

**Communication 338 – Special Topics in Public Relations:
Persuasion in the Public Arena
Wednesday, 10:00 – 11:50
Room 300**

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Office: 329 (CAC)

Office Hours: T 9:15-10:45

W 12:00-1:00 and by appointment

Course Description:

In this course, we play with ideas. Each class begins with an open discussion of relevant current events and continues our dialogue on how information circulates and resonates. The readings should help guide our discussion in the first several weeks.

After establishing a general framework for understanding what persuasion is, we'll evaluate persuasive appeals in a variety of spaces. Your success in this course depends upon your ability to synthesize readings, contribute to class discussions, and apply concepts learned in the course to each assignment.

You will have several opportunities to enhance your professional presentation skills through individual and group work. By the end of the semester, you should feel more comfortable engaging in sophisticated appraisals of how information moves and connects, what people find credible, and why.

Readings:

All course readings are available via D2L.

Attendance Policy:

Attending class is important, if only to get used to the notion of being expected to be at a certain place at a certain time. Sometimes life happens, and you can't make class. For that—and whatever reason, really—I'm giving you one free absence. That does not mean you aren't responsible for what we cover that day, it only means I won't take additional points off your grade for being absent.

Please note that class periods in which you are scheduled to present are particularly important: Not showing up and not emailing me in advance on those dates means you will receive a zero for that presentation.

After your "free" absence, your professionalism score will drop a full letter grade for being absent. Being late matters as well. If you're late three times, it counts as an absence. *We only meet 15 times (including today) so get your money's worth!*

Course Requirements

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
Reading Responses (10)	100
Current Issue	25
Quiz	75
Team Discussion	25
Essay #1	50
Essay #2	50
Case Study	75
Final	50
Participation	50
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TOTAL	500

A:	94%+	(470+)
A-:	90-93%	(450-469)
B+:	87-89%	(435-449)
B:	84-86%	(420-434)
B-:	80-83%	(400-419)
C+:	77-79%	(385-399)
C:	74-76%	(370-384)
C-:	70-73%	(350-369)
D:	65%	(325-349)
F:	<65%	(Below 325)

Late Work

Deadlines matter in the workplace, and there are consequences if you fail to deliver. Work submitted after the deadline has passed will receive a 20 percent deduction. For each subsequent 24-hour period that elapses, an additional 5 percent will be deducted until the assignment is turned in.

Grading

In general, all work will be graded against a publication standard, and will be evaluated for grammar and usage (15%), content (60%), and organization/clarity (25%). Any changes to this basic formula will be made clear in particular assignments.

An "A" is Outstanding. This grade rewards work that is of a professional caliber. The writing is clear, organized and precise, and requires virtually no editing. Any edits are

relatively cosmetic and subjective. In short, the work would not require changes prior to being submitted to a client or editor.

A "B" is Good. This grade reflects work that could be raised to professional standards without extensive editing. The work needs minor revisions in terms of reorganizing, rewriting and/or reformatting. A "B" doesn't necessarily have anything wrong, but does have identifiable areas for improvement.

A "C" is Adequate. This work indicates a relatively significant problem in at least one area, such as research, analysis, grammar, strategy, or formatting. It does not measure up to professional quality but might be saved with extensive revisions. This is work that a boss might consider a first draft.

A "D" is Unacceptable. This work is substandard, even for a classroom setting. The research and analysis may be unprofessional, the writing may be unclear, and/or ungrammatical. The work may contain factual errors and/or critical omissions, or may show little concept of basic strategic judgment.

An "F" is Failing. This grade reflects completely unacceptable work, and conveys the impression that the student did not take the assignment seriously.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

You are expected to do original work. Recycling work you have previously done is known as self-plagiarism. When you use information or images that you did not create, you need to indicate that.

Section 14.03 of the UWSP code defines academic misconduct as occurring when a student takes any of the following actions:

- ◇ Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- ◇ Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- ◇ Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- ◇ Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- ◇ Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- ◇ Assists other students in any of these acts.

The potential consequences of academic misconduct include failing the class, being placed on disciplinary probation, being suspended, or being expelled from UWSP.

The stakes are far too high to take risks in this area. Let me know if you need clarification.

Beyond the ethical considerations, part of the fun in this class and in the field is playing with ideas. It is far more rewarding to be inspired and find your own voice than it is to

steal someone else's effort and hope you don't get caught. It's a better way to live; as Mark Twain put it, "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."

Additional Resources

The [Mary K. Croft Tutoring-Learning Center](#) offers assistance with writing, technology, and study skills. It is located in room 018 of the Learning Resource Center (in the basement of the library), and you can set up an appointment by stopping by or calling 715-346-3568.

Any student who anticipates they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) should contact me privately to discuss specific needs.

The [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](#) offers assistance and documentation for students with disabilities. It is located in room 609 of the Learning Resource Center. You can contact them at 715-346-3365 or via email at datctr@uwsp.edu. Students registered with the DATC may provide their Notice of Accommodation letter (yellow forms) during office hours, via email, or after class.

The [UWSP Counseling Center](#) is available to help you deal with the stresses of college life. There are licensed mental health professionals who can help. It is located on the 3rd floor of Delzell Hall at 910 Fremont Street. Contact them at 715-346-3553, or via email at counsel@uwsp.edu.

SCHEDULE

Subject to change. Students are responsible for noting changes announced during class.

*Discussion indicates readings that should be completed before class begins.

*Assignment denotes something that will be discussed & assigned that day.

*Due indicates an assignment is due to D2L before class begins that day.

Week 1 – Introductions, Course Overview

Weds., Sept. 6

Week 2 – Foundations of Persuasion & “What Sticks”

Weds., Sept. 13

Current Issue #1, 2

Discussion: Heath & Heath Intro – “What Sticks” (pp. 3-24) and Ch. 1 “Simple” (pp. 25-62)

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 3 – Unexpected & Concrete

Weds., Sept. 20

Current Issue #3, 4, 5

Discussion: Heath & Heath, Ch. 2 “Unexpected” (pp. 63-97) and Ch. 3 “Concrete” (pp. 98-129)

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 4 – Credible & Emotional

Weds., Sept. 27

Current Issue #6, 7, 8

Discussion: Heath & Heath, Ch. 4 “Credible” (pp. 130-164) and Ch. 5 “Emotional” (pp. 165-203)

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 5 – QUIZ – What Sticks

Weds., Oct. 4

Readings: Heath & Heath, Ch. 6 “Stories” (pp. 204-237)

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 6 – Guest Visitor

Weds., Oct. 11

- Reading Response due Friday (regarding the guest visitor)

Week 7 – Informing v. Communicating

Weds., Oct. 18

Current Issue #9, 10, 11

Discussion: Decker & Decker, “Creating a Communication Experience,” (pp. 49-76)

Assign: Essay #1

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 8 – Applied Persuasion

Weds., Oct. 25

Current Issue #12, 13, 14

Discussion: Perloff, “Advertising, Marketing and Persuasion” (pp. 494-535)

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 9 – Frontloading Attention

Weds., Nov. 1

Current Issue #15, 16

Due: Essay #1

Discussion: Cialdini, “Part 1 – Pre-Suasion: The Frontloading of Attention” (pp. 19-66)

Team 1 Discussion

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 10 – Role of Association

Weds., Nov. 8

Current Issue #17, 18

Discussion: Cialdini, “Part 2 – Processes: The Role of Association” (pp. 97-147)

Team 2 Discussion

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 11 – Best Practices

Weds., Nov. 15

Current Issue #19, 20

Discussion: Cialdini, “Part 3 – Best Practices: The Optimization of Pre-Suasion” (pp.

149-172; 209-233)

Team 3 Discussion

Assign: Essay #2 (Flex assignment)

Case Study

- Reading Response due Friday

Week 12 – Flex Period / Essay #2 Due

Weds., Nov. 22

Week 13 – In-Class Work Period & Strategy Session – Case Studies

Weds., Nov. 29

Current Issue #21, 22

Week 14 – Case Study Presentations

Weds., Dec. 6

Week 15 – Last Day of Class

Weds., Dec. 13

Wrap-Up & Distribution of **Final**