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COM519: Social Influence and Persuasion

Course Overview

Course Faculty:

- Course Instructor: Dr. Matthew Lamb, Instructional Faculty, HDSHC (matthew.lamb.1@asu.edu)
- Teaching Associate: Ms. Mary Weber, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate (Mary.Weber.1@asu.edu)
- Teaching Associate: TBD
- Original Course Designer: Dr. Paul Mongeau, Professor, HDSHC
- Featured Video Lecturer: Dr. Tony Roberto, Professor, HDSHC
- Department: ASU's Hugh Downs School of Human Communication

Course Description:

In this course, we will study Social Influence and Persuasion in the discipline of Communication from a social scientific perspective. Course curriculum examines significant processes and factors whereby human communication can effectively impact the perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors of others.

Course Objectives:

The course curriculum specifically examines major perspectives and concepts related to social influence and persuasion, and focuses on significant research, theories, and points of controversy that have emerged from social scientific methodologies exploring this subject. The purpose of graded group discussions and individual assignments is to apply relevant research and theory by analyzing and evaluating persuasive messaging attempts, ranging from commercial advertising to public discourse.

Student Learning Outcomes:

The course will equip students to demonstrate their mastery of the very practical and beneficial concepts and skills undergirding social influence and persuasion. Upon course completion, students will be able to:

1. Comprehend and clearly explain prominent, reliable, research-based theories of social influence and persuasion.
2. Apply theories to selected persuasive messages in order to analyze and identify the specific components of those messages.
3. Apply theories to selected persuasive messages in order to evaluate the effectiveness and ethicality of those messages.
4. Transfer learned concepts and skills into personal, professional, and public spheres of engagement to become more critical consumers and competent creators of persuasive messages.

Requirements for Success

Textbooks:

- Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
  - Simply stated, this is an amazing book! It compiles and illustrates much of the social influence research in an intriguingly readable style (and also it's inexpensive).
- O'Keefe, D. J. (2016). *Persuasion: Theory and research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
  - Although this book is *not* inexpensive, it is nonetheless required. It contains clear descriptions of important persuasion theories, models, and supporting research. You'll need to read chapters from this text early in the course, so access it right away (new, used, or as an e-text).

Time Investment:

The course requires you to spend the time necessary to learn the material and complete the assignments. A three-credit course requires 135 hours of student work. Since this is a compressed course, expect to spend an average of 15-20 hours per week preparing for and actively participating in the class.

Computer and Internet Access/Technology Support:

This is an entirely online course, and will not include any face-to-face or synchronous Zoom class sessions. Since all assignments and course interactions will utilize Internet technologies, productive coursework will require each of the following:

- **First**, all elements of the course requires that you to have a reliable computer (equipped with web browser and all necessary software) along with high-speed Internet access. Note that devices such as a smartphone, iPad, or Chromebook will not be sufficient for completing your work in ASU online courses. While you will be able to access course content with mobile devices, you must use a computer for all written assignments.

- **Second**, although this course is designed for students who already possess basic experience with computers and the Internet, if you have course site-related Internet problems or questions, please contact the ASU Help Desk. Help is available 24/7 via phone (480-965-6500), Internet (Help Desk), or email (helpdesk@asu.edu).
- **Third**, you must have an active ASU email account. *All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU e-mail account using the course email function.* You can expect instructor replies to your email inquiries within 24 hours (but longer for emails sent during weekends or holidays). Please plan on checking your ASU email account and the course site *daily* for course related messages and announcements.
- **Fourth**, computer or Internet issues will not be an acceptable excuse for late work (see "Assignment Deadlines" below). So please ensure that you have reliable Internet access, and plan to work well ahead of deadlines in order to avoid unexpected conflicts or technical difficulties.

Virtual Learning Environment:

This ASU online course uses the Canvas learning management system for all instructional material, including communication between faculty and students, instructions for assignments, schedule for completing learning material and submitting assignments, and posting of grades. Although students enrolled in this course should already have experience with the Canvas learning environment, it will still be necessary to become familiar with the organization of the course site in order to facilitate successful navigation through its learning material. Our Canvas course site can be accessed through MyASU or through the Canvas Dashboard. If you need technical assistance, it is available via ASU Canvas Support. To learn the basics of Canvas, refer to the Student Guide.

Assignment Deadlines:

Due to the volume of work for this course and its overall abbreviated time frame, there will be *no allowances* for late assignment submissions.

To be clear, *deadlines are absolute* and THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.

Waiting until just before a deadline to complete or submit a graded activity carries the risk of missing that deadline due to unforeseen Internet connection problems, unexpected schedule conflicts, or personal emergencies. Expect any assignment submitted even one minute after the scheduled midnight deadline to receive a grade of "0". Therefore, you should prepare for the unexpected by recognizing deadlines as the latest possible moment that assignments will be accepted, and plan to submit assignments early. Scheduled outages should be anticipated and planned for by regularly checking ASU's System Health. All course activity deadlines are listed in the Schedule section of this syllabus, and note that the Course Schedule is also available in Module 0 for easy access. Refer to the schedule frequently to plan ahead and complete activities before their deadlines. Bear in mind that all deadlines are **not later than 11:59 p.m. (Arizona time)** on the due date listed in the Course Schedule. If you anticipate a schedule conflict related to religious observances/practices (see *ACD 304–04*) or university-sanctioned events/activities

(see *ACD 304–02*), you must make appropriate arrangements with the instructor *prior to* these types of conflicts.

Disability Accommodations:

Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services should contact SAILS immediately. SAILS staff can be reached at (480) 965-1234 (V) or (480) 965-9000 (TTY). For additional guidance, visit ASU's SAILS website.

Communicating with the Instructor:

ASU email is an official means of communication among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly. *All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.* When emailing your instructor, please include the course name and purpose of the message in the subject line. Expect instructor replies within 24 hours (except for weekends and holidays).

Community Forum:

This course uses a discussion board called Community Forum for general questions and comments about the course (found in Module 0). Prior to posting a question or comment, check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts to ensure it's not redundant. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates. Email questions of a personal nature to your instructor.

Best Practices:

- Be a self-motivated adult learner, taking ownership of your learning experience.
- Check the course daily and read announcements.
- Read and respond to course email messages as needed.
- Create a study and assignment completion plan to stay on track.
- Thoughtfully ingest and take notes on all the assigned readings and videos.
- Remain an active and valuable contributor to the online discussions.
- Complete and submit all assignments by their deadlines listed in the Course Schedule.
- Keep in contact with the instructor and classmates as necessary.
- Access ASU Online Student Resources.

Challenges

Learning Challenges:

Online learning presents a number of distinct advantages, such as opportunities to complete coursework at the times, places, and pace of your own choosing. However, it also presents a

number of pronounced learning challenges. This particular course poses some of its own unique challenges that are described below. From the very beginning of the course, you should be aware of these online learning challenges, and the necessity for self-motivation to successfully negotiate them.

Learning Rate:

This compressed course proceeds at a *rapid* pace. You must stay on top of the course schedule and manage your time well in order to assimilate course material and meet the fixed assignment deadlines. Starting slowly or falling behind will jeopardize your ability to achieve a passing grade in the course.

Learning Levels:

Many courses simply expect students to verify *memorization* of information through recognition and recall. This course, however, demands higher levels of learning. You will be expected to demonstrate *comprehension* of information through analysis and synthesis of the material. You will also be expected to accomplish *implementation* of information through evaluation and application. These higher learning levels will require substantial thought, time, and effort.

Learning the Terms:

This course presents a vocabulary of terms that is unique to the subject matter. It is imperative that you learn the distinct meanings of these various terms in order to adequately comprehend and effectively apply the course material in each module's graded assignments.

Learning through Writing:

Online learning depends almost entirely on *written* communication in the forms of reading and composition. You will need to read learning materials, assignment instructions, and classmate discussion posts. In turn, you will need to compose your own discussion posts and other written assignments. The lack of face-to-face oral dialogue requires *careful and thorough reading*, as well as *clear and concise composition*.

Graded Assignments and Grading

Graded Assignments:

This course is segmented into learning modules that are specified in the syllabus Course Schedule (which is also located in Module 0 for ease of access). Note that all assignment deadlines are before midnight (AZ time) on the due dates listed in the Course Schedule. Before completing any graded assignment, read the module's assigned textbook chapters, view the module's videos highlighting important learning material, and carefully review the assignment instructions located within the module. The following overview serves to highlight the content of graded course assignments:

- **Discussion Board Forums** (3 forums worth 20 points each). These forums are assigned In Modules 1, 3, and 5. They are intended to foster a deeper exploration of the module's learning material. In each forum, you will first (earlier in the module) submit a thought-provoking discussion *question* post that is worth 6 points, and then (by the end of the module) submit two substantive discussion *reply* posts worth 7 points each. The question post, as well as the two reply posts, should primarily focus on concepts covered within the module in which the forum is assigned. There are no word-count minimums of maximums for these posts. Instead, the posts will be evaluated based on the substance and insight they offer. Detailed instructions that include grading criteria are provided in each of the three assigned modules.
- **Application Papers** (two papers worth 30 points each). These papers are assigned in Modules 2 and 4, and are due at the end of each module. They are intended to serve as a practical application of the module's learning material. In each assigned module, you will compose a 2-4 page paper (not including title page and reference list). The paper is to be based on a concept you select from that particular module's readings/videos, and that is exemplified by an actual persuasive message or influence attempt of your own choosing. Your paper should demonstrate how the example illustrates the concept, and/or how the concept explains the example. Detailed instructions that include grading criteria are provided in both of the assigned modules.
- **Interview Paper** (one paper worth 40 points). This paper is assigned in Module 6, and is due earlier in the module. It is intended to distill the salient aspects of an interview that you conduct with an influence specialist of your choice. After the interview, you will compose a 3-5 page paper (not including title page and reference list) that describes the extent to which (and how) the influence specialist is aware of (and employs) each of Cialdini's weapons of influence. Detailed instructions that include grading criteria are provided in the assigned module.
- **Final Examination** (one exam worth 40 points). The final (and only) exam is assigned in Module 7, and is due at the end of the module. You will compose answers to four of the 10 questions posed (your choice). Each answer (worth 10 points) should be limited to a maximum of two double-spaced pages, and you will be expected to integrate into each answer material from multiple modules. Exam instructions and questions are provided in the assigned module.

Assignment Grading Criteria:

- A-level work (≥ 90%) – *Outstanding* performance that *far exceeds* requirements.
- B-level work (≥ 80%) – *Very good* performance that *exceeds* requirements.
- C-level work (≥ 70%) – *Good* performance that *satisfies* requirements.
- D-level work (≥ 60%) – *Fair* performance that *falls below* requirements.
- E-level work (< 60%) – *Poor* performance that *falls well below* requirements.

Important Grading Notes:

- No points will be awarded for graded activities submitted after their deadlines; that is, you will receive a score of "0" (zero) for late work.

- Final course grades will be awarded according to the Final Grade Scoring Summary below. Expect this grading rubric to be strictly followed (i.e., don't expect your scores to be "rounded up").
- There will be no additional assignments or extra credit opportunities afforded to individual students seeking to improve their grade status at the end of the course. In other words, there will be no special projects offered to earn additional points beyond the regular coursework. Your final grade will be based only on the accumulation of scores you receive on the graded activities offered to everyone in the class. Requests for additional points or for opportunities to earn additional points will be denied, and email appeals of this nature may not receive a reply from the course instructor.

Final Grade Scoring Summary:

Graded Assignments	Point Value	Total Points Earned	Total Percentage	Final Grade
Mod 1 DB Posts	20	198.0 - 200.0	99.0% - 100%	A+
Mod 3 DB Posts	20	186.0 - 197.9	93.0% - 98.9%	A
Mod 5 DB Posts	20	180.0 - 185.9	90.0% - 92.9%	A-
Mod 2 Paper	30	174.0 - 179.9	87.0% - 89.9%	B+
Mod 4 Paper	30	166.0 - 173.9	83.0% - 86.9%	B
Mod 6 Paper	40	160.0 - 165.9	80.0% - 82.9%	B-
Mod 7 Exam	40	154.0 - 159.9	77.0% - 79.9%	C+
Total Points	200	140.0 - 153.9	70.0% - 76.9%	C
		120.0 - 139.9	60.0% - 69.9%	D
		0 - 119.9	<60.0%	E

Course Schedule

Important Schedule Notes:

- All assignment deadlines are before midnight (AZ time) on each of the indicated due dates listed below. Assignment deadlines are based on Arizona Standard time. Click the Time Converter to ensure you account for the difference in Time Zones. Note that Arizona does not observe daylight savings time.
- All assignments MUST be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. Do not submit an assignment via email.
- Notify the instructor BEFORE an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and you are unable to submit the assignment on time.
- Follow the appropriate University policies to request an accommodation for religious practices or to accommodate a missed assignment due to University-sanctioned activities.
- Note that this Course Schedule is available for easy access in Module 0. Refer to it frequently.

Schedule and Deadlines: *** Subject to change. Instructor will notify the class of any changes in a timely manner.

COM 519 (SI&P) Summer A 2022 Course Schedule				
Mon, 5/16 – Fri, 7/1				
Module	**Days/Dates**	**Learning Materials**	**Assignments**	**Deadlines**
1	Mon, 5/16- Fri, 5/20	O'Keefe Chap 1 Video 1A O'Keefe Chap 8 Video 1B (& Handout)	One Question Post (6 points) Two Reply Posts (7 points each)	Wed, 5/18 Fri, 5/20
2	Sat, 5/21- Fri, 5/27	Cialdini Chaps 1 & 8 Video 2A Cialdini Chap 2 Video 2B	Application Paper 1 (30 points)	Fri, 5/27
3	Sat, 5/28- Fri, 6/3	Cialdini Chap 3 Video 3A O'Keefe Chap 5 Video 3B	One Question Post (6 points) Two Reply Posts (7 points each)	Wed, 6/1 Fri, 6/3

4	Sat, 6/4-
	
	Fri, 6/10
		Cialdini Chap 4
		
		  Video 4A
		
		O'Keefe Chap 6
		
		  Video 4B (& Handout)
			Application Paper 2 (30 points)	Fri, 6/10

5	Sat, 6/11-
	
	Fri, 6/17
		Cialdini Chap 5
		
		  Video 5A
		
		Cialdini Chap 6
		
		  Video 5B
			One Question Post (6 points)
			
			Two Reply Posts (7points each)
				Wed, 6/15
				
				Fri, 6/17

6	Sat, 6/18-
	
	Fri, 6/24
		O'Keefe Chap 10
		
		  Video 6A
		
		Cialdini Chap 7
		
		  Video 6B
			Interview Paper (40 points)	Fri, 6/24

7	Sat, 6/25-
	
	Fri, 7/1
		O'Keefe Chap 11
		
		  Video 7A
		
		Rogers (2003)
		
		  Video 7B
			Final Exam (40 points)	Fri, 7/1

Policies and Parameters

Play by the Rules:

Course policies and parameters are intended to align all course participants with the same set of expectations – they are like the "rules of play" in a game. Only this game is about learning some essential communication concepts and skills that can be beneficially applied. Consequently, our course represents a terrific learning opportunity! However, the quality of your learning experience is ultimately up to you. Therefore, the policies and parameters in this syllabus and on our course site only augment your own responsibility to maximize your gains from the course. Minimal or grudging compliance with these "rules of play" will almost certainly result in a minimal learning experience. Furthermore, because they are non-negotiable, failure to adhere to them will detrimentally impact your grade.

Agreement to Course Conditions:

This syllabus spells out the conditions for your participation in the course. By registering and remaining in attendance, you are implicitly agreeing to all of these conditions. So read the syllabus and other course documents carefully, and then make an informed choice – either drop the course, or else stick with it knowing what to expect. Pleading, complaining, or arguing with the instructor about the conditions for course participation will *not* result in policy exceptions. If you feel it is necessary to withdraw from the course, please see Drop/Add and Withdrawal for full details on the types of withdrawals that are available, their procedures, and their deadlines.

Constructive Communication:

Productive learning requires constructive communication practices. In this course, communication among classmates should be constructively critical, but not demeaning, derogatory, or coercive. Appropriate online interaction (known as *netiquette*) includes keeping course discussion posts focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board posts may be deleted by the instructor. In your Discussion Board exchanges (as well as in any email exchanges with classmates or instructor), maintain a responsible balance between being *passionate* and *teachable* about your own ideas, as well as being *evaluative* and *respectful* toward others' ideas. By applying these important communication responsibilities, you will foster a positive and constructive learning environment. In the words of Bill and Ted, "Be excellent to each other!"

Expected Student Conduct:

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may exclude or denigrate others. Any verbally aggressive behavior toward students or instructor will not be tolerated. Required behavior standards are listed in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures, Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications policy, and outlined by the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities. Anyone in violation of these policies is subject to sanctions. The instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts incident reports from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Integrity:

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all graded activities. This course may provide you with opportunities to plagiarize on written assignments. Please *do not* exercise these opportunities, or make it opportune for others to exercise these opportunities. Plagiarism and cheating are essentially stealing ideas that belong to others and lying about their authorship. The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication *strongly* believes in academic integrity, and any plagiarism or cheating in this class will not be tolerated. Possible sanctions include (but are not

limited to) appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal. For more information, see the University Provost's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

General Discrimination:

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits [discrimination, harassment, and retaliation](#) by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

Sexual Discrimination:

Title IX is a federal law enacted so that no person, on the basis of sex, will be excluded from, will be denied benefits of, or will be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex are prohibited. Any individuals who believe they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassment on the basis of sex can seek support from the university, including counseling and academic support. If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted or harassed on the basis of sex, you can find information and resources at [Sexual Violence Prevention FAQ](#). As mandated reporters, course instructors are obligated to report any information they become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. [ASU Counseling Services](#) are available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Threatening Behavior:

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on or off campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances.

Syllabus Disclaimer:

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course syllabus, but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make changes necessary. Remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

Course Material Copyright: