

COM 318 Principles of Persuasion

Purdue University
Winter 2025

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Hoewe

Course Description:

Whether you are buying a car, managing your relationship with your roommate, watching television, riding on public transportation, attending a political event, or engaging in any number of day-to-day activities, you are regularly participating in persuasive situations. Your interactions with others can often, if not almost always, be characterized as the production or reception of messages designed to influence or change someone's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. As students in this class, you will develop a sophisticated understanding of the complexities underlying persuasive situations and factors associated with their successes and failures. In this course, we will review the major theories and principles social scientists have studied related to persuasion. Successful completion of this course will help you develop your skills in the investigation and application of persuasive messages in a wide variety of contexts.

Course Goals:

Upon successful completion of the work assigned in this course, students will:

- Become familiar with the major theories and principles of persuasion and social influence as they are understood by contemporary scholarship;
- Understand why and how social scientists study persuasive situations;
- Be able to critically evaluate persuasive situations encountered in day-to-day life; and
- Demonstrate the ability to strategically apply these principles in the development of persuasive messages.

Textbook:

Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2018). *Persuasion: Social influence and compliance gaining* (6th ed.). New York: Routledge.

- You are expected to complete all assigned readings by the end of the day for which they are assigned.

Grades:

Grades in this course are based on a point system. A “perfect” score would consist of 100 points.

Assignment Type	Points
Exams	70
Quizzes	30
Total	100

Grading Scale:

Final grades are determined based on point totals according to the following scale:

Grade	Points
A+	99+
A	93-98.9
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	0-59.9

Please note that final grades are nonnegotiable. (Final grades will not be rounded on an individual basis.)

Policy on grade/attendance appeals: Any appeals must be submitted in writing within 3 days after the quiz/exam has been returned.

Exams:

Throughout the course of the semester, you will take three online exams. (You will complete each exam on Brightspace.) These exams are spaced evenly throughout the semester, and each exam will test your knowledge of each individual unit. That is, the exams are not cumulative. These exams will include material in the readings but not covered in the lectures as well as material covered in the lectures but not included in the readings.

Each exam will include 30 multiple choice and true/false questions and will be timed. You may NOT use your notes, textbook, or any other materials to complete the exam. Also, all exams should be completed independently. **While taking exams in this class, students are strictly prohibited from collaborating with other students. You are also prohibited from using any other resources while completing the exams in this class, including any form of AI, notes, the textbook, the internet, etc.** Any evidence of using these materials during an exam will result, at a minimum, in a zero for the exam for all students involved and will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities

All exams will incorporate Respondus LockDown Browser and Webcam Proctoring. If you haven't done so already, you will need to install Respondus LockDown Browser on the computer that you will use to take the exam (available here: <https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=929638209>).

Quizzes:

Over the course of the semester, there will be 13 online quizzes. Quizzes cover the readings that are assigned for that day as well as material covered in that day's lectures. All quizzes are due by the end of the day (11:30 p.m. ET) for which they are assigned. These quizzes will include 5 questions and are not timed. (You will complete each quiz on Brightspace.) **While taking online quizzes in this class, students are strictly prohibited from collaborating with other students. You are also prohibited from using any form of AI to complete quizzes in this class.** Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped from your final grade.

Policies:

Above all, you must show respect for your fellow classmates and Dr. Hoewe. In our online communication (e.g., email), you must address your peers and Dr. Hoewe with the same – or greater – level of courtesy you would want directed toward you.

Class Behavior:

- You are expected to *never* disrupt your fellow students' abilities to learn. If you ever think another student is hindering your learning, please notify Dr. Hoewe.
- Refrain from using your computer and/or cell phone for other purposes while completing any work for this class. While watching the lecture videos, you should take notes using your computer, but you should not use your computer or cell phone for any other purpose.
- It is highly recommended that you take detailed notes while watching the lecture videos. This will help you better understand the material and study for exams.

Email Contact:

Remember to use appropriate professional etiquette when emailing. You should address the professor as Dr. Hoewe. I check my email daily and will respond to your email within 24 hours. If you email after 5 p.m., you should not expect to receive a response that same day. When you email about this course, be sure to include "COM 318" in the subject line.

Please remember that due to federal privacy laws, I cannot discuss grades or any other student-specific information with your parents or guardians without your consent.

Attendance:

There is no attendance policy in this class.

Deadlines and Emergencies:

Exams must be completed on the day indicated on the schedule below. Make-up exams will only be allowed in emergency situations.

Quizzes must be completed on the day indicated on the schedule below. Since your lowest quiz score will be dropped from your final grade at the end of the semester, make-up quizzes are not allowed.

You should take detailed notes on the lecture material. Readings should be completed on the day indicated on the schedule below. Failure to complete the lecture

material and/or the readings according to the schedule below will most likely result in scoring lower on the exams and quizzes.

If you experience an emergency during the semester, please notify me as soon as possible. You must notify me within one week of the emergency. Upon your return from the emergency, I will work with you to make sure you have adequate time and opportunity to complete the work missed during the emergency. Also, you must inform me of any conflict that can be anticipated and will affect the submission of an assignment or the ability to take an exam (at least 4 days prior to that conflict).

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling (765) 494-8778.

Purdue explicitly prohibits “dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty” [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, Student Regulations]. Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that “the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms...is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest.”

The professor’s notes, slides, lectures, quizzes, and exams are “considered to be ‘derivative works’ of the instructor’s presentations and materials, and they are thus subject to the instructor’s copyright in such presentations and materials.” As such, they cannot be sold or bartered to anyone at any time (see part J of the Purdue student misc. conduct regulations).

AI use of any kind is not allowed in this class. In this class, submitting AI-generated work as your own is academic dishonesty and carries the same penalties as plagiarism. If any portion of your work in this class (including assignments, exams, and quizzes) was generated by a chatbot or another AI-enabled tool, you are in violation of the academic integrity guidelines of this course and the university. If you use AI of any kind (e.g., ChatGPT) to help you complete an assignment, quiz, or exam in COM 318, you will receive a zero on that quiz or exam (at the minimum); also, you will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review of your status at Purdue University.

Plagiarism and AI detection software: Written assignments will be checked for plagiarism and AI use electronically. This can and will be used as evidence in academic misconduct procedures.

Accessibility and Accommodations:

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please let Dr. Hoewe know as soon as possible to discuss options for accommodations. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at drc@purdue.edu or (765) 494-1247.

If you plan to request accommodations in this class, you must submit your DRC letter to Dr. Hoewe at least 4 days before those accommodations would need to take effect (e.g., at least 4 days before Exam 1). Instructions for sharing your Course

Accommodation Letter are available here: <https://www.purdue.edu/drc/students/course-accommodation-letter.php>

Nondiscrimination:

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her potential.

Mental Health and Safety:

If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> or 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

Any student who has substantial reason to believe that another person in a campus room is threatening the safety of others may leave the room without consequence. The student is encouraged to report the behavior to and discuss next steps with their instructor. Students also have the option of reporting the behavior to the Office of the Student Rights and Responsibilities. See also Purdue University Bill of Student Rights.

Note Regarding the Syllabus:

This syllabus, course assignments, grades, and the course schedule are subject to change if necessary. All such changes will be announced in advance. You are expected to read the syllabus carefully and understand its contents.

Please see the Course Schedule on Brightspace.