

Communication 390/590, Persuasion Seminar
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, spring, 2016
TTh 8 – 9:15 CAC 239

Instructor

Dr. Mary McComb

Office Hours: CAC 234 Thursday 9:30 – 11:30 and by appointment, mmccomb@uwsp.edu

Additional availability:

Monday – Wednesday 10am – 5:30pm

Sugar Doll, 1336 Strongs Ave., Downtown Stevens Point, 715-341-5556

It is fine to call me or drop in at Sugar Doll. Sometimes I will be helping customers, so you might have to wait a bit, but I'm happy to meet with you at my shop. Call ahead to make sure I'm there.

Home phone 6:30 – 9pm 715-570-8836

Course Overview

This course will develop your ability to think and communicate critically and knowledgeably about the ways persuasive messages invite audiences to respond. You'll learn about a variety of theories that highlight different parts of the persuasion phenomenon. This knowledge will also help you become an astute designer of persuasive messages in your career and personal life.

This is a great semester to study persuasion since it's an election year. Make sure your media habits include keeping track of the latest campaign ads and other persuasive messages. Take advantage of the free newspaper program. Be on the lookout for interesting examples of persuasion; there will be many opportunities to collaborate with colleagues to explore how these messages invite us to respond.

Because the course will use current, real-life persuasive artifacts, we must keep attention on the phenomenon of persuasion. Our focus is on the means used to invite desired responses, not on the ends. For example, it will be tempting to move beyond a discussion of Trump's language use to an evaluation of his proposed policies. If we study an artifact from a "pro-life" or "pro-choice" organization, it would be easy to divert discussion to the issue itself. Use of persuasive examples from students or me should not be construed as support for the issues involved.

This seminar helps you achieve the following program learning outcomes. Students should be able to:

- Communicate effectively using appropriate technologies for diverse audiences
- Use communication theories to understand and solve communication problems
- Apply principles of ethical decision making in communication contexts

In addition, by the semester's end, this course will enable you to:

- Describe a range of theories and how they explain the persuasion process.
- Analyze persuasive messages using appropriate theories.
- Create persuasive campaign outlines for a variety of persuasive goals.

Textbook

Frymier & Nadler, *Persuasion: Integrating theory, research, and practice*, 2nd ed. Reading assignments are in CONTENT on D2L. Note that this course does not follow the book outline. There will be other resources posted on D2L.

Assessment

The quality of your learning will be assessed in several ways this semester. Details will be on D2L.

Assessment	% of final grade
Online discussion 8 required postings	30
Short papers 4 papers	30
Analysis paper	15
Persuasion Games group presentation	15
Essay final	10
TOTAL	100

Note: Failure to submit any one assessment component will result in an "F" course grade. For instance, even if the rest of your work averaged out to "B" quality, but you didn't submit one of the short papers, you would fail the course.

Assessment standards will be available on D2L. Please note that your writing assignments must be written in at least near-perfect English to be eligible for an "A" grade.

Schedule

Jan 26, 28	Orientation to course
Feb 2, 4	Unit 1 Definitions & basics
Feb 9	Unit 1.1 Persuasive goals
Feb 11	Unit 1.2 Aristotle
Feb 16	Unit 2 Social science theories
Feb 18	Persuasion Games 1 Classic vs. Classic
Feb 23	2.1 Social judgment theory
Feb 25	2.2 Consistency and cognitive dissonance theories
Mar 1	2.3 Self-perception theory
Mar 3	2.4 Elaboration likelihood theory
Mar 8	Social science theories summary
March 10	Persuasion Games 2, social science theories,
Mar 15	Unit 3 ethos pathos logos
Mar 15, 17	3.1 Ethos
Mar 29	3.2 Pathos
Mar 31	3.3 Logos
Apr 7	Persuasion Games 3
Apr 12	Interview paper discussed, analysis assigned
Apr 14	Unit 4 Language and symbols
Apr 14, 19, 26	4.1 Language and persuasion
Apr 28, May 3	4.2 Symbolism and identification
May 5	Persuasion Games 4
May 10, 12	Persuasion Games 5
May 17, 10:15-12:15	Final Exam

Attendance and Participation

A classroom is not an assembly of individuals, but a community where interaction with colleagues is vital to learning. Absences interfere with those relationships. But life happens, so you are allotted two excused personal days. Save these for necessary absences. Beyond those two days, absences are unexcused and will have a negative impact on your final grade. I will not excuse absences retroactively. I will not excuse absences due to:

- oversleeping
- workload in other courses
- job duties
- early or late holiday breaks or rides home

... So don't bother asking.

Whatever the reason for your absence, it's your responsibility to catch up on what you missed by consulting D2L and your colleagues. If severe illness or emergency require your being absent more than your two personal days, contact me ASAP to discuss the situation.

Participation is not assessed directly. Be aware that the quality of your participation will affect your course grade in borderline situations. I expect your participation to be professional, characterized by punctual attendance, obvious preparation for class, asking pertinent questions and offering relevant comments, taking notes, and actively engaging in classroom discussions and other activities.

If you as an employee would not behave in certain ways, those behaviors would be inappropriate in this course. Examples are: not preparing for activities and discussion, unexcused absences or habitual lateness, using electronic devices for non-class purposes, rudeness, sleeping in class, or other discourtesies.

Academic Honesty

I expect that all your work will be a product of your own intelligence and effort. Plagiarism occurs whenever a person presents words and ideas of another as his or her own without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources. Plagiarism can be both deliberate and conscious, or inadvertent, when a person does not understand how to document sources properly. If you have any questions about how to document others' words and ideas, come see me and I will help you! Academic dishonesty in your work will be treated as per UWSP policies.

Classroom Etiquette

Room setup. If we have moved desks from the row arrangement, please help put them back in rows before you leave.

Leaving during class. If you find you must absolutely leave during class, leave the room quietly and quickly. Complete whatever task was necessary and come back to class immediately.

Communication technology. Turn off and put away any phones, tablets, laptops, etc. by the time class starts. Exceptions will be made for those with a documented reason for using technology. Use during class is distracting not only to the user but also to other students. From time to time I might give you specific permission to use your devices in an activity.