

SPCH 3334, PERSUASION
COURSE SYLLABUS, Spring Semester, 2005
Instructor: Dr. L. Brooks Hill

COURSE LOGISTICS

Meeting Situation. Time: MWF 11:30 A.M.-12:20 P.M. Place: RTT 316

Instructor Access: Office: RTT 203/204. Office hours: MWF 8:30-9:30, 10:30-11:30
& TR 10-12 A.M. Also available at other times
during each weekday. Drop-ins invited, but
appointments encouraged. Phones: (O)
210/999-8511, (H) 830/981-8009, (C) 210/218-
2120, (FAX) 210/999-8512. Email: lhill@trinity.edu

COURSE FIT IN GENERAL EDUCATION

The study of persuasion addresses the processes and implications of personal and social influence. Borrowing ideas from several social sciences, this course studies these phenomena primarily from a communication perspective. To underscore its relevance to many other professional applications, coursework in such areas as public relations, advertising, marketing, and campaigning build on the research and theory of persuasion.

For students who entered Trinity University prior to AY 2004-05, SPCH 3334, Persuasion, is not a Common Curriculum choice, but for students under the Courses of Study 2004-2005 this course is a Common Curriculum choice in Understanding Human Social Interaction. This understanding addresses “the behavior of individuals and groups within social, historical, and institutional contexts, focusing on the ways in which the social sciences and humanities seek to understand human behavior and social cultures, and providing an in-depth investigation of significant social issues and cultural values that help shape individual and social choice” (Courses of Study 2004-2005, page 36). Of the three courses required to satisfy this Understanding, Persuasion is in the subcategory of Social Issues and Values where one course is required.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examines theory, research and practice in persuasive communication with an emphasis on the interaction of rhetorical and psychological approaches. Considers the development of strategies for application in contemporary public speaking and campaigning. Addresses ethical issues and questions throughout.

COURSE CONCERNS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how persuasion simultaneously serves and reflects our society and culture.
2. Learn varied rhetorical and behavioral theories designed to explain the process of persuasion and their use in persuasive activities.
3. Develop the ability to analyze the practice of persuasion in varied personal, social, and political situations.

4. Understand and analyze how persuasive actions coalesce into campaigns and movements in the social dynamics of a democratic society.
5. Develop the ability to evaluate the functional, ethical, and aesthetic quality of persuasive efforts.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The textbooks for this course will address our subject from three different approaches: First is an overview with a more popular slant based on the book by Pratkanis and Aronson. Second is a more thorough examination of persuasion theory, processes, and extensions built around the central text by Woodward and Denton. The final component focuses our attention on campaigns and movements using the Stewart, Smith, and Denton book.

Pratkanis, A. & E. Aronson. Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion. Revised Edition. New York, NY: Freeman, 2001.

Stewart, C. J.; C. A. Smith, & R. E. Denton, Jr. Persuasion and Social Movements. 4th edition revised. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2001.

Woodward, G. C. & Robert Denton, Jr. Persuasion & Influence in American Life. 5th edition revised. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2004.

All courses in the Department of Speech and Drama utilize the same style manual: Hacker, D. A Pocket Style Manual. 3rd ed. rev. Boston MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. Each student should either purchase this guide or have ready access to a copy.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Examinations (40%). Two examinations will assist my evaluation of your comprehension and synthesis of the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The mid-term examination will count 15% of your grade and will consist of a combination of key-term definitions, short-essay questions, and one essay question. The final examination will count 25% of your grade and will consist of essay questions. To assist your preparation for the final examination, a set of illustrative study questions will be provided.

Critical Analysis (15%). Using the Pratkanis and Aronson book as your point of departure, prepare a 5-7 page, typed analysis of a single, contemporary persuasive effort to promote a product or idea. A primary objective of this assignment is to demonstrate your grasp of the concepts and principles from the text as they apply to your selection. Each student will also provide a brief oral presentation to introduce the persuasive event and identify the primary lesson to be learned from this analysis.

Research Project (30%). Each student will conduct a major research project to be reported in a paper of at least 10 typed pages, excluding title page, references, and appendices. No two students will be permitted to work on the same topic. A proposal of at least 3 typed pages must be submitted before the end of the eighth week of classes. Guidelines for the preparation of this proposal will be provided in class. This proposal will be evaluated and count for 5 % of the total credit for the major

research project. The earlier you select a campaign or movement and begin to gather materials about it, the better you can control and execute this major assignment. All students will be expected to contribute relevant information from their project to class discussions. Each student is encouraged to meet with the instructor regarding the project.

For this project each student must select a current, or at least recent, ideological campaign or movement. Then, using the texts by Woodward & Denton, by Stewart, Smith and Denton, or by other campaign experts, develop a conceptual framework, describe, analyze, and evaluate the campaign or movement. Here again, the primary thrust of this assignment is for you to demonstrate your facility with the concepts, principles, and theories of persuasion as you attempt to capture the intricacies and dynamics of a campaign or movement.

Please note that your instructor does not accept electronic transmission of the written projects. Because he also does not want you to miss a class session if your paper is not in final form at class time on the due date, you may place your papers in his mailbox in RTT 203 by 5:00 P.M. of the due date without penalty. Late papers are penalized one letter grade per class session or part thereof.

Class Participation (15%). Each student is expected to contribute to class discussions and/or activities. This will minimally include a brief report of your critical analysis, a more detailed report of your research project, and general participation in class discussion. The course format necessitates responsible, active participation by each student. For the evaluation of this work, see the attached form on "Class Participation Criteria" which the instructor will use to monitor and assess these activities. Obviously, class participation requires attendance.

Extra Credit. For the very dedicated, grade conscious, or simply worried student, extra credit work is available and encouraged. An attached handout explains "Extra Credit Options." Please note that a maximum of five points can be added to your final average grade through extra credit work. Also note that this is not a "give-away" bonus, but requires time, energy and a respectable product.

Attendance Policy. You are expected to attend all class sessions. In the case of an excused absence, you are responsible for arranging to complete any work missed during your absence. Because of unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, three unexcused absences (i.e., one week of classes) will be forgiven. You should use these prospects prudently, especially if you know that you will have some excused absences. Exceptional attendance will be rewarded, and the penalty for excessive unexcused absences is severe with a three-point reduction for each on your final average. Only in rare situations will make-up examinations be administered.

Academic Integrity. Pages 103-105 of the Student Handbook and 2003/2004 Academic Planner provide the policies and regulations regarding academic integrity for students at Trinity University who matriculated prior to AY 2004-05. New students who are under the Courses of Study 2004-2005 have an Honor Code. Details of the Honor Code are available on the website of the Office of Academic Affairs. Please read the appropriate information and recognize the significance of your complete compliance. If you do not understand any of the terms used or policies stated, please ask your instructor for clarification. The work you submit must be your own, and all borrowed ideas and materials must be appropriately referenced. Whenever in doubt, please ask for guidance.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	READINGS
Wed 1/12	Course Overview and Introductions	
Fri 1/14	I. Persuasion Popularized A. The Psychology of Everyday Persuasion	P & A, Preface & Chs. 1-5
Mon 1/17	MLK HOLIDAY	
Wed 1/19	B. Pre-persuasion	P & A, Chs. 6-11
Fri 1/21	C. Communicator Credibility	P & A, Chs. 12-16
Mon 1/24	D. Message and Its Presentation	P & A, Chs. 17-23
Wed 1/26	E. Emotional Appeals	P & A, Chs. 24-30
Fri 1/28	F. The Challenge	P & A, Chs. 31-37
Mon 1/31	G. Counteracting Propaganda	P & A, Chs. 38-40
Wed 2/2	Open Discussion of the Critical Analyses	
Fri 2/4	CRITICAL ANALYSIS REPORTS	
Mon 2/7	-reports continued- CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER DUE	
Wed 2/9	II. Persuasion from a Communication/Rhetorical Perspective A. Definitions and Issues	W & D, Preface & Ch. 1
Fri 2/11	B. Persuasion and Social Change	W & D, Ch. 2
Mon 2/14	-continued-	S, S & D, Chs. 1 & 2
Wed 2/16	C. Symbolic Bases for Communication	W & D, Ch. 3
Fri 2/18	-continued-	S, S & D, Chs. 7 & 8
Mon 2/21	MID-TERM EXAMINATION	

Wed	2/23	III. Perspectives on the Nature of Persuasion A. Persuasion and Reasoning	W & D, Ch. 4
Fri	2/25	-continued-	S, S & D, Ch. 10 Rec. SSD, Chs. 11-13
Mon	2/28	B. Credibility and Authority	W & D, Ch. 5
Wed	3/2	C. Psychology of Persuasion	W & D, Ch. 6
Fri	3/4	-continued-	S, S & D, Ch. 4
Mon	3/7	D. Social Bases of Persuasion LAST DATE FOR TERM PROJECT PROPOSAL	W & D, Ch. 7
Wed	3/9	-continued	
Fri	3/11	IV. Contexts of Persuasion A. Interpersonal Persuasion	W & D, Ch. 8
March 14-18		SPRING BREAK	
Mon	3/21	B. Public and Mass Persuasion	W & D, Ch. 9
Wed	3/23	C. Advertising as Persuasion	W & D, Ch. 10
Fri	3/25	GOOD FRIDAY HOLIDAY	
Mon	3/28	D. Political Persuasion	W & D, Ch. 11
Wed	3/30	E. Strategic Considerations	W & D, Ch. 13
Fri	4/1	V. Impact of Persuasion on Society A. Ethical Considerations	W & D, Ch. 12
Mon	4/4	B. Persuasion and Social Movements	S, S & D, Chs. 1, 3 & 6
Wed	4/6	C. Personal Needs and Leadership	S, S & D, Chs. 4-5
Fri	4/8	D. Symbolism and Social Movements	S, S & D, Chs. 7-9
Mon	4/11	E. Arguments and Social Movements	S, S & D, Chs. 10-13
Wed	4/13	F. Resisting Social Movements	S, S & D, Ch. 14

Fri	4/15	Refining the Research Projects
Mon	4/18	RESEARCH PROJECT REPORTS
Wed	4/20	-reports continued-
Fri	4/22	-reports continued-
Mon	4/25	-reports continued-
Wed	4/27	-reports continued- RESEARCH PROJECT DUE (Preparatory Exam Questions Distributed)
Fri	4/29	Concluding Business
Mon & Tues	5/2-3	READING DAYS
Fri	5/6	FINAL EXAMINATION
	8:30-11:30 A.M.	

SPCH 3334, PERSUASION EXTRA CREDIT PROSPECTS

Trinity University challenges everyone in our community with a rich learning environment. One prominent aspect of this potential is the large number of guest speakers who visit our campus each semester. To enhance your breadth of learning and to encourage you to apply what you are learning in your persuasion course, your instructor strongly encourages you to attend several of these guest presentations around campus and think about the persuasiveness of the message and its presentation.

To make this learning prospect even more attractive, your instructor will make available extra credit for your active engagement of these learning opportunities. If you wish to take advantage of this extra credit, attend the event and write a 3-5 page typed review/analysis of what you experienced, drawing upon your text and class discussions of persuasion.

General guidelines: (1) For each reported analysis, you can earn up to one point to be added to your final average for the course. (2) You can earn a maximum of five points toward your final grade. (3) You must submit your review/analysis no later than one week after the event you attended. (4) No reports will be accepted beyond the fourteenth week of the semester. (5) Do not simply report what happened. You must also analyze what transpired using concepts, principles, and theories from the persuasion literature and our class discussions.