

Communication Studies 205-0
Theories of Persuasion
Spring 2021

COURSE INFORMATION

Professor: Daniel O’Keefe
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Course site: www.dokeefe.net/205S21.html or via www.soc.northwestern.edu/dokeefe

Text (supplementary): D. O’Keefe, *Persuasion: Theory and research* (3rd ed., paperback, Sage) (ISBN 978-1-4522-7667-0) (available at the Library Reserve Room)

Brief course description and tentative outline: This course provides a general introduction to the social-scientific study of persuasive communication. The course focuses on alternative theoretical accounts of the processes underlying persuasion and on research findings concerning the effects of various factors on persuasive effectiveness.

- I. Introduction
- II. Theoretical approaches
 - A. Social judgment theory
 - B. Belief-based models
 - C. Functional approaches
 - D. Reasoned action theory
 - E. Elaboration likelihood model
 - F. Consistency theories
- III. Factors influencing persuasive effectiveness
 - A. Source factors
 - B. Message factors
 - C. Receiver factors

Course format: This course has a lecture-and-discussion-section format, with two lectures and one discussion-section meeting each week. Exams are based on material presented in lecture. Lectures are recorded and uploaded in Zoom; the day-by-day schedule page at the course website will provide links to lectures (www.dokeefe.net/205daybydayS21.html).

Discussion sections provide an opportunity to review, ask questions about, or otherwise engage with, material in the preceding lectures. Discussion-section meetings take the form of synchronous Zoom meetings in the regularly scheduled time periods (Fridays, at 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT); your TA will send you information about how to log in.

There is no required reading. The text is a supplement to, not a replacement for, the lectures. Exam questions assume you have not even looked at the supplemental reading. In case you do want to read the supplementary text, the latter part of this document indicates what parts of the text correspond to the material being covered each week.

After each lecture, a study guide will be posted online at the course website. The study-guide questions are not exam/quiz questions; they are the kinds of questions a tutor might ask in a one-on-one encounter in order to lead you through the material.

The primary purpose of the study guides is to get you ready for the exams. There's nothing in the exams that isn't on the study guides. If you have mastered the study guide, there will be no surprises in the exams.

Recommendation: Before each week's discussion-section meeting, do the study guides for that week's lectures. If you realize you have questions or uncertainties about some aspect of the material, then you'll know what to ask about in that week's discussion section.

Remote access support: Northwestern is committed to ensuring students remain connected to courses and learning resources while participating remotely. The [Keep Learning](#) webpage provides you with access to information to ensure you are prepared for—and can excel at—studies and participation in courses via Canvas, Zoom, and [other online tools](#). University resources such as academic advising, career services, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the Health Service, are available remotely. More information is [here](#).

Course grading: One's course grade is based on two hourly examinations and a final examination. The hourly exams are open-note multiple-choice exams; the first counts for 35% of the course grade, the second for 30%. The final exam is a take-home essay exam; the final exam counts for 35% of the course grade.

More exam information (e.g., results): <http://www.dokeefe.net/205examsS21.html>

One's course grade will be determined by the weighted average of the grades on the individual assignments. Each assignment will receive a letter grade, with the usual numerical equivalents (that is, A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, and so forth).

So, for example, a student who received a B on the first exam, an A- on the second exam, and an A on the final exam would have a course average of 3.56.

$$(3.0 \times .35) + (3.7 \times .30) + (4.0 \times .35) = 3.56$$

To convert the course average into a course grade, the following scale will apply:

| <u>course average</u> | <u>course grade</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 3.850 and up | A |
| 3.500 and up | A- |
| 3.150 and up | B+ |
| 2.850 and up | B |
| 2.500 and up | B- |
| 2.150 and up | C+ |
| 1.850 and up | C |
| 1.350 and up | C- |
| 0.500 and up | D |
| below 0.500 | F |

So a student with a course average of 3.56 would earn a course grade of A-.

However, before course grades are submitted, the raw scores on the hourly exams are reviewed. If the circumstance is such that having answered correctly just one additional question on just one hourly exam would have yielded a higher course grade, then the higher course grade is given.

Academic dishonesty: Don't do it. (If uncertain about what constitutes a violation of Northwestern University's standards of academic integrity, consult the University web site: <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/>.)

Bad things will happen if you do. (These can include a failing grade on the assignment—and worse. For details on School of Communication procedures: <http://www.communication.northwestern.edu/files/ProceduresAllegedAcademicDishonesty.pdf>.)

Discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct: Don't do these things, and don't accept them being done.

Northwestern University is committed to fostering an environment where students are safe and free from sexual misconduct. [Confidential resources](#) are available to those who have experienced sexual misconduct. Faculty, instructors, and TAs are not confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct, whether discussed in your assignments or in person, to the Office of Equity, which can provide information about resources and options. I encourage students who have experienced sexual misconduct to talk with someone to get support. For more information, including how to request supportive measures or file a report, see [the Get Help page](#).

Northwestern University's policies on discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct apply to all members of the University community, including students, staff, faculty, and third parties. Any student, staff, or faculty member, or third party, who believes that they have been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, or any other classification protected by law, should contact the Office of Equity at (847) 467-6165. Additional information about the University's discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct policies, including the campus resources available to assist individuals with concerns, is available online on the [Office of Equity website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty who report harassment, discrimination, or sexual misconduct are also protected under the [University's Policy on Non-Retaliation](#)

Recording or downloading class sessions: Don't do it.

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should make contact with [AccessibleNU](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings—including distributing or posting them—is also prohibited. Under the University's [Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials—including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

Accommodations for disabilities: Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. For details: <http://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/>

COVID-19 testing: To ensure the health of our community, Northwestern University currently requires students who come to campus or interact with the campus community in person regularly to be tested for COVID-19 routinely. Students must keep the Community Interaction Survey in CAESAR up-to-date, which is the method by which students communicate such plans to the University. Community Interaction Survey status, enrollment in classes with face to face meetings, and/or living in an on-campus residence dictate the frequency with which students must be tested. Students who fail to comply with COVID-19 testing or misrepresent their status in the Community Interaction Survey may face summary disciplinary action, including being restricted from campus or suspended.

Some tentative dates of interest:

Hourly exam #1 (online): from 9:00am CT Wednesday 28 April (available for 24 hours)
Hourly exam #2 (online): from 9:00am CT Wednesday 2 June (available for 24 hours)
Take-home final available online: Wednesday 2 June not later than noon CT
Take-home final due: Tuesday 8 June not later than noon CT

Tentative schedule: For an updated day-by-day schedule with links to (inter alia) online lectures: www.dokeefe.net/205daybydayS21.html

Week of 29 March

Tu 3/30: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: course introduction (no content)

W 3/31: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: concept of persuasion, attitude measurement, assessing persuasion
supplementary reading: pp. 1-18

F 4/2: online discussion sections 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT

Week of 5 April

- M 4/5: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: social judgment theory (1 of 2)
supplementary reading: pp. 19-34
- W 4/7: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: social judgment theory (2 of 2)
supplementary reading: pp. 19-34
- F 4/9: online discussion sections 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT

Week of 12 April

- M 4/12: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: belief-based approaches
supplementary reading: pp. 56-75
- W 4/14: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: functional approaches
supplementary reading: pp. 35-55
- F 4/16: online discussion sections 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT

Week of 19 April

- M 4/19: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: reasoned action theory (1 of 2)
supplementary reading: pp. 98-131
- W 4/21: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: reasoned action theory (2 of 2)
supplementary reading: pp. 98-131
- F 4/23: online discussion sections 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT

Week of 26 April

- M 4/26: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: elaboration likelihood model
supplementary reading: pp. 148-175
- W 4/28: **hourly exam #1 given online** (available for 24hr at 9:00am CT)
- F 4/30: discussion sections do not meet

Week of 3 May

- M 5/3: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: consistency theories: balance
- W 5/5: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: consistency theories: cognitive dissonance (1 of 2)
supplementary reading: pp. 76-97
- F 5/7: online discussion sections 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT

Week of 10 May

- M 5/10: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: consistency theories: cognitive dissonance (2 of 2)
supplementary reading: pp. 76-97
- W 5/12: lecture available online by 10am CT

topic: source factors (1 of 2)
supplementary reading: pp. 188-213
F 5/14: online discussion sections 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT

Week of 17 May

M 5/17: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: source factors (2 of 2), message factors (1 of 3)
supplementary reading: pp. 188-213 (source), 214-251 (message)
W 5/19: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: message factors (2 of 3)
supplementary reading: pp. 214-251

F 5/21: online discussion sections 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT

Week of 24 May

M 5/24: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: message factors (3 of 3)
supplementary reading: pp. 214-251
W 5/26: lecture available online by 10am CT
topic: receiver factors
supplementary reading: pp. 252-267
F 5/28: online discussion sections 12:00-12:50pm CT and 1:00-1:50pm CT

Week of 31 May

M 5/31: Memorial Day (no classes).
W 6/2: **hourly exam #2 given online** (available for 24hr at 9:00am CT)
W 6/2: **take-home essay final posted online** by noon (12:00pm) CT
F 6/4: discussion sections do not meet

Week of 7 June

Tu 6/8: **final exam due** (online submission) by noon (12:00pm) CT