

COMM 4310: Persuasion

Instructor: Dr. Mu Hu

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Class meeting time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30 pm. – 4:45 pm.

Classroom: Online through WebEx (<https://tamus.webex.com/meet/mhu>)

Course Description

This course is a study of motivational appeals and social scientific approaches to creating and evaluating persuasive messages. Emphasis will be on applying theory by both analyzing examples and creating appeals under different circumstances. This course focuses on paradigm persuasion, the traditional form of persuasion in interpersonal communication context. The components and functions of paradigm persuasion will be carefully reviewed at different levels (cognition, affection, and behavior). Other forms of persuasion, such as persuasion campaign, low involvement persuasion, and advertising, will also be introduced and briefly examined.

Learning Objectives

- 1) Understand major theories and principles of paradigm persuasion in different contexts.
- 2) Be familiar with other forms of persuasion in non-traditional platforms.
- 3) Critically evaluate information obtained through independent reading and research.
- 4) Survey and analyze audiences and adapt message strategies accordingly.
- 5) Apply and improve social scientific writing skills.
- 6) Apply theories of persuasion in written and oral discourses.

Required textbook

Perloff, R.M. (2017). *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century* (6th Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Grade breakdown

A = 90% and above, B = 80% to 89%, C = 70% to 79%, D = 60% to 69%, F = 59% and below.

Evaluation

Your final grade will be based on several components totaling 900 points:

Three exams (300 points)

Speech topic assignment (30 points)

Research assignment (25 points)

Exigency, solutions, & barriers paper (95 points)

Audience analysis survey (55 points)
Audience analysis interpretation paper (125 points)
Message outline paper (90 points)
Persuasive speech (125 points)
Participation (55 points)
Total (900 points)

Tardiness and Leaving Class Early Policy

Our class starts at 3:30 pm. and ends at 4:45 pm. on Mondays and Wednesdays. Please be in class via Webex on time. If students need to attend a certain class meeting late and/or leave a certain class meeting early due to unexpected time conflicts, please notify the instructor before the class starts to obtain the instructor's permission. Upon the approval from the instructor, the students may attend the class meeting late and/or leave the class meeting early. Tardiness and/or leaving class early without prior notice of legitimate reasons will negatively influence students' participation grade.

Please be noted that since the students' time between 3:30 pm. and 4:45 pm. on Mondays and Wednesdays this semester is scheduled for this class, the interruptions from the students' other obligations and commitment should be occasional and minimal. Frequent and substantial interruptions can cost the students all their participation grades at minimum and lead to the instructor's recommendation of withdrawal to the university at maximum.

Attendance Policy

Attendance of class meetings is mandatory. Missing class meetings without prior notice of legitimate reasons will negatively influence your participation grade.

Webex Classroom Policy

Although all the class meetings are conducted online and probably the students attend their class meetings at home or other locations which are not classrooms physically. However, it is the students' responsibility to recognize the online class meetings as formal and regular class meetings in a public university. All the necessary class meeting policies in the formal and regular class meetings in a public university, as well as the penalties associated with the violations of the policies, apply to this class's meetings.

Participation Policy

Participation is a must in class. There are in-class discussions, assignments, and activities in almost all the class meetings. Your participation grade is decided by the quantity and quality of your contribution to the class discussions and activities. Missing class meetings means that you miss the class discussions and activities and therefore will negatively influence your participation grade.

If you don't get involved in class activities but instead do other things unrelated to class, you will be asked to leave the online classroom immediately and receive a zero on your participation grade.

If you miss a class meeting (especially when the instructions of the assignments are given), it is your responsibility to find out what you miss. If you miss the class meeting(s) due to legitimate reasons, feel free to contact me ahead of time. You are responsible for the loss of points for not knowing the instructions because of your absence.

Absent/Late policy of assignments

You are required to take exams as scheduled and turn in all the assignments on the scheduled due dates. The assignments are due at 11:59 pm. of the due dates. Each assignment should be turned in via Dropbox in Blackboard. If you miss an exam or an assignment due date for some legitimate reasons (e.g., illness, death in the family), you are expected, if at all possible, to notify me via the contact information listed above of your situation prior to missing a scheduled exam or an assignment due date. If, for some legitimate reasons, you are not able to contact me prior to missing an exam or an assignment, you need to contact me within 24 hours after the missed scheduled test or assignment due date. Note that unless you are unconscious, kidnapped, incarcerated, or similarly incapacitated there is no excuse for not contacting me within 24 hours of missing a deadline.

An unexcused absence from an exam will result in a grade of zero. Late written assignments will be reduced by 20% per 24 hours they are late (note that weekend days are counted as late days). If an assignment is 72 hours or more late it will not be accepted.

If you are absent from class so that you fail to turn in an assignment or take an exam, the ONLY acceptable form of excuse is:

You must provide written confirmation of your excuse on an appropriate, official paper (e.g., a doctor's excuse on office letterhead or prescription pad).

If it is not provided, in a timely fashion (as described above), the excuse will not be accepted and the appropriate sanction will be applied.

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations of their disability. If you have a disability that may require an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of

services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dss@tamus.edu.

AI Use Policy

This class assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves individually. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment based center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamus.edu or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources:

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services.

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2'). For more information and self-help resources, please visit www.tamus.edu/studentcounseling

Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff, and faculty who are registered in JagE Alert, will have the option to receive a text message, email, and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamus.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can

be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Jaguar Writing Center

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the student services tab. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at www.tamusa.edu/Writing-Center. The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. In addition, you may notify the instructor if you are comfortable doing so.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, about special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in-person, Room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under A&M System policy, students are

provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism, and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331,

Modular C.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions of students' freedoms and responsibilities to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System, including the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no university rule or procedure that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the university, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and staff, and the administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted and compliant with the University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and in the University Catalog.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their University email for any updates or official University notifications.
6. We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Grade Grievance

Any grade grievance needs to be submitted to me in written form, including a print-out copy of the argument, the assignment or exam in question, and the evidence supporting your grievance.

Tentative Schedule

Alterations to this schedule due to unforeseen circumstances will be announced in class.

Exams include all readings, lectures, and notes since the previous exam, unless otherwise indicated by your instructor.

Week	Date	Topics	Assignments and Presentations Due	Readings
1	January 21	Introduction of class		
2	January 26	Persuasion: definition, assumption, characteristics, and persuasive strategy		Slides and Chapter 1
	January 28	Persuasive strategy further analysis		Slides and Chapter 1
3	February 2	Belief, attitudes and behavior I	Speech topic assignment due at 11:59 pm. in Blackboard Dropbox	Slides and Chapter 3
	February 4	Beliefs, attitudes and behavior II		Slides and Chapter 3
4	February 9	Beliefs, attitudes and behavior III		Slides and Chapter 11
	February 11	Fear appeal		Slides and Chapter 10
5	February 16	Social judgment theory	Research assignment due at 11:59 pm. in Blackboard Dropbox	Slides and Chapter 4
	February 17	Source credibility I		Slides and Chapter 8
6	February 23	Source credibility II		Slides and Chapter 8
	February 25	Exam one		
7	March 2	Audience analysis I	ESB paper due at 11:59 pm. in Blackboard Dropbox	Slides and Chapter 6
	March 4	Audience analysis II		Slides and Chapter 6
8	March 16	Inoculation theory and two sided message		Slides and Chapter 9
	March 18	Personality and persuasion I		Slides and Chapter 12

Week	Date	Topics	Assignments and Presentations	Readings
9	March 23	Personality and persuasion II	Audience analysis survey due at 11:59 pm. in Blackboard Dropbox	Slides and Chapter 12
	March 25	Interpreting survey data		Slides
10	March 30	Survey day		
	April 1	Exam Two		
11	April 6	Message organization		Slides
	April 8	Reasoning	AAIP due at 11:59 pm. in Blackboard Dropbox	Slides
12	April 13	Evidence		Slides
	April 15	Presentation styles		Slides
13	April 20	Alternatives to paradigm persuasion I		Slides and Chapter 7
	April 22	Alternatives to paradigm persuasion II	MOP due in Blackboard Dropbox	Slides and Chapter 7
15	April 27	Alternatives to paradigm persuasion III		Slides and Chapter 7
	April 29	Alternatives to paradigm persuasion IV		Slides and Chapter 7
15	May 4	Persuasive speech day	Persuasive speech video due at 11:59 pm. in Blackboard Dropbox	

Exam three will be scheduled during the Final Exam Week