

COMSTRAT 561 Persuasion Syllabus

Course Overview

Persuasion is part of the fabric of our everyday life. Persuasion is one of the central functions of communication. Governments, commercial entities, political leaders, corporations and institutions, social and public health groups, and even intimates engage in persuasive efforts. This course offers a comprehensive overview of persuasion communication with an emphasis on theories that guide persuasive message design as well as attitudinal and behavioral change in a variety of persuasion contexts. In addition to offering a review of the fundamental theories and topics in persuasion communication research, this course provides a thorough examination of social processes that often powerfully motivate our decision-making, and how they manifest themselves and exert influence in an increasingly diverse media landscape. An in-depth understanding of the topics covered in this course would benefit students who are interested in health and political campaigns, mass media effects, mass media, technology, and neuroscience in persuasion-related contexts.

Credits: 3 credits

Textbook: O'Keefe, D. (2016). *Persuasion: Theory and research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Required readings: Available in each lesson on Canvas.

Course Goals

By the time you complete this course, you should (1) understand a wide range of theoretical and empirical issues related to the study and practice of persuasion, (2) develop critical thinking skills and become a critical consumers of persuasion communication research, (3) examine and analyze influence in a variety of communication contexts, and (4) be able to apply the knowledge and skills you have learned in professional communication settings.

Course Work

Each lesson will consist of readings and tasks you should complete. The major assignments of this course include weekly discussion posting and three papers (e.g., case study, persuasive analysis, and persuasion theory review and application). Weekly discussion posting will give you an opportunity to further explore and apply each week's readings. You will also be required to complete a case study, persuasive analysis, and persuasion theory review and application. All these assignments will allow you to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what you have learned in the course.

Weekly Discussion Posting (50 points; each weekly discussion for 5 points)

You will post your reactions to the assigned readings in Class Discussion on Canvas each week. The goal of this assignment is to help you organize your thoughts and facilitate the engaging discussions with your peers. This assignment includes two steps. First, please post your reactions in Class Discussion no later than 11:59 PM (PST) on every Friday. Second, please complete responding to at least three of your peers' initial posts no later than 11:59 PM (PST) on every Sunday. The weekly discussion of your initial posts should include the following elements:

- **Major takeaways: Across all readings**, state the major themes of the readings, or what you should take away from this week's readings. What are the most important points you have learned from the readings? Also, point out connections or contradictions between the readings if you see any. This should be about 1-2 paragraphs.
- **Your own critical reflections on the readings:** It can be something you found interesting, confusing, disturbing – as long as you focus on the topic at hand in a scholarly and professional manners. For example, whether you agree or disagree with some of the assumptions and arguments posited in the theories/readings, and why; directions toward which the theoretical/conceptual framework, or operationalization of the constructs should be improved; alternative theoretical perspective that may shed light on the explanations of the study findings; whether the theory could be applied to different contexts (e.g., communication contexts, PR, health problems, etc.) that are more important to study; what insights or contributions the studies can offer to the future development of our field, etc. You can also relate the readings to other topics that have come up in class discussion or previous work or relate them to your own professional experience. This should be about 1-2 paragraphs and you can focus on one or multiple papers in the assigned readings.
- **Propose two discussion questions in your initial posts:** The purpose of this element is to facilitate engaging discussion with your peers. You will conclude your post by proposing two discussion questions. Discussion questions should demonstrate your depth of understanding of the week's readings. Quality discussion questions analyze, synthesize, and/or constructively criticize one or more of the assigned readings with an eye on improving the current theory and research.

Next, you need to respond to two discussion questions in your peers' initial posts. When you answer the discussion questions they propose, your responses should include the depth of critiques and insights, which reflect the knowledge you learn from this class. Simple answers (e.g., I agree/disagree with your question; I think so, etc.) will not count as an insightful response that will cause you to lose some points for this assignment.

Last, you are also encouraged to respond to your peers' responses.

Assignment One: Article Review (10 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to help you in practicing reviewing and criticizing research articles as a persuasion scholar. You will choose one academic article in terms of the persuasion theory and topic you are interested. Your role as a reviewer reviews and criticizes this article. The article you choose cannot be the same from readings. For the article review, you should identify and explain the following: the purpose of the paper; the theory used; the methodology used; the findings; the discussion and conclusion. You should also analyze and criticize the strengths and weaknesses of the article. At the end, since you are a reviewer for this article, you need to tell the editor about your decision (e.g., accept the paper without any revision; minor revision and resubmit; major revision and resubmit; reject) with your justifications. This assignment should be 2 to 3 pages in APA style (7th edition) (e.g., double-spaced, 12 font size, Times New Roman font, citation, references, etc.).

Assignment Two: Persuasion Case Analysis (15 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to help you apply persuasion theory to analyze and criticize a real work. You will complete **a four or five-page paper** identifying and thinking critically about an effort made to persuade you in the mass and digital media environment (e.g., advertisement, news, PSA, campaigns, speech, #metoo; #BlackLivesmatter; ALS Ice Bucket Challenge; Arab Spring; BK Subservient Chicken, etc.). Your paper should be a critical analysis of the artifact as informed by at least one persuasion theory. Although you will provide descriptive summary of the content of the artifact, it should be concise in one paragraph. A major part of this assignment should be critical and thoughtful. You should apply one or multiple persuasion theories to analyze and criticize the artifact you choose. At the end, you need to provide insightful suggestions about improvement. In other words, this section is like your persuasion plan book about how to improve and make that artifact be more persuasive in terms of the target publics. This assignment needs to follow APA style (7th edition) (e.g., double-spaced, 12 font size, Times New Roman font, citation, references, etc.).

Final Assignment: Persuasion Theory Review and Application (25 points)

The purpose of this final assignment is to help and reflect you in understanding the depth of the persuasion theory you are interested. Regarding the theory review, you need to systematically review the persuasion theory you choose. You also need to critically evaluate how well and/or not well the theory has been applied in the topic you are interested. For instance, you could focus on gain and loss framing and critically review how well and/or not well the theory has been applied on college campus to motivate students to get vaccines.

Regarding the application part, there are two options. The first option is the research driven. You can propose the research proposal to demonstrate how you apply the theory in your research idea. It includes the research questions and/or hypotheses you will examine as well as what research method you will use to conduct that research. The second option is the practical driven. You can propose campaign plan in terms of the theory and topic you choose (e.g., using gain and loss framing to design a health campaign about vaccination for WSU students). According to your research and theory insights from systematically review, the proposal of campaign plan includes the target publics, goal, objective, strategies, and tactics.

The structure of this assignment should include introduction, theory review, application, conclusion, and references. **This assignment should be 7 to 8 pages in APA style** (7th edition) (e.g., double-spaced, 12 font size, Times New Roman font, citation, references, etc.).

Instructor Interaction

General course questions should be submitted to the “Questions for the Instructor” discussion board in our Blackboard space. I will make every effort to respond to discussion board questions within 48 hours of their posting. If 48 hours has passed and you haven’t heard from me, please feel free to follow up with an email to yen-i.lee@wsu.edu.

Communication with Classmates: Every student in this class has a unique and valuable perspective, and encountering diverse viewpoints is a key feature of education. By showing respect to your classmates in your online interactions with them, we can create an environment where everyone feels welcome and comfortable expressing their views. That’s a main goal of mine! Therefore, remember that it can be difficult to understand/read emotions and humor in online discussions. Before posting to a discussion board, please consider how classmates from various backgrounds may

interpret your comments. If you find yourself having a particularly emotional response to a discussion prompt or a classmate's post, consider waiting 24 hours before posting to the board. Repeated misuse of the boards (e.g., personal attacks and inflammatory comments disrupting productive discussion) will result in referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Late Work Policy

In the communications industry, work must be delivered on time, without exception. As such, missing a deadline has consequences except in emergency situations, and you may be facing one this semester. If you have an emergency that makes it impossible to meet a deadline, please email me before the deadline and let me know what's going on. Documentation may be required. Unless there is a significant emergency, late assignments receive a **deduction of 5 points if submitted within 24 hours of the deadline**. If submitted 24 to 48 hours after the deadline, 10 points will be deducted, and five extra points deducted for each additional 24-hour period.

Grading

Assignment	Points	Percent of Overall Grade
10 Weekly Discussion Posting (5 points each)	50	50%
Article Review	10	10%
Persuasion Case Analysis	15	15%
Persuasion Theory Review and Application	25	25%
	100	100%

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	93–100%	C	73–76%
A–	90–92%	C–	70–72%
B+	87–89%	D+	67–69%
B	83–86%	D	60–66%
B–	80–82%	F	0–59%
C+	77–79%		

Incomplete Grade Policy (Academic Rule 90h)

Incompletes are granted only with permission of the instructor and are subject to the following guidelines:

1. Students must request an incomplete in writing or by e-mail from the instructor before the end of the semester.
2. The request must be signed and dated by the student (or identified by student's e-mail address) and must explain the reasons behind the request for the incomplete.
3. In order to be considered for an incomplete, **there are two main conditions:**
 1. A student must complete a minimum amount of the assigned course work. Specifically, a student must complete 75 percent of the course work.
 2. A student must have a mathematical possibility of passing the class. A passing grade is 60 percent or above for the entire course.
4. If extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family emergency, serious illness) are involved and are documented to the instructor's satisfaction, the professor/ instructor retains the discretion to grant an incomplete even if the minimum conditions outlined in item 3 above are not met.

If an incomplete is granted, the standard WSU policy applies (i.e., ALL work must be completed within one full year from the end of the enrollment semester at issue, unless a shorter time is specified by the instructor. Otherwise, an automatic grade of "F," or failing, will be entered on the student's transcript).

Credit Hour Equivalent

Academic credit is a measure of the total minimum time commitment required of a typical student in a specific course. For the WSU semester system, one semester credit is assigned for a minimum of 45 hours of student effort. See [Academic regulation 27](#).

Students should expect to spend a minimum of 9 hours per week for each online 3-credit course engaged in the following types of activities; reading, listening to/viewing media, discussion conversation in the LMS or other academic technology, conducting research, completing assignments and reviewing instructor feedback, studying for and completing assessments, etc.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education. As such, **all members of the university community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities, including academic integrity and honest scholarship.** Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Violation of WSU's Academic Integrity Policy (identified in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 504-26-010(3) and -404) may result in penalties up to and including failing the assignment, exam, quiz, course requirement, or the course itself and students will not have the option to withdraw from the course pending an appeal, and will be reported to the Office of Community Standards.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration as defined in the Standards of Conduct for Students, WAC 504-26-010(3). You need to read and understand all of the definitions of cheating: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=504-26-010>. If you have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course, you should ask course instructors before proceeding.

If you wish to appeal a faculty member's decision relating to academic integrity, please use the form available at communitystandards.wsu.edu/.

Copyright

Any course-related materials, presentations, lectures, etc. are the instructor's intellectual property and may be protected by copyright. The use of University electronic resources for commercial purposes, including advertising to other students to buy notes, is a violation of WSU's computer abuses and theft policy (WAC 504-26-218). Selling class notes through commercial note taking services without written advance permission from the faculty, could be viewed as be as copyright infringement and/or academic integrity violation, WAC 504-26-010 (3)(a,b,c,i).

Re-Taking Course Policy

Pursuant to WSU Academic Integrity Policy (WAC 504-26-010 (3j) "Unauthorized multiple submissions of the same work" (reference: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=504-26-010>), unless otherwise previously arranged with your instructor, students are not permitted to re-submit previously graded work for courses they are re-taking. "Students may repeat a course in which they have received a grade of C- or below, or a withdrawal (W), or when a course may be repeated for additional credit. Students may enroll more than once in the same course in any given term (fall, spring, or summer) provided that the particular periods of enrollment do not overlap and that other conditions for allowed repeats are met (reference [WSU Academic Regulation 34 Repeat Courses](#))."

Due to privacy rules, students should assume that instructors do not know they are re-taking a course and therefore, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of their status. A follow-up conversation should then take place to outline or review all previously submitted assignments, tests, contributions to discussion forums, or other graded tasks to determine what, if any, can be re-used or resubmitted with limited or no modification.

Per the Academic Integrity Policy, cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration as defined in the Standards of Conduct for Students, WAC 504-26-010(3). View specifics at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=504-26-010>. If you have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course, please inquire with the instructor before proceeding. If you wish to appeal a faculty member's decision relating to academic integrity, please use the form available at conduct.wsu.edu.

Academic Complaints Procedure

The Academic Complaint Procedures (Academic Rule 104) describe procedures for channeling graduate student complaints, grievances, and concerns to faculty, staff, and administrators for appropriate action. While these rights and responsibilities outline the complaint process, students are encouraged to use the Academic Complaint Procedures for guidance and advice on conflicts that may arise at any point during their course of study at the University. The procedures below have been customized for Murrow College students.

1. Students with complaints about instruction or grading should first address concerns with the instructor.
2. When complaints cannot be resolved with the instructor, concerns should be taken to the Director of Murrow Online Programs (Rebecca Cooney and/or the Graduate Program Coordinator (Christy Curtis)
3. If the complaint is still unresolved, it will be taken to the strategic communication department chair (Stacey Hust).
 1. The chair's decision shall be rendered within 20 business days.
 2. After the chair's decision, the student or the instructor may appeal to the Murrow College Dean's Office.

3. Complaints must be presented in writing to the dean (Bruce Pinkleton) within 20 business days of the chair's decision. The written statement should describe the complaint, indicate how it affects the individual or unit, and include the remedy sought from the dean.
4. The decision of the dean is the final step and shall be made within 20 business days.
4. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to unlawful discrimination, including sexual harassment, or who believes his or her rights have been violated by a member of the academic community, is strongly encouraged to contact the Office for Equal Opportunity (<https://oeo.wsu.edu/>). If the complaint involves discrimination or harassment by a student, a complaint may also be filed with the Office of Student Standards and Accountability (<https://conduct.wsu.edu/>).

Academic Regulations

Students enrolled in online courses are subject to the same University academic regulations as on-campus students. For the most accurate and up to date information go to <http://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-regulations/>.

Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct (including stalking, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence) is prohibited at WSU (See [Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment, Sexual Harassment, And Sex And Gender Based Violence](#) (Executive Policy 15) and WSU Standards of Conduct for Students ([Chapter 504-26 WAC](#)).

If you feel you have experienced or have witnessed discriminatory conduct, you can contact the WSU Office of Civil Rights Compliance & Investigation (CRCI) and/or the [WSU Title IX Coordinator](#) at 509-335-8288 to discuss resources, including confidential resources, and reporting options. (Visit crici.wsu.edu for more information).

Most WSU employees, including faculty, who have information regarding sexual harassment or sexual misconduct are required to report the information to CRCI or a designated Title IX Coordinator or Liaison. (Visit crici.wsu.edu/reporting-requirements for more info).

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call your campus Access Center (see contact information listed below) to schedule an appointment. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center of your campus. For more information contact a Disability Specialist on your home campus:

- Global Campus <https://accesscenter.wsu.edu/students/global-campus-students/>
- Pullman: 509-335-3417 <http://www.accesscenter.wsu.edu>, Access.Center@wsu.edu
- Spokane: 509-358-7757, Academic Center 145F, <https://spokane.wsu.edu/studentaffairs/access-resources/>
- Tri-Cities: 509-372-7352, Floyd 269C; <http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/disability/>

- Vancouver: 360-546-9238, Classroom Building
<http://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/access-center>, van.access.center@wsu.edu

Accommodations for Religious Observances or Activities

Washington State University reasonably accommodates absences allowing for students to take holidays for reasons of faith or conscience or for organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. Reasonable accommodation requires the student to coordinate with instructor on scheduling examinations or other activities necessary for course completion. Students requesting accommodation must provide written notification within the first two weeks of the beginning of the course and include specific dates for absences. Approved accommodations for absences will not adversely impact student grades. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence.

Safety and Emergency Notification

Classroom and campus safety are of paramount importance at Washington State University and are the shared responsibility of the entire campus population. WSU urges students to follow the “Alert, Assess, Act,” protocol for all types of emergencies and the [“Run, Hide, Fight”](#) response for an active shooter incident. Remain ALERT (through direct observation or emergency notification), ASSESS your specific situation, and ACT in the most appropriate way to assure your own safety (and the safety of others if you are able).

Please sign up for emergency alerts on your account at MyWSU. For more information on this subject, campus safety, and related topics, please view the FBI’s Run, Hide, Fight video and visit the WSU safety portal.

Full details including campus-specific safety information can be found at <https://provost.wsu.edu/classroom-safety/>

Lauren’s Promise

I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening you.

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year-old honors student athlete, was murdered on Oct. 22, 2018, by a man she briefly dated on the University of Utah campus. We must all take actions to ensure that this never happens again.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are experiencing sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking, please report it to me and I will connect you to resources or call the National Alternatives to Violence at 877-334-2887 (24-hour crisis hotline).

Any form of sexual harassment or violence will not be excused or tolerated at Washington State University. WSU has instituted procedures to respond to violations of these laws and standards, programs aimed at the prevention of such conduct, and intervention on behalf of the victims.

- **National Resources for Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking:**
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-SAFE and <https://www.thehotline.org/help/>
- **RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network):** 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) and <https://www.rainn.org/>
- **Victim Connect Resource Center:** 1-855-484-2846 and <https://victimconnect.org/>
- **Love is Respect – National Dating Abuse Hotline:** 1 (866) 331- 9474
 - Text: 22522 and <https://www.loveisrespect.org/>
- **Anti-Violence Project Hotline:** 212-714-1141 and <https://avp.org/get-help/>

Online Collaboration

The essence of education is exposure to diverse viewpoints. In your discussion posts you'll meet students with vastly different opinions and backgrounds. You're encouraged to disagree with the substance of others' ideas and opinions but do so with an active sense of respect for one another, and without losing focus on the topic at hand. Personal attacks, inflammatory statements, flaming, trolling, and disruption of the discussion do not have a place in academic discourse. Postings must comply with University policy on use of computing resources, including those regarding harassment and discrimination, as well as conform to the WSU [Community Standards](#).

Your instructors will promote high-quality academic discussions by removing any posts they view as disruptive of the educational process and alerting students whose posts have been removed that they have violated course expectations. Students who continue to misuse the discussion boards after a warning may be subject to removal of access rights, course failure, and referral to the Office of Community Standards.

For netiquette guidelines, visit <https://online.wsu.edu/currentstudent/netiquette-guidelines/>

WSU Global Campus Student Support

The WSU Global Campus Current Student site <https://online.wsu.edu/currentstudent/> has all the non-content and administrative and contact related information you need to be a successful online learner as well as [study tips and skills for success](#).

Technical Support

If you need technical assistance, please select the **Course Information** link in the course menu, then select Technical Support.

Library Support

All students enrolled in Washington State University online courses can use the WSU Libraries online databases and receive reference and research assistance from their home campus. Students can also borrow books and other circulating material as well as access full-text journal articles.

General Library Links by Campus

- Pullman: <http://libraries.wsu.edu>
- Global Campus: <http://libguides.libraries.wsu.edu/global>

- Vancouver: <https://library.vancouver.wsu.edu/>
- Tri-Cities: <http://tricities.wsu.edu/library>
- Spokane – Riverpoint and Nursing at Yakima: <https://spokane.wsu.edu/library/>
- College of Nursing: <https://nursing.wsu.edu/library-services/>

Online Tutoring

As a WSU student enrolled in an undergraduate course, you have FREE unlimited access to Online Tutoring. This is not a course requirement, but a resource for you to utilize as needed.

With three ways to access a tutor you can choose the one that best fits your needs:

- **Submit a paper:** Writing Lab tutors will respond to papers in ANY academic subject. Just submit your paper, ask specific questions on the submission form, and a tutor will respond within 24-48 hours.
- **Live tutoring:** eChat rooms allow students to meet with tutors in one-on-one tutoring sessions via a fully interactive, virtual online environment.
- **Leave a question:** Students can leave specific questions for a tutor in any of our subjects by taking advantage of our eQuestions option. Our tutors will respond to your question within 24-48 hours.

More details and the list of available tutoring subjects can be found at www.eTutoringOnline.org.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Students are encouraged to refer to the academic calendar often to be aware of critical deadlines throughout the semester. The academic calendar can be found at <http://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-calendar/>.