



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
MOUNT ST. JOSEPH UNIVERSITY

**PSY 635-S5: Social Influence S1-20**  
**Mount St. Joseph University School of Business**

**Course Number:** PSY 635-S5  
**Level:** Graduate, Required  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Course Meets:** Saturdays 9/7, 9/28, 10/19, 11/9, 12/7/2019  
1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
SC 314

**Instructor Name:** Melissa “Missy” Houlette, PhD  
**Office Location:** 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Seton  
**Office Hours:** Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Thursdays 3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m., MSOL Saturdays 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an in-depth look at how people influence each other's attitudes and behavior, with an emphasis on management applications. A variety of influence methods will be examined.

**Course Requisite:** Only Master of Science in Organizational Leadership (MSOL) graduate students may register.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)**

1. Understand the major principles of social influence;
2. Relate these principles to management/leadership situations and to your everyday life;
3. Have a basic understanding of some of the scientific research that has contributed to our understanding of social influence.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

***Textbooks:***

Bacon, T. R. (2011). *The Elements of Power: Lessons on Leadership and Influence*. New York, NY: AMACOM.

Hardcover ISBN-13: 978-0-814-41511-5; eBook ISBN-13: 978-0-814-41512-2

Cialdini, R. (2007). *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion (Revised Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Harper Collins Publishers.

Paperback ISBN-13: 978-0061241895; eBook ISBN-13: 978-0-205-24064-7



Maxwell, J. C., & Dornan, J. (2006). *Becoming a Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Paperback ISBN-13: 978-0-785-28839-8; eBook ISBN-13: 978-0-061-89987-4

Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2009). *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness. (Revised and Expanded Edition)*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Paperback ISBN-13: 978-0-143-11526-7; eBook ISBN-13: 978-0-300-14466-6

**Reading (on Blackboard):** Aronson, E. (1999). The power of self-persuasion. *American Psychologist*, 54(11), 875.

## LEARNING STRATEGIES

Type	% of Course
Lecture/Traditional Classroom	20%
Other:	
• Discussions	70%
• Active Learning Activities	10%

## PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

### Grading Scale

#### Graduate

Description	Letter Grade	GPA Scale	Range
Excellent	A	4.0	90% - 100%
Very Good	B	3.0	80% - < 90%
Good	C	2.0	70% - < 80%
Fail	F	0	< 70%

## GRADING

The grade a student receives in class will be determined as follows:

Preassignment	10%
Discussion Leadership	20%
Papers	20%
Participation	20%
Final Project Presentation	10%
Final Project Paper	20%
Total	100%



### **Preassignment (10%):**

The preassignment for this course is described on the final page of this document. Please note that there is a significant amount of reading for this assignment, a brief field experience, and a required paper. Students should begin the preassignment work well in advance of the first class meeting. The required paper that is part of the preassignment is due on Blackboard prior to the first class meeting at 1:00 p.m. on September 7, 2019.

### **Discussion Leadership (20%):**

Students will lead a class discussion on one of the required readings during the semester. Assignment of students to readings will occur at the first class meeting. A Discussion Leadership Rubric will also be provided. Each designated discussion leader should prepare in advance 1.) a 1-2 page (single spaced) outline of the material to be distributed to all students and the instructor, and 2.) at least 5 written open-ended discussion questions/prompts pertaining to the reading. Students are required to submit a copy of the outline and discussion questions/prompts on Blackboard (through assignment link) prior to class. During the related class, students are expected to provide an introduction to the topic then take a leadership role in the discussion. Students' discussion leadership will be evaluated on the quality of the summary of the material (handout) and discussion questions/prompts, knowledge of the subject matter, and ability to facilitate and manage the discussion.

Good discussion questions (or prompts) have many or all of the following qualities:

- Questions are open-ended; closed-ended (e.g., yes-no) questions do not give the class any room to discuss ideas (e.g., "do you agree?"). Closed-ended questions can be useful if you have an open-ended question (or two) as a follow-up (e.g., asking "why?" after "do you agree?").
- Questions do not have an objective, verifiable, answer (particularly from the reading). That is, students should not ask factual questions that others can answer simply by looking it up in the reading (unless you have a good follow-up).
- Questions give the class a number of directions that they could go; they can be answered by more than one person and in more than one way.
- Questions attempt to identify (and/or challenge) implicit assumptions in a particular reading. These questions require students to look beyond what the authors have to say.
- Questions may ask for applications of theoretical positions (or theoretical explanations for applied issues).
- Questions get at controversial issues, complex/difficult issues, and/or allow for student opinion (supported by evidence or explanation of one's position).



### **Papers on Readings (20%):**

On the class sessions that students are not assigned to lead discussion, they will submit a paper on the assigned reading. Papers requirements will be similar to the preassignment with a component that requires students do practice or apply some aspect of the material and write about their experience in addition to developing discussion questions related to the reading. Students will be given specific requirements for each paper on Blackboard (attached to the assignment link.)

Papers should be single spaced with 1" margins and use either Times New Roman 12 point or Arial 10 point font. Submissions will be made on Blackboard prior to class in pdf or Word format. Students should bring a hard copy of their assignment to class or be able to access it electronically so that they are able refer to it during class discussion. (Submissions will be accessible through the assignment link as well.)

### **Participation (20%)**

This course will be dominated by discussion rather than lecture. Students should therefore come prepared for each class and be ready to discuss and engage with the material/issues addressed in the reading. The majority the class participation grade will be an individual evaluation of students' specific contributions to the discussion and participation in class activities. Because this course is part of the organizational leadership degree, development of leadership skills is of significant importance. Part of a leader's role is to encourage and enable the best performance by others (and not dominate interactions). Therefore, a part of the class participation grade will be a group grade based on whether everyone in the class participates at an appropriate level. Class participation is worth 20% of your final grade with 15% of your final grade coming from your individual contributions and 5% coming from the group-based grade.

### **Final Project Presentation (10%) and Paper (20%)**

For the final project, students will identify a business-related problem or goal in their own organization or an organization to which they have access and apply principles of social influence to promote change. This project is worth 30% of the final grade. The project includes doing an oral presentation during the last class meeting (10% of final grade) and writing a supplemental paper to go along with the presentation (worth 20% of final grade). More details about the project will be provided in class. Presentation time for each student will depend on the total number of students in the class.



## **POLICIES**

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:**

Please use the following link to access Mount St. Joseph University's Academic Honesty Policy. The policy will be enforced in this class.

<http://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/rights-policies1/academic-policies1/academic-honesty1/>

### **DISABILITY POLICY:**

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Mount St. Joseph University provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids for students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit or restrict one or more major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, or learning. Students with disabilities should contact Meghann Littrell, the Director of Learning Center & Disability Services, to present documentation and develop individualized accommodation plans (244-4524, Meghann.Littrell@msj.edu, Learning Center, Room 156 Seton). Students who have already registered with MSJ Disability Services are encouraged to discuss their accommodations with their course faculty at the beginning of each semester. Additional information can be found at <http://www.msj.edu/academics/disability-services/>.

### **TEMPORARY ILLNESS POLICY:**

Please use the following link to access Mount St. Joseph University's Temporary Illness Policy.

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/Temporary\\_Illness\\_Injury\\_Pregnancy\\_Policy.pdf?target=cb704db2-bcb1-454d-9c31-4310226ce3b4](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/Temporary_Illness_Injury_Pregnancy_Policy.pdf?target=cb704db2-bcb1-454d-9c31-4310226ce3b4)

### **POLICY ON INCOMPLETES:**

Please use the following link to access Mount St. Joseph University's policy on incompletes.

<http://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/rights-policies1/academic-policies1/incomplete-grades1/>

### **DROP DATES FOR THE CURRENT SEMESTER:**

Please use the following link to access information regarding drop dates for this semester.

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Catalogs.jnz?portlet=Semester\\_Policies](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Catalogs.jnz?portlet=Semester_Policies)

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

It is particularly important to attend all class meetings due to the accelerated format of graduate business courses. If you will miss one class meeting for an unavoidable reason, please contact the instructor as soon as possible in order to discuss alternative ways of meeting the learning outcomes that will be covered in the class meeting. If you will miss more than one class meeting for a particular course, please contact both the instructor and the Assistant Dean as soon as possible to discuss whether it is advisable to take the course this semester. Each unexcused absence will lower your final grade by one letter.



## COURSE SCHEDULE <sup>1,2</sup>

Date & Learning Outcomes	Topics	Class Preparation & Assignments
<b>Date:</b> 9/7  <b>CLOs:</b> 1,3	6 "Weapons of Influence" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reciprocity</li> <li>• Scarcity</li> <li>• Authority</li> <li>• Consistency</li> <li>• Liking</li> <li>• Consensus</li> </ul>	<i>Materials to prepare:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Read:</i> Cialdini, R. (2007). <i>Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion (Revised Edition)</i>. Needham Heights, MA: Harper Collins Publishers.</li> <li>• <i>Assignment:</i> Preassignment</li> </ul> <p><u>Assignment due date:</u> Submitted to Blackboard by 1:00 p.m. on 9/7</p>
<b>Date:</b> 9/28  <b>CLOs:</b> 1,3	Personal Sources of Power  Organizational Sources of Power  Will Power (Meta-Source)	<i>Materials to prepare:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Read:</i> Bacon, T. R. (2011). <i>The Elements of Power: Lessons on Leadership and Influence</i>. New York, NY: AMACOM.</li> <li>• <i>Read:</i> Aronson, E. (1999). The power of self-persuasion. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 54(11), 875. (On Blackboard)</li> <li>• <i>Assignment:</i> Discussion Leadership Reading Outline and Discussion Questions (Assigned Leaders) <u>or</u> Paper on Reading (Non-Leaders)</li> </ul> <p><u>Assignment due date:</u> Submitted to Blackboard by 1:00 p.m. on 9/28</p>
<b>Date:</b> 10/19  <b>CLOs:</b> 1,3	Becoming an Influencer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model</li> <li>• Motivate</li> <li>• Mentor</li> <li>• Multiply</li> </ul>	<i>Materials to prepare:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Read:</i> Maxwell, J. C., &amp; Dornan, J. (2006). <i>Becoming a Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others</i>. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.</li> <li>• <i>Assignment:</i> Discussion Leadership Reading Outline and Discussion Questions (Assigned Leaders) <u>or</u> Paper on Reading (Non-Leaders)</li> </ul> <p><u>Assignment due date:</u> Submitted to Blackboard by 1:00 p.m. on 10/19</p>



<b>Date:</b> 11/9  <b>CLOs:</b> 1,3	"Nudge" Basics  Choice Architecture  Libertarian Paternalism	<i>Materials to prepare:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Read</i> Part I, V, and additional assigned section of Thaler, R. H., &amp; Sunstein, C. R. (2009). <i>Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness. (Revised and Expanded Edition)</i>. New York, NY: Penguin Group.</li><li>• <i>Assignment:</i> Discussion Leadership Reading Outline and Discussion Questions (Assigned Leaders) <u>or</u> Paper on Reading (Non-Leaders)</li></ul> <i>Assignment due date:</i> Submitted to Blackboard by 1:00 p.m. on 11/9
<b>Date:</b> 12/7  <b>CLOs:</b> 2	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Assignment:</i> Final Project Presentation and Paper</li></ul> <i>Assignment due date:</i> Paper submitted to Blackboard by 1:00 p.m. on 12/7. Copy of presentation provided to instructor in class (may be copied or downloaded to instructor computer or submitted on a flash drive or disc).

<sup>1</sup>Syllabus subject to change.

<sup>2</sup>Readings subject to change.





**PSY 635-S5: Social Influence S1-20  
Preassignment**

**\*\*Due on Blackboard prior to the first class meeting at 1:00 p.m. on September 7, 2019\*\***

The preassignment consists of the following:

**1. Reading**

Read all of Cialdini, R. (2007). *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion (Revised Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Harper Collins Publishers. Note that there is no physical “deliverable” for this part. It is simply the required reading component. However, students are expected to be prepared to participate in a class discussion on the during the first class meeting. It would therefore be a good idea to take some notes as you read to refer back to during class.

**2. Writing Preparation**

Before writing your paper, carefully read the following brief document. This source will help you better understand some of the explications and standards of graduate-level writing and how it differs from the undergraduate level. (Note: The MSJ Writing Center will work with you on any of your assignments.)

<https://sites.google.com/site/gritmockup/writing-and-research/characteristics-of-graduate-level-writing-revised>

**3. Field Experience**

This exercise requires students to set themselves up as targets of a professional salesperson or other persuasion expert. Students will (a) identify a situation in which they will encounter persuasion, (b) obtain instructor approval if the situation is not on the pre-approved situations list, (c) expose themselves to the situation, and (d) write an analytical reflection paper on the experience. Students should behave as naturally as they can in the chosen situation. The “deliverable” for this experience is contained in the paper described below.

Approved Situations:

- Salesperson-heavy retail stores (e.g., stores that sell appliances, jewelry, furniture, high-end clothing) or street vendors
- Car dealerships (looking only—no test drives unless you actually intend to purchase a vehicle)
- In-home product parties hosted by a friend or acquaintance (e.g., beauty products, nutritional supplements, cooking supplies, clothing, scrapbooking supplies, food products, etc.)
- Street vendors
- Service providers (e.g., cell phone, cable, cleaning services, travel agency)

NOTE: 1.) Students may leave the situation at any time and should provide personal/identifying information at their own discretion. 2.) Students should avoid situations in which conducting this activity would be of ethical concern or potentially disrupt business (e.g., making funeral





arrangements, visiting a military recruiter). 3.) Students should avoid subjecting themselves to persuasion attempts from cults and militant organizations for this assignment!

Activity Source: Levine, R. V., Fast, N., & Zimbardo, P. (2004). The power of persuasion: A field exercise. *Teaching of Psychology*, 31(2), 136-138.

#### **4. Paper**

##### **Part I: Field Experience Analytical Reflection**

After completing the field experience, students will write a paper in which they (a) use the social psychological concepts discussed in the preassignment reading to describe and analyze the tactics that were employed, (b) reflect on how they responded to the tactics, and (c) explain how they could more effectively resist similar persuasion attempts in the future. Students will be asked to share their experiences during the first class meeting.

##### **Part II: Items for Class Discussion**

Write at least three questions/prompts related to the readings designed to stimulate class discussion. Questions/prompts should reflect that you read and understood the material in the assignment and must be designed to stimulate discussion among the other class members. Refer to the qualities of good discussion questions provided in the Discussion Leadership component in the Performance Evaluation section of this document.

NOTE: Students are not required to answer their own questions in writing. However, they should consider their own response prior to posing it to the class.