

# Persuasive Communication (COM 202)

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**Office Hours: Available Via Email**

**Section: 01**

**Meeting Time: T & TH 12:35 - 1:50 FEL 180**

## Textbook

Persuasion in Society (3rd Edition) by Jones & Simons ISBN-13: 978-1138825666 / ISBN-10: 9781138825666 \*\*

## Course Objectives & Student Learning Outcomes

This class focuses on three central themes: identifying and analyzing persuasive messages, producing persuasive messages, and discussing the ethical questions related to persuasion. What is the difference between persuasion and manipulation? Persuasion and coercion? Is it ethical to persuade someone to buy a product they don't want or need? Is it ethical to try and persuade people to vote for policies or politicians that could hurt them or their families? In what contexts and types of relationships is persuasion inappropriate? Is it ethical to deceive someone if your dishonesty actually benefits them? Ideally at the end of this class you will have your own answers to all of those questions, but more importantly the skills needed to answer many other much more interesting questions.

### Course Objectives (What students will **KNOW** by the end of the course)

- You will gain a comprehensive understanding of the psychological basis of persuasion
- You will develop your critical thinking and communication skills through our weekly discussions and weekly papers
- You will learn how to identify your individual strengths and weaknesses as a writer, speaker, and communicator

### Student Learning Outcomes (What students will **BE ABLE TO DO** by the end of the course)

- Students will be able to **identify** and **describe** key theoretical ideas related to persuasive communication
- Students will be able to **generate** a thesis, outline, and edited draft using high quality scholarly sources
- Students will be able to **assess** and **critique** persuasive messages in various contexts

## **Assignments**

### **Term Papers (x2) (100 pts each)**

There will be two papers due throughout the semester. Each paper will be between 3-4 pages long (**Double Spaced, 12pt font, Times New Roman Font, 1 Inch Margins**).

The first paper will be an analysis of a Black Mirror episode. I will provide you with a rubric. The goal of this paper is for you to analyze the persuasive communication both within the fictional universe of the episode and within the context of media producers (Netflix/writers) and media consumers (us).

The second paper will ask you to identify a societal problem, its root causes, and potential solutions. A rubric will be provided to you. The goal of this paper is for you to research the different mechanisms of solvency to a certain problem and articulate which is best and why. This paper may also serve as the basis of your persuasive speech.

### **Exams (x 2) (100 pts each)**

Exams will be primarily built from the weekly quizzes (multiple choice/matching) and class discussions (short answer/essays). These will take up the entire class time.

*NOTE: For both of the term papers and the exams you may edit/correct them and submit them a **SECOND TIME** within 5 days of being returned to you for **half credit** on the points that were missed. For multiple choice questions you must write a minimum of one sentence of explanation for why you choose the incorrect answer and why the correct answer is correct. Simply choosing the correct answer will not earn you additional points. For essay responses and short answer responses you must completely rewrite your answer. For the papers you must make edits and re-writes that are appropriate given my comments/suggestions. (For example if you get an 80/100 and you make edits and return the paper in and it scores a 95/100 on the second grading you would receive a final grade of 87.5 for the paper -  $15/20$  on corrections:  $15/2 = 7.5 + 80 = 87.5$ )*

### **Weekly Response Papers (\*x10\*) (15 points each)**

These papers are due every Thursday at the beginning of class **ON CANVAS**. Ideally these “kill two birds with one stone” for you. If you write them and show up for class, it should be incredibly easy to contribute to discussion. They are 15 points and should be one page long (Times New Roman, 12pt font, 1 inch margins, double spaced, **WITH NO HEADERS/TITLES**) and will be a chance for you to answer **one of two** questions posed in the textbook. **There are 13 weekly response papers and you are required to do 10 of them.**

### **Weekly Discussion (x15) (10 points per week - 5 per day)**

This grade is moderately subjective, as it is up to me to determine the “quality” of your discussion participation. To me, meaningful participation is about actually speaking, but it's also about how you listen to your classmates. You must also provide insight or a perspective when you participate. Just agreeing with what other people have said or repeating the same arguments others have made is not meaningful participation. I want to hear what you have to say and think. If I don't know what you think I will dock you some points.

### **Weekly Quizzes x10 (15 pts quiz)**

These will happen most Thursdays at the end of class. They will include 10 multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank questions and one short answer question. You will be given 20 minutes to complete the quiz. If you need more time than 20 minutes you may stay after class or follow me to my office and continue the quiz in the hallway. Quizzes will only be offered during class time. **UNLESS** you let me know ahead of time that you will be missing the class/quiz. In this instance you may schedule a time with me to take it **BEFORE** the quiz in class. Once the quiz has happened no one will be able to retake the quiz.

### **Persuasive Speech (100 pts)**

This speech will focus on persuading the audience to change their attitudes or behaviors in relation to a specific topic. This speech must be between 6-7 minutes and must include at least **4 high quality source citations**. **This speech will primarily be assessed on argumentation, structure, writing/language choices, preparedness, fluency/delivery, and credibility/citations when applicable.** You must approve your topic with the instructor prior to preparing your speech. A rubric for the speech will be provided to you.

## **Peer Evaluation (50 pts)**

After listening/watching your classmates' persuasive speeches you will write critiques of both their performance and their argumentation. I will provide a form/sheet that has the relevant spaces for critiques and how persuasive you found their argument.

## **\*Self Evaluation (50 pts)\***

This is the final assignment for this class. It will be a 1 page paper arguing what grade you deserve in this class. If you make a compelling case that you deserve a grade higher than you earned I am willing to give you the higher grade. I am a somewhat difficult person to persuade and you would need to make a pretty compelling case to get a grade change. It can happen though! These 50 points are not calculated into your final grade and allow me to offer bonus points at my discretion based on the arguments presented in your self evaluation.

*NOTE: All written assignments for this course (papers, outlines, drafts) will be submitted electronically through Canvas unless otherwise instructed. WITH ONE MAJOR EXCEPTION. Corrected papers and corrected exams must be handed in as hard copies. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline or special permission must be requested from the instructor before the due date or they will be docked 5% per day for lateness. Per day means 24 hours from their due date (If an assignment is due at 10am and you turn it in at 10:01am it will be docked 5%. If you turn it in at 9:55am the day after it is due you would still only lose 5%. If you turn it in at 10:01am the day after it was due it will be docked 10%)*

## **Grading Policy**

This class is designed to theoretically allow you to mix and match assignments depending on your personal learning style. If you write a quality weekly response paper, then missing the occasional class or quiz should only cost you a handful of points. If you write your weekly response papers and participate in discussion then you should be okay even if you do poorly on the quizzes. If you write your weekly paper and do okay on the quizzes, you will still only lose a few points if you are terrified of talking in class. If you struggle with papers then participation in class and doing well on quizzes will be your ideal combo. Ideally if you have a learning weakness this gives you an avenue to avoid being penalized for it, while also being incentivized to engage with the assignment formats that might make you uncomfortable. I also reserve the right to curve the class at my discretion. Meaning, I may add or remove an additional number of

points to everyone's grade at the end of the semester depending on a variety of variables and factors that I will share with you if I choose to do this.

### **Evaluation**

Assignment	Point Value
Black Mirror Paper	100 pts.
Social Issue Paper	100 pts.
Persuasive Speech	100 pts.
Exam 1	100 pts.
Exam 2	100 pts.
Discussion/Participation	150 pts. (15 weeks x 10 pts.)
Response Papers	150 pts. (*10* weeks x 15 pts.)
Quizzes	150 pts. (10 quizzes x 15pts.)
Peer Feedback (Speeches)	25 pts.
Self-Evaluation	25 pts.
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>1000 POINTS</b>

**The grading scale is a standard ten percentage point scale:  
90-100% = A; 80%-89% = B; 70%-79% = C; 60-69% = D; below 60%**

## **SCHEDULE**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Material Covered</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
<b>1</b>	1/16	T	Syllabus Review and Introduction	<b>Advertisement Discussion</b>
	1/18	TH	Introduction Speeches	<b>Introduction Speech</b>
<b>2</b>	1/23	T	The Study of Persuasion	<b>Chapter 1 Discussion</b>
	1/25	TH	Introductory Ethics	<b>Response Paper #1</b> <b>Quiz Ch 1</b>
<b>3</b>	1/30	T	Psychology of Persuasion	<b>Chapter 2 Discussion</b>
	2/1	TH	Persuasion in “Real Life”	<b>Response Paper #2</b> <b>Quiz Ch 2</b>
<b>4</b>	2/6	T	Persuasion Broadly Considered	<b>Chapter 3 Discussion</b>
	2/8	TH	Choosing a Topic for Persuasive Speech/Social Issue Paper	<b>Response Paper #3</b> <b>Quiz Ch 3</b>
<b>5</b>	2/13	T	Coactive Persuasion	<b>Chapter 4 Discussion</b>
	2/14	TH	Influencer/Social Media Culture	<b>Response Paper #4</b> <b>Quiz Ch 4</b>
<b>6</b>	2/20	T	Resources of Communication	<b>Chapter 5 Discussion</b> <b>Black Mirror Paper Due</b>
	2/22	TH	The Dark Side of Persuasion	<b>Response Paper #5</b> <b>Quiz Ch 5</b>
<b>7</b>	2/27	T	Framing & Reframing	<b>Chapter 6 Discussion</b>
	2/29	TH	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b> <b>Response Paper #6</b>
<b>8</b>	3/5	T	Cognitive Shorthands	<b>Chapter 7 Discussion</b>
	3/7	TH	Group Workday - Persuasive Speech/Social Issue Paper	<b>Response Paper #7</b> <b>Quiz Ch 7</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>3/12</b>	T	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>

	<b>3/14</b>	TH	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<b>10</b>	3/19	T	Reasoning & Evidence	<b>Chapter 8 Discussion</b>
	3/21	TH	Examples of Non-Traditional Persuasion	<b>Response Paper #8 Quiz Ch 8</b>
<b>11</b>	3/26	T	Persuasive Speaking	<b>Chapter 9 Discussion</b>
	3/28	TH	Glossophobia (Fear of Public Speaking)	<b>Response Paper #9 Quiz Ch 9</b>
<b>12</b>	4/2	T	Persuasive Campaigns	<b>Chapter 10 Discussion</b>
	4/4	TH	Political Campaigns	<b>Response Paper #10 Quiz Ch 10</b>

<b>13</b>	4/9	T	Leading Social Movements	<b>Chapter 11 Discussion</b>
	4/11	TH	Product Advertisement	<b>Response Paper #11 Quiz Ch11</b>
<b>14</b>	4/16	TH	<b>EXAM REVIEW</b>	<b>EXAM REVIEW</b>
	4/18	TH	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>Response Paper #12 FINAL EXAM</b>
<b>15</b>	4/23	T	<b>Persuasive Speeches</b>	<b>Persuasive Speeches Response Paper #13</b>
	4/25	TH	<b>Persuasive Speeches</b>	<b>Persuasive Speeches Response Paper #14</b>

<b>16</b>	4/30	TH	<b>Persuasive Speeches</b>	<b>Persuasive Speeches Response Paper #15</b>
	5/2	T	<b>Persuasive Speeches</b>	<b>Persuasive Speeches Self Evaluation</b>

**FINAL EXAM TIME (TBD) - Self Evaluation Due - Debrief/Feedback Meeting -  
Emergency Speech Day**

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance**

If you miss class you will not have the opportunity to take quizzes or participate in weekly discussion. These will cost you some points. The class is designed with opportunities for bonus points built into most classes, so attendance is highly recommended.

### **Late Work Policy**

I firmly believe being able to follow the syllabus and turn things in on time is a vital part of the educational process. Deadlines are an integral part of the “real world” and class is a great way to practice getting used to meeting deadlines. However, in the real world, being late rarely means the things you created or worked on don’t have any value, just diminished value. For this class, papers turned in late will be penalized 5% for every 24 hours after they are due on Canvas. This caps at 50% reduction. Weekly papers can be turned in until the last week of class for 50% reduction. Exam corrections, and term paper corrections will not be accepted after the 5 day window to re-submit).

Quizzes cannot be retaken if you miss them during class.

If you are absent on ANY speech days you will be docked points for failing to provide peer critiques. If you are absent the day of your own speech, you will be given the opportunity to present a make up presentation but you will be docked 10 points for lateness.

### **Participation**

Students are expected to participate in class as students and during presentations as audience members and feedback providers. Unless approved by the professor, all technology (phones, computers, wearables) will be prohibited during **student presentations** and strongly discouraged during normal class time unless you are using it for taking notes. You are expected to participate in class discussions and ask questions during lecture. This is primarily assessed by frequency of asking questions or answering questions posed by the instructor/classmates.

### **Class Conduct**



Persuasion/critical thinking can be an especially vulnerable activity, and thus it is imperative that we treat each other with respect. Criticism's are aimed at **behaviors** NOT **people**. Using abusive language or derogatory comments toward me or any of your classmates will be met with a single warning through an individual meeting with me. After this warning failure to refrain from abusive or derogatory comments will result in an automatic expulsion from the class. If the initial infraction is severe enough I reserve the right to skip the warning and just expel you from my class. Expulsion from my class will result in a failing grade and a referral to the appropriate university department for disciplinary action. I never had to exercise this option. Please do not force me to do so.

### **Accommodations**

If you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, please contact the instructor during the first week of the semester so that your accommodations may be provided in a timely manner. Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall (309-438-5853).

### **Academic Integrity**

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at Illinois State University. Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is quoted or paraphrased from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on paper topics, misrepresentation of sources, or the presentation of someone else's work as your own is considered plagiarism. Students found to commit unintentional or intentional acts of plagiarism will be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through Student Dispute Resolution Services. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and / or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

### **Safe Space**

This classroom is a safe space. Given the nature of this course, controversial ideas may be discussed in class, but only with civility and respect for others. Disparaging remarks toward another's race, religion, sex, socio-economic status, family status, gender identity, mental capacities, sexual orientation, or any immutable trait will not be tolerated.

## **Student Resources**

A variety of useful links related to tutoring services, mental health care, wellness, adjusting to college and a variety of other topics are covered in depth on the schools website. Please check out the resources our university provides and let me know if there are any ways I can help you navigate these systems to maximize your educational experience.

## **Instructor Feedback**

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let me know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing me when difficulties arise during the semester so that we work together to find a solution. I firmly believe that adaptability is what makes an instructor successful. Please don't hesitate to tell me ways I could better accommodate or adapt to your specific learning style.