

Persuasion for Professional Communicators

COMSTRAT 561

Course Overview:

Welcome to COMSTRAT 561, Persuasion for Professional Communicators. This course is designed to introduce students to theories, concepts, strategies, and processes of persuasion and social influence. Thus, we will be considering questions such as, “How, through communication, do we get others to decide to engage in such behaviors as buying, electing, joining, quitting, giving, believing in, or supporting?”

Course Learning Goals:

Through participation in this course, students should (1) understand a range of theoretical and empirical issues in the study and practice of persuasion (2) be able to critically evaluate persuasion and social influence scholarship in the discipline, and (3) be able to apply skills and competencies in professional settings.

Course Work:

Each unit will consist of readings, analysis of case studies, discussion, and various “in-class” activities as well as 5 short reflection papers designed to test your grasp of core concepts. In addition, there will be one semester-long project and one final exam.

Instructor Interaction:

I will be active in the course space afternoons from 3-4 p.m. (Pacific time). You can expect responses to emails or questions received outside of these times during my next “office hour.”

Late Work Policy

Work (papers, exams, final projects) will be due at 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Late work will be accepted the following day, but will lose one full grade. Work turned in after that time will lose one full letter grade for each business day it is late.

Grading:

As this is a graduate-level Communication course, I have high expectations for your work. Assignments will be graded on both content and writing/presentation. If you have questions about any assignment, please ask. I will use the following formula for grading:

A: Assignment is well above the standard in both content and writing/presentation

B: Assignment meets standard for a graduate-level Communication course (argument is well articulated and supported; writing is professional quality; meets criteria specific to assignment)

C: Assignment meets standard in either content or writing; or is just below standard in both

D: Assignment does not meet standard in either content or writing

Course Work	Points	Percent of Final Grade
Participation	250	25%
Reaction papers (5 at 50 each)	250	25%
Final project and presentation	250	25%
Final Exam	250	25%

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A	93–100%	C	73–76%
A–	90–92%	C–	70–72%
B+	87–89%	D+	67–69%
B	83–86%	D	60–66%
B–	80–82%	F	0–59%
C+	77–79%		

Reaction papers

In addition to the reading and discussion of assigned material, five times during the semester each student will prepare a short reaction paper on assigned readings, using the discussion prompts. These papers are worth 50 points each, and together count for 25% of the grade. Students may write more than five papers; in that case the top five scores will count. Specific topics and due dates for the papers are available on the class website.

Participation

Persuasion for Professional Communicators is a participation-based class...students will do much of their learning through group discussion. Each week's discussion will center on several specific questions, or prompts, from the assigned readings. The participation grade must be earned through consistently demonstrating understanding of the readings, asking thoughtful questions, being able to answer questions, and constructively engaging in group discussion and activities. The participation grade (25% of the final grade) will be based both on the quality and the regularity of participation.

Exam

There will be one final exam consisting of several short essay questions, requiring students to synthesize and apply course material (readings, discussions, etc.) to case examples. The exam is open book but limited in time, and will draw from the entire semester's material. The exam is worth 25% of the course grade.

Final project and presentation

The final project has two components: the creation of a Facebook "group" or "page" and then a presentation. Students will apply principles of Persuasion in order to advocate for a single political or social issue. Students will be asked to "curate" the news on this issue and to link news stories, videos, tweets, etc. to this site. In addition, students will be required to write several (3 or 4) "opinion pieces" on the issue in an attempt to synthesize the evidence for the issue in a way that is persuasive to an intended audience. In a final presentation, you will share your page/group, discuss how you applied Persuasive concepts in it, and discuss how effective your effort was. Creation and maintenance of the group/page is worth 15% of the final grade while the presentation is worth 10% and will be about 15 minutes long.

Incomplete Grade Policy:

Incompletes are granted only with permission of the instructor and are subject to the following guidelines:

Students must request an incomplete in writing or by e-mail from the instructor before the end of the semester.

1. The request must be signed and dated by the student (or identified by student's e-mail address), and must explain the reasons behind the request for the incomplete.
2. In order to be considered for an incomplete, there are two main conditions:
 - a. a student must complete a minimum amount of the assigned course work. Specifically, a student must complete 75 percent of the course work.
 - b. a student must have a mathematical possibility of passing the class. A passing grade is 60 percent or above for the entire course.
3. If extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family emergency, serious illness) are involved and are documented to the instructor's satisfaction, the professor/ instructor retains the discretion to grant an incomplete even if the minimum conditions outlined in item 3 above are not met.

4. If an incomplete is granted, the standard WSU policy applies (i.e., ALL work must be completed within one full year from the end of the enrollment semester at issue. Otherwise, an automatic grade of "F," or failing, will be entered on the student's transcript).

Academic Regulations

Students enrolled in distance courses are subject to the same WSU academic regulations as on-campus students. A complete listing of the WSU academic regulations is available online ([Academic Regulations](#); select "Printable" next to "List All Academic Regulations" to view a printable list of all regulations).

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. DDP and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) work together to provide reasonable accommodations for students who have documented disabilities and who are registered both with DDP and the DRC. DDP's liaison to the DRC will assist you in getting started. To begin this process, contact DDP (800-222-4978 or distance@wsu.edu). We strongly recommend that you notify us as soon as possible. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Center.

If you have questions, please contact the DRC at DRC.FrontDesk@ad.wsu.edu or 509-335-3417. Additional information is available on the DRC website: <http://www.drc.wsu.edu>.

Online Collaboration:

Threaded discussion posts in online course spaces are an integral part of online learning environments. In certain courses, assessment of discussion posts is included as part of the final grade.

WSU is committed to the rights of all community members to freedom of expression and academic freedom. In order to protect the rights of all participants and to preserve the educational tone of online course spaces, the following rules apply:

1. Postings must be germane to the subject matter.
2. Postings must comply with WSU's policy on appropriate use of computing resources: <http://www.wsu.edu/ElectronicPolicy.html>.
3. Illegal postings or postings that violate WSU policies, including those regarding harassment and discrimination or the Standards of Conduct for Students, are not permitted.
4. Postings that are threatening to others are not permitted.

Instructors have the authority to remove posts that violate these rules. Continued postings in violation of these rules may result in removal of access rights, course failure, and, when appropriate, referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

In addition to the netiquette guidelines for online collaboration, you will be expected to participate in the online discussions in a way that engages with the topic and with the other participants. An overview

of the criteria used in this course to evaluate your participation through your original and response posts is provided in the online course space, if applicable.

Critical Thinking

The ability to think and write critically are essential skills in many walks of life. Critical thinking skills are developed and refined through practice, self-reflection, and the critique and support of peers and instructors. Throughout this course you will have many opportunities to exercise your analytical thinking, synthesize information, and apply knowledge to real-life situations. To help facilitate your thinking and writing, the "Critical Thinking Rubric" is provided in the online course space, if applicable, to assess your own writing and that of other students. Please review it carefully before completing each activity.

Technical Support

If you need technical assistance, please expand the **Content** folder in the Map menu on the left by clicking the plus sign (+), then select **Technical Support**.

DDP Student Help Centers,

DDP understands that navigating the academic world may be confusing – that is why we have created the DDP [Help Centers](#), a central location where students can find information on a variety of topics. Take a moment to check out the many links available in the various help centers. Below are just a few important links to information in the help centers we would like to bring to your attention:

- Please review "Tuition & Fees" in the [Finance Center](#). Tuition is due on the first day of the semester, and WSU does not mail billing statements.
- If you are a new DDP student, information to assist you with online learning is available under "Resources and Tips" in the [New DDP Students Center](#). In this section you will find study tips, resources, and skills to give you a good head start in assuring success with your course.
- Also check out [myDDP](#), your personal DDP Web page where you can find quick links to important information, upcoming DDP events, deadlines and more. The quick link "Go to myDDP" is available from every page in the help centers, found in the upper right part of the page.

Library Support,

All students enrolled in Washington State University distance courses can use the WSU Libraries online databases and receive reference and research assistance from the Distance Degree Library Services (DDL). Enrolled students can also borrow books and other circulating material and receive photocopies of journal articles.

Visit the DDL Web page ([DDL](#)) for links to the WSU online database and library support information.

eTutoring,

As a WSU student you have **unlimited FREE** access to eTutoring.org, a tutoring platform that enables students and tutors to collaborate in an online environment. This is not a course requirement, but simply an available resource that you may utilize as needed.

Currently, eTutoring is available for Accounting, Anatomy & Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, Math and Calculus, MS Office 2007, Spanish, Statistics, and Writing! With three ways to access a tutor you can choose the one that best fits your needs...

- Use the Online Writing Lab that allows students to submit a draft of a paper to a tutor, ask for specific feedback, and receive a tutor's response within 24-48 hours.
- Access live eTutoring via eChat that allows students to meet with a tutor in one-on-one tutoring sessions via a fully interactive, virtual online environment.
- Utilize the offline eQuestions that allow students to leave a specific question for an eTutor, who will respond within 24-48 hours.

The list of available tutoring subjects can be found on the <http://etutoring.org/login.cfm?institutionid=176> site.

For more information on accessing and setting up your eTutoring account, visit: http://online.wsu.edu/current_students/as_eTutoring_start.aspx

DDP Academic Calendar,

Please review the current DDP [Academic Calendar](#) to become familiar with critical deadlines.

On Campus Safety.

Washington State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its faculty, staff, and students. Safety is the responsibility of every member of the campus community and individuals should know the appropriate actions to take when an emergency arises. In support of our commitment to the safety of the campus community the University has developed a Campus Safety Plan, <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu>. It is highly recommended that you visit this web site as well as the University emergency management web site at <http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> to become familiar with the information provided.