COURSE DESCRIPTION

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.”
- Mark Twain, Author and Humorist

“There’s zero correlation between being the best talker and having the best ideas.”
- Susan Cain, Writer and Lecturer

“How it is we have so much information, but know so little?”
- Noam Chomsky, Scholar and Activist

Consider this question for a moment: why are you reading this syllabus? Is it because you were fascinated by the quotes above and are eager to read more? Is it because other students around you are reading the syllabus, and you don’t want to stand out from the crowd? Is it because the professor asked you to read the syllabus, and you’d like to make a good impression? Is it because you want to be a successful student in the class, and society has told you that a successful student always reads the syllabus? Or is it for some entirely unconscious reason, just a force of habit that you’ve developed by following this start-of-semester ritual on several occasions?

Regardless of your motivation, we can all agree that some process, or some combination of processes, persuaded you to read on. This course focuses on those processes of persuasion. Persuasive communication is omnipresent in our social world – from the work of government and politicians, to the efforts of corporations and advertisers, in the actions of social movements and health institutions, and throughout our everyday personal and professional lives. Our study of persuasion investigates how communicators’ messages, mediums and values shape the attitudes, opinions and behaviors of audiences. This interdisciplinary course blends theoretical and practical insights from communication and media studies, rhetoric, history, psychology, literature, neuroscience, advertising, business, public health, cultural studies and political economy. By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Describe the persuasive role of communication across individual, interpersonal, community-based and societal levels.
- Understand theories from the social sciences and humanities that explain both rational and implicit pathways of persuasion.
- Critically consider the ethics of persuasion within the public, corporate, government and cultural sectors.
- Develop competencies for persuasion research, analysis and practice that can be applied in your life and work.

REQUIRED TEXTS & BLACKBOARD
Purchase Animal Farm by George Orwell, first published in 1945, available wherever books are sold. All other reading/video/audio assignments will be made available through the Blackboard online course software. Readings should be completed prior to class on the day they are listed;
students should download, print and bring materials to class on the day they are due. The SafeAssign software on Blackboard will be used for the posting and grading of assignments.

DISABILITY SERVICES, ESL & SUPPORT RESOURCES
All accommodation requests based on disability will be taken seriously and honored by the instructor. Please inform the instructor if English is not your primary language and you need special assistance. The Office of Disability Services and the Writing Center are valuable support resources – talk to your instructor if you would like additional information.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Academic integrity is taken seriously at Fordham University. This means that all work you submit for this class should be your own, original effort. Submitting ideas or writing that you find on the Internet or elsewhere will result in zero credit on that assignment and will also result in disciplinary measures in accordance with university policy. SafeAssign software on Blackboard will provide an automatic originality report on all submitted assignments.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:
- Borrowing another person’s ideas or words without acknowledging them
- Not attributing paraphrased ideas and not citing quoted material
- Copying from any source, but presenting the copied work as your own
- Downloading or copying sentences, paragraphs or entire speeches off the web
- Using someone else’s speech, paper, outline, or website to fulfill any course requirements

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:
- Using or providing external assistance during an exam
- Unauthorized collaboration on exams or assignments
- Possessing or providing unauthorized notes or other materials during an exam
- Changing answers, content or form after an exam has been returned

Please consult the Fordham University Policy on Academic Integrity for additional details.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
- Attendance and Participation: 15 Points
- Quizzes: 20 Points
- Position Papers: 20 Points
- Presentation: 15 Points
- Final Exam: 30 Points

GRADING SCALE
- A: 93-100
- A-: 90-92.9
- B+: 87-89.9
- B: 83-86.9
- B-: 80-82.9
- C+: 77-79.9
- C: 73-76.9
- C-: 70-72.9
- D+: 67-69.9
- D: 63-66.9
- D-: 60-62.9
- F: 59.9 or below

ABSENCES & MAKE UP WORK
You are allowed a maximum of two (2) unexcused absences before a deduction in your grade. If you miss more than four (4) classes, excused or unexcused, you may fail the class. Please talk to your instructor as early in the semester as possible about excused absences. Consistent tardiness will be treated as unexcused absences. Make-up work will be allowed without penalty for excused absences only. For unexcused absences, there will be a full letter grade loss on the evaluation of any assignment for each day that it is late. Make-up work will not be accepted one week after the original due date. Consult the Fordham attendance policy for additional details.
SCHEDULE
The schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

**Week 1: Introductions and Foundations**

- **Wednesday 7/5**: Syllabus Review, Personal Introductions.
- **Thursday 7/6**:
  - Richard M. Perloff, “Introduction to Persuasion,” in *The Dynamics of Persuasion*.

**Week 2: Psychology of Persuasion, Campaigns and Social Movements**

- **Monday 7/10**:
- **Tuesday 7/11**:
  - Robert Cialdini and Steve Martin, “The Science Of Persuasion,” WATCH: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFdCzN7RYbw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFdCzN7RYbw)
  - The Economist, “Nudge nudge, think think.”
- **Wednesday 7/12**:
  - Richard M. Perloff, “Communication Campaigns,” in *The Dynamics of Persuasion*.
- **Thursday 7/13**

**Week 3: The Advertising Industry and Political Campaigns**

- **Monday 7/17**:
- **Tuesday 7/18: Case Study: Branding Youth**
  - Simon Hill, "How much do online advertisers really know about you? We asked an expert." Digital Trends.
- **Wednesday 7/19**:
  - Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “Broadsides to Broadcasts,” in *Packaging the Presidency*.
  - Brian Lehrer Show, “This Election Season, We're Robocalling People,” WNYC. Listen: [http://www.wnyc.org/story/election-season-were-robocalling-people](http://www.wnyc.org/story/election-season-were-robocalling-people)
  - NonprofitVote, “Seven Tips on Getting Out the Vote.”
• Thursday 7/20
  o Daniel Kreiss, “2016: the proving ground for political data,” The Conversation.
  o Carl Bialik and Harry Enten, ”The Polls Missed Trump. We Asked Pollsters Why,” FiveThirtyEight.
  o Paul Rosenberg, ”Don’t think of a rampaging elephant: Linguist George Lakoff explains how the Democrats helped elect Trump,” Salon.

Week 4: Persuasion and/as Ideology

• Monday 7/24
  o Herbert Simons and Jean Jones, “Persuasion Broadly Considered,” in *Persuasion in Society*.

• Tuesday 7/25:
  o George Orwell, *Animal Farm*.

• Wednesday 7/26:

• Thursday 7/27 Case Study: On Race and Implicit Bias
  o Take a test on ProjectImplicit.com – (RACE IAT -- [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html))
  o Theodore Johnson, ”Black-on-Black Racism: The Hazards of Implicit Bias,” *The Atlantic*.
  o ColorOfChange, “Not to be Trusted: Dangerous Levels of Inaccuracy in TV Crime Reporting in NYC,” The ColorOfChange News Accuracy Report Card

Week 5: Communicating Health and Risk/Corporate Communication/Digital Media

• Monday 7/31
  o Katherine Rowan, ”Why some health risks upset us and others do not: Risk perception and risk communication,” NCA Spectra.
  o Ezra Klein, “How politics makes us stupid,” *Vox*.
  o Peter Sandman, “Risk Communication Lessons from the BP Oil Spill,” *The Synergist*.
  o RISK COMMUNICATION SCENARIO

• Tuesday 8/1: Case Study: Corporate Communications
  o US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Selections from *Building a Healthier World: Private Sector Solutions That Save Lives*.
• Take the Gender/Career IAT: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
  o Rosa Brooks, “Recline! Why “Leaning In” is Killing Us,” Foreign Policy.

**Wednesday 8/2: Digital Persuasion**
  o Adam Mosseri, “Building a Better News Feed for You,” Facebook.
  o Adam Mosseri, "News Feed FYI: Addressing Hoaxes and Fake News," Facebook.

**Thursday 8/3: Entertainment and Storytelling**
  o TED Radio Hour, “Framing the Story.” LISTEN: http://www.npr.org/2013/05/23/186301332/framing-the-story
  o Julia Fox, "The Daily Show was never ‘real’ news – but came (depressingly) close," The Conversation.
  o Amber Day, "Satire might not sway votes, but that isn't the point," The Conversation.

**Week 6: Final Presentations and Final Exam**
  • Monday 8/7: Finale Presentations
  • Tuesday 8/8: Final Exam