

Title of the course:	Communication Strategies and Psychological Principles of Persuasion		
Course ID:	VE-NPT037		
Level of education:	Regular & Erasmus, BSc	Academic semester:	Spring
Professor's name:	PhDr. Enikő Kahler Korcsmáros, PhD.	Academic title: Associate Professor	
Hours per semester:	26 hours	Credits:	4
Exam:	Classroom activity, presentation, written exam (test)	Pre-requisites:	---

The purpose of the course

The purpose of this course is to enable students to understand and apply psychological and communicative principles that underlie effective persuasion. It is designed to provide a conceptual and empirical foundation for analysing how communication strategies can influence attitudes, decision-making, and behaviour across various professional and social contexts. Through the integration of theory and practice, the course encourages the development of critical thinking, ethical awareness, and practical skills necessary for constructing persuasive and credible messages in interpersonal and organizational settings.

Competencies to develop

This course contributes to the development of both theoretical and practical competences in the areas of communication and psychology. Students will enhance their analytical competences by critically examining psychological theories of persuasion and their application to real-world communication contexts. They will strengthen their communicative competences through the design and delivery of persuasive messages tailored to diverse audiences and purposes. Furthermore, the course fosters interpersonal and social competences, including empathy, active listening, and ethical awareness, which are essential for effective and responsible influence. In addition, students will develop research and reflective competences by evaluating the effectiveness of communication strategies using evidence-based approaches and by reflecting on their own communicative behavior. Overall, the course supports the formation of well-rounded professionals capable of applying psychological insights to enhance clarity, persuasiveness, and ethical integrity in their communication practices.

Structure of course

1. Introduction to Persuasive Communication
 - Course overview and expectations
 - The role of persuasion in communication
 - Distinction between persuasion, manipulation, and influence
 - Ethical considerations in persuasive practice
 - Application in practice, group exercise
2. Foundations of Communication Theory
 - Models of communication (Shannon-Weaver, transactional model, etc.)
 - Verbal and non-verbal communication processes
 - Message framing and meaning construction
 - Application in practice, group exercise
3. Psychological Perspectives on Persuasion
 - Overview of social and cognitive psychology relevant to communication
 - Theories of attitude formation and change
 - Dual-process models of persuasion (ELM, HSM)
 - Application in practice, group exercise
4. Motivation, Emotion, and Cognitive Biases
 - The role of motivation and emotion in persuasive contexts
 - Cognitive biases and heuristics affecting decision-making
 - Implications for message design and audience targeting
 - Application in practice, group exercise
5. Credibility, Trust, and Source Effects
 - Source characteristics: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness
 - Building credibility and rapport with audiences
 - Managing perceived authenticity and authority
 - Application in practice, group exercise
6. Audience Analysis and Message Adaptation
 - Identifying audience needs, values, and expectations

- Cultural and demographic factors in persuasion
 - Tailoring messages to different communication contexts
 - Application in practice, group exercise
7. Persuasion in Interpersonal Communication
- Persuasion in relationships, negotiation, and conflict resolution
 - Active listening, empathy, and assertive communication
 - The psychology of compliance and resistance
 - Application in practice, group exercise
8. Persuasion in Mass and Digital Media
- Persuasive strategies in advertising, social media, and public campaigns
 - Emotional appeals and storytelling
 - Ethical issues in digital persuasion
 - Application in practice, group exercise
9. Nonverbal and Visual Persuasion
- The impact of body language, tone, and visual cues
 - Design principles for persuasive visual communication
 - Practical workshop: analysing persuasive materials
 - Application in practice, group exercise
10. Strategic Communication and Persuasion Planning
- Planning and implementing persuasive communication strategies
 - Setting objectives and evaluating outcomes
 - Integrating psychological insights into strategic planning
 - Application in practice, group exercise
11. Social media and its challenges
- How can social media effect our everyday life?
 - Social media and different generations of customers
 - Emoticons and icons for feeling – is this really what we want to say?
 - Application in practice, group exercise
12. Applied Work I.
- Presentations: case study or campaign proposal
 - Peer feedback and instructor consultation
 - Reflection on applied persuasion challenges
13. Applied Work II.
- Presentations: case study or campaign proposal
 - Peer feedback and instructor consultation
 - Reflection on applied persuasion challenges

Educational methods

Students must be active during the course, solve tasks assigned by the teacher, prepare presentation and individually write an exam (test). Assessment is made on the bases of the above criteria based on the following weights:

Activity during lessons (classroom activity): 30%

Presentation: 30%

Final exam (individual test): 40%

Grades:

5 – excellent (91-100%)

4 – good (75-90%)

3 – medium (61-74%)

2 – sufficient (51-60%)

1 – insufficient/failed (0-50%)

Required reading:

Dale Carnegie and associative: How to Win Friends and Influence People in the Digital Age. Simon & Schuster Ltd, 2012

Robert Cialdini: Pre-Suasion - A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade. Random House UK Ltd, 2017

Stefan Hoffmann, Payam Akbar: Consumer Behavior. Understanding Consumers – Designing Marketing Activities. Springer, Wiesbaden, 2023

Leil Lowndes: How To Talk To Anyone. Harper Collins Publ. UK, 2024

Presentations connected with the content of the course.