PSYCHOLOGY 513
Attitudes and Social Influence
52679D – GFS 108
Wednesdays, 4:00 to 7:50 pm
Fall 2011 (4 units)

Instructor:  C. Miranda Barone, PhD
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Hours: W 3:00–4:00 p.m. or by appointment

Required Texts:

Additional readings are available on BlackBoard or through Ares. Please check BlackBoard weekly for additional readings.

Course Description and Objectives
Social psychology’s definition of an attitude is an enduring evaluation of an attitude object (e.g., people, social groups, consumer products). The study of attitudes is one of the oldest and central areas of research in Social Psychology, and has undergone many revisions and developments. However, it is crystal clear that understanding attitudes is fundamental for understanding impression formation, group stereotypes, marketing and consumer behavior, jury decision-making, political psychology, and many, many other areas of interest to social scientists. In addition to studying how attitudes are formed, we will also explore how attitudes are changed (i.e., persuasion), and how people respond to persuasion attempts. Finally, we will study the application of these principles in the area of consumer behavior.

Learning Objectives:
1. Demonstrate a basic understanding of theories in Attitudes, Attitude Change, Social Persuasion.
2. To understand to the theories and principles of attitude change and persuasion that have been developed and tested.
3. To understand the meaning, measurement, and utility of attitudes in various applied settings, such as advertising, education or the workplace.
4. To develop and understanding of the way advertisers incorporate these theories to change attitudes.
5. To develop the skills to conceptually develop questionnaires.
**Course Format**
Discussions will be a function of everyone’s involvement. In most cases, I will provide some opening remarks as a background for each unit. It is anticipated that these preliminary comments will evolve into a discussion of issues raised in the readings. Thus, *it is essential that the assigned reading be completed prior to each class meeting. Please check BlackBoard for additional readings.*

**Methods of Evaluation**

*Construction of an Interview and Questionnaire*
One of the main goals of this course is to learn how to measure attitudes. Each student will create a questionnaire and an interview. These instruments should be based on theory and the literature. Explanations for the design of the instruments must be provided. Some pilot work will also be required. Presentations to the class will be included in the grade. Additional assignment information will be available on BlackBoard.

*Written Application Paper*
In this paper, you will be required to observe and report on an organization, industry, or media attempts to persuade and influence. Your paper should focus on one specific area (suggestions: advertising campaigns, pharmaceutical company sales, sex education, exercise motivation, non-profit fundraising, political campaigning and lobbying, etc.) In your paper, you should make sure to summarize events or issues that you are discussing, analyze that event through theories or concepts from the readings or class discussion, explore pertinent aspects of persuasion and social influence. You may also consider critiquing current campaigns and/or developing an alternative campaign and incorporating strategies of persuasion. Include social issues that are relevant to your topic. Always describe and cite empirical evidence that would support your design, descriptions, critique and assertions. Additional assignment information will be available on BlackBoard.

*Presentation*
A presentation of your project to the class will occur at the end of the semester. The presentation should include visual aids (i.e., PowerPoint or Keynote) and be very professional, and should prompt a class discussion. During your presentation you should highlight important aspects of the theoretical area, provide more detailed information on the empirical evidence supporting the theory, and discuss key conceptual debates and criticisms of persuasion and influence strategies.

**Grading**

Grades will be based on:
- Midterm: 50
- Questionnaire & presentation: 50
- Final Paper: 50
- Presentation: 25
- Participation: 10
- **Total Points**: 185
Course Schedule

Week 1. August 24 - Orientation and introduction to Attitudes and Social Influence
   A Brief History of Attitude Research
   PsychInfo and APA style discussion
   Readings:
   • Chapter 1 in Crano & Prislin (2009), Attitude and Attitude Change
   • Folk Wisdom- Was You Grandmother Right?
   • How to read a Research Article
   • How to Be a Wise Consumer of Psychological Research

Week 2. August 31 - Attitude Structure
   Readings:
   (In Ares)
   • Chapter 2 in Crano & Prislin
   Discussion topic: The Interview

Week 3. September 7 - Attitude Strength, Ambivalence, Function, and Change
   Chapters 11, 12, 13 & 14 in Crano & Prislin
   • Bassili, J. (2008) Attitude Strength
   • Attitudes vs. Actions
   • Predictors of Intention to Use Condoms Among University Women: An Application and Extension of the Theory of Planned Behaviour
   • Purchase and Consumption Habits: Not Necessarily What You Intend
   • The Cognitive Consequences of Forced Compliance
   • The Origin of Cognitive Dissonance
   Discussion topic: The Interview

Week 4. September 14 - Attitude Measurement
   Chapters 3 & 4 in Crano & Prislin
   • Schwarz, N. (2008) Attitude Measurement

Discussion topic: The Questionnaire

**Week 5. September 21 - Attitudes: Origin and Formation**

*Chapters 5, 6, and 7* in Crano & Prislin

• Forgas, J. (2009) The Role of Affect in Attitude and Attitude Change

• Attribution Versus Persuasion as a Means for Modifying Behavior

Discussion topic: The Questionnaire

**Week 6. September 28 - Persuasion, Attitude Change and Resistance**

• Self-Esteem, Trivialization, and Attitude Change

**Week 7 – October 7 – Persuasion, Attitude Change and Resistance, cont.**

*Chapters 8, 9, and 10* in Crano & Prislin


**Week 8 – October 12 – The Social Context and Applications**

*Chapters 15, 16, & 17* In Prislin and Crano

• Schultz, P. W., Tabiniaco, & Rendon, T. (2008) Normative Beliefs as Agents of Influence: Basic Processes and Real World Applications
• The Constructive, Destructive, and Reconstructive Power of Social Norms
The Influence of Social Pressure and Black Clothing on Judgments of Crime

Week 9 – October 19

Midterm

Week 10 – October 26 - Social Influence

Presentations & Questionnaire/ papers due


Week 11 – November 2 - Social Norms and Conformity

• Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4 in Cialdini
Influence and Reciprocity and Commitment and Social Proof
• Social Influence on Political Judgments
• The Chameleon Effect- The Perception–Behavior Link and Social Interaction

Week 12 – November 9 - Compliance Gaining

• Chapters 5, 6, 7, & 8 in Cialdini
Liking and Authority
Scarcity and Instant Influence

Week 13 – November 16 - Language, Nonverbal, Visual, and other Esoteric Forms of Persuasion


Week 14 – November 23 - Discussion

Week 15 – November 31 -- Presentations and Discussion

Week 16 – December 7 --Final Paper due
Policies and Procedures

• **Attendance and Participation**
  Participation, and therefore attendance, is expected. There will be many in-class activities, videos, and small group discussions that will help explain the material covered in class or lecture.

• **Students with Disabilities**
  Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

• **Statement on Academic Integrity**
  USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/
  Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/