

COMM EXAM 1

Chapter 1: Introduction to persuasion

- Persuasion isn't new—from antiquity onward
- But a number of changes have taken place: number of communications, speed of communications, institutionalization, subtlety, complexity and mediation, digitization.
- Defining Persuasion
 - Symbolic process in which
 - Communicators try to convince other people
 - To change their own attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue
 - Through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice
- Symbol—a form of language, representing broader concepts or ideas with rich meaning
 - Ex. Words: “freedom” “justice” “equality”
 - Ex. Non verbal signs: a country's flag, religious icon
 - Ex. Brand icons: golden arches, swoosh
- Persuasion is not always literal
- Persuader must intend to persuade, and be aware of that intention
- Thus it is a CONSCIOUS attempt
- Persuasion is a form of social influence, but more strictly defined
- Persuasion doesn't force change, people decide themselves
- Can be healthy or not
- Multitude of types of messages:
 - Verbal/non verbal
 - Interpersonal/mediated
 - Reasonable/unreasonable
 - Factual/emotional
 - Arguments/peripheral cues
- For self-persuasion to work, freedom of choice is needed
- Freedom=can act against the recommendation of the persuader
- Distinction= the perception of freedom to resist
 - Freedom= persuasion
 - No freedom= coercion
- Murky distinction—depends on circumstance and perceptions
- Propaganda:
 - Ruling group has near/total control of distribution of information
 - Typically mass level influence
 - Deceptive and manipulative, always negative
- Manipulation:
 - True goals of persuader are hidden
 - Recipient misled

- Shaping Responses—associate a new idea with a concept
- Reinforcing responses—strengthening already held attitudes
- Changing responses—boldest form of persuasion

Chapter 2: Historical and Ethical foundations

- Rhetoric: argumentation, language, and public address used to influence audiences—ancient form of persuasion.
- Dual approach: Persuasion as strong arguments and logic (Plato) Persuasion as style and flash (Sophists)
- Aristotle's framework for persuasion:
 - Ethos: nature of communicator
 - Pathos: emotional state of audience
 - Logos: arguments within the message
- Kenneth Burke (1950): symbols and emotion more important
 - Audience identification with speaker
 - Encouraged social protest usage of rhetoric to change status quo
- More radical followers emphasized upheavals of establishment and power
- Now, rhetoric studied both critically/humanistically and social scientifically
- First half 20th century concerns about mass propaganda
 - U.S. wanted to understand power and effects of war documentary films
 - Carl Hovland pioneered experimental methods to test persuasion
 - Empirical emphasis still used today
- Scientific study of persuasion:
- Scientific approach: Uses theory, hypotheses, and empirical tests
- Theory= conceptualization of a phenomenon that links variables, explains events, and offers predictions