Course Outline

Instructor: R D Britton, Associate Dean for General Education
Department: Communications
Cat. No.: COM131 - Theories of Persuasion Semester: Fall 2010
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Course Description:

Course Objectives:
The student will:
A. Develop an understanding of persuasion.
B. Develop an understanding of the persuasive devices available to us.
C. Develop an understanding of the persuasive devices used upon us.

Procedures for Accomplishing These Objectives:
A. Regular readings from the required text, lecture notes, and additional readings, as assigned
B. Weekly discussion threads
C. Critical review of persuasive media forms

Student Requirements:
A. Timely completion of assigned readings and projects.
B. Effective participation in discussion threads.
C. Satisfactory completion of research project.
D. Participation that demonstrates an understanding of the academic environment.

Assignments:
A. Mid Term and Final exam
B. Research project
C. Film critiques

Grading Distribution:
A. Mid term and Final exam 45%
B. Research Project 25%
C. Critiques 20%
D. Effective Participation 10%

Text:
Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance Gaining; 2nd. Ed. Gass and Seiter, Allyn and Bacon
Bi Weekly Modules:

1-2 What is Persuasion and Why Study it?
3-4 Attitudes and Credibility
5-6 Language and Non-Verbal Considerations
7-8 Conformity and "Persuasability"
9-10 Ordering the Message
11-12 Ethical Considerations
13-14 Persuasion and the Moving Image

Research Project

The end result of the assignment will be a demonstration of the students understanding of a specific area of Persuasion Theory. This demonstration will be in the form of an 8-12 page research paper. The paper will be submitted in MS Word format (as will all assignments) and will follow MLA style.

In week 5 the student will submit a topic proposal in the form of a thesis statement. Upon approval, the student will prepare a working bibliography, to be submitted in week 10. The research paper will be submitted in week 13.

Film Critiques

A filmography will be provided. The student will choose 4 films to view and critique. The critique will be 500 words addressing specific to each film, identified by the instructor. All films are available through NetFlix and at many local libraries.