



**PSY 635-GS Social Influence S2-21
Preassignment**

****Due on Blackboard prior to the first class meeting.
Check Blackboard for due date and time****

The preassignment consists of the following components:

1. **Read:** Berger, J. (2020). *The Catalyst: How to Change Anyone's Mind* (pp. 1-213—Case Studies not required). Be prepared to discuss in class.
2. **Review:** supplemental materials provided on Blackboard, Module 1. Be prepared to discuss in class.
3. **Prepare to Write:** carefully read the information at this link, to help you better understand some of the expectations and standards of graduate-level writing.
<https://sites.google.com/site/gritmockup/writing-and-research/characteristics-of-graduate-level-writing-revised> (Note: The MSJ Writing Center is a resource for you when working on your writing assignments.)
4. **Conduct Field Experience:** set yourself up as the target of a persuasion attempt! It must involve a real-time, verbal exchange between you and someone else. You will need to (a) identify a situation in which you will encounter a persuasion attempt, (b) obtain Sharon's approval if the situation is not on the pre-approved situations list, (c) expose yourself to the situation, and (d) write an analytical reflection paper on the experience. Try to behave as naturally as you can in the chosen situation.

Pre-approved Situations:

- A one-on-one online or phone-based sales attempt. For example, someone may try to persuade you to buy a product like an automobile, nutritional supplement, beauty product, or subscription; or a service such as cell phone, cable, or cleaning services.
- A one-on-one online- or phone-based attempt to influence your opinion or inspire action (e.g., political campaign or solicitation or decisions made with family member or friend).
- On-line or phone-based group conversations aimed at influencing opinions or inspiring action (e.g. school board decision, pandemic-related practices at a community recreation center or workplace policy).

Please note:

- 1) All of the pre-approved situations are online- or phone-based, due to the pandemic. A face-to-face situation is acceptable, if you believe you can take adequate precautions to keep yourself safe.
- 2) You may leave the situation at any time and should provide personal/identifying information at your own discretion.
- 3) Avoid situations in which conducting this activity would be of ethical concern or potentially disrupt business (e.g., inquiring about funeral arrangements at a business you do not intend to ever use, visiting a military recruiter feigning interest, arguing with a persuader simply to give that person a hard time)



- 4) Avoid subjecting yourself to dangerous situations or persuasion attempts (e.g. from cults or militant organizations!)

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

5. Write Reflection Paper #1: Field Experience Analytical Reflection

After completing the field experience, you will write a paper addressing the following items. The paper will likely be about one single-spaced page in length, with a second page devoted to your reference list (listing any of the required readings or supplemental materials from Module 1 that you cite in the paper). You will be asked to share your experiences during our first class session.

- a) Describe the setting and the characters involved in the persuasion attempt, along with the issue/policy/product/service that was involved. In general, was the persuasion attempt aimed at getting you to *obey*, *comply*, *conform*, or *convert*? Explain.
- b) Describe any attempt(s) to *reduce or repurpose reactance*, along with your reaction to the attempt(s).
- c) Describe any attempt(s) to *ease endowment*, along with your reaction to the attempt(s).
- d) Describe any attempt(s) to *recognize and/or shrink distance*, along with your reaction to the attempt(s).
- e) Describe any attempt(s) to *recognize and/or reduce uncertainty*, along with your reaction to the attempt(s).
- f) Describe any attempt(s) to *identify or utilize corroborating evidence*, along with your reaction to the attempt(s).
- g) Which specific tactics used during the persuasion attempt were most successful? How do you know?