

**MMC 6466**  
**\*\*DIGITAL PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION\*\***  
**FALL 2019**

**Professor:** Dr. Kasey Windels

**Class Time/Location:** Tuesday from 1:55-4:55 in 3324 Weimer

**Office Hours/Location:** Thursdays from 9:00-11:00 in 3059 Weimer

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**Office Phone:** 352-294-1398

**Course Website:** Relevant course info will be posted on Canvas.

As an increasing amount of our time is spent with digital technologies, an increasing amount of persuasion is performed through digitally-mediated communication. This course is designed to provide you with a foundation of practically-oriented knowledge on persuasive communication that can be used in digital and traditional contexts.

Throughout the semester, we will examine theories of persuasive communication and consider some of the myths we hold about how to persuade others. Our initial focus will be on messaging and persuasion. Later, we will consider how digital media campaigns are used to influence consumers. Throughout the semester, we will engage in our own persuasive messaging campaign that applies course materials.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Deepen our understanding of persuasive communication.
  - Consider several theoretical approaches to persuasive communication and influence.
  - Examine new research on the value of rational versus emotional messages.
  - Understand the importance of long-term brand building that generates emotional connections with consumers.
- Develop a thorough understanding of the persuasive communication campaign process.
  - Conduct secondary and primary research to understand consumers' relationship with the brand or service.
  - Set realistic communication objectives.
  - Develop a unique message strategy that builds from consumer and brand knowledge.
  - Use the creative process to generate a big idea that is novel and relevant.
  - Understand the digital ecosystem and how to use it for persuasive communication.
  - Develop a media strategy that considers how users interact on each platform.
  - Execute tactics that garner attention, generate emotional connections and accomplish campaign objectives.
- Sharpen the skills necessary to be a communications professional.
  - Work collaboratively as part of a team.
  - Hone critical thinking, creative thinking, persuasion, and presentation skills.
  - Develop a campaign plan that will showcase your work to future employers.

"The best way to persuade people is with your ears - by listening to them."

--Dean Rusk

## COURSE MATERIALS

- **Required:** Morrison, Haley, Sheehan, Taylor. *Using Qualitative Research in Advertising* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Sage, 2012.
- **Required:** Cialdini. *Influence: Science and Practice* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson, 2009.
- **Recommended** if you have not taken a PR or Advertising campaigns class: Avery and Yount. *Advertising Campaign Planning* (any edition). Melvin & Leigh, 2010.
- All other readings will be uploaded to Canvas.

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Reaction Paper and Discussion Question:** Each week you are responsible for writing an approximately 500-word response regarding the week's readings, due by Monday at 3:00. In the **reaction paper**, you will respond to the readings for the week. You must respond to implied ideas in the reading, plus evaluate and elaborate on the author's main points. These papers will help you to participate in a meaningful discussion during our class time. Do not waste your time summarizing what you read. I will grade these posts and hand them back to you by at the beginning of class so that you may refer to them in during discussion. The reaction paper will be evaluated with a check plus, check, or check minus, indicating either an outstanding (A=97); satisfactory (B=88), or unsatisfactory (C=77) performance. At the end of the reaction paper, you will also write one **discussion question** that will provoke interesting in-class discussion. Please **do not** include the following discussion question or its related counterparts, "Can you think of an example of an ad that contains (topic from the reading)?"

Some topics you may discuss in your reaction paper include the following:

- Discuss the most important idea(s) from the readings. How do you disagree? Can you reconcile your point of view with the readings?
- Raise a question relevant to the topic but not answered in the readings: "The author ignored this key issue..."
- Analyze how one text relates to another text from the same week or from a previous week. Point out similarities and differences. Reconcile with your own point of view.
- Connect a text to concepts and themes discussed in class.
- Question key assumptions made by the author.
- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument.
- Consider how the material could be applied to real-world problems or to another area that interests you.

You will upload your reaction paper and discussion question into Canvas by 3:00 Monday.

2. **In-Class Contributions:** As the course is a seminar, class participation is essential—and a substantial part of student grades. Your grade for in-class contributions will be based on two factors: (1) your consistent, active contribution to in-class discussion and activities, which should demonstrate a firm grasp of the material covered and (2): your contribution to your team when we break out into groups, including whether you participate actively, communicate your points professionally, and work with your team for the full duration of the class period. Weekly participation will be evaluated

with a check plus, check, or check minus, indicating either an outstanding (A=97); satisfactory (B=88), or unsatisfactory (C=77) level of engagement.

3. **Case Study Presentation:** Choose a case study that showcases an example of excellent digital persuasive communication. Learn about the case study, especially the background on the situation, the strategic challenge faced by the brand or group, key problem or objective, target audience, applicable research and insights, the strategy, the concept or big idea, and the tactics of the case. Analyze and evaluate why the case was successful. Present the case to the class in 7-10 minutes. Ideas for cases include: #metoo; #BlackLivesMatter; Dove Campaign for Real Beauty; ALS Ice Bucket Challenge; #marchforourlives, or many others. Assignment and rubric will be posted on Canvas.
4. **Drafts of Persuasive Communication Campaign:** You will work with your team on the final campaign project throughout the semester, with drafts of several parts of the project due. The drafts help ensure your team is on the right track and working on the project throughout the semester at a good pace. They also allow you to receive feedback from the professor. The drafts will be graded.
5. **Final Digital Persuasive Communication Campaign:** This is a group project in which you will apply your knowledge and understanding of audiences, persuasion, and digital media to develop a persuasive messaging campaign for a real client or social issue. The deliverable for this project is a ~20 page written campaign plansbook outlining your key problem or objective, target audience, research, insights, strategy, concept or big idea, and tactics. You will also develop a 10-15 minute presentation. Assignment and rubric will be posted on Canvas.

**Peer Evaluation:** After completion of the project, each student will complete a peer evaluation of the contributions of yourself and the other members in your group, which accounts for 5% of your total grade. If you do not turn in your group evaluation, you will receive a one-letter-grade deduction on your final campaign book grade.

**NOTE:** Since participation in group projects is critical, I also reserve the right to deduct up to 50% off any individual team member's team research report score if they receive evaluation scores that suggest they did not participate fully in the project.

## GRADING

Group Persuasive Communication Campaign <i>Situation Analysis Draft (5%)</i> <i>Qualitative Methods and Findings Draft (5%)</i> <i>Message Strategy Draft (5%)</i> <i>Creative Concept Draft (5%)</i> <i>Final Campaign Book (25%)</i> <i>Final Campaign Presentation (10%)</i> <i>Peer Evaluation (5%)</i>	60%
Reaction Papers	10%
In-Class Contributions (discussion and group)	15%
Plansbook Critique	5%
Case Study Presentation	10%

## GRADING SCALE

	94.00 and above = A	90.00 – 93.99 = A-
87.00 – 89.99 = B+	84.00 – 86.99 = B	80.00 – 83.99 = B-
77.00 – 79.99 = C+	74.00 – 76.99 = C	70.00 – 73.99 = C-
67.00 – 69.99 = D+	64.00 – 66.99 = D	61.00 – 63.99 = D-
60.99 and below = E		

Please see UF grading policies at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

“You cannot reason people out of a position that they did not reason themselves into.”  
--Ben Goldacre

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- **Classroom Preparedness:** Students should attend all classes and participate in class discussions. Students should complete readings before the class in which they are discussed. Finally, students should check email and Canvas frequently for the latest class information and updates.
- **Attendance:** As a graduate-level course, your attendance and punctuality are expected each week. Each person can **miss one class unexcused without repercussions**. If you have **any additional** unexcused absences, you will receive a **zero** on that day for your in-class contributions.

If you are going to miss class for an excused absence, you must let me know you will miss class **BEFORE** the class meets except in certain (rare) emergency situations. Explain why you will not be in class, and bring in a written documentation to verify your excuse when you come back to class. Make sure to make a photocopy of the documentation if you need it for other classes.

Excused absences include: Religious holidays (only the holiday). Documented, dated, necessary medical excuse or official documented legal excuse (a dated doctor’s note or prescription). The Student Health Center will provide you a specific kind of note that indicates they think you should’ve missed class or will need to miss additional days. University competitive events (that means athletes).

The following is a partial list of the types of situations that are **NOT** considered excused absences: Social events, meetings, entertaining out-of-town guests, holiday/travel plans, weddings, etc.

- **Group Work in Class:** In-person, face-to-face communication is a learning outcome of this course and an important part of working in persuasive communications industries. As such, we will have some class time allotted to working on the group project. During that time, you and your team are expected to work on and converse about your project for the full length allotted

during class. If you leave early or don't communicate with your team, your in-class contributions score will be lowered. If your whole team leaves early, every member of your team will receive a lower in-class contribution score for the day.

- **Respect for Others' Ideas:** Appropriate and professional classroom conduct is expected at all times. Respect and common courtesy toward your classmates and your professor are required. Effective communication relies on the ability to recognize and embrace diversity in all its forms, including viewpoints. Be respectful of the diverse range of opinions of everyone in the class, and help make this an inclusive environment. See the CJC diversity statement for more information: <https://www.jou.ufl.edu/home/about/diversity-statement/>.
- **Honor Code:** Please review the UF Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code, which can be found at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>. Any violation of the codes will be reported to the proper University administrators and may result in other sanctions.
- **Plagiarism:** Original writing is essential to ethical communication, and it is also essential for this class. Cheating is any action that violates University norms or an instructor's guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. Such actions may include using or providing unauthorized assistance or materials on course assignments or possessing unauthorized materials during an exam.

Plagiarism involves the representation of another's work as your own, for example: (a) Submitting as one's own any material that is copied from published or unpublished sources such as the Internet, print sources, or video programs without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Paraphrasing another's views, opinions or insights without proper acknowledgement or copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination, paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. (d) Presenting work created for another course as original work in this class.

UF requires faculty who find evidence of plagiarism to submit a report to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Please read the UF Student Honor Code for more information.

- **Effective Writing and Presentation Skills:** Your written communication is expected to be clear and concise. I will grade you on your ideas as well as on grammar, syntax, spelling and other writing mechanics. Be sure to proofread all papers and presentations carefully. Presentation skills are another important component of communication. We will have class assignments that focus on presentation skills and delivery. I will specify a time limit for each presentation. You must observe these limits. Plan and rehearse the material.
- **Professional Credibility:** There are certain egregious errors that signify to a client or superior that you have not given adequate attention to your assignment. One example of an egregious error is misspelling the client's name. Another is misrepresenting facts about the client. Agencies get fired on the spot for these types of errors. You will receive a two-letter-grade reduction.

- **Professional Execution:** You should execute and present your ideas as if you were pitching to a client or boss. You can choose the tools (Photoshop, InDesign, PPT, Prezi, etc.), but the key is to develop professional work.
- **Technology/Paying Attention:** I prefer that you take hand-written notes in class and keep your laptops closed to avoid distraction. Research shows that we learn and remember more from handwriting our notes. Also, when we're distracted rather than engaged, we can't improve as professionals. No text messaging/social media/web surfing during class. If you do this you will be asked to stop. If you continue, you will be asked to leave.
- **Grade Challenges:** Grades will not be discussed via email, the telephone or in class. If you disagree with a grade given on any assignment, you must appeal the grade in person during my office hours or in an appointment with me. In this appeal, you must clearly state the problem and give a clear, concise explanation as to why you feel the grade is inaccurate. You must appeal assigned grades within two weeks of your receiving that particular grade. After two weeks, all grades are final.
- **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 me 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.
- **Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities can receive accommodations. The first step is to contact the Disability Resource Center (352-329-8565; [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). Once you receive your accommodation letter, provide a copy to the professor as early as possible in the semester.
- **Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and constructive feedback on the quality of instruction via the online course evaluation system, GatorEvals. You will be notified when the evaluation period begins, and you can find GatorEvals through your Canvas course menu.
- **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 you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto: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.

"People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come into the mind of others."

--Blaise Pascal

	Topic / Key Question	Assignments & -Readings	-Active Learning
8/20	<p>Course Intro and The Strategic Planning Process</p> <p><i>What are the steps in the persuasive communications strategic planning process?</i></p>	<p>-C: Advertising Campaign Planning Ch. 1 (Situation Analysis)</p> <p>-C: Other Readings on Strategic Planning Process as Resources for Plansbook Critique</p>	<p>-Library resources</p> <p>-Briefed on Plansbook Critique Assignment</p>
8/27	<p>Creative Messages and Persuasion</p> <p><i>Why is research an important part of persuasive communication?</i></p>	<p><b>Case Study 1</b> <b>Plansbook Critique Due</b></p> <p>-B: Qualitative Research in Advertising Ch. 1-2</p> <p>-C: Truth, Lies and Advertising Ch. 1-2</p> <p>-C: Advertising Research Ch. 2</p>	<p>-CrossFit Activity</p> <p>-Choose a client and begin secondary research</p>
9/3	<p>Qualitative Research for Consumer Insights</p> <p><i>What kinds of research help us develop messages that persuade consumers?</i></p>	<p><b>Case Study 2</b></p> <p>-B: Qualitative Research in Advertising Ch. 3-4</p> <p>-C: Advertising Research Ch. 10: Focus Groups</p>	<p>-Group work on interview guide</p> <p>-Qualitative practice</p>
9/10	<p>Qualitative Research and Analysis</p> <p><i>How do we get the most out of our qualitative data analysis and report those insights and findings?</i></p>	<p><b>Case Study 3</b> <b>Situation Analysis Due</b></p> <p>-B: Qualitative Research in Advertising Ch. 5</p> <p>-C: Consumer Insights 2.0 Ch. 9</p> <p>-C: Advertising Research Ch. 11: Analysis of Qualitative Research</p>	<p>-Group work on projectives</p> <p>-Data analysis practice</p> <p>-Focus group with projectives</p>
9/17	<p>Strategic Messaging</p> <p><i>How do we choose the right path and write an inspirational strategy?</i></p>	<p><b>Case Study 4</b> <b>Qualitative Methods and Findings Due</b></p> <p>-C: The Creative Search for an Insight (JA)</p> <p>-C: The Chop Shop Theory of Strategy and Planning</p> <p>-C: How to Do Account Planning</p>	<p>-Strategy Activities</p> <p>-Group work on strategy</p>
9/24	<p>The Myth of the Rational Consumer</p> <p><i>Why do we assume that rational arguments are the way to persuade?</i></p> <p><i>Should we think about branding in the short or long term?</i></p>	<p><b>Case Study 5</b></p> <p>-C: Kahneman: Ch. 1-2: System 1 and System 2</p> <p>-C: Emotions and Feelings: Drivers of Consumer Behavior</p> <p>-C: Brands Need Building</p> <p>-C: Demasio Video 1</p> <p>-C: Demasio Video 2</p>	<p>-Brainstorm: Decrease discrimination</p> <p>-Group work on strategy</p>
10/1	<p>The Creative Process</p> <p><i>How do we come up with amazing ideas?</i></p>	<p><b>Case Study 6</b> <b>Message Strategy Due</b></p> <p>-C: AdTeachings eBook on Idea Generation</p> <p>-C: Hey Whipple Ch. 4 on How to Get Ideas</p>	<p>-Creative process activity</p> <p>-Mind map</p> <p>-Strategy to Idea</p>
10/8	<p>Workshop Day</p>	<p><b>Case Study 7</b></p> <p>-TBD</p>	<p>-TBD</p>

	How can we take the time to ensure we're giving our best effort?		
10/15	Copy and Visuals  How do we get people to pay attention to our ideas?	<b>Case Study 8</b> -C: Hey Whipple Ch. 5 on Ideas and Headlines -C: AdTeachings eBook on Writing Headlines -C: Advertising by Design Ch. 8: Typography and Visualization -C: Advertising by Design Ch. 9: Composition	-Art and copy activities -Group work on creative ideas and concept
10/22	Understanding Digital Platforms  How do we choose our digital platforms?  Which media platforms should we use? When? How?	<b>Case Study 9</b> <b>Creative Concepts Due</b> -C: Marketo: Choosing the Right Social Media Platform -C: eMarketing Ch. 17: Social Media Strategy -C: Effective Social Strategy Report -C: Definitive Guide to Digital Advertising: p. 40-77	-W+K digital strategist application -Group work on digital ideas
10/29	Theoretical Approaches  What theory can guide our thinking?	<b>Case Study 10</b> -C: Attention (Dig Research and Theory- Ch. 9) -C: Resisting Advertising (Fransen et al 2015) -C: Emotion in Advertising (Effective Adv. Ch. 10) -C: Stop Raising Awareness Already -C: The Science of What Makes People Care	-Work time in class
11/5	Social Influence Principles  How do we influence people?	<b>Case Study 11</b> -B: Cialdini Ch. 1-7	-Apply concepts to digital -Group work to apply to final project
11/12	Work Day	Work day in class	Work day
11/19	Work Day	Work day in class	Work day
11/26	Work Day	Work day	Work day
12/3	Final Presentations	<b>Final Campaign Plansbook Due</b> <b>Final Campaign Presentations</b>	

C = Reading posted on Canvas

B = Reading from a required course textbook

\*This syllabus is subject to change as the instructor deems appropriate and necessary.