

Spring 2024 –Thursdays – 2-5 online
Section: 21718
Location: Online through Blackboard

Instructor: Sheila T. Murphy
Office: 201 Kerckhoff Hall
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11-12 or by appointment
Contact Info: Email smurphy@usc.edu to set up ZOOM or phone meeting

Course Description

Sheila Murphy is a Full Professor at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California where she teaches persuasion and research methods (survey construction, experimental design and focus groups) at the graduate level. Trained in social psychology, Dr. Murphy specializes in identifying the individual, interpersonal, community, ethnic and cultural factors that shape people’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Dr. Murphy is widely known for her ability to translate persuasive techniques and theories into measurable behavior change. Dr. Murphy is also an expert in the use of stories or narratives – in contrast to more traditional interventions -- to change individual and normative beliefs and behavior on topics ranging from condom use, stereotyping, sex-trafficking, cancer screening, water conservation, e-cigs, opioid use, and acceptance of Muslim and transgender individuals. She has designed and evaluated the impact of dozens of health-related storylines on popular US television programs as well as internationally in developing countries with the BBC and USAID. For her work using narratives Dr. Murphy received the **Everett M. Rogers Award** given to “*an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to advancing the study and/or practice of public health communication*” by the American Public Health Association. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Murphy produced three films to combat vaccine-hesitancy among parents (*Team Player*), and at risk Latinx (*Reasons and Rumors*) and African Americans (*Happy Birthday Granny*) resulting in over one million vaccinations.

Student Learning Outcomes

Persuasion is a dynamic and developing discipline. While many persuasive techniques from a hundred years ago remain extremely effective, our understanding of persuasion has evolved, the target of the persuasive attempt has changed, and the number and type of persuasive channels continue to expand exponentially. This course will therefore include both classic and more recent less tested persuasion techniques. The objective of this course is to allow students to both recognize and utilize a variety of persuasive techniques.

When you have completed this course you should be able to...

1. Identify persuasion attempts by individuals and organizations.
2. Increase your ability to resist persuasive appeals.
3. Understand how persuasion differs across subgroups (e.g., by gender and cultures).
4. Understand the relationship between behavior and attitudes.
5. Utilize persuasion more effectively in your day-to-day life.
6. Design more effective persuasive campaigns.

Prerequisite(s): None

Course Notes

Class will meet weekly for up to 2 hours and 45 minutes with a 10-minute break. Class meetings will consist of a lecture (PowerPoint slides available on Blackboard), examples and discussions followed by a short multiple-choice quiz to ensure that students have grasped the key concepts of each specific week.

Currently, we are scheduled to meet in person but a need to meet online may arise. Luckily, I have taught this course and others online and it works fine with the course content and format if necessary.

Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's **Information Technology Services** website.

Technology in the classroom:

Many of you expect to be able to use your computers during class to take notes. To avoid distracting background noises please mute yourself if typing during lecture as it is distracting. When you have your computer in front of you, there is a temptation to IM, email, check sport scores, or watch YouTube videos while your peers are trying to engage in the lecture but please don't. It is typically obvious to the instructor and classmates when a student is using their laptop or phone for tasks unrelated to the class. **To maintain the classroom atmosphere please use your computer only for note taking during class. If on Zoom, please keep your camera on during class lectures.**

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Announcements are sent to your usc email. Please make sure that your usc email is forwarded to the email you check regularly.

If Zoom becomes necessary, please make sure to access Blackboard for the course 5 minutes before class begins. Relevant links: [USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program](#), [USC Technology Support Links](#) [Zoom information for students](#), [Blackboard help for students](#), [Software available to USC Campus](#).

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Cialdini, R. B. (2021). *Influence, New and Expanded: The Psychology of Persuasion*.

Harper Collins, New York. ISBN: 978006294750 (handcover) 9780062937650
also available in paperback.

Perloff, R. (2023). *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century*, 8th Edition (Routledge Communication Series). New York: Routledge Press.
available in hardcover (ISBN: 978-1-032-26819-4); paperback (978-1-032-26818-7); ebook (978-1-003-029005-6) or rental

Most required journal articles are available organized by weekly topic on Blackboard. However, be aware that readings may change during the semester.

Optional Readings and Supplementary Materials

Recommended but not required:

O’Keefe, D. (2016). *Persuasion: Theory and Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
ISBN 978-1-4522-7667-0

Dillard, J. P. & Shen, L. (2013). *The Persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
ISBN-13: 978-1412983136
ISBN-10: 1412983134

Berger, C. R., Roloff, M. E. & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R. (2010). *The handbook of communication science (2nd edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Course Requirements:

Description and Assessment of Assignments

1. Attendance and participation in class activities — As we only meet once a week, and much of the material from lecture does not overlap with that of the text, attendance is crucial. Everyone is allowed one unexplained absence (meaning not present either in-person or online) per term but must view the video of the lecture and complete any activities required such as quizzes or short assignments. If you already know that you need to be absent for more than one lecture, you may want to take an alternate class that can be taken asynchronously. **10%**

2. Reading assignments — The lectures presume you have done the assigned reading prior to coming to class. The lectures will make more sense if you have done the background reading ahead of time.

3. Quizzes – At the end of most lectures (but not the first) there will be a 10-15 item quiz on the key concepts covered in that day’s lecture. If you pay attention during class, you should do fine. Together these quizzes will count for **10%** of your grade.

4. Midterm paper —You will write a 12 to 15page paper (not counting references and appendices) from a selection of topics (typically including current health, environmental, politics and public relations crises) demonstrating your knowledge of the theories covered in the first half of the class. Examples of past midterm papers available on Blackboard. **30%**

5. Final paper — You will design an attitude change campaign on a topic of your own choosing integrating theories from the entire semester (15-20 pages not including references or appendices). Examples of past final papers available on Blackboard. **40%**

6. Final presentation — This course attempts to enable you not just to design a persuasive campaign but to impart information to others in a coherent and professional manner. Consequently, in the final class period you will prepare and present an 8 minute PowerPoint presentation describing the key components of your persuasive campaign to the class. **10%**

Assignments:

All assignments are to be typed (double-spaced) in 12pt Times New Roman or Century Schoolbook font, with 1-inch margins on all sides of the page (no right justification). You should adhere to American Psychological Association (APA) format throughout.

Course-specific Policies (Assignment Submission, Grading Timeline, Late work, and Technology)**Assignment Submission**

Unfortunately, Blackboard submissions tend to screw up paper formatting. Consequently, all assignments need to be submitted via email directly to smurphy@usc.edu in an editable Word doc (non-pdf format so Dr. Murphy can edit and comment in track changes).

Paper and submission guidelines:

1. Papers must be word-processed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins on all sides of the page.
2. Before you turn in your paper make sure you keep both a hard copy and a Word file.
3. Please ensure that each paper is written in American Psychological Association style by referring to the APA manual.
4. Typos and spelling errors are unforgivable at this level and reflect poorly on you. This is a professional program and a paper with multiple grammar, typo or spelling errors will receive substantial deductions.
5. If you are not a native English speaker it is recommended that you have a native English speaker or someone from the Learning Lab look over your paper for grammar. The content of the paper, however, must be yours alone

Grading Breakdown

Description of assessments and corresponding points and percentage of grade.

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Participation	10	10%
Weekly Quizzes	10	10%
Midterm Original research proposal based on first half of course material	30	30%
Final Second original research proposal based on second half of course material	40	40%
Short in class presentation of either midterm or final research idea	10	10
TOTAL	100	100%

Course Grading Scale

Letter grades and corresponding point value ranges.

Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
94% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 93%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

Course Specific Policies Course-specific Policies (Assignment Submission, Grading Timeline, Late work, and Technology)

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Classroom Policies

Attendance

As we only meet once a week attendance is crucial. Everyone is allowed one unexplained absence per term. However, if you are absent more than once you must make an appointment to see me or risk losing credit for the course.

Participation --- The quality of a graduate seminar is heavily dependent on the active participation of those involved. It is imperative that you come to class having completed the assigned reading and prepared to discuss the topic.

Classroom Norms

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Zoom and Internet Etiquette

Classroom atmosphere

In this course, we will engage in classroom discussions. Any true discussion involves personal exposure and taking risks. Your ideas may or may not be consistent with those of your classmates but we should try to respect the views and opinions of others.

There will be times when you will give wrong answers to questions posed during classroom discussions. This is acceptable because if you knew everything about persuasion, you would most likely not be enrolled in this course.

Note on use of personal laptops during class.

Many of you expect to be able to use your personal laptops in class. Laptops are useful tools but also distracting devices. When you have your laptop in front of you, there is a temptation to IM, email, check sport scores, or watch YouTube videos while your peers are trying to engage in the lecture. When you use your laptop for tasks other than note taking you distract those around you. Moreover, it is typically obvious to the instructor when a student is using their laptop for tasks unrelated to the class. **To maintain the classroom atmosphere please use laptops only for note taking during class.**

Grading Standards

What each letter grade demonstrates:

Letter Grade	Description
A	Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
B	Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
C	Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
D	Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
F	Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.

Grading Timeline

Course Specific Policies for Grading

For effective learning, students should receive timely feedback on assignments and exams. Therefore, every attempt will be made to grade assignments/exams within two weeks. You are responsible for notifying the Instructor within two weeks if you think a score is missing or inaccurate.

Late work

Delivering your assignments on time is crucial to your success in this course and in life more generally. The deadlines for each submission are provided with each assignment. Missing deadlines incurs significant penalties. Any late assignment still must be completed and delivered, or it may prevent you from completing the course. There will be substantial penalties for assignments turned in after the deadline (up to one grade per week unless for a documented illness or death).

The grade of incomplete (IN):

The University only allows instructors to assign a grade of incomplete if work is not completed because of documented illness or some other emergency. Removal of the grade of IN must be instituted by the student and agreed to by myself and the department and reported on the official "Incomplete Completion Form" to the University.

Changes to syllabus

The course schedule will be followed as closely as possible but may vary. Any changes will be announced in class or by e-mail as far in advance as possible.

Weekly Course Schedule for SPRING 2024

Date	Lecture Topic
Week 1 Jan 11	Cognitive Influences
Week 2 Jan 18	Emotional and Motivational Influences
Week 3 Jan 25	Individual Level Influences I The Self
Week 4 Feb 1	Individual Level II Gender
Week 5 Feb 8	Social Influences I
Week 6 Feb 15	Social Influences II
Week 7 Feb 22	MIDTERM DUE NO CLASS
Week 8 Feb 29	Cross-Cultural Influences
Week 9 March 7	Media Influences I
Week 10 March 14	SPRING BREAK NO CLASS
Week 11 March 21	Media Influences 2
Week 12 March 28	One on one meetings as necessary (Not required! Please schedule with Dr. Murphy)
Week 13 April 4	Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)
Week 14 April 11	The Relationship between Attitudes and Behaviors
Week 15 April 18	Correction of Misinformation and Resistance to Persuasion
Week 16 April 25	Student Presentations and Final Paper

Academic Dishonesty

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#)

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class is prohibited without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is also prohibited. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Policy for the use of AI Generators in this course

You are permitted to use AI (e.g., ChatGPT and image generation tools) in this class. Learning to use AI is an emerging skill, and I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to provide guidance with these tools during office hours or after class. Keep in mind the following:

- AI tools are permitted to help you **brainstorm topics or revise work you have already written.**
- If you provide minimum-effort prompts, you will get low-quality results. You will need to refine your prompts to get good outcomes. This will take work.

- Proceed with caution when using AI tools and do not assume the information provided is accurate or trustworthy. If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is incorrect unless you either know the correct answer or can verify its accuracy with another source. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions provided by the tool. It works best for topics you understand.
- AI is a tool, but one that you need to acknowledge using. Please include a paragraph at the end of any assignment that uses AI explaining how (and why) you used AI and indicate/specify the prompts you used to obtain the results what prompts you used to get the results. Failure to do so is a violation of academic integrity policies.
- Be thoughtful about when AI is useful. Consider its appropriateness for each assignment or circumstance. The use of AI tools requires attribution. You are expected to clearly attribute any material generated by the tool used.]

Plagerism

If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an “F” grade on the assignment, exam, and/or in the course.

Students and Disability Accommodations

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems

Annenberg Student Success Fund

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund

Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students’ continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

[TrojansAlert](#)

TrojansAlert is an alert system that allows university officials to contact you during an emergency. It is your connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do, or what not to do, who to contact and other important information. Visit the website to sign up.

[Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis](#)

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on [Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness](#).

[ITS Customer Support Center \(CSC\)](#): (213) 740-5555

The ITS Customer Support Center (CSC) provides support to the USC community for connecting to the USC Network and using supported applications. For help with network connectivity and software, contact CSC. Walk-in support is available in Leavey Library's Information Commons.

[Violence-Free Campus](#)

Visit the website to read more about prohibited behaviors, reporting responsibilities and where to report.

[Student-Athlete Travel Excuse Letters](#)

Prior to a university-sponsored away competition, Student-Athletes are responsible for providing their Instructor with a Competition Excuse Letter (provided by their academic counselor) for the classes missed while on the road (i.e., excused absence). It is the responsibility of the Student-Athlete to provide the letter prior to leaving on their trip and to make arrangements for a make-up of any missed assignments or exams. Please refer to the [SAAS site](#) where they detail travel and travel excuse letters.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001

(15 weeks: 1/8/2024 – 4/26/2024; Final Exam Period: 5/1-8/2024)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20241/calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, January 26, 2024

Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund: Friday, January 26, 2024

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Friday, January 26, 2024 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund or change to Audit:

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

Last day to withdraw without a “W” on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade:

Friday, February 23, 2024 [Mark of “W” will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.]

*Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

Last day to drop with a mark of "W": Friday, April 5, 2024