

COMS 3382-01 Persuasion (3 Credit Hours)

Fall 2017

Class Time: MWF 11:00 am - 11:50 am

Class Room: DRCB 312

Instructor: Dr. Cindy (Yixin) Chen

Email: cindychen@shsu.edu (email is the best way to reach me; please allow for **at least 24 hours** for a response)

Phone: (936) 294-3164

Office: Dan Rather Com Building 324

Office Hours: Mon & Wed at 1:30 to 2:30pm or by email appointment

Teaching Assistant: Ms. Melanie Coe (mdc068@shsu.edu)

Course website: <https://shsu.blackboard.com/>

Course Description

Persuasion is a lecture-style course that introduces students to major concepts, theories and research in the area of persuasion, social influence, and compliance-gaining. Students will learn how persuasion is designed, attempted and whether it works and how well it works (if at all) in various applied contexts. The textbook, lectures, and assignments all converge to instruct students about persuasive principles discussed in the communication, social, and behavioral sciences.

Course Objectives & Student Learning Outcomes

- To understand fundamental concepts, theory, and research findings about persuasive communication.
- To gain actual experience in the study and practice of persuasive communication through in-class exercises and out-of-class assignments.
- To enhance persuasive skills and to develop resistance to undesirable persuasion and propaganda.
- To apply knowledge gained about persuasion to the analysis of real life persuasive situations.

Textbooks

Required: Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2014). *Persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining*. Boston: Pearson. (ISBN: 978-0-205-91296-4)

Please be sure to get the book with the ISBN above.

Recommended (not required): American Psychological Association (APA). (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

SHSU Blackboard

We will make use of SHSU Blackboard (<https://shsu.blackboard.com/>) for announcements, distributing documents, posting assignments, and reporting grades. All students are required to regularly check the COMS 3382-01 Blackboard webpage.

Grading

Your grade in the course will be determined as follows:

10 In-class activities: 10 points

10 Friday assignments as Short Answer Questions (SAQs): 20 points (2 points * 10)

Exam 1: 20 points

Exam 2: 25 points

Exam 3: 25 points

Total = 100 points

Grading scale: 90+ = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; 59 & Below = F

In-class activities

Throughout the semester, we will have 10 in-class activities (randomly distributed), with each activity accounting for 1 point. The activities could be self-reflections, group discussions, or evaluations of learning outcomes. If you are present, be sure to hand in the sheet for the in-class activity with your name and ID clearly written to get the credit for the activity.

Missed in-class activities due to absence cannot be made up, except in the case of illness or a documented absence for legitimate reasons. If you miss an in-class activity for documented and legitimate reasons and would like to request a make-up, you must submit your documentation **within one week past the activity date.**

Friday assignments as Short Answer Questions (SAQs)

There will be **10 required** Friday assignments, with each assignment accounting for 2 points. This assignment will be available on Blackboard on each Monday by noon and is due **by Midnight each Friday**. Please see the “Weekly Schedules” for specific due dates of each Friday assignment. You need to **submit electronic copies** of Microsoft Word documents via Blackboard.

For each Friday assignment, you will be given 2 to 4 short-answer questions. You can directly find answers from the textbook. However, try **NOT** to use the exact words from the textbook. Use your own words to summarize or paraphrase.

Although this assignment is called “short” answers, your responses should be **comprehensive and accurate**. You are advised to finish reading the chapter before you answer the SAQs. Do **not** copy and paste from the textbook. You have to **use your own words** to summarize what you have learned from the textbook based on your understanding.

Exams

Three exams will take place during the semester. Exams in this course are non-cumulative, although there may be some overlap due to the nature of the material covered. There is **no** final exam in this course. All aspects of the course (Chapter readings, lectures, activities, SAQs, etc.) are possible sources of exam material.

Make-up exams will only be given with **timely notification and appropriate documentation** for illness or other legitimate reasons. Make-up exams will take place in my office and will be scheduled at my discretion. Please see **policy for make-up exams** described below.

Exams are closed-book and closed-note. Cell phones and laptops should be **turned off** during the exam time. During the exam time, you are expected to work on your own. Don't look around; don't talk to other students. Students who violate these rules will get an immediate F in the exam.

Reaction Papers

There might be a couple of opportunities to earn extra credit by writing optional extra-credit reaction papers. An extra-credit paper could account for up to 4 points of extra credit added to your total points. Detailed instructions for extra-credit paper will be posted on Blackboard.

You will be asked to read a research article in the area of Persuasion and write a reaction paper. The article will be posted on Blackboard. You are expected to write a two-to-three-page (**1 inch margins, double space, Times New Roman font, size 12**) reaction paper related to the article. In your reaction paper, you should include 7 elements below:

- 1) Summarize the purpose(s) of the article.
- 2) Use a few sentences to summarize the research questions or hypotheses the author(s) have proposed.
- 3) What method(s) did the author use? Survey? Experiment? Interview?
- 4) What are the major findings of the article?
- 5) Describe any personal experiences that might be related to what was studied in the article.
- 6) Were any of the findings from the article surprising to you? If you were a researcher on the same topic, what questions would you ask differently? In other words, are there any questions you want to know, but were not asked in the article?
- 7) Any additional thoughts, feedback, or comments on the topic discussed in the article.

Please proofread your paper for any typos or grammar errors before you submit it in **hardcopy**.

Written Papers

All papers should be submitted in **hard copy**. Emailed written papers will NOT be accepted.

Attendance Policy

Attending class is important to your final grade: Missing **five or more** class sessions will drop your grade by **one letter grade**. Missing **10 or more** class sessions will be the cause for an **F grade**. It is also expected that students arrive on time and not leave until the class is dismissed. Lateness or early leaving will result in a reduced grade (**5 points deduction each lateness/early leaving** from your total) for the course.

Attending class provides you the best opportunity to learn the materials taught in the course and I hope you will raise clarification questions during class time. We will also do many activities during our time together, including self-reflections, group discussions, and working on skill development. Information about assignments and exams will also be given during class. Additionally, your presence here will provide you a chance to learn from your peer students' perspectives and give them a chance to learn from yours.

Before class time, lecture notes (sometimes partial and sometimes complete) in hard copies will be distributed to students. If you are gone from the class for ANY reason, it is **your responsibility to coordinate with your peers** as soon as possible to acquire missed notes. **Under no condition** will the instructor give the notes to students who missed the class.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments that are turned in late without an appropriate documentation for illness or other legitimate reasons will only receive **half credit** and will NOT be accepted after one week past the assignment's original due date. **Computer failure, printer failure, Internet problems, and the like** are **not** acceptable excuses for turning in assignments late.

Policy for Make-up Exams

Make-up exams will only be administered in extreme cases of illness, emergency, car accidents, or circumstances beyond your control wherein: (1) You notify me by email in advance of your absence during an exam (when possible); AND (2) You provide me with written documentation of your absence from a relevant authority, such as a physician, medical professional, police officer, or judge. Except in extreme cases, written documentation of the reason for which you missed the exam must be presented to me **within one week** of the exam for permission to take a make-up exam. Please note that minor "emergencies" (e.g., "I overslept;" "My alarm failed to wake me up;" "I work night shifts;" "I didn't have a ride;" "I could not find a parking spot;" "I had a cold;" "It rained;" "I want to go on vacation with my family;" "It is my birthday") will not be considered justifiable absences. Although make-up exams will cover the same material as the original exam, they may be **in a different format** than the regular exam (i.e., they may be in an all short answer/essay format). No make-up exams will be given without approval in advance.

Proper Classroom Demeanor/Code of conduct

According to university policy “Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university.” Please **turn off or mute** your cell phone before class begins. Students are prohibited from using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking among each other at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy. Please see the link below for Student Guidelines:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/2016-2018%20Student%20Guidelines.pdf>

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors

so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM:

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Note: You will find a more detailed description of these policies online at <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

Recommendation Letters

I write recommendation letters for students who have excellent performance in class. If you would like to request a recommendation letter from me for application for a(n) award/scholarship, internship, graduate program, or employment, you need to contact me at least **3 weeks before** the application deadline and provide the following information:

1. Post/link of the award/scholarship, internship, graduate program, or employment;
2. A copy of your resume;
3. A copy of your cover letter (if the application requires).

Course Schedule and Assignment Due Days

This course is divided to 3 units:

Unit 1: Intro of persuasion and persuasion at the **individual level** (Ch 1, Ch 2, Ch 3, Ch 5).

Unit 2: Persuasion at the **interpersonal level** (Ch 7, Ch 8, Ch 14, Ch 4, Ch 13).

Unit 3: Persuasive strategies, social influence, & compliance gaining (Ch 9, Ch 10, Ch 6, Ch 11).

The following schedule lists important course dates and outlines the planned schedule of lecture topics, readings and assignments. This schedule is **contingent on** our progress and thus is subject to change. There will likely be some overlap in topics covered each week. All numbered chapters refer to chapters in the **required textbook**.

Week	Date	Topic	Friday assignments due on Friday at midnight ; Papers due before class	Readings
Week 1	8-21			
	8-23	Introduction of Syllabus		Syllabus
Week 2	8-28	Why study persuasion?		Ch 1
		Why study persuasion?		Ch 1
			Friday Assignment 1 due	
Week 3	9-4	Labor Day, no class.		Ch 2
		What constitutes persuasion?		Ch 2
			Friday Assignment 2 due	
Week 4	9-11	Attitudes		Ch 3
		Attitudes		Ch 3
			Friday Assignment 3 due	
Week 5	9-18	Communicator characteristics		Ch 5
		Communicator characteristics		Ch 5
			Friday Assignment 4 due	
Week 6	9-25	Exam 1 (1 st Reaction Paper assigned)		Ch 7

		Language & Persuasion		Ch 7
			Friday Assignment 5 due	
Week 7	10-2	Nonverbal		Ch 8
		Visual		Ch 14
			Friday Assignment 6 due	
Week 8	10-9	Credibility	<i>1st Reaction paper due</i>	Ch 4
		Credibility		Ch 4
			Friday Assignment 7 due	
Week 9	10-16	Motivational appeals		Ch 13
		Motivational appeals		Ch 13
			Friday Assignment 8 due	
Week 10	10-23	Exam 2 (2 nd reaction paper assigned)		Ch 9
		Structuring and ordering messages		Ch 9
			Friday Assignment 9 due	
Week 11	10-30	Structuring and ordering messages		Ch 10
		Sequential persuasion		Ch 10
			Friday Assignment 10 due	

Week 12	11-6	Sequential persuasion	<i>2nd reaction paper due</i>	Ch 6
		Group influence		Ch 6
			Friday Assignment 11 due (optional)	
Week 13	11-13	Group influence		Ch 11
		Compliance gaining (TBA)		Ch 11
			Friday Assignment 12 due (optional)	
Week 14	11-20	Compliance gaining		
	11-22	Thanksgiving, Enjoy! ☺		
Week 15	11-27	Review and catch up		
	11-29	Exam 3		
Week 16	12-4		<i>TBA</i>	
Week 17	12-11			