

PERSUASIVE POLITICS

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[Office hours and location]
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Course Description

How do you turn a skeptic into a believer? Or a believer into a skeptic? What makes an argument persuasive? Why do some campaigns succeed when others fail? Though an election year may bring these questions more easily to mind, we interact with the politics of persuasion every single day. From TV commercials to political campaigns to the college classroom, we are under nearly constant siege from attempts to influence our beliefs and preferences. Indeed, this class will attempt to influence your beliefs – about persuasion itself. In this course, we will accomplish two things. First, you will become familiar with the logic, art, and science of persuasion campaigns, drawing on diverse backgrounds and disciplines including political science, psychology, communication, and social marketing. Second, you will translate these lessons into concrete skills by designing and presenting your own persuasive campaign.

Required Texts

1. Cialdini, Robert. 2008. *Influence: Science and Practice*. 5th Ed. Boston: Pearson.
2. Lupia, Arthur. 2015. *Uninformed: Why People Know So Little About Politics and What We Can Do About It*. Oxford University Press.

Course Objectives

- Demonstrate comprehension and mastery of key terms and concepts in the study of persuasion from multiple academic and professional worlds, including political science, psychology, communication, business/social marketing, and political activism.
- Apply this mastery to the development of professional skills in the logic, art, and science of persuasion, by designing an original persuasive campaign as part of a semester-long group project. More about the campaign project is explained below.
- Conduct research and gather data and information on a current political topic in order to develop their campaign; design and present this campaign to classmates and community.
- Demonstrate continuous learning by written reflection on the success of students' campaign efforts, as measured by audience opinion polling before and after each campaign presentation.
- Practice active learning skills through participation in class discussions, collaboration with peers on a semester-long project culminating in a final presentation, and written self-reflection about the success of their persuasive efforts in the final project/presentation.
- Practice verbal communication and public speaking skills through in-class engagement with peers, course material, and participation in final presentation.
- Practice writing skills through midterm, final paper, and other assessments.

Grading & Assignments

Assessment	% of Final Grade	Description
Office Hours Visit	5%	Each student will attend office hours at least once during the semester, preferably during Part I of the course, so that we may get to know one another better and discuss any questions related to course content.
Initial Campaign Proposal	5%	Propose a clearly defined conclusion/campaign topic, and offer an argument as to why you think this campaign could be successful. Reference the lessons from Andreasen (2005) in your explanation. Examples will be provided. Due Week 2.
Homework	10%	As assigned during Part I. More information to come.
Midterm	20%	Midterm assessment. Equal parts logic problems, concept identifications and content application, and long form essay response to how to build a persuasive argument to defend a given conclusion.
Final presentation (group grade)	15%	Grade based on the success of your persuasive strategies. We will conduct a survey of the class before presentations begin, to establish a baseline opinion. Then, we will conduct another survey immediately following each presentation, to measure change as a result of your campaign.
Final paper (solo grade)	15%	Reflect on the strategies used in your final presentation. What worked? What didn't? What could be improved? Rubric to come.
Peer evaluation	5%	You will evaluate your group-mates, and your group-mates will each evaluate your contributions to the final project. This will count for up to 5% of your final grade.
Attendance & Participation	25%	Attendance is required and accounts for 10% of your final grade. Critical, informed, and regular participation counts for 15%.

Classroom Policies

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

This refers to any number of expectations for behaviors in an academic context. Foremost among these are the preparation for class, respect for each other, and participation as outlined in this syllabus. It also, of course, refers to plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty. I recognize that academic standards are sometimes unclear or unfamiliar, and that citation practices/styles vary by discipline. However, it is your responsibility as a student to learn these standards. I encourage you to review the materials below and then to contact me if you have remaining questions.¹

At a minimum, the first occurrence of discrepancies or concerns relating to citation practices and transparency in your assignments/writing will result in the following:

1. We will have a meeting during my office hours to discuss the concerns.
2. Within one week of this meeting, you will take Indiana University's online tutorial, "How to Recognize Plagiarism" (linked below), and submit to me the electronic certificate you receive verifying you successfully completed the course.²
3. Within two weeks of the meeting mentioned in #1, you must also resubmit your original assignment and a new version with the appropriate revisions to the citation practices or concerns. This must include a one-page cover letter explaining the errors in citation practices you made and how you corrected them.

Access & Inclusion

Difference enhances both the teaching and learning experiences. The classroom is a space where all students are welcome, regardless of age, dis/ability, ethnicity, gender identity and/or expression, national origin, race, religious non/belief, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religious non/belief, and alignment with other identities or contexts. Furthermore, if any student has a particular consideration, including learning and participation style, that affects their ability to meet course expectations, please see me as soon as possible. I am personally committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive learning environment for each and every student.

Please, do not hesitate to contact me with specific needs or concerns, and the sooner the better.

Maintaining transparency (and communication in general) with your instructor is not only a good professional skill, but also a good way to develop a more one-on-one relationship. Furthermore, accommodations are far easier and effective to arrange when planned than when rushed. In short, I will make every effort to ensure students equal access. Please let me know how I can help make this class work for you.

My classroom is intended to be a constructive and critical space, wherein all students feel comfortable engaging openly with the material, each other, and oneself. However, this is only possible when everyone commits to this endeavor. I expect you to do so, and to help your peers (and me) to do the same. While I very much encourage (and celebrate) dissent and/or debate, I will not tolerate disrespect in my classroom. Please let me know if you feel the principles expressed in this syllabus are not being upheld so that I can address it as soon as possible.

¹ The Purdue Online Writing Lab (O.W.L): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
University of Michigan Academic Integrity: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/>

² Indiana University's "How to Recognize Plagiarism" Tutorial: <https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html>

Attendance

As in-class participation is a critical element of the learning process (as well as your final grade), attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted one no-questions-asked absence. Other absences will only be excused for university-sanctioned events with advanced notice, or with a medical note. I will take attendance every class period. If you anticipate being unable to make it to class, please let me know ahead of time whenever possible.

Contacting Me

My contact information is available at the beginning of this syllabus. Please maintain professional etiquette in your correspondences, including email.³

When emailing with a question about the course or related work, **always** consult the syllabus first. The syllabus includes information on my office hours, due dates, assignments, and much more. If you conclude that the syllabus does not answer your question and that an email is still necessary, please include the course number in your email's subject line. I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours of your email during the week, and within 48 hours on the weekend. If you do not hear from me within this window, please email me again. Please note this policy does not apply within 72 hours of a midterm, final exam, or final paper due date.

My office is meant to be an open resource. By this I mean you should make use of outside-of-class opportunities to meet with me (during the specified hours or by appointment) to further discuss your experiences in the class, your thoughts or concerns about the course material or classroom matters, and any other questions you have or guidance you seek.

Grading

If you feel you earned a grade lower than your work merits, you may communicate this to me but only in the following way. First, wait at least 24 hours after the assignment/exam has been returned to you. Then, write at most one page explaining why you believe your grade is incorrect. You may submit this to me up to one week after the assignment or exam was originally returned. At this point, I will review your comments and respond within one week. If necessary, we can schedule a meeting to discuss my decision. The results of this review process are final.

Late Work

Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. Late work will be accepted up to one week after the original due date, but you will lose half a letter grade for each day it is late. If you anticipate you will not be able to complete assignments on time, let me know as soon as possible. Clear communication prior to due dates increases the likelihood that we can plan an alternative arrangement or that I may accept late work with a reduced penalty. Missed exams can only be made up if (1) you communicate with me at least two weeks prior to the exam about why you need alternative arrangements, and (2) you provide documentation of this need.

³ For further advice on emailing professors, see for example:
<http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html>

Participation

Participation is a critical component of this class and the learning process. I will record participation every class period. Your ability to participate in an informed and constructive manner rests on your having completed the readings and assignments *before* class. Questions are always welcome, but do not expect us to review the readings in class; rather, expect us to jump right in to a critical and academic discussion of the assignment and/or readings. Please note that it is more important to contribute substantively rather than repeatedly – in other words, quality over quantity. Additionally, listening and considering others' points of view is just as integral to participation as actually expressing your own. Just as constructive and positive contributions to discussion will earn you points, negative and disrespectful interactions will cost you your participation grade for the day.

If in-class participation is difficult for you, please contact me! We can discuss strategies for participating. Please know I also consider engaged and thoughtful questions via email or in office hours as valid forms of participation (though not a pure substitute for in-class contributions). In short, I want to see that all students are thoughtfully engaging with the class materials, in the ways that work best for you, but also that you are pushing yourself and growing during this class.

Course Outline

Part I: Persuasion
Part II: Practice
Part III: Presentation

Course Schedule

Part I: Persuasion

Week 1: Introduction

- Class 1 – Syllabus Review
- Class 2 – Lupia, Chs 1 & 2; Cialdini Ch 1

Week 2: Agenda & Preference Formation

(Due: Initial Proposal)

- Class 3
 - Andreasen, Alan. 2005. "Creating and Framing the Agenda." *Social Marketing in the 21st Century*.
- Class 4
 - Druckman, Jamie & Arthur Lupia. 2000. "Preference Formation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3:1-24.

Week 3: Psychology

- Class 5
 - Cialdini, Chs 2-4: Reciprocation; Commitment & Consistency; Social Proof
- Class 6
 - Cialdini, Chs 5-7: Liking; Authority; Scarcity

Week 4: Business & Social Marketing

(Campaign Topics Announced)

- Class 7
 - Goldstein et al. 2008. "A Room With a Viewpoint: Using Social Norms to Motivate Environmental Conservation in Hotels." *Journal of Consumer Research* 35: 472-482.
- Class 8
 - Andreasen, Alan. 1995. "Putting the Customer First: The Essential Social Marketing Insight." *Marketing Social Change*.
 - Sedivy, Julie & Greg Carlson. 2011. "Sold on Language: How Advertisers Talk to You & What This Says About You." New York: John Wiley-Blackwell Press.

Week 5: Communication & Arguments

(Voting on Campaign Topics)

- Class 9
 - Frank Luntz. 2007. “The Ten Rules of Effective Language.” Chapter 1 of *Words That Work: It’s Not What You Say It’s What People Hear*. New York: Hyperion.
- Class 10
 - Bruce Waller. *Critical Thinking: Consider the Verdict*. Chs 2, 7.

Week 6: Necessary Conditions for Persuasion

(Voting Results Announced)

- Class 11 – Lupia, Chs 3-6
- Class 12 – Lupia, Chs 7-11

Week 7: How Voters Reason

(Group Assignments Announced)

- Class 13
 - Lupia, Arthur. 2013. “Communicating Science in Politicized Environments.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 110: 14048-14054.
- Class 14
 - Graham, Jesse, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A Nosek. 2009. “Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96(5): 1029–46.
 - Erickson, Lanae. 2011. “Commitment: The Answer to the Middle’s Questions on Marriage for Gay Couples.” Memorandum, Third Way.

Week 8

- Class 15 – Review Session
- Class 16 – Midterm Exam

[midterm/spring break]

Part II: Practice

Week 9: Government Regulation

- Issue: Legalization of Marijuana
 - [“Repeal Prohibition, Again”](#) – The New York Times Editorial Board, 2014
 - [“Why Congress Should Legalize Marijuana”](#) – The Cato Institute, 2014
 - [“Massachusetts Should Not Legalize Marijuana”](#) – Gov. Charlie Baker, Attorney General Maura Healey, and Mayor Martin Walsh, Boston Globe, 2016
- Issue: Junk Food/Soda Tax
 - [“Junk Food Taxes Don’t Curb Obesity or Heart Disease”](#) – US News, 2015
 - [“Soda Taxes Might Save 2,600 Lives Per Year”](#) – Huffington Post, 2012
 - [“But Don’t You Realize Fat is Unhealthy?”](#) – Shapely Prose, 2007

Week 10: Elections and Campaigns

- Issue: Leave open for something relevant to the current presidential campaign
- Issue: Leave open for something relevant to local issues on the November ballot

Week 11: How To Work for Social Change

- Issue: Black Lives Matter
 - [“11 Major Misconceptions About the Black Lives Matter Movement”](#) – Black Lives Matter Network
 - [“Black Lives Matter Won’t Endorse Presidential Candidate”](#) – NY Post, 2015
 - [“Black Lives Matter Has Too Much Influence Not to Endorse a Candidate”](#) – Shaun King, New York Daily News, 2016

- Issue: LGBTQ Politics after Gay Marriage
 - [“After Obergefell, What the LGBT Movement Still Needs to Achieve”](#) – ACLU, 2015
 - [“To Make Real Progress, More Gay Americans Must Run for Office”](#) – MSNBC
 - [“Gay Rights Are Not Queer Liberation”](#) (watch video too) – Autostraddle, 2012

Week 12: Personal Choice

- Issue: Gun Control
 - [“The Gun Control Debate, Explained in 5 Questions”](#) – Washington Post, 2015
 - [“The Conservative Case for Reforming America’s Sick Gun Culture”](#) – The Week, 2015
 - [“Some Inconvenient Gun Facts for Liberals”](#) – New York Times, 2016

- Issue: Reproductive Rights
 - [“Contraceptive Use in the United States”](#) (especially the “Who Pays for Contraception?” section) – Guttmacher Institute
 - [“What Do Religious Women Think of Contraceptive Mandate?”](#) – Atlantic, 2015
 - [“Nearly 7 in 10 Americans Say Health Plans Should Cover Birth Control”](#) – L.A. Times, 2014
 - [“The Cost of Contraception”](#) – The Guardian, 2014

Part III: Presentations

Week 13: Final presentations

Week 14: Final presentations **(Final paper due one week after final presentations)**