

**This is a NO LAPTOP class.  
Spring 2007**

**PERSUASION**

**MBCM-60490/60491**

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*The Eugene D. Fanning Center for Business Communication  
College of Business Administration  
University of Notre Dame*

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Persuasion meets twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 8:00 a.m. until 9:50 a.m.

The instructor for the course Dr. Sandra Collins. Office: 219 Mendoza College of Business. Office Hours: TH 10:00-12:00, and by appointment. E-mail: scollin1@nd.edu. Business phone: 631-3919. Home phone: 277-1067. Mendoza College of Business fax number: 574-631-5255.

The Director of the Eugene D. Fanning Center for Business Communication is Prof. James S. O'Rourke. The Center is located in 234 College of Business. Telephone: 631-8397. Fax: 631-5255. E-mail: james.s.orourke.2@nd.edu.

**TEXT**

Coursepack available from La Fortune Copy Center. (#150)

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Define persuasion and other forms of social influence.
- Describe the factors that influence how deeply a persuasive message will be processed and how effective it will be.
- Analyze persuasive messages and identify their persuasive elements for a given audience.
- Create persuasive messages.
- Differentiate between ethical and unethical persuasion.

## GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- You must complete the assignments described in this syllabus and submit them on the specified dates.
- You must participate fully and actively in our classroom discussions and exercises.
- You must attend class. Your professor will take roll at each meeting session to determine who is present and who is not.

## SPECIFIC COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Participation (10%).** Participation is more than just attendance. This class will involve case discussion and in class exercises. Attendance and preparation for class are expected. Ability and willingness to contribute to class discussions and exercises will be evaluated.

**Exams (50%).** There are two exams for the class. The exams may include multiple choice, true or false, short answer, and short essay questions. Exams will cover material presented in class and reading assignments (even if not discussed in class).

**Theories in Action Assignment (10%).** Select any two of the persuasion theories or concepts below. For each, find an example of a persuasive message that illustrates the theory. The example could be a print ad, a television commercial, a speech, an editorial, etc. For each theory, write one page explaining the theory in your own words and describing how the example illustrates the theory. Turn this in, along with full description of the example. In lieu of a description, you may turn in an actual ad, a photocopy, videotape, CD, etc. of your example.

Normative social influence

Sequential persuasion

Compliance gaining techniques

Attitude functions

Fear Appeals

Cognitive dissonance

Elaboration likelihood model

Propaganda

**Service Project (30%).** For the service project assignment you will work in small groups of 4 to 5 students to help a local, nonprofit organization on a project involving persuasion that the organization has identified as significant. These projects take many forms depending on the needs of the organization.

Your group may help the organization:

- Assess the current position or attitudes of an audience.
  - Example of a previously done project: One group researched the attitudes of members of an upscale area about putting a Boys and Girls Club in their community.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of current or past persuasive messages.
  - Example: Several groups have worked with the YWCA to learn why some women succeed in their long-term residential facility, while other women leave too soon to benefit from the program.
- Determining the reasons for failure of a previously used message.
  - Example: One group worked with the Food Bank of Northern Indiana to investigate why a house raffle promotion failed to generate the amount of ticket sales needed to actually give away the house.
- Create a persuasive message.
  - Example: One group designed a brochure for the Humane Society to encourage high school students to volunteer.
- Plan or a persuasive campaign or develop some aspect of a campaign.
  - Example: A group planned a campaign for Upward Bound, a program dedicated to helping at risk students prepare for and enter college, to seek financial support from its previous members.

**Deliverables.** Each group must complete and submit the following deliverables for the service projects:

*Progress Communication. (5 points)*

- Group sheet with contact info 3/20 (in class).
- Email about initial conversation with contact person at the organization by 3/23.
- Email about initial meeting and to schedule an appointment with instructor by 3/30.
- Brief meeting with instructor to explain project by 4/5.
- Update email with optional meeting by 5/19.

*After-action Report.* Each group must complete and submit a report in memo format detailing the project. The specific content of the report will vary by project, but in general should include the following:

- Description of the issue.
- Audience analysis.
- Strategy for project and method, including a communication plan if applicable.
- Explanation of the theoretical support.
- Plan for evaluating the success of persuasive messages, if applicable.
- Attachments of any deliverables given to the organization.

*Presentation.* Each group will give a brief, informal presentation on their project to the rest of the class.

*Peer feedback.* Each member of your group will be required to submit an evaluation of the contribution of every other member of the group in the form of a rating of 0 to 5. Evaluations by group members are worth up to five points.

*Organization's deliverable.* The deliverable for the organization will vary across groups and will depend on the nature of the project, but should be delivered to the organization no later than May 2.

**Grading for the service projects (Total points for project = 30):**

- 5 points      Progress communication completed on time.
- 5 points      Ratings by organization on general professionalism of the group and quality of contribution from group.
- 15 points     After-action report and presentation.
- 5 points      Peer evaluations.

**The ethical obligation of participation in group work for MBAs.** A student's choice to continue enrollment in this class after learning that a group project is assigned is viewed as an agreement by that student to participate as part of a group. If a student chooses to participate minimally, the group can award few, if any, participation points. However, if a student refuses to participate at all, the group can unanimously agree that the student has violated his or her ethical obligation to participate as a group member. If this happens, the instructor will hold a meeting with all group members to sort out the situation and additional points may be deducted, up to the entire 25 remaining points from the nonparticipating student's grade for the project.

**GRADING AND GRADE WEIGHTS**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percent of Grade</u>
Theories in Action	10%
Service Project	30%
Exams (2@25% each)	50%
Classroom Discussion & Participation	<u>10%</u>
	100%

**GRADING PHILOSOPHY**

Your grade for any particular assignment in this course is a reflection of your professor's judgment of the quality of your work. We can only grade on the basis of what you give us, not on what you had sincerely intended to do. Submit your work on time, follow the

assignment directions, do your own work, and you'll have little trouble achieving the course objectives.

Grades will not be distributed on a curve. You are attempting to meet our standards of quality work. Those standards have been developed over a period of more than 30 years, dealing with business, government, industry, the press and the public. We are asking you to do what your employers will ask of you: prompt, competent, effective work.

Once a grade has been assigned and recorded, it cannot and will not be changed unless evidence is provided that your professor has made an error. A difference of opinion between you and your professor about the quality of your work is not evidence of error.

## **THE ETHICS OF MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION**

Three basic principles guide our discussion of ethics in this course. First, we contend that *all parties in the communication process have ethical responsibilities*. Second, *ethical writers, readers, speakers, and listeners possess attitudes and standards that pervade their character and guide their actions before, during, and after they communicate*. Third, *management communication is not value-neutral*. Your obligation is to communicate for the betterment and benefit of your organization.

## **COURSE POLICIES AND STANDARDS**

Please seek help as soon and as often as you need. Do not wait until it is too late for us to help you. We are here to assist you with the task of learning and improving your communication skills.

**Drop/Add dates.** The last day to add this class is 3/21. The last day to drop this class is 4/6.

**Deadlines.** There are no automatic extensions, make-ups, or incompletes. Late assignments will be accepted; however, you will be graded down. Please let me know in advance if you will miss or be unable to take an exam at the scheduled time.

**Absence.** We will have just fourteen meeting sessions in this course. We regard your presence as especially important, even if your instructor does not formally take roll at the beginning of each class. If you cannot be here, let your instructor know about it in advance. We have found, over the years, a remarkable correlation: those who come to class faithfully seem to do better in the course.

**Incompletes.** As a rule, we just do not award incompletes. They're genuinely a pain in the neck. You begin the new term with the obligations of the previous semester hanging over your head. Both instructor and student feel harried and unhappy about the situation. In unusual cases, though, such as hospitalization or genuine emergency, an incomplete will be assigned. The student must complete all class assignments within one semester or

the Registrar will assign a grade of “F” unless an extension is approved by both the instructor and the Dean, and we notify the Registrar.

**Appeals.** Your first course of appeal for any grade, assignment requirement, due date or other course-related decision is your instructor. If you either do not understand or cannot accept your instructor’s decision, you may appeal in writing to the course director. Subsequent appeals may be directed to the Associate Dean for MBA Programs and, from there, to the Dean of the College. Keep in mind that most administrators will be reluctant to overrule routine, course-related decisions of their faculty.

**The Notre Dame MBA Honor Code.** Much of the educational process in the Mendoza College of Business involves group discussion and collaborative activities. Neither the College nor the Fanning Center for Business Communication wish to hinder the learning that can and often does take place in that environment. Fairness, however, requires that certain limits be observed in the actual production of assignments.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

This is a tentative class schedule. Any changes will be announced in class.

(In addition to the assignments below, reading assignments will include brief articles and discussion cases distributed in class or posted on WebCT.)

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
March 20 Introduction to Course Forms of Social Influence Forming Groups for Projects	22 The Tares Test for Ethics Conformity and Group Influence Read: Coursepack 1, Cerner Case.
27 Compliance and Obedience Read: Coursepack 2.	29 Attitudes and Persuasion Read: Coursepack 3.
April 3 Consider the Audience The ELM Measuring Attitudes Read: Coursepack 5	5 Culture and Persuasion  (Meet in the Commons)
10 <b>Exam 1</b>	12  Logical Arguments and Evidence Read: Coursepack 10
17 Emotional Appeals Read: Coursepack 6, 7, and 8	19 Stickiness <b>Due: Theory in Action</b>
24 Propaganda Advertising Read: Coursepack 9 and 11	26 Influential People
May 1 Last Class Day <b>Group Presentations</b>	<b>Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, Exam 2</b>