per class period. These papers will be graded in terms of their written comprehensibility with respect to accurate grammar, proofreading, format etc. (25%), and general content (75%). Papers can use any font (12pt) but need to be double spaced.

➤➤ Course Assignments

1. Ethics in persuasion paper:
Based on reading C. 1-2 and 16, review the ethical situations in Box 1.3 B choose 7 of these, indicate according to the scale how you would evaluate the ethical nature of each situation selected (1-5) and then briefly explain why. In addition, answer these questions as a follow-up to the review of the situations: What line would you draw with reference to unethical attempts to persuade you? In other words, for you, when is a persuasive attempt unethical? In answering these last questions, you can draw on one or more of the situations or create a fictional illustration to make your position clear. A major criterion: does your paper show evidence of having thought through and used text concepts in clarifying your view of ethical persuasion?
2. Reaction Papers:
Each student will be expected to send in 3 brief reaction papers (5-7 pages in length) that will illustrate (1) an understanding of the material read, (2) an application of the theories or concepts to a specific communication event or context, and (3) a critical assessment of the value of the theories or concepts in making sense of communication. Due dates, and scope of material to be covered, will be noted in the course outline below.
3. Theory into Practice Paper:
This assignment may be completed as an individual, or as a member of a 2-3 person group (no groups can be larger than 3 persons). Due at the end of the term, this project also can be an extension of one of the earlier A Reaction Papers @ you have submitted, or can be an entirely new paper. As with the reaction paper, the goal is to illustrate your understanding of a specific theory or concept covered in class. Thus, the basic purpose is to both extend understanding of the dimensions/nature of the specific theory, and, more importantly, demonstrate how that theory might be applied in analyzing a specific persuasive situation or interaction in providing an answer to this central question: Why is it important to know this theory? An individual paper will be 10-12 typed (double-spaced, size 12 font) text pages, plus

references. A two person group would be expected to turn in 20-24 pages of text plus references, while a three-person group would be expected to turn in 3 C 36 pages (as a rough measure of equity across 1-2-3 person projects. If you elect to work with others, I do not have to approve the teams in advance, hence you may start with a team and elect to go on your own at the last minute.

4. Managing Due Dates OnLine:

Given the time difference, all due dates refer to HONG KONG dates. Papers will be due on the date assigned; you will have a one class grace period C if not submitted as an email attachment on date assigned, point value will be lessened per day late by 10% unless sufficient justification is offered by way of explaining reason for lateness. Failure to complete assignments may necessitate an A F @ if you have not formally withdrawn from the course. NOTE: if you are taking both this course and INCO 234 this term, please let me know B assigned due dates can be altered to facilitate completion of assigned tasks.

5. OnLine Discussion:

Whether via regular email conversation or via Blackboard = s discussion format, you will be expected to contribute at least twice each week, either in asking a question, commenting on an issue raised by others, or offering your own explanation of an issue and asking if others agree. You can work ahead on papers, but NOT with respect to online discussion C in other words, you will be expected to be A present @ throughout the term.

6. Grades:

The point value for assignments is as follows: Ethics Paper - 40; Reaction Papers B 50-50-60 pts. (200); TIP Paper: 200 pts.; Participation via email (20 per week, 100 overall). The grade range will be based on the following percentage: A: 94%; A- 90%; B+ 87%; B 84%; B- 80%; C+ 77%; C 84%; C- 70%; D+ 67%; D 64%; D- 60%; F, 59% or less. I reserve the right to increase or lower grades due to extenuating circumstances, such as an anomalous grade, participation excellence, poorer than expected participation, etc.

➤➤ Course Outline (tentative)

Week/Subject Reading (Gass/Seiter text)

July 28-Aug.2	Introduction to Persuasion Theory Ch.1 B2 B16
Aug. 4 - 9	From Attitude to Conformity Ch.3 B4 B5 B6
Aug. 11-16	Issues of language and Structure Ch.7 B8 B9
Aug. 18-23	Influence Strategies Ch.10 B11 B12
Aug. 25-30	Final Considerations Ch.13 B14 B15

➤➤ Paper Assignment Due Dates

Aug. 4

Ethics Paper:

This assignment will be a bit different; the task here, in reacting to material in the initial 3 chapters, is to (1) summarize your

understanding of what A theory @ means C when do you know you have a A theory @ C what critical elements must it contain? And (2) given the 5 criteria for evaluating a theory C if you had to select a single criterion as the most important, which would it be and why? (note: there is no single A right @ answer C the goal is to provide a clear rationale for your choice).

Aug. 11

Reaction Paper 1:

Select TWO of the specific theories to react to in this paper from among those read in chapters 3 B 6

Aug. 18

Reaction Paper 2:

Select TWO of the specific theories to react to in this paper from among those read in chapters 7 B 9

Aug. 25

Reaction Paper 3:

Select TWO of the specific theories to react to in this paper from among those read in chapters 10 B 12.

Sept. 1

Theory into Practice Paper Due.