

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO**  
**C&J 327 – Section 001**  
**Persuasive Communication**  
**SUMMER 2009**

**Olaf Werder**

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**Office Hours- By appointment**

**Class Time: MTWRF 8:00am – 5:00pm**

**Class Location: C&J 119**

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**Course Materials**

**Required Text**

Your required texts are:

- Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2007). *Persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Supplemental readings are available on our course web site. You are responsible for making sure that you have read all the readings and supplemental in-class handouts and assignments if you were absent.

**Suggested Texts**

Listed below are some supplemental books that may be useful resources to you during the semester.

O'Keefe, Daniel J. (2002). *Persuasion: Theory & research* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rice, R. E., & Atkin, C. K. (Eds.) (2001). *Public communication campaigns* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stiff, J. B. (1994). *Persuasive communication*. New York: Guilford.

Rogers, W. (2007). *Persuasion: Messages, receivers, and contexts*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

## **Course Overview**

The goal of this course is to provide you with a solid grounding in the theories, principles, strategies, and practices of social influence as they apply to everyday communication contexts, situations, and settings.

It is not necessary that students have previously taken courses in Mass Communication, although this is helpful.

## **Class Attendance and Work Responsibility**

This course only meets 5 times, so attendance is important to your success. For every day you miss, your final grade will be reduced by 5 points. In addition, there is an “arrive late”/“leave early” policy. Each time you are more than 10 minutes late or, if you leave early, your final grade will be penalized 2 points. So, please, be here, be courteous, and be on time. If you miss a lecture, you still are responsible for learning the content of that lecture. I usually send class announcements to your UNM email account. If you do not check your UNM account, please forward it to the account you do check.

Due dates are marked on the course outline. Only work handed in on the due date, at the beginning of class, will be considered for full credit. Late work will only be accepted within 24 hours and will only receive 50% credit. Only extraordinary circumstances will be accommodated. These circumstances require prior, or as timely as possible, notification and all the requisite documentation. Making up a missed exam also requires legitimate documentation. The only University approved excuses are (1) illness documented by a physician; (2) death in the family with requisite documentation; (3) religious observance; (4) University sanctioned activity.

## **Ethical Conduct**

This course emphasizes ethical practices and perspective. Above all, students and instructors should strive to communicate and act, both in class interactions and in assigned coursework, in a manner directed by personal integrity, honesty, and respect for self and others. Students need to do original work and properly cite sources. For example, be aware of plagiarism--directly copying more than 3 or 4 words from another author without quoting (not just citing) the author is plagiarism. Further, dishonesty in quizzes, tests or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records is also considered a violation of ethical conduct.

All such cases will be at a minimum receive a zero grade for that particular exam or assignment and at a maximum may result in failure in the course and be reported to the proper university committee.

## Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with physical and learning disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

## Diversity

This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. This course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating..

## Course Assignments and Contract Points

For this course, you can decide which assignments you want to complete. By the end of the first day (5/18) you will turn into me your semester contract. For your semester, you must have 500 assignment point values. There are three required assignments: the daily quizzes, the final take-home exam, and the assessment of an advertisement. All other assignments are optional; it is up to you to decide how you want to divide your points. Please keep track of your grades and absences. If at any point you feel that you would do better taking this class a different semester, please talk to me so we can arrange for you to withdraw. If, however, you stop coming to class but have not talked to me about withdrawing, and you are still on the roster on the day I input final grades, you will receive an "F" or whatever letter grade you earned. **THIS IS A VERY SHORT COURSE (ONE WEEK)!** On the last page of the syllabus, there is a contract.

Assignment	Minimum Points	Maximum Points
Assessment of Persuasive Environment (due 6/20)	25	40
QUIZ 1 (5/19)	10	25
QUIZ 2 (5/20)	10	25
QUIZ 3 (5/21)	10	25
QUIZ 4 (5/22)	10	25
ASSESSMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT (due 6/26)	100	200
Sales Speech (in-class)	50	75
Film Analysis (final due date 6/20)	50	100
TAKE-HOME FINAL (due 5/29)	100	200
Attendance and Participation	10	25
Lecture Reports (due the day after each lecture)	10	25
Other?	10	??

## Grade Breakdown

A+	97.5%-100%	C+	77.5%-79.4%
A	92.5%-97.4%	C	72.5%-77.4%
A-	89.5%-92.4%	C-	69.5%-72.4%
B+	87.5%-89.4%	D+	67.5%-69.4%
B	82.5%-87.4%	D	62.5%-67.4%
B-	79.5%-82.4%	D-	59.5%-62.4%

## Description of Course Assignments

### **Take-home Final Exam (due 5/29)**

The exam will be cumulative. It will consist of one or more of the following: multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions. It will test your understanding and ability to apply key concepts and theories. I emphasize critical thinking and application over memorization on exams. The exam will be due by the end of the week following our intersession course.

### **Assessment of Advertisement (due 6/26)**

Advertisements are one of the most pervasive forms of persuasion and one that we seldom think about critically. The goal of this assignment is for you to select either one magazine ad, or a series of ads, and analyze all the components of the ad for its persuasive message. Your 5-7 page paper should address the following elements of ad design (use the section headers). Include the advertisement with your paper

- What is the product being advertised?
- Who is the target audience? How do you know?
- What publication is the ad in and why do you think it was selected? When did the ad appear?
- Where is the ad placed in the publication and what does placement indicate to the reader?
- What is the content of the message? What do the language choices indicate about the product and audience?
- What is the implicit message of the ad? (What should we think about this product?)
- How does the layout move the reader through the ad? (background versus foreground images)
- What do the visual images suggest? (model choices, key objects, location, time, activity, tone, etc.)
- Discuss the use of symbol and stereotypes.
- What does the ad suggest in terms of gender roles, cultural assumptions and values, and self-identity?

- How does the use of color enhance the message?
- How does typeface play into the image creation?
- Where is the logo placed and why do you think it was put there?
- Where is the product placed and why do you think it was put there?
- What is not included that would be relevant? Why do you think it was omitted?
- Overall, what type of appeal does that advertisement use? (logical, emotional, fear, bandwagon, etc)
- **What have you learned from this exercise about the choices the advertiser made?**
- **What have you learned from this exercise about how ads operate as persuasion?**
- **What do you like or not like about this ad?**

### **Assessment of a Persuasive Environment (due 6/20)**

We are surrounded by persuasive attempts. Many of these attempts are “invisible” to us, but they shape our behavior and reactions. For this assignment, you need to identify and analyze one preplanned environment for its persuasive strategy. Select a business or location that you think attempts to shape how people behave when in that environment. (a) Take a picture of the environment (attach the picture) and then detail each persuasive element, (b) Identify those persuasive messages that are explicit and those that are implicit, (c) Explain why you think the choices were made and how the choices meet/do not meet the desired goal, and (d) Describe how people interact with the environment and with each other in the environment. (5-7 pages).

#### General Questions:

- What three adjectives come to mind when you look at this place? What do you think is causing your reaction?
- What should you do here? Why do you perceive that message?  
○ *Linger/Leave; Buy/Browse; Be serious/Be fun*
- How should you feel here? Why do you perceive that message?
- What should you remember from here?

#### Describe and Analyze:

- Location—how does it interact with other stores, traffic flow, ease of access, etc,
- Signs and Wayfinding images—what do they say to you? What should you do?
- Layout—what does it lead you to do? Not to do? What do you see first? How does your eye travel in the location? How does it make you feel?
- Color—what do the color choices imply for the way that you are supposed to feel and react?
- Lighting—what mood does it create?

- Sound—what is being broadcast? Why? What mood does it create?
- Room size—what does it indicate for movement?
- Safety design—who should be there and who is not welcome
- Personnel—who, where, when greet you, how greet you
- Purchase options—where do you go to buy things? Why do you think it was placed there?
- Placement of logo—what should you remember?

### **Film Analysis (due 6/20)**

In class, we will view a Michael Moore movie, and you will write a 8-10 page paper analyzing the persuasive intent and outcome. You will pay particular attention to the techniques he used

A. Summarize the film (2-3 paragraphs)

B. What was Moore's goal with this movie? How well did he achieve this goal? Why do you think so?

C. Who was Moore's intended audience? How do you know? Was this the best audience for his goal?

If yes, what did he expect this audience to do?

If no, what audience would have been better? How could he have reached that audience?

Regardless of how effective you think he was, what are three persuasive techniques he could have used to better achieve his goal?

D. What are five different persuasion techniques that Moore used? Name the technique, define and explain how the technique works, identify which scene in the film demonstrates this technique, and evaluate how well it is utilized.

E. For each of the five techniques you identified, find another "real world" media example of this technique. Provide or describe the technique, and answer the questions from section "D" for each additional example.

### **Sales Speech (5-7 minutes – In-class)**

You will sell the class a product or service.

1. Be mindful of all the tactics and strategies we will discuss throughout the semester. Plan how you will structure your language, nonverbals, the structure & order of your message, the sequence to your request, etc. Gaining compliance from your audience will depend upon how well you structure the above.
2. First, demonstrate an interest in the product or service for the audience. Second, create a need for the product or service. The way in which you do this will differ for the type of thing you are discussing; however, the central concern of establishing the need remains the same. Third, identify the solution you are offering. Fourth, demonstrate how this solution is useful to the audience and how it is a better solution than other solutions (i.e., better than other similar services or

products). It is crucial to be as concrete and specific as you can about the product or service you are offering. Make sure you give us the costs of the product or service, and how we can purchase it.

3. Create visual aids to go along with your speech. People are more likely to comply if they see the product or service and are able to view its benefits.

### **Create your speech outline:**

Once you have decided on all of the above, you need to organize your speech in outline format. Organize your introduction, body and conclusion as follows:

#### **I. Introduction (DO NOT BEGIN BY TELLING US YOU WILL TRY TO PERSUADE US!)**

- How are you going to gain the audience's attention?
- How will you relate the topic to your audience?
- How will you establish your own credibility and expertise

#### **II. Body of the Speech**

- Which persuasive organization are you using? Why did you select this organization?
- What is the key information the audience should know about this product? How will you make them understand and relate to this information?
- What visual aid are you using? How do they help sell your product/service?

#### **III. Conclusion**

- What is the final thing you want your audience to know?
- What is your memorable ending?

You will hand in your speech outline. In addition, you will hand in a brief (1-2 pages) summary explaining your:

- a. language choices
- b. how you used nonverbals to persuade
- c. why you structured your message the way you did
- d. why you chose the type of sequential persuasion you did

### **Lecture Reports (due in-class the day after lecture)**

Each report should be 2-4 pages in length. Since we are familiar with the lecture, do not need to have its contents repeated. However, you should draw from the article some key insights and questions and use these to generate discussion. The reports should contain a summary (!) of the key ideas, examples of the concepts other than the authors have provided, case studies/ role play/ questionnaires/ any other form of instructional vehicles that help the class understand the concepts and gets them involved. Also, have a few questions or critiques prepared.

## **Resources**

**Class website:** Copies of the syllabus, lectures and assignments are available on the class website (WebCT).

## Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
May 18	Welcome to class Introduction to Persuasion Attitude Theories	Ch. 1 – 3	<b>Contracts</b>
May 19	Interpersonal Issues in Persuasion Communicator Characteristics Conformity and Influence in Groups	Ch. 4 – 6	<b>Quiz 1 (15 min.)</b> <i>Reports if applicable</i>
May 20	Language and Persuasion Nonverbal and Environm. Influence Structuring and Ordering Persuasive Messages Sequential Persuasion	Ch. 7 – 10	<b>Quiz 2 (15 min.)</b> <i>Reports if applicable</i>
May 21	Compliance Gaining Deception Motivational Appeals FILM	Ch. 11 – 13	<b>Quiz 3 (15 min.)</b> <i>Speeches if applicable</i> <i>Reports if applicable</i>
May 22	Visual Persuasion Esoteric forms of persuasion Ethics of Persuasion Developing Persuasive Messages (How to)	Ch. 14 – 16	<b>Quiz 4 (15 min.)</b> <b>Take-home Final distributed</b> <b>Take-home Final Review</b> <i>Speeches if applicable</i> <i>Reports if applicable</i>
=====			
May 23 – Jun 20	<b>Turn in assignments as chosen per contract</b>		<b>Deadline: 6/20, 12 pm</b>
May 29	<b>Take-home Final Exam due</b>		<b>Email until 5/29, 12 pm</b> <b>Hard copy on 5/29, 2 pm</b>
June 26	<b>Deadline for Advertising Assignment</b>		<b>Email by 6/26, 12 pm</b>

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*For the great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearance as though they were realities, and are often more influenced by things that seem rather than by those that are (Machiavelli)*

## C&J 327 INDIVIDUAL CONTRACT—Student Copy

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Minimum Points	Maximum Points	My Points	Due Date
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<b>QUIZ 1</b>	10	25		5/19
<b>QUIZ 2</b>	10	25		5/20
<b>QUIZ 3</b>	10	25		5/21
<b>QUIZ 4</b>	10	25		5/22
<b>ASSESSMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT (due 6/26)</b>	100	200		
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<b>TAKE-HOME FINAL</b>	100	200		5/29
Attendance and Participation	10	25		
Lecture Reports (due the day after each lecture)	10	25		
Other?	10	??		

I, \_\_\_\_\_, in good mind and semi-free will, do hereby agree to complete in a professional manner the assignments indicated above. I know that I am responsible for turning in all assignments in paper form, stapled, neatly compiled, and with my name on the front page. I have made note of all due dates. On exam days, I will show up with a writing utensil and a brain full of knowledge. I promise not to cheat in any fashion. On speech days, I will show up as a willing audience member. As a speaker, I will be prepared, adhere to time limits, and follow the conventions of good public speaking. For written assignments, I will type and proofread my papers. If I have trouble with grammar, punctuation, or organizing my papers, I will see the professionals at CAPS. I will always be willing to ask a question if I do not understand. I will be supportive of my class members' contributions. I will laugh at my professor's jokes. In sum, I come prepared to work hard and learn a lot.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## C&J 327 INDIVIDUAL CONTRACT—Instructor Copy

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Minimum Points	Maximum Points	My Points	Due Date
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