**COMM 4301.001 – Persuasion**
**Spring 2025**
**Course Syllabus**



| | | RESOURCES |
|---|---|---|
| Professor: | **Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.** | Bookstore |
| Office Hours: | MW, 9:50-10:50am & TTh 2-3pm, or by appointment. | Graduate Student Center |
| Office Location: | LH 307 | |
| Telephone: | 432-837-8370 | |
| Email Address: | jvelasco@sulross.edu | Human Resources |
| Class Schedule: | TTh 9:30-10:45am | |
| Classroom Location: | MAB 301 | Library |
| Required Text: | Frymier, A. B. (2021). *Persuasion: Theory, research, and practice* (5th ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt | Lobo lookout |
| | | Lobo Pass |
| Required Equipment & Software: | Internet connection; computer with webcam & microphone; Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint (available free to SRSU students via **Office 365**) | Office 365 |

**Introduction**

Understanding how humans influence one another has been a concern for thousands of years. In the 21st 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.
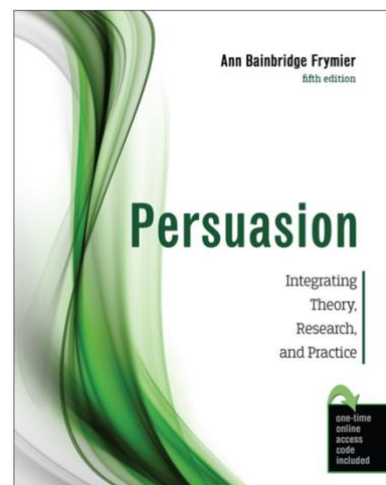
**Section I. Student Learning Outcomes**

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.**

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**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. Marketable Skills**

This course offers you the opportunity to develop the following skills:
- Informative and Persuasive Speaking
- Audience-centered Writing
- Critical Analysis
- Research
- Effective Message Construction Using Technology

**Section IV. Course Requirements, Assignments, and Grading**

| Assignment | Points Possible |
|---|---|
| Article Summaries (4) | 400 |
| Persuasive Analysis | 300 |
| Persuasive Composition | 300 |
| Total | 1000 |

| Grade Description (Points) |
|---|
| A = 895-1000 |
| B = 795-894 |
| C = 695-794 |
| D = 595-694 |
| F = < 595 |

*Article Summaries.* Throughout the course, you are required to search the online database (provided by the library) and find *four scholarly journal articles* that both interest you AND relate to the field of persuasive communication (e.g., rhetoric, persuasion, compliance-gaining, etc.) and come from a peer-reviewed Communication journal. For each journal article, you will write a one-page summary which adheres to a format which is posted on Blackboard. You will submit a Word document through our Bb Assignments link, and you will also post a copy in the designated discussion board so that your peers can view your work and benefit from it. Basically, your summary will 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 these details are included in your handout. Submit for grading through the *Submit Assignments* link on Blackboard.

*Persuasive Analysis.* You will complete a four-page paper identifying and thinking critically about an effort made to persuade you in the mass media (i.e., advertisement, newspaper editorial, letter to the editor, PSA, etc.). Your paper should be a critical analysis of the artifact as informed by at least one theory of persuasion. The **Discussion Board** will be used for you to post a visual image of your object and a Word file of your paper for your peers to read. 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. Submit for grading through the *Submit Assignments* link on Blackboard.

*Persuasive Composition*. For this assignment, you will compose a persuasive visual, oral, or written message that employs strategies that are driven by theory. You may select your own topic. In addition to this composition, you will write a five-page paper divided in two parts: (1) a section identifying your strategy/tactics (from section four in our textbook), and (2) a section identifying & describing a theory of persuasion from our textbook and describing how it explains the persuasiveness of your composition. You will use the theory of reasoned action, the elaboration likelihood model, or the extended parallel process model. Submit for grading through the *Submit Assignments* link on Blackboard.

**Section V. Course Policies**

***Basic Class Expectations:*** It is expected that you spend at least a few hours each week to complete the course readings and assignments.  I also expect that you check your university email at least once a day. For students who do not reside in Alpine or those who have received permission to join at a distance, it is also expected that you have reliable internet service. I recommend that you set up course notifications in Blackboard to receive a text alert when I post announcements, grades, or other course-related items.  See instructions in Blackboard.

***Classroom Demeanor*:** Communication topics tend to be emotionally charged.  It is highly unlikely in a class this size that everyone will share your personal values, beliefs, and opinions.  Believe it or not, this is a good thing!  The presentation of varying perspectives will help all of us to learn.  This can be accomplished if ideas, beliefs, and opinions are presented in a respectful way.

***Academic Integrity*.** Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources ***unless permission is expressly given*** for an assignment or course.  Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

***Late Work:*** All the assignments for the entire course will be posted and available as soon as the course is open.  It is expected that all assignments are completed by the stated deadlines. Please plan your time carefully.  If something does come up, prompt and clear communication will facilitate an accommodating response.

**Section VI. Notes on University Programs and Policies**

*ADA*.  SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartze@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

**Counseling.** Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting Timelycare/SRSU. The

SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

**SRSU Student Responsibilities Statement.** All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

**SRSU Distance Education Statement.** Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website.

Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

*Technical Support.* SRSU 24/7 Blackboard Technical Support: Toll Free: 888.837.6055.
Email: blackboardsupport@sulross.edu

*SRSU Library Services.* The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

**The Graduate Student Center Computer Lab (BAB 300) provides:**
- A Mac and PC graduate computer lab with MS Office and Adobe software
- Graduate program specific software available on many lab PCs
- Wireless internet
- A nearby conference room that can be reserved for group study or meetings, student presentation rehearsals and workshops.
- A nearby graduate faculty and student media studio
- Equipment that can be checked out for field work in remote locations
- A networked printer/copier/scanner for student use

FMI on any of their services, use the following: gradcenter@sulross.edu or call **(432) 837-8524**

**Tutoring Center**
The Lobo Den Tutoring Center offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses. Whether you need assistance in Writing, Math, Science, or other subjects, we're here to help!
**Important Information:**
- **Drop-in and Scheduled Appointments:** Flexible options to fit your needs.

- **Hours of Operation:** Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- **Workshops:** Attend our regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development, often in collaboration with specialized faculty.
- **Location:** BWML Room 128.
- **Contact Us:** For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726.

**Looking for additional support?**
- Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors.
- Access Tutor.com via Blackboard: Log in to your Blackboard account to get started anytime, anywhere.

Take advantage of these valuable resources to boost your confidence and performance in your classes. We look forward to helping you succeed!

<p style="text-align:center">Course Calendar</p>
<p style="text-align:center">(<em>Calendar subject to change</em>)</p>

| Week | Date | Topic | Reading | Due or To Do: |
|------|------|-------|---------|---------------|
| One | Jan 14<br>Jan 16 | No Class – Semester starts on January 15th<br>Course Introduction/Welcome Video (on Bb) | | |
| Two | Jan 21<br>Jan 23 | The concept of persuasion<br>Attitudes | Chapter 1<br>Chapter 2 | |
| Three | Jan 28<br>Jan 30 | Attitudes & Behaviors<br>Attitudes & Behaviors<br>How to write an Article Summary | Chapter 3<br>Chapter 3 | |
| Four | Feb 4<br>Feb 6 | *Research & APA Style*<br>Source Factors<br>Source Factors | <br>Chapter 4<br>Chapter 4 | |
| Five | Feb 11<br>Feb 13 | Message Factors<br>Receiver & Channel Factors | Chapter 5<br>Chapter 6 | |
| Six | Feb 18<br>Feb 20 | The Role of Theory in Persuasion<br>*Independent Work on Article Summary 1* | Chapter 7 | |
| Seven | Feb 25<br>Feb 27 | Article Summary 1 Presentations<br>Article Summary 1 Presentations | | Article Summary 1 |
| Eight | Mar 4<br>Mar 6 | Social Judgement Theory &<br>*Writing the Persuasive Analysis Paper*<br>Cognitive Dissonance Theory | Chapter 8<br><br>Chapter 9 | |
| Nine | Mar 11<br>Mar 13 | Article Summary 2 Presentations<br>Article Summary 2 Presentations | | Article Summary 2 |
| Ten | Mar 18<br>Mar 20 | SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS<br>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS | | |
| Eleven | Mar 25<br>Mar 27 | Elaboration Likelihood Model<br>Persuasive Analysis Presentations | Chapter 11 | Persuasive Analysis Paper |
| Twelve | Apr 1<br>Apr 3 | Compliance<br>Logical Fallacies - Extra Credit! | Chapter 12<br>Chapter 12 | EC: Bring a Fallacy to Class |
| Thirteen | Apr 8<br>Apr 10 | Article Summary 3 Presentations<br>Article Summary 3 Presentations | | *Writing the Persuasive Composition* |
| Fourteen | Apr 15<br>Apr 17 | Ethics<br>Ethical lens application | Chapter 13 | In-class analysis |
| Fifteen | April 22<br>April 24 | Article Summary 4 Presentations<br>Article Summary 4 Presentations | | |
| Sixteen | April 29<br>May 1 | Persuasive Composition Presentations<br>Dead Day – No Class | | Persuasive Composition |
| Finals Week | | **Final Exam TBA** | | **Final Exam** |