

PERSUASION COMM 304 001 VATZ Spring, 2019 TT 2-3:15; BU 0113

<http://wp.towson.edu/vatz/>

Office: Hawkins Hall 405J; Generally available 9-9:30 MTWTh a.m.; better to make appointment via e-mail

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### **Required Reading**

Richard E. Vatz, The Only Authentic Book of Persuasion (Third Edition; previously published by Kendall Hunt, McGraw-Hill: current publisher: LAD: 2019)

[NOTE: I MAKE NO PROFIT ON THIS TEXT]

### **Important Supplementary Reading**

Jeffrey Schaler, Addiction is a Choice

### **Supplementary and/or Optional Readings**

Murray Edelman, Words that Succeed and Policies that Fail (and assorted works)

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Everything You Think You Know about Politics-- and Why You're Wrong

Trevor Melia, Lucifer State (Many of you will love this novel on rhetoric; some of you will hate it); [Available in library]

Thomas Szasz, The Second Sin (and assorted works)

Gary Woodward, Persuasive Encounters

### **Course Description**

Theory and practice of linguistic and symbolic persuasion; applications of rhetorical principles in social sciences and formal and informal communication; analysis of rhetoric through discussion. Prerequisites: Junior/senior standing or consent of instructor.

### **Course Objectives**

At the end of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe various theories of persuasion and demonstrate his or her understanding in class discussions and a paper in which article is rhetorically reworked to reverse the persuasive intention of the author.
2. Discuss and describe the basic elements of the process of persuasion, detailing in different representatively created “situations” the persuader’s ability to know the audience, the methods used in audience analysis, what to discover about audiences generally, etc. Such representative applications will include politics and journalism, *with a major emphasis on presidential political persuasion.*

### Purpose

The aim of this course is to help the student understand theory and practice of linguistic and symbolic persuasion. Emphases will be on the theory of persuasion and rhetoric explicated in *The Only Authentic Book of Persuasion: the Agenda-Spin Model* and applying that theory to political persuasion, persuasion in academe (especially social science), and persuasion and mystification in psychiatry, presented as a central persuasion archetype.

**Persuasive reconstruction of an opinion piece** (e.g., from *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today Magazine*, *Entertainment Magazine*, *Travel Magazine* and a variety of other sources). **Any student who receives a “D+” or below must re-do the assignment, but the second/third/etc. attempt, however much it is improved, will be recorded as no higher than a**

**“C” for this assignment.** The resubmission may take place up to the final day of classes before finals but should be done earlier.

+++++**This is the *Seminal Assignment* of the course (and is so named) ; it must be satisfied with a “C-” or better; it is due weeks following final lectures on assignments, and I shall give you a specific date.**

**A final examination is required for this 300-level course. It will not be nearly as important as the seminal assignment, but with the quizzes can be worth a not insignificant portion of your grade.**

Material in this objective examination is composed of the lectures, readings, tapes, DVDs and class notes.

## BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

1. The student must be able to describe and apply relevant theories of persuasion in the seminal assignment (see above) and demonstrate understanding in class discussions.
2. The student must be able to discuss and describe the basic elements of the process of persuasion, detailing in different representative situations the persuader's ability to know the audience, the methods used in audience analysis, what to discover about audiences generally, etc. Such representative situations will include political rhetoric, psychiatric rhetoric and journalistic rhetoric.

## Grading System

Seminal Assignment – 50%

Tests – 15%

Classroom participation – 10%

Attendance – 10% (but many absences can destroy your final grade)

Final examination – 15%

CALENDAR (approximate; interesting matters can lengthen or shorten attention to such; we shall have 4-5 guest speakers or so)

WEEK 1-4 Introduction – “Myth of the Rhetorical Situation;” “Mythical Status of Situational Rhetoric”  
Rhetoric and Persuasion - philosophical bases – Seminal Assignment  
Due: **Rhetorical Reversal**; check *Authentic* book for tips on Seminal Assignment  
Logic and its place in persuasion

**WEEK 5 THURSDAY, February 21st– EXAM ON pp. iii-39 The Only**

**Authentic Book of Persuasion: the Agenda-Spin**

## Method

WEEKS 6-8

Rhetoric and Situations; Ethics and Persuasion -- Burkean Pentad  
Rhetoric, Persuasion and Drugs/Alcohol Model – talk about Schaler book

WEEKS 8-9 Political Persuasion -- Murray Edelman's Theories; Persuasion  
+ Presidential Campaigns; "Rhetorical Presidency;" Public Opinion and Persuasion

WEEKS 9-12 **April 10-14 I shall present at Eastern Communication Association**  
Persuasion and Metaphor; psychiatric persuasion –  
understand Rhetorical Theories of Dr. Thomas Szasz

The months of February, March, April and May will likely include some  
significant Maryland and maybe national speakers... TBA

WEEKS 13-14 Practical persuasion; hierarchical rhetoric and intimidation;  
Grading as rhetoric; Persuasion and Social Science

May 14 **FINAL REGULAR CLASS MEETING**

Final Exam:. – Vatz book; Lectures; class videos, DVD's; and class discussions.