

**COMM 4301.001 – Persuasion**  
**FALL 2018**  
**Course Syllabus**

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**Professor:** Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.  
**Office Hours:** Monday through Thursday, 2-2:50pm, or *by appointment*  
**Office Location:** FAB 206B  
**Telephone:** 837-8370  
**Email Address:** [jvelasco@sulross.edu](mailto:jvelasco@sulross.edu)  
**Class Schedule:** 12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Monday and Wednesday  
**Classroom Location:** MAB 301  
**Required Text:** Frymier, A. B., & Nadler, M. K. (2017). *Persuasion: Theory, research, and practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt.

*Always bring applicable reading material to class with you.*

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## **Introduction**

Understanding how humans influence one another has been a concern for thousands of years. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an advanced understanding of the complexities of persuasion is perhaps more vital than ever before. This course is designed to help you become a more effective communicator and savvy consumer of messages by introducing you to the study and application of theory, research, and practices of persuasion.

By reviewing social scientific literature, we will examine variables involved in successful and unsuccessful persuasion. We will also examine the boundaries of persuasion – discerning what persuasion is and what it is not. You will find not only that persuasion applies to all communication contexts (e.g., interpersonal, group, and public), but also that it can be directly applied to your own experiences.

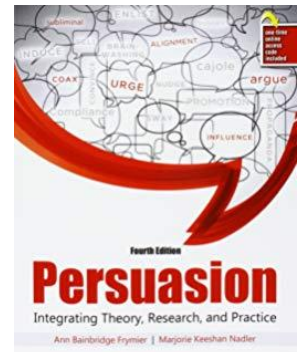
## **Section I. Student Learning Outcomes**

This course is designed to meet one or more of the student learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors:

**SLO 1: Students will be able to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claim, warrants, and data.**

**SLO 2: Students will be able to effectively construct messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context; including electronic media technologies.**

**SLO 3: Students will be able to apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts to the analysis of communication situations.**



## Section II. Course Learning Objectives

The general objectives for this course are to *enhance your competence and knowledge of persuasive communication*. As a student, your learning objectives are to:

1. articulate leading research on and theories of persuasive influence
2. analyze key elements in the communication process of persuasion
3. examine and analyze influence in interpersonal, political, virtual, economic, business, religious, health and organizational contexts
4. recognize ubiquitous persuasive messages and, when desired, use counter-persuasive strategies in response, and as an outcome become an informed, critical receiver of persuasive messages in professional and personal contexts
5. develop an ethic regarding persuasion and influence

## Section III. Course Requirements, Assignments, and Grading

Assignment	Points Possible	Grade Description (Points)
Article Summaries (3)	300	A = 895-1000
Exam 1	100	B = 795-894
Exam 2	100	C = 695-794
Persuasive Analysis	200	D = 595-694
Persuasive Composition	200	F = < 595
Final Exam	100	
Total	1000	

**Article Summaries.** You are required to search the online database (provided by the library) and find three scholarly journal articles that both interest you AND relate to the field of persuasion. You will then write a one-page summary of each article and **submit one on the designated days in your course calendar**. Please bring a one-page copy of your summary for each of your class colleagues. Half of the class will present articles to the class. Basically, you will have to teach the class about the content of the article, informing us of any key concepts, the methods employed, the findings, and discuss the implications of the study. In addition, you will need to prepare two discussion questions to pose to the class concerning your topic. All of this should be included in your handout.

**Exams.** Exams (including the final exam) will not be comprehensive. They will draw from our readings as well as supplemental lecture material.

**Persuasive Analysis.** You will complete a two page paper identifying and thinking critically about a brief effort made to persuade you in the mass media (i.e., advertisement, newspaper editorial, letter to the editor, PSA, etc.). You will discuss this paper briefly with the class. Bring the artifact/message with you so that we may see what you analyzed. I will evaluate this assignment based upon the specificity, thoughtfulness, and overall strength of your critical insights, not on a lengthy description of the message's content.

**Persuasive Composition.** For this assignment, you will compose a persuasive visual, oral, or written message. You may select your own topic. In addition to this composition, you will write a one-page paper divided in two parts: (1) a section identifying your strategy/tactics (from section four in our textbook), and (2) a section identifying a theory of persuasion from our textbook and describing how it explains the persuasiveness of your composition.

#### **Section IV. Policies**

**Attendance.** I expect you to be in class. You are responsible for everything that goes on, including announcements, lecture material, assignments and modifications to the course schedule – *this includes required reading in subsequent class meetings*. Arrange with someone in the class wherein you will notify each other of relevant items in the event that one of you must be absent. Having more than two unexcused absences may result in a lower grade.

**Classroom Demeanor.** I expect the environment during class meetings to be conducive to learning. I have little tolerance for students talking among themselves when they should be listening to someone else speak. I understand that some comments pertain to class material; I encourage you to share these comments with the class as a whole. Also, I would rather that cell phones, pagers, etc. **not** disrupt class – make sure your communications technology is **shut down** when class begins.

**Academic Integrity.** I expect and assume that as students you conduct yourselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Sul Ross State University reserves the right, through due process, to place on probation, suspend or expel any student who violates academic integrity and regulations by *plagiarism, classroom misdemeanor, or academic dishonesty*. Plagiarism includes doing and/or taking credit for someone else's work, presenting the ideas and work of others as your own, and not citing your sources if you utilize the ideas of others. Classroom misdemeanor includes cheating, allowing others to cheat, and interfering with others' ability to succeed in the course. Academic dishonesty includes procuring examination materials illegally, doing unauthorized group work, and handing in your own work for which you have already received academic credit (see Student Handbook, p. 39-40).

**Late Work.** *You are responsible for handing in assignments when they are due.* If you miss a due date, you will be given full credit *only* if the assignment was missed because of a University-excused absence – which includes hospitalization or a *serious* medical condition, a family or personal *emergency*, or a University-sponsored activity. In order to be able to make up the assignment, you must notify me beforehand *and* have supporting documentation from a relevant authority that the situation or event occurred.

#### **Section V. Notes on University Programs and Policies**

**ADA.** It is Sul Ross State University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such accommodations because of a physical, mental, or learning challenge, please contact the ADA Coordinator in the Counseling office in Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is PO Box C-122, Alpine, TX 79832. E-mail: [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu)

## Calendar

(This calendar is subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Due or To Do:
One	Aug 27 Aug 29	Course Introduction The concept of persuasion	No reading Chapter 1	Introductions
Two	Sept 3 Sept 5	<i>Labor Day – No Class!</i> Attitudes	Chapter 2	
Three	Sept 10 Sept 12	Attitudes & Behaviors Attitudes & Article Summaries	Chapter 3 Chapter 3	
Four	Sept 17 Sept 19	Source Factors <b>Exam 1</b>	Chapter 4	<b>Exam 1</b>
Five	Sept 24 Sept 26	Message Factors Message Factors & <i>Writing</i>	Chapter 5 Chapter 5	
Six	Oct 1 Oct 3	Article Summary 1 Article Summary 1		Article Summary 1 Article Summary 1
Seven	Oct 8 Oct 10	Receiver & Channel Factors The Role of Theory in Persuasion	Chapter 6 Chapter 7	
Eight	Oct 15 Oct 17	Social Judgement Theory <b>Exam 2</b>	Chapter 8	<b>Exam 2</b>
Nine	Oct 22 Oct 24	Cognitive Dissonance Theory Theory of Reasoned Action	Chapter 9 Chapter 10	
Ten	Oct 29 Oct 31	Article Summary 2 Article Summary 2		Article Summary 2 Article Summary 2
Eleven	Nov 5 Nov 7	Elaboration Likelihood Model Persuasive Analysis Presentations	Chapter 11	Analysis Paper
Twelve	Nov 12 Nov 14	Compliance Logical Fallacies	Chapter 12 Chapter 12	
Thirteen	Nov 19 Nov 21	Ethics Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class!	Chapter 13	
Fourteen	Nov 26 Nov 28	Article Summary 3 Article Summary 3		Article Summary 3 Article Summary 3
Fifteen	Dec 3 Dec 5	Course Evaluations Course Wrap-up   Discuss Final		Pers. Composition
Sixteen	<b>Dec. 11</b>	<b>Final Exam - 12:30-2:30pm</b>		<b>Final Exam</b>