



**The University of Hong Kong  
Faculty of Business and Economics  
School of Business**

**BUSI2819: Persuasion and Behavioral Change**

**(Mons: 11:30am-12:20pm; Thurs: 10:30am-12:20pm; Classroom: KKLG105)**

**Instructor:** Dr. Xiaoying Xie  
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**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

This course aims at providing a systematic introduction of concepts, theories and practices in persuasion, from the perspectives of social psychology and communication, with a focus on equipping students with the ability of applying persuasion knowledge in various business and interpersonal contexts. Classic theories in persuasion, attitude change, and behavior change, together with more practical approaches will be introduced before drawing connection to the business examples. Students will practice persuasion via developing strategic planning for business cases and conducting persuasive writings and presentations.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To provide students with exposure to basic and classic theories in persuasion, attitude, and behavior change;
2. To introduce students with current empirical studies in persuasion, attitude and behavior change;
3. To develop students' ability to apply persuasion theories to various business and interpersonal contexts;
4. To equip students with skills in persuasive writing and presentation;
5. To increase students' leadership by enhancing their power of influence and effective communication skills.

**II. COURSE MATERIALS:**

**Text-book:**

Frymier, A. B. & Nadler, M. K. (2017). *Persuasion: Integrating theory, research and practice*. Kendall Hunt Publishing.

Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice*. Pearson Education.

**Required readings:**

Chapter. 1 from Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2010). *Three surprises about change*. From C. Heath & D. Heath, *Switch* (Ch. 1). Crown Business.

Chapter 1 & 2 from Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2010). *Made to stick* (Ch. 1 & 2). Random House, NY.

Selected chapters from Locker, K. O., & Kienzler, D. S. (2009). *Business and administrative communication*. McGraw-Hill Irwin.

Other selected cases from Harvard Business Publishing.

**III. INTENDED COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)**

Through applying and integrating knowledge in business communication acquired from the above teaching and learning tools, the following Learning Outcomes may be expected:

CLO1: Describe and explain basic and classic concepts and theories in persuasion, attitude and behavior change;

CLO2: Draw proper connection between persuasion theories and business and interpersonal phenomena;

CLO3: Apply persuasion strategies and influence tools to specific business problems;

CLO4: Master effective persuasive writing and presentation skills in typical communication settings in an international business context.

**IV. ALIGNMENTS OF INTENDED PROGRAM & COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

<b>Program Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>CLOs</b>
1. Acquisition and internalization of knowledge and skills in key functional areas	1, 2, 3, 4
2. Application and integration of business knowledge	1, 2, 3, 4
3. Inculcating professionalism	2, 3, 4
4. Developing global outlook	4
5. Mastering communication skills	1, 2, 3, 4
6. Cultivating leadership	2, 3, 4

## V. ASSESSMENT

Persuasion Theory and Application (Individual)	40%
Case Presentation - Persuasive Proposal (Group)	40%
Class Participation	20%
Total	100%

**1. Literature Review.** You will need to find a human behaviour/persuasion phenomenon of your interest and try to identify the existing folk and/or scientific theories to explain the phenomenon. You may also need to come up with your own version of the explanation/theory for the phenomena and see how it can be tested and further applied. This work is worth 40% of your course grade.

*Focus: CLO1, 2, 3, 4*

**2. Presentations.** You will need to work in a group to conduct a presentation regarding a change proposal. You will work with the group to brainstorm and discuss the topic and presentation methods, practice. The presentation takes 20 minutes. All team members need to be involved in the presentation. Use presentation strategies we discuss in class to enrich the content and to generate attitude or behavioral change. Your speech will be graded on a group basis, as well as on each member's individual contributions. You will also be responsible for providing feedback to other groups' presentations and conduct peer performance review for your team members and your own work. The presentation is worth 40% of your course grade.

*Focus: CLO1, 2, 3, 4*

*Please note: Detailed instructions for the memo and presentations will be distributed in class on the days when these tasks are assigned.*

**3. Class participation.** All class members are expected to read the materials (readings or cases) assigned for each class meeting. Participants need to contribute to the class discussion throughout the term: 1) share with the class your ideas, viewpoints, and experiences; 2) ask and answer questions; 3) present results of mini interview; and so on. The quality and quantity of your discussion participation throughout the term is worth 20% of your course grade.

*Focus: CLO1, 2, & 4*

## VI. COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

Grade	Course Grade Descriptor
A+, A, A-	Strong evidence of superb ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate and synthesis.
B+, B, B-	Strong evidence of ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at all levels of learning: describe, apply, evaluate and synthesis.

C+, C, C-	Evidence of adequate ability to fulfill the intended learning outcomes of the course at low levels of learning; such as describe and apply, but not at high levels of learning such as evaluate and synthesis.
D+, D	Evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.
F	Little evidence of basic familiarity with the subject.

## VII. STUDY LOAD

Course Teaching and Learning Activities	Expected Contact hour	Study Load (% of study)
T&L1. Interactive lectures	33	33%
T&L2. Group project, case analysis and homework	33	33%
T&L3. Self study	34	34%
Total	100	100%

## VIII. COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Attendance:** Attendance and participation are vital if you are to do well in this course and enhance your effective business communication skills. Students who miss THREE classes without legitimate documentations will receive a warning letter from the faculty. Not meeting attendance requirement may result in a failure for this course.

Four legitimate excuses for missing class: illness, religious observance, participation in University activities at the request of the University authorities, or compelling circumstances beyond the student's control. Written documentations will not be accepted after the 7<sup>th</sup> calendar day after the due day, at which time the lateness/absence will be considered unexcused. In the case of an emergency, you are responsible for contacting your instructor as soon as possible.

**Late Assignment Policy:** Because presentation is conducted in front of the whole class, there will be no make-up presentations. All presentations need to be conducted at their scheduled time slot. For the formal business report, for every calendar day that the assignment is late, 20% of the assignment grade (e.g., lose 6 points for a 30-point assignment) will be deducted. Except for illness or other emergencies, any student expecting to miss a course deadline must have the approval from instructor *prior to* the assignment due date. Failure to turn in an assignment on time without explicit exemption by the instructor may result in a grade of ZERO for the assignment.

**Academic Integrity:** plagiarism in assigned work will result in a score of zero in that assignment, and a potential failure of the entire course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

quoting scholarly materials without acknowledgement; and turning in work completed by another person but represented to be your own.

***Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:*** Appropriate academic accommodations will be provided to students with documented disabilities. Please provide the official documentation by the end of the second week of class. Academic accommodations will not be provided without official documentation.

## Tentative Schedule

*ANY NECESSARY CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED AND A REVISED SCHEDULE  
DISTRIBUTED*

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>READINGS and ASSIGN- MENTS</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b>		
Jan 17	Course Introduction.	<b>Syllabus</b>
Jan 20	Basic issues in persuasion – Basic distinctions.	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp.1 Cialdini, Cp. 1</i>
<b>WEEK 2</b>		
Jan 24	Basic issues in persuasion – Concepts and measures.	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 2</i>
Jan 27	Attitude-Behaviour Connection.	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 3</i>
<b>WEEK 3</b>		
Jan 31	University Holiday	
Feb 3	New Year's Holiday	
<b>WEEK 4</b>		
Feb 7	New Year's Holiday	
Feb 10	Persuasion Theories and Practices - Social Judgement.	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 4 &amp; 5</i>
<b>WEEK 5</b>		
Feb 14	Persuasion Theories and Practices - Consistency and Cognitive Dissonance.	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 6</i>

Feb 17	Persuasion Theories and Practices - Consistency and Cognitive Dissonance.	
<b>WEEK 6</b>		
Feb 21	Persuasion Theories and Practices: Self-perception.	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 7</i>
Feb 24	Persuasion Theories and Practices: Reasoned Actions and Planned Behavior.	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 8</i>
<b>WEEK 7</b>		
Feb. 28	Persuasion Theories and Practices - Elaboration Likelihood Model.	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 9</i> <b><u>Assign: Theory Review and Application</u></b>
Mar 3	Theory Application Exercise (In-class sharing).	
<b>WEEK 8</b>		
Mar 7	Reading Week.	
Mar 10	Reading Week.	
<b>WEEK 9</b>		
Mar 14	Influence and behavior change in organizations and commercial settings - Influence	<i>Cialdini, Cp. 2 &amp; 3</i>
Mar 17	Influence and behavior change in organizations and commercial settings - Influence	<i>Cialdini, Cp. 2 &amp; 3</i>
<b>WEEK 10</b>		
Mar 21	Influence and behavior change in organizations and commercial settings - Influence	<i>Cialdini, Cp. 4 &amp; 5</i>

Mar 24	Influence and behavior change in organizations and commercial settings - Influence	<i>Cialdini, Cp. 6 &amp; 7</i>
<b>WEEK 11</b>		
Mar 28	Influence and behavior change in organizations and commercial settings - Switch	<i>“Switch” Cp. 1</i> <b><u>Assign: Persuasive Proposal Presentation</u></b>
Mar 31	Influence and behavior change in organizations and commercial settings - Switch	
<b>WEEK 12</b>		
Apr 4	Influence and behavior change in organizations and commercial settings - Switch	
Apr 7	Persuasive messages in oral and written form - Source Factors	<i>Locker &amp; Kienzler, Cp. 11</i> <i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 10</i>
<b>WEEK 13</b>		
Apr 11	Persuasive messages in oral and written form - Content and Styles	
Apr 14	Ethics in Persuasion	<i>Made to Stick, Cp. 1 &amp; 2</i> <i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 11</i>
<b>WEEK 14</b>		
Apr 18	Public Holiday	<i>Frymier &amp; Nadler, Cp. 14</i>
Apr 21	Group Presentation	
<b>WEEK 15</b>		
Apr 25	Group Presentation	



Apr 28	Group Presentation	<b><u>Theory Review and Application Due on May 15.</u></b>
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