

COMM 3310: Persuasion  
Instructor: Dr. Melanie Conrad  
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Office Hours: MW 8:30-9:30, 12:30-2:00  
(other times by appointment)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Theories and inquiry into strategies for the creation of and ethical use of persuasive messages including historical and contemporary perspectives in various communication contexts. Special focus on oral presentation of persuasive content and analysis of ethical persuasive strategies.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Students will learn to think and respond critically to a wide variety of persuasive messages.
- Students will learn to create and develop persuasive messages.
- Students will be introduced to the theoretical framework guiding persuasion.
- Students will learn how persuasion functions in a variety of mediated contexts.
- Students will learn to interact effectively in performance group activities/presentations and with audiences.

**READING:**

Persuasion and Influence in American Life. Woodward and Denton, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. An e-version of this textbook can be purchased through the following link: <http://waveland.com/browse.php?t=249&r=dl66>.

**GRADING POLICY:**

Final grades will be based on a total of 525 points. The grades will be computed on a percentage basis such that 92-100% = A, 90-91.9% = A-, 88-89.9%=B+, 82-87.9% = B, etc.

**EXAMS:**

There will be a mid-term and final exam that will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Each exam is worth 100 points. Examss will be taken online through Course Den.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

Persuasive Message Analysis: (25 pts) Students will briefly analyze a speech based on criteria discussed in class and in the textbook. Students will analyze only the text of the speech.

Presidential Debate: (25 pts) On September 12 and 13 there will be two Democratic Presidential Debates. Students need to view one of these in its entirety. They will evaluate and post their impressions of the persuasiveness of the candidates in a Discussion on Course Den.

Parliamentary Debate: 75 points. Students will be paired with another student to engage in an impromptu style debate. The topics will address Communication and Media issues and will be selected by the instructor. One pair will argue for the issue, while another pair will argue against the issue.

Persuasive Speech: (75 pts) Each student will prepare and deliver a 5-7 minute speech defending a position on a controversial issue. The student should use logical and emotional appeals to persuade their audience.

Analysis of Campaign or Movement: (125 pts, 10-12 pages) As a group, students will incorporate a theoretical framework in order to describe, interpret and evaluate the persuasion of a political campaign, social campaign, or social movement. Papers should encompass the total life cycle of the campaign/movement rather than just specific persuasive messages. The information gathered in this process will be presented to the class in a 20 minute presentation. The presentation will be worth 25 of the total points possible.

## SPECIAL NOTES:

- All papers must be handed in; tests taken and presentations given on the date they are scheduled. If a conflict arises the instructor must be notified at least one day prior to the due date. No credit will be given for work missed without prior approval.
- All assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for the course.
- Excessive absences (5 or more) will result in a lowering of the student's final grade by one full letter grade. If a student has more than 7 absences they will fail the course. I do not make a distinction between excused and unexcused absences. If you are ill the absence still counts toward your total allowable absences. The student is responsible for notifying the instructor if they will be absent. The only exceptions to this rule are absences for religious holidays or those relating to college sanctioned activities.
- Any student found guilty of plagiarism or cheating will fail the course (NO EXCEPTIONS!!). Plagiarism is defined as "The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work." (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language; 1996; New York: Gramercy Books p. 1100). Other forms of plagiarism would include paraphrasing large portions of a work from another author or passing someone else's speech or paper off as your own.
- The instructor reserves the right to make subjective judgments. This right will be used if a student speaks or acts in a manner that denigrates a person or class of people based on their race, gender, sexual preference.
- The instructor will abide by all student privacy laws. Further, the instructor will not release academic information or have discussions of a student's academic progress or attendance issues with a parent or guardian. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.
- Unless they are being used for an in-class assignment or note-taking, all electronic devices (phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) must be put in the designated storage spot. If these devices are used inappropriately the student will be asked to leave and will be counted absent. You will never have a need to text, check social media, etc. while in class.
- Research, papers, assignments, etc. from another course may be used in this course.
- For additional information regarding university policies please see:  
<https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>

### **Mass Communications Program Learning Outcomes**

ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies: As a unit seeking accreditation from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), the Department of Mass Communications is committed to preparing students with the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the media and communications industries after graduation. The Department has adopted as its degree program learning outcomes ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies that all graduates of an ACEJMC accredited program should be aware of and able to demonstrate as scholars and professionals in the discipline. These include the six (6) values and six (6) competencies listed below. For the detailed list of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, see the [UWG Undergraduate Catalog](#) or [ACEJMC - Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction](#).

## Tentative Schedule

Aug.	14	Introduction	Read Ch. 1-2
	19	Lecture/Activity	
	21	L/A	
	26	L/A	
	28	L/A	Message Analysis Due
Sept.	2	Labor Day	
	4	L/A	
	9	L/A	
	11	Presidential Debates	Read Ch. 3-4
	16	L/A	Discussion Due
	18	L/A	
	23	L/A	Read Ch. 5
	25	Debate	
	30	Debate	
Oct.	2	Debate	
	7	Exam Review/Mid-Term Exam	Read Ch. 6-7
	9	L/A	
	14	L/A	
	16	L/A	
	21	L/A	
	23	Persuasive Speeches	
	28	Persuasive Speeches	
	30	Persuasive Speeches	
Nov.	4	L/A	Read Ch. 8-9
	6	L/A	
	11	L/A	
	13	L/A	
	18	Presentation	Paper Due
	20	Presentation	
	25	Thanksgiving Break	
	27	Thanksgiving Break	
Dec.	2	Presentation	
	4	Final Exam Review	

Final Exam Availability: Monday, Dec. 9 @ 8:00 a.m.- Wednesday, Dec. 11 @ 1 p.m.



