



# Short Syllabus



## Course Title

Theories in Persuasion

## Lecturer

Dr. Sharon Avital

## Contact details

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## Semester

Fall

## Short Description

Have you ever felt manipulated by a smooth-talking politician, a slick TV commercial, or a Girl Scout selling cookies?

This class explores the strategies of persuasion and influence that people use to manipulate attitudes and behaviours, and discusses rhetorical and social scientific theories that explain when and why these strategies work.

The first part of the course is dedicated to understanding the audience and analyzing speeches and other persuasive artifacts according to structure, language, and delivery.

We will examine the use of emotions such as fear and guilt to induce compliance and cooperation.

We will then look at the source of the messages (the speaker, writer, etc) and what makes them persuasive.

The class will also examine the persuasive principles used in contexts such as interpersonal settings, cults, as well as PR campaigns.

### Objectives:

By the end of the class you will be able to recognize a variety of psychological and communicative processes used in persuasion.

You will improve your capacities in analyzing, and creating your own, persuasive texts.

You will also learn how to think independently, systematically, and skeptically about persuasive campaigns and scientific research.

These goals will require that you take an active role in the learning process.

## Final grade components

Midterm:

**Midterm assignment- 19%**

Final requirement:

**Mandatory.**

Final paper analyzing a persuasive artifact 71%



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Participation 10%

### Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three unauthorized 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.\*

### Final assignment

Exam dates and submission deadlines are published on the Liberal Arts website. Courses with a final exam also have a second make-up exam. Students requiring an extension for a final paper must submit an Academic Committee Request Form to the Liberal Arts office in advance of the deadline. Late papers will be subject to a point deduction.\*

### Additional requirements

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\* See Liberal Arts academic handbook for further details