

**Course: PUR 5507 Section 1229**  
**Persuasion Theory & Research**  
**Times: Tues. 4:05 p.m.-7:05 p.m.**  
**Location: Tues. Weimer 1078**

**Professor: Spiro Kiouisis, Ph.D., APR**

**Pronunciation=Say the letter “q” and finish with “sis.”**

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**Office: Weimer 2096**

**Office Phone: 352-392-0466**

**Office Hours: F 1-5 p.m. or by Appt.**

## **Description:**

In the field of public relations and related areas, we are constantly surrounded by messages intended to influence how people think, feel, and behave. To better understand how the process of influence operates, this course provides a broad overview of the main scholarly perspectives in persuasion. The course is designed to introduce you to the principal theories and empirical research programs exploring how communication, particularly from public relations efforts, impacts persuasion. While the primary focus is conceptual, we will also examine persuasion in applied settings, including political campaigns, health communication, and public information/social action campaigns.

Persuasion research has a rich scholarly history, drawing from a variety of academic disciplines, thus making an exhaustive introduction to it impossible in the span of just one semester. As a result, the readings for this class are designed to expose you to a wide range of information, with each week’s readings representing a larger body of literature in the field.

Please note that the course will be administered through the Canvas learning and UF’s Course Reserves systems.

## **Required Readings:**

- Perloff, Richard M. (2014). *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and attitudes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (fifth edition). New York, New York: Routledge.
- Because we have only one required text, several supplemental readings will be supplied or read online throughout the course.
- All readings should be completed prior to the class meeting for that day.

## **Objectives**

Students who are actively involved in the class—via participation, leading class discussions, reaction papers, final paper, online course materials, etc.—should:

- increase their understanding of the major theories and concepts prevalent in persuasion.
- be able to critically evaluate empirical research emanating from persuasion scholarship.
- be able to use the information covered in class to become more effective practitioners.
- be able to apply their knowledge of persuasion to their own research.

#### **IV. Grading**

Final grades will be based on the following 100-point scale. (Please note that pluses or minuses are not used):

90-100=A  
 80-89=B  
 70-79=C  
 60-69=D  
 0-59=E

For more information on grading and grading policy, please see the link below:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

##### Semester Assignments:

*Reaction Papers*=20 percent

- At certain points in the semester, students are required to complete reaction papers to the weekly readings. Questions will be posed to the class for structuring these papers. These papers will not simply be summaries. More detail will be provided.

*Participation* (attendance, discussion, etc.)=20 percent

- This learner-centered course will primarily use discussions to engage in the learning process, so class involvement is essential. The role of the instructor and students in the course is to facilitate that discussion. In other words, there will be little lecturing in this course, so speak up thoughts, suggestions, criticisms, whatever...but talk.
- As a graduate-level course, attendance and punctuality are expected. If you are going to miss class, please contact me beforehand to make other arrangements. Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final grade by as much as one letter grade.

- Because of the discussion-style nature of the course, which can sometimes become passionate, please remember to be courteous in your exchanges with others. Nonetheless, enthusiastic discourse is what frequently leads to the strongest learning experiences.

*Discussion Leadership=10 percent*

- On most days, students will be scheduled to head the class discussion for half the class period. Presentations should outline the key points of the readings (assume the class has read) for that week and pose questions to the group to foster discussion. Be sure to not only highlight the theoretical and conceptual implications of the readings, but the practical and professional applications of the material as well.
- Additional literature on the topic beyond the assigned readings for that week must also be covered. The selections will need to be pre-approved by the instructor. In general, these should come from scholarly and professional sources, such as academic journals, books, conference papers, trade publications, mass media, and so forth. When submitting these, please include the entire citation in APA format. Once discussion leadership assignments have been made, you will have one week to submit your proposed supplemental readings to the instructor due to the time needed to secure copyright permission.
- For all presentations, discussion leaders are expected to hand out an outline to the class stating what they will cover in the presentation. Activities, exercises, guest speakers, examples, and other creative approaches are welcome and encouraged. Even when not serving as a leader, it is critical that you come prepared and actively participate in the discussion.

*Final Paper=25 percent*

- Students must write a final paper on the approved topic of their choice in persuasion that is due **12/9** (more details to come). The deadline for the International Communication Association's (ICA) annual conference is **11/1**. The final paper for this class could be used to submit to the conference. Oral presentations are also required.

*Final Paper Proposal=10 percent*

- A brief proposal on your final paper topic is due on **9/23**. More detail will be provided.

*Final Paper Rough Draft=15 percent*

A rough draft of at least half your final paper is due on **10/14**. More detail will be provided.

## V. Miscellaneous

### Academic Honesty

Plagiarism (literary or artistic theft), copying someone else's work or other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any case of academic dishonesty will be considered grounds for an automatic failing grade in the course. University guidelines will be followed for any offenses.

- Having someone else do your work for you is also considered academic dishonesty.
- When completing any assignments for this class, it is important to clearly attribute where you obtained your information from, whether it is from a Web site or from an organization's internal document. To clarify, you CANNOT copy anything word for word from any source without putting quotes around it, even if it is given to you directly from an organization. This includes Web site copy, mission statements, etc. In these cases, you should paraphrase and cite the source as you write or simply quote it.

**IN SHORT, PLEASE DON'T TRY TO CHEAT. IT'S TOO PAINFUL FOR YOU AND ME BOTH!!**

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." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class."

### Inclusiveness

Every attempt is made to make all courses non-sexist, diverse, and multicultural in content. Should the course fail to meet this goal, please visit with me to discuss.

### Students with Special Needs

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

### Final Notes

- The instructor reserves the right to make changes if necessary to the grading system and schedule for this class.
- While laptop/tablet computers are welcome for taking notes, please do not use them to chat, email, blog, etc. during class time unless relevant to the class discussion for that day.
- This class is intense, but in the end is usually quite rewarding. If you notice yourself having trouble, it is crucial that you see me immediately. Please feel free to approach me about any concerns that you might have in this class or other classes. I will do my best to have an "open door" policy with you.
- Please turn off your cell phones and pagers in class unless it is for emergency purposes.
- The following dates and discussion topics are a good faith attempt at providing you with a tentative schedule for the course, but note that they are subject to change.
- Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three 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/>.
- Requirements for class attendance and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.
- Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

## **V. Instructor Biography**

Dr. Spiro Kiouisis is executive associate dean for the College of Journalism and Communications and is a professor of public relations. Previously, he served as chair of the Department of Public Relations from 2006-2012, was director of distance education for the College from 2010-2013, and was a University of Florida Research Foundation Professor from 2009-2011. From 2013-2014, he was selected as a SEC Academic Leadership Development Program fellow from Southeastern Conference universities. He holds a B.A. in mass media from the University of San Francisco, an M.A. in media studies from Stanford University, and a Ph.D. in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin. His current research interests include political public relations, political communication, and digital communication. Specifically, this interdisciplinary research explores the interplay among political public relations efforts, news media content, and public opinion in traditional and interactive mass mediated contexts.

Dr. Kiouisis has had articles published in several leading journals, including *Communication Research*, *Journal of Communication*, the *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, *Mass Communication & Society*, *Public Relations Review*, *Communication Yearbook*, *Communication Education*, the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, the *International Communication Gazette*, *Public Relations Journal*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Journalism Studies*, *Journal of Media and Religion*, *Journal of Political Marketing*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, the *Southwestern Mass Communication Journal*, *Journal of Communication Management*, and *New Media & Society*. He also serves on numerous editorial boards and has presented papers to the International Communication Association, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the National Communication Association, the World Association for Public Opinion Research, the American Association for Public Opinion Research, the Southwest Education Council for Journalism and Mass Communication, and the Public Relations Society of America. He recently co-edited a book with Jesper Stromback (Mid-Sweden University) titled "Political Public Relations: Principles and Applications" (Routledge) <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415873819/>, as well as co-wrote a book with Max McCombs (University of Texas), Lance Holbert (The Ohio State University), and Wayne Wanta (University of Florida) titled "The News and Public Opinion: Media Effects on Civic Life" (Polity) <http://www.polity.co.uk/book.asp?ref=9780745645186>.

Dr. Kiouisis' teaching areas include public relations campaigns, public relations strategy, public relations writing, persuasion theory and research, public relations management, and mass communication theory. He has professional experience in public relations, marketing, online journalism, and media production. He is a member of the graduate faculty and has his APR credential from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

## Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Discussion Leaders</i>	<i>Readings &amp; Assignments</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Week 1: 8/25	Instructor	Biography Assignment	Orientation
Week 2: 9/1	Instructor	Perloff Ch. 1, 2, Lowery & DeFleur Chs. 7 & 8*, Hutton (1999)	Foundations of Persuasion
Week 3: 9/8	Instructor	Pfau & Wan (2007)*, Miller (1989)*, VanLeuven (1989)*, Dickerson (2012) <b>Reaction Paper Due</b>	General Views of Public Relations & Persuasion

\* Instructor to provide