**COMM 3030: Persuasive Communication**

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 2:30-3:45pm ● Education 347

**Course Syllabus**

**Mr. Scott Owen Chappuis, MA Office Hours:**Office: 219B West Hall T/Th 9:30 – 11:00 am  
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**Course Textbooks:**

Gass, R. H. & Seiter, J. S. (2014). *Persuasion: Social influence and compliance gaining* (5th ed.). Columbus, OH: Pearson.

Potter, W. J. (2014). *Media literacy* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**\*\*A reserve copy of each of our textbooks will be available at BGSU’s Jerome Library\*\***

I will post additional readings on our Canvas site.

**Course Description**

This course takes an in-depth approach to studying what persuasion is and how persuasion theories can be applied to varying media in the real world. Additionally, this course features a media literacy component that will be utilized in order to not only understand the persuasive messages that exist in the real world, but also to understand how media messages can influence audiences. **Prerequisites: COMM 1020, COMM 2010**

**Course Objectives**

1. Increase students’ knowledge of core concepts, theories, research, and applications in persuasive communication
2. Challenge students to critically evaluate and utilize persuasive communication theories to analyze real life media messages
3. Enhance students’ understanding of media literacy and the impacts that media can have on society.

**Course Policies**

**Attendance:** As this is a required class in your major, attendance is mandatory for your success. You may miss up to TWO classes (excused or unexcused) without having your attendance grade penalized. Each additional absence will result in a 15-point deduction from your final grade. On days that you are absent, in-class activities cannot be made up. Excessive absenteeism (more than 10 absences) will result in a failing grade in the course. If you have an excused absence on the day of an exam or presentation, the exam or presentation may be rescheduled. In order for the absence to be excused, you must notify me **BEFORE** the start of class on the day of your absence. Additionally, you must provide official written documentation of your absence upon your return. If you have a medical emergency that causes you to miss a large number of classes, you will need to work with the Office of Accessibility in order to determine an appropriate course of action for the remainder of the semester.

**Tardiness:** As this is a 3000 level course, I expect students to be professional within the classroom. Arriving on time to class is one means by which I judge professionalism. As a result, I expect my students to arrive to class on time and to stay for the entire class period. As this class starts at 2:30 pm, I will begin teaching right at 2:30. Arriving late to class (within 15 minutes of the start of class) three times is equivalent to one absence. Missing more than 15 minutes of a class will result in being marked absent.

**Academic Dishonesty:** I will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty in this course. Any form of academic dishonesty (i.e. plagiarism, cheating) will result in a zero on the assignment or exam. Additionally, further action may be taken. For more information about academic dishonesty, please visit: http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/bgsu/file921.pdf

**Late Work:** Late work is not accepted in this course unless you have a verifiable excused absence. All work must be submitted by the day that it is due. If you know that you are going to be absent, you will need to submit your work prior to missing class. There are no makeup days for presentations.

**Electronic Device Use:**

*Cell Phones* – There is to be no cell phone usage (including texting) during class, as it tends to serve as a distraction rather than as a tool that enhances learning.  Your cell phone needs to be turned off for class and stowed away out of sight.The first time that I hear or see your cell phone out during class, you will give an impromptu 1-2 minute speech about classroom etiquette. If I hear or see your cellphone after this, **you will be dismissed from class and receive an absence for the day.** If I hear or see your phone while someone is giving a presentation, you will be dismissed from class and receive an absence for the day. Additionally, 20 points will be deducted from your own presentation grade.

*Laptops/Tablets* – As we are in the 21st century, I will allow laptops and tablets to be used as a means of note-taking during class. HOWEVER, if you choose to use your laptop/tablet in class, you must send me any notes that you take by the end of class. Failure to do so will result in the loss of attendance points for that day.

**Contacting Me:** I will do my very best to address any concerns via email as soon as possible. My policy is that I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours. Any emails sent to me after 10:00 pm will not be addressed until the next day. Additionally, I will not address any emails on Saturdays. I will resume responding to emails after 3:00 pm on Sunday afternoon. When you send an email, please use proper grammar and spelling. Emails using text speak will not be addressed. In the past, I have received many emails that could be easily answered by looking at either the syllabus or the course calendar. If you email me with a question that can be answered by looking at either the syllabus or course calendar, I will tell you to look at the appropriate document. Feel free to email me if you are confused about an assignment or if you have an emergency.

**Assignments**

**Attendance and Participation:** (50 points)

**Reading Reflection:** Throughout the semester, you will complete reading reflections in which you spend time discussing the content that you have read for a given week. These reflections should clearly show that you have spent adequate time with the material prior to writing the reflection. Reflections must be formatted correctly (Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced, 1 inch margins) and should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. APA citations should be used. Your reflection should not summarize the reading. Rather, it should be a critical interpretation of what you have read. Each reading reflection will be worth 10 points. (100 points total)

**Papers:** You will write **four** papers that are worth 75 points each. In these papers, you will critically analyze a media artifact using a persuasive theory that we discuss in the weeks leading up to the paper being due. You should give clear evidence that you understand the nuances of the theory that you are using. Additionally, you will critically analyze each artifact to determine how the artifact can affect audiences. Papers must be 3-4 pages in length. Papers must be formatted correctly (Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced, 1 inch margins) and should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. APA citations should be used. (300 points)

**Group Product Presentation:** You will work in groups of 3-4 to develop the concept for a product that could be sold in stores. You must create a product description and advertisement for the product. Be sure to utilize both textbooks as you are preparing for this presentation. Your presentation will be in the form of a marketing pitch to the head of a prestigious firm. Your advertisement should be persuasive in nature and should clearly detail the benefits of the product. (100 points)

**Final Exam:** Your final exam for this course will be worth 250 points, but it will not take the form of a written exam. Rather, it will be a group project and an individual paper. Groups of 3-4 will produce a visual media form that can be shared with the rest of the class. You can create a video, a song, a commercial, a print advertisement, etc. The created medium must be persuasive in nature. Then, you will write an individual paper (5-7 pages, not inclusive of references). This paper must analyze the persuasive messages in the media that you created, as well as how the created media could affect your audience. You will submit your final draft to Canvas by our final exam time, which is Friday, May 8, 2015 from 3:30-5:30 pm. We will meet during the final exam time to view, critique, and discuss the media that the groups produce. Failure to attend the Final Exam time will result in a loss of 50 points from your final exam grade. Your final exam grade will be figured as follows:

Group Media Production: 100 points  
Individual Paper: 150 points

**Grading Scale**

Grades in this class will be calculated according to a point system. You have 800 points that you can earn throughout the course of this semester. Extra credit is not offered in this course. You can calculate your grade at any point during the semester by adding all of the points that you have earned and dividing by the total possible points up to that point. I will also update grades in Canvas. Extra credit will not be offered and I do not round grades at the end of the semester. So, if you end up with an 89.9 at the end of the semester, it will be a B, not an A.

**Course Work: Grading Scale**

Attendance and Participation: 50 A 800 – 720 100% - 90%  
Reading Reflections: 100 B 719.9 – 640 89.9% - 80%  
Papers 300 C 639.9 – 560 79.9% - 70%  
Group Product Presentation 100 D 559.9 – 480 69.9% - 60%  
Final Exam 250 F 479.9 or lower 59.9% or lower  
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Total: 800 points

**Finally**, this syllabus is a working document and is subject to change at any time. Any changes that are made are at the sole discretion of the instructor.