



MMC 6936
Digital Persuasive Communication (#106B)
Spring 2017

College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida

Class Meeting: M 7-9 (1:55-4:55 p.m.), Weimer Hall 3020
Professor: Dr. Eunice Kim
Email: eunicekim@jou.ufl.edu
Office: Weimer Hall 2084, (352)392-5059
Office Hours: M 5-6 (11:45-1:40 p.m.) or by appointment

Course Description

Welcome to Digital Persuasive Communication! This course acquaints graduate students with the major theories and concepts prevalent in persuasive communication and provides the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge to understanding the psychology of persuasion in digital media environments. This course will deal with a wide range of persuasion issues and topics, particularly in the areas of advertising and marketing communication in the digital age (e.g., consumer-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, social media marketing, native advertising, and virtual/in-game advertising). While the primary focus is conceptual, we will examine discuss the application of literature to a variety of persuasion practices, including advertising and marketing campaigns, health communication, and public relations campaigns. As an advanced course, you will go through the complete process of designing and conducting a study. Students should have basic knowledge of (or strong motivations to learn) research methods (particularly quantitative) to succeed in this course.

Specific objectives of this course are:

- To provide students an opportunity to carefully examine the academic literature and theories that have applications to advertising and marketing communication in the context of digital media.
- To have students critically analyze and construct critical viewpoints of theory and research in the field of digital persuasive communication.
- To help students translate theoretical concepts to practical applications in digital persuasion settings.
- To develop students' critical thinking and research skills through writing research papers.
- To give students practice in defending their research against criticism from their colleagues.

Readings

- There is no textbook assigned for this class, however individuals are responsible for the readings that will posted on Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>) under "Reading List".

Expectations

A lively discussion among classmates is crucial to the success of any graduate-level course. This course is designed around a discussion format—meaning it is a **discussion-intensive class**. You are expected to arrive in class having completed the readings assigned for each week and be ready to *actively participate and engage* in class discussion. The most valuable contributions will be your scholarly opinions and your efforts to synthesize and apply course readings.

Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:

Weekly Questions/Discussion Leader	25%
Attendance/Participation	15%
Reaction Papers (2)	15%
Final Paper Sections and Deadlines (4)	20%
<u>Final Research Paper</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

Final grades will be based on the following 100-point scale.

93-100% = A	73-76.99% = C
90-92.99% = A-	70-72.99% = C-
87-89.99% = B+	67-69.99% = D+
83-86.99% = B	63-66.99% = D
80-82.99% = B-	60-62.99% = D-
77-79.99% = C+	0-59.99% = F

1. Weekly Questions/Discussion Leader (25%) & Participation (15%)

Each week, 2-3 articles will be assigned for class readings. Each week you must identify at least **THREE** important questions or discussion points/agendas from **ACROSS** (not from one reading; and not three from each) the readings assigned for that week that will serve as class discussion items. These questions might be those that interest you or those about which you would like to hear the thoughts of your classmates. Keep in mind, these questions should be thoughtful – going beyond definitional issues or areas of confusion. The questions may attempt to make links between the readings for the week or try to tie the current week’s topic with topics covered in other weeks. They may pertain to a specific connection you see between the article and a personal observation and/or another article. In short, the questions should indicate that you have spent time and effort to understand and digest the information in the readings.

Each week, a few of you will be asked to take the role of the “**discussant leader**”. As the discussant leader, you are expected to read each article carefully before class, point out what you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the reading, and integrate the information into the class discussion. You should assume that the class has already read the readings, your role is not to give a detailed presentation of the readings. To ensure everyone has done the assigned readings for the day, it is your job as the discussion leader to ask open ended questions based on the readings. When you throw out a question, ask specific people to answer them, so everyone has to be ready each week.

While each of you will be submitting questions each week, only the assigned discussion leaders will be charged with channeling the discussion and making sure that everyone participates. On the week you are the discussion leader, you do not need to submit questions.

Please email your questions to the **discussion leader for that week AND me no later than 6 p.m. on the SATURDAY before class** so that the discussion leaders will have enough time to put the questions together and prepare for class.

The discussion leaders will be responsible for synthesizing the questions submitted, facilitate open discussion/debate and further questions. It is up to you as to how you do that – through slides, handouts, exercises, quizzes, videos. etc. You may use slides to help lead the discussion, but remember that the class should be a “discussion” and not a “presentation”.

Everyone is expected to participate thoughtfully during each class session. A major part of your class participation grade will be determined by (1) your ability to thoughtfully discuss the papers and contribute meaningfully to class discussions and (2) your performance in the role as the lead discussant.

2. Reaction Papers (15% = 7.5% X 2)

You are expected to turn in **TWO** reaction papers throughout the course of the semester. You can choose any article assigned for class readings. These papers will **NOT** simply be summaries. You will be asked to identify the significance of the study to the academia and/or practice in digital persuasive communication and critique the article’s research methodology and/or theoretical position among other aspects. More detail will be provided.

- Three pages double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman; hard copy in class. Please include the citation at the top of your paper.

3. Final Paper Sections and Deadlines (20%) & Final Research Paper (25%)

The final research paper can be on any topic of your choice relevant to digital persuasive communication. You will decide to use a qualitative or quantitative approach to conducting your research study. As an advanced course, the final paper should be a complete research paper that can be submitted to a conference (e.g., AAA, AEJMC, ICA, NCA, etc.) and subsequent publication. The paper can be completed either by yourself (i.e., if you want it to be used as a springboard for your thesis or dissertation) or with one or two others in class (max number in a team: 3).

The final paper will consist of five sections:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Literature review**
3. **Method**
4. **Results**
5. **Discussion, limitations and future research**

We will have various due dates for parts of the paper so that I can give you feedback along the way. The following sections need to be submitted in forms of written assignments (hard copy in class).

- #1. Proposal: Early in the semester you will be asked to choose a topic of your interest and provide your rationale for why this is an important topic to study. Topic choice must be approved by me in advance in writing (**due January 30**)
- #2. Intro and Literature Review Section (provide the likely contribution(s) of the proposed research. Summarize relevant literature that informs your topic, which will provide the foundation for your final paper. Include resulting research questions at end of lit review) (**5%; due February 13**)
- #3. Method Section (describe the research design with the quantitative and/or quantitative method of your selection, including: subjects, procedure, measurement of variables, and stimuli, etc.) (**5%; due February 27**)
- #4. Results Section (describe how you analyzed the results and summarize the findings) (**5%; due April 3**)

Final Presentation (5%): On the last day of class, you will be delivering a 20-minute professional presentation on your final paper in which we will discuss your topic and provide feedback.

Final Paper (25%): Turn in a final paper that will extend each part of the paper by providing detailed explanation and revision of the paper.

- No more than 25 pages, double-spaced (not including the references, tables, and figures), 12-point Times New Roman; email submission and hard copy in my mailbox. Use APA reference style.

General Course Policies

Attendance

As a graduate-level course, your attendance and punctuality are expected each week. If you are going to miss class, please contact me beforehand to make other arrangements. Failure to attend more than two class meetings without prior notice will result in your final course grade being substantially lowered by one letter grade, or your dismissal from the course, at the instructor's discretion.

Late Work Policy

NO late assignments will be accepted. No exception.

E-mail Policy

As e-mail has become a favored way to communicate in academia and industry, you must learn to use it appropriately. Thus, when e-mailing me, address it formally. I will generally return it within 24 hours of receiving it on weekdays or by Monday evening if I receive it on the weekend. If you need to discuss something in length, come see me during office hours or we can schedule an alternative time.

Professional Courtesy

While laptop/tablet computers are welcome for taking notes, please do not use them to chat, email, Facebook, etc. during class time. As a courtesy to your instructor and to your classmates, please make sure at the beginning of each class period that **your cell phones and other electronic devices are turned OFF**. Students who text, email, etc during class will be asked to leave and be considered absent for that day.

Academic Dishonesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

Please see the plagiarism document in the Graduate Division, and be sure that you have signed it and it is on file (required, if you are in this college).

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Religious Holy Days

By UF policy, a student who misses classes or other required activities for the observance of a religious holy day must notify me of his or her pending absence as early as possible prior to the date of a religious holy day, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment or activity within a reasonable time after the absence.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last 2-3 weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Tentative Nature of the Syllabus

I reserve the right to change and/or add readings throughout the semester. Furthermore, I reserve the right to change and or move around scheduled lectures in order to facilitate for potential unplanned events (cancellations or guest speakers). If changes in the schedule are necessary, students will be held responsible for such changes, which will be announced in class ahead of time.

PRELIMINARY COURSE SCHEDULE

The course outline is subject to change

Week 1:

1/9- Welcome & Course Intro

Week 2:

1/16- Martin Luther King Day – No CLASS

Week 3:

1/23- Digital Persuasive Communication – Overview, Opportunities, and Challenges

Week 4:

1/30- Understanding Digital Consumer Engagement

- *Research Proposal Due - Research topic idea be ready to discuss in class*

Week 5:

2/6- Psychology of Social Media Use and Behavior I

Week 6:

2/13- Psychology of Social Media Use and Behavior II

- *Intro and Literature Review Section Due*

Week 7:

2/20- Individual Meetings - no group class

Week 8:

2/27- User-Generated Content and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

- *Methods Section Due*

Week 9:

3/7- Spring Break – No Class

Week 10:

3/13- Resisting Persuasion

Week 11:

3/20-Media Multitasking and Attention

Week 12:

3/27-Persuasion in Virtual Environments

Week 13:

4/3- In-Game Advertising & Advergaming

- *Results Section Due*

Week 14:

4/10- Individual Meetings - no group class

Week 15:

4/17- Final Presentations/Wrap-up

Final Paper Due on Monday April 24th