

THEORIES IN PERSUASION

Sharon Avital

Fall Semester

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Office Hours: By appointment

Short description:

Have you ever felt manipulated by a smooth-talking politician, a slick TV commercial, or a Girl Scout selling cookies? We will explore the strategies of persuasion and influence people use to manipulate our attitudes and behaviours, and discuss social and rhetorical theories that explain when and why these strategies work. We will learn about the structure of attitudes, beliefs, and arguments. We will examine the structure of the message, the importance of emotions (such as fear, guilt and humor) and the persuasiveness of the source. The last part of the class will be dedicated to advocacy in organizations and the media.

Objectives:

By the end of the class you will be able to recognize a variety of psychological and communicative processes involved specific persuasion topics such as compliance, conformity, cults, obedience, propaganda, and subliminal persuasion, among others.

Assessment*:

Final paper 60%

Minor assignments:

Analysis Paper 30%

Participation 10%

Midterm:

Analysis paper of an artifact such as a speech or an advertisement using persuasion theories studied in class.

Final requirement:

Final Exam.

Participation:

Active participation 10%

Attendance:

* Please note that if distance learning is required, the assessment procedure, modes of assessment and weightings may be changed.

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.

Additional requirements:

Keep phones turned-off while in class.