**Persuasion and Social Influence (MEJO 811.1) Spring 2020**

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| Day, time, & location: Tuesdays, 9:30 AM - 12:15 PM, Carroll Hall 338  Instructor: Dr. Maria Leonora (Nori) Comello  [comello@email.unc.edu](mailto:comello@email.unc.edu) (Best way to reach me)  (919) 928-2440 cell  Office hours & location: Thursdays, 3:30 – 5pm, Carroll Hall 359 |

**Course description**

This graduate-level seminar will examine social-scientific theories and concepts related to persuasion and social influence in a communication context. Topics include attitudes, beliefs, and other antecedents to behavior; reasoning and automatic processing; source, message, context, and receiver characteristics; interpersonal influences; and community-based/multi-component campaigns. Articles will be drawn from a range of persuasion areas including health, political, environmental, and consumer behavior. PhD students and MA students in the research track will be expected to produce a study proposal that utilizes a persuasion theory applied to their area of interest. MA students in the professional track will write a paper that applies some aspect of a persuasion theory to a professional/organizational problem. Whatever you produce should be useful to your scholarly or professional goals. I expect everyone to come prepared for lively discussion!

**Required readings and other content**

* O’Keefe, D. J. Persuasion: Theory and research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. 3rd ed. (2016). Several chapters will be assigned over the semester. There is a reserve copy at Park Library. Amazon and other online sources offer new and used copies, as well as rental options, but they may be expensive. You may find ebooks for as low as $15.
* Other required course readings will have full-text links on Sakai under Resources.

**ACEJMC competencies**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies. This course is particularly relevant to the following competencies:

* Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
* Think critically, creatively and independently;
* Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
* Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

The full list of competencies is available here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

**Diversity and inclusion**

The School of Media and Journalism adopted [diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements](http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion) in spring 2016 with accompanying goals.  It complements the University policy on [Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination](http://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/). In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University’s nondiscrimination policies.

**Special accommodations**

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the [Accessibility Resources & Service Office website](https://accessibility.unc.edu/), call 919/962-8300, or use NC Relay 711.

**UNC honor code**

It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code ([http://instrument.unc.edu](http://instrument.unc.edu/)), which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student, or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.

**Course requirements (THIS IS A PREVIEW ONLY – FULL INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI)**

* Reflection and participation: Be prepared to discuss readings at the start of class. Reflect on 1) something of value you took from the readings, 2) a question or point of confusion about any of the readings, and 3) how any of the readings relate to your life, your topic, or past readings. We will begin each class by having each person talk about these points briefly (1-2 minutes per person) OR discussing them within a small group. I will sometimes provide additional prompts at the start of class. If you need to be absent for professional or other reasons, please submit these in advance (see section on absences). Beyond these reflections, I expect everyone to engage in lively and respectful class discussion. Regular and on-time attendance is important as well.
* Article critique and presentation: You will select a scholarly article on a persuasion topic that is helpful to your research/professional interests and that aligns with one of the class session themes. At the first class meeting, you will have opportunity to sign up for one of the days. On that day, you will submit on Sakai a written critique of the article you have chosen AND prepare a short presentation about the article to the class and lead discussion. The article must be theory-based and must present a study (i.e., with data, using qualitative or quantitative methods). Your job is to summarize the article, discuss strengths and weaknesses, integrate the article with our readings for the day, and pose questions to the class to prompt discussion about the article/topic. The written critique should be no longer than two single-spaced pages. Detailed instructions for the written critique and presentation will be posted on Sakai.
* Study proposal or professional project: You will be asked to develop a paper and present it to the class. More details will be provided on Sakai under Assignments, but please note the following.
  + *If you are a PhD student or research-track MA student:* you should propose a study that investigates some aspect of a theory of persuasion or area of persuasion research. It should include a brief overview of past research in the same or a similar area, a rationale for your study, the hypotheses or research questions you will investigate, and a description of the methods you will use to collect data (study design; proposed participants; and operationalizations of dependent and independent variables*).* Although a proposal is the basic requirement, students are encouraged to carry out as much of the study as possible during the semester.
  + *If you are a professional-track MA student:* you should write a paper that applies some aspect of a theory of persuasion to a professional/organizational problem (e.g., development of a campaign plan, a critical analysis of a health organization’s communication materials, etc.). It should be a piece that will be useful as you pursue professional opportunities.

You will work on the paper by stages throughout the semester so that you can receive feedback from me about content and direction. The paper will be broken down into the following graded assignments:

* + Synopsis – Provide a brief description of the topic you want to study and why it’s important to you and your field. The assignment instructions on Sakai will provide specific prompts you should address.
  + First draft – Provide an intro and review of literature, including RQs/hypotheses. Outline methods and other sections you plan to include.
  + Presentation – Toward the end of the semester, each student will deliver a presentation to the class with slides/visuals. The purpose is to receive feedback prior to final paper turn-in at the end of the semester. The time allotment and format will depend on the number of students.
  + Final paper – Address feedback from first draft/presentation and flesh out remaining sections.

**Absences**

I expect regular and on-time attendance. If you need to be absent for professional or other reasons, please let me know if advance, and submit reflection/discussion points so we can include your thoughts in class discussion.

G**rading**

Grades for overall course performance and most individual assignments will be based on the graduate scale (H, P, L, F). *As applied to final course grades*, interpretations are as follows:

* H = Your very best work. These students read and critically engage with all materials. They are able to apply concepts to practical and/or research-based contexts, suggest new directions, and significantly contribute to the body of scholarship in the area. Assignments are submitted on time and are well written and engaging. *Reserved for truly extraordinary work – I will actually say “wow!”*
* P = Your very best work. These students read and critically engage with all materials. They are able to apply concepts and suggest new directions in many instances. Assignments are submitted on time and are well written and engaging.
* L = Students read most of the material but do not often critically engage with it. They are able to apply concepts and suggest new directions in some instances.
* F = Students miss one or more classes without prior arrangement. They do not always read the material, and they fail to critically engage it.

Most individual assignments are also evaluated according to the H/P/L/F scale. *As applied to individual assignments,* a P signifies work that meets rubric requirements, is well written, and is submitted on time. An H signifies work that meets the above and is also exceptional in terms of depth of analysis or significance of contribution.

Although no formal points corresponding to the grades are issued, the WEIGHTS of each assignment in determining the final course grade are as follows:

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| Synopsis | 10 |
| First draft | 15 |
| Presentation | 10 |
| Final paper | 40 |
| Article critique | 15 |
| Reflection and participation | 10 |
| TOTAL | 100 |

For individual assignments, I will also provide written feedback, typically in the form of comments (sometimes extensive) added directly to your paper using the comment feature in Word.

**Spring 2020 Persuasion Course Outline – tentative schedule – subject to change**

**This schedule represents a good faith effort to outline our work over the course of the semester. However, because of unpredictable factors (inclement weather, guest speaker opportunities, etc.), the timeline and assignments are subject to change. I will alert you of any changes in readings, assignments, due dates, etc., over the course of the semester. Thank you for your flexibility!**

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|  | **Topic** |
| Week 1  Jan 14 | Day one. Meet and greet, discuss course goals, go over syllabus, discuss research interests. |
| Week 2  Jan 21 | **Theory assessment and persuasion research methods**  O’Keefe, Chapters 1 & 9  Chaffee, S. H., & Berger, C. R. (1987). What communication scientists do. In C. R. Berger & S. H. Chaffee (Eds.), *Handbook of communication science* (pp. 99-122). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. WE WILL DISCUSS ONLY THROUGH PG. 106.  *Choose one* of the following methods pieces:  Karmarkar, U. R., & Plassmann, H. (2019). Consumer neuroscience: Past, present, and future. *Organizational Research Methods*, *22*(1), 174-195.  Belk, R. W. (2017). Qualitative research in advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, *46*(1), 36-47. |
| Week 3  Jan 28 | **Belief-based models of attitude change. Synopsis due**  O’Keefe, Chapter 4  Gilbert, D. T. (1991). How mental systems believe. *American Psychologist*, *46*(2), 107-119.  Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K., Seifert, C. M., Schwarz, N., & Cook, J. (2012). Misinformation and its correction: Continued influence and successful debiasing. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *13*(3), 106-131. READ PGS. 106-111 ONLY. |
| Week 4  Feb 4 | **Cognitive dissonance and misinformation**  O’Keefe, Chapter 5  Dickerson, C. A., Thibodeau, R., Aronson, E., & Miller, D. (1992). Using Cognitive Dissonance to Encourage Water Conservation. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *22*(11), 841-854.  READ REMAINDER OF LEWANDOWSKY ARTICLE FROM LAST WEEK.  Recommended further reading: Journal of Communication special issue on misinformation, Vol 65, Issue 4. Read overview by special-issue editors Southwell and Thorson: <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/doi/epdf/10.1111/jcom.12168> |
| Week 5  Feb 11 | **Theories of behavioral intention (TRA/TPB and intention-behavior gap)**  O’Keefe, Chapter 6  Carrington, M. J., Neville, B. A., & Whitwell, G. J. (2014). Lost in translation: Exploring the ethical consumer intention–behavior gap. *Journal of Business Research*, *67*(1), 2759-2767.  Yzer, M. (2012). The integrative model of behavioral prediction as a tool for designing health messages. *Health communication message design: Theory and practice*, 21-40. |
| Week 6  Feb 18 | **Elaboration Likelihood Model / information processing, bias, and reflection**  O’Keefe, Chapter 8  Kang, J., Bennett, M. W., Carbado, D. W., Casey, P., Dasgupta, N., Faigman, D. L., ... & Mnookin, J. (2012). Implicit bias in the courtroom. *UCLA Law Review*, 59(5). READ SECTIONS ON INTRO AND INTERVENTIONS. SKIM SECTIONS ON CRIMINAL AND CIVIL PATHS.  Resnicow, K., & McMaster, F. (2012). Motivational Interviewing: moving from why to how with autonomy support. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, *9*(19), 1-9.  Recommended: Gerrard, M., Gibbons, F. X., Houlihan, A. E., Stock, M. L., & Pomery, E. A. (2008). A dual-process approach to health risk decision making: The prototype willingness model. *Developmental Review*, *28*(1), 29-61. |
| Week 7  Feb 25 | **Message factors, emotions, and narratives**  O’Keefe, Chapter 11  Myrick, J. G., & Oliver, M. B. (2014). Laughing and Crying: Mixed Emotions, Compassion, and the Effectiveness of a YouTube PSA About Skin Cancer. *Health Communication*, (ahead-of-print), 1-10.  Bilandzic, H., & Busselle, R. (2012). Narrative: Conceptualizations and Foundational Literatures. In The SAGE Handbook of Persuasion: Developments in Theory and Practice. Ed. Dillard, J. |
| Week 8  Mar 3 | **Communicator & receiver factors / Workshop day**  Skim O’Keefe, Chapter 10 & 12  **BY END OF WEEK: FIRST DRAFT DUE. I will also send out a mid-semester evaluation to get your feedback on the course thus far.** |
| Week 9  Mar 10 | **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK!** |
| Week 10  Mar 17 | **Reward and punishment**  Guest speaker: TBD  Hanus, M. D., & Fox, J. (2015). Assessing the effects of gamification in the classroom: A longitudinal study on intrinsic motivation, social comparison, satisfaction, effort, and academic performance. *Computers & Education*, *80*, 152-161.  Mols, F., Haslam, S. A., Jetten, J., & Steffens, N. K. (2015). Why a nudge is not enough: A social identity critique of governance by stealth. *European Journal of Political Research*, *54*(1), 81-98. |
| Week 11  Mar 24 | **Identity and values-framing**  Comello, M. L. G., & Farman, L. (2016). Identity as a Moderator and Mediator of Communication Effects: Evidence and Implications for Message Design. *The Journal of Psychology*, *150*(7), 822-836.  Gollust, S. E., Niederdeppe, J., & Barry, C. L. (2013). Framing the consequences of childhood obesity to increase public support for obesity prevention policy. *American Journal of Public Health*, *103*(11), e96-e102.  Ramasubramanian, S. (2010). Television viewing, racial attitudes, and policy preferences: Exploring the role of social identity and intergroup emotions in influencing support for affirmative action. *Communication Monographs*, *77*(1), 102-120.  Recommended readings:  (Influential piece from consumer behavior perspective) Belk, R. W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *15*(2), 139-168.  (Synthesis of psych literature on the self) Baumeister, R. F. (2010). The self. *Advanced social psychology: The state of the science*, 139-175. |
| Week 12  Mar 31 | **Interpersonal, cultural, and community influences**  Kreuter, M. W., Lukwago, S. N., Bucholtz, D. C., Clark, E. M., & Sanders-Thompson, V. (2003). Achieving cultural appropriateness in health promotion programs: targeted and tailored approaches. *Health Education & Behavior*, *30*(2), 133-146.  Dutta, M. J. (2015). Decolonizing communication for social change: A Culture‐Centered approach. *Communication Theory*, *25*(2), 123-143.  Schau, H. J., Muñiz Jr, A. M., & Arnould, E. J. (2009). How brand community practices create value. *Journal of Marketing*, *73*(5), 30-51. |
| Week 13  Apr 7 | **Students’ choice, based on mid-semester evaluation:** If there are persuasion topics you would like to discuss that are not covered on the syllabus, please suggest during mid-semester evaluation. We will discuss during this session. Readings TBA. |
| Week 14  Apr 14 | **Course recap / Workshop day** |
| Week 15  Apr 21 | **Presentations of projects**  **FINAL PAPERS DUE APRIL 29 (WED BY MIDNIGHT)** |

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!